



The Status of Teacher Education and Development in Nepal

Nepali Teachers' Engagement in and Attitudes to Professional Development

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Methodology	1
3	Respondent profile	1
4	Participation in and Impact of professional development	5
5	Professional development interests	7
6	Preferred professional development activities	7
7	Summary	7

1. Introduction

This survey of teachers in Nepal was conducted in late 2022 as part of a larger study of teacher education and development in the country. The study was commissioned by the British Council

and conducted by Vertex Consult with support from Simon Borg, who wrote this report in January 2023'. The link for the URL¹.

2. Methodology

Public schoolteachers (those of English, mathematics and science were targeted) across Nepal completed a survey about their engagement in and attitudes towards professional development. The survey consisted of 27 questions that addressed the following topics:

- demographic information
- teaching context
- engagement in professional development
- impact of professional development
- professional development interests
- preferred professional development activities.

The survey was administered in Nepali both face-to-face and online. For face-to-face administration, an enumerator was deployed in two municipalities in one district of each province. For each province, the target was to collect five responses from ten schools,

giving a total of 50 responses per province and a total of 350 responses across the seven provinces. Enumerators read out the questions to teachers along with the answer options, and responses were entered into the Kobo Collect application. An additional 34 face-to-face surveys were later collected from Madhesh, as this province was not well represented in the online survey.

For the online administration (conducted through Google Forms), teachers from 19 districts contributed (different districts from those covered in the face-to-face survey, with at least two per province). Five public schools from one municipality in each district were identified with the support of local education offices, and school principals were sent details of the survey and asked to share the link with their teachers. Additionally, the survey was publicised through its teacher networks by the British Council in Nepal.

3. Respondent profile

A total of 714 responses were obtained – 384 face-to-face and 330 online – from 26 districts as shown in Table 1. Responses were fairly evenly distributed across the seven provinces, except for Gandaki which accounted for 26.8% of the total (see Table 2).

Table 1: Provinces and districts

Province	Survey districts	N
Province 1	Sunsari, Bhojpur, Ilam, Jhapa	4
Madhesh Province	Saptari, Sarlahi, Mahottari	3
Bagmati Province	Kathmandu, Bhaktapur, Kavrepalanchowk	3
Gandaki Province	Tanahun, Syangja, Nawalpur, Nawalparasi, Parbat	5
Lumbini Province	Banke, Rupandehi, Kapilvastu, Palpa	4
Karnali Province	Jumla, Salyan, Jajarkot	3
Far West Province	Dadeldhura, Bajhang, Achham, Baitadi	4
Total		26

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

As Figure 1 shows, within these districts, respondents worked in schools across urban, semi-urban and rural areas, with the largest group coming from the last of these.

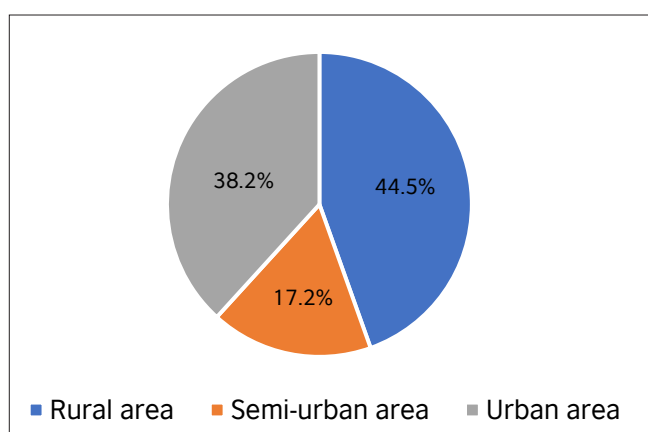


Figure 1: School locations

As Table 2 shows, almost 72 per cent of survey respondents were male (this reflects the distribution of secondary teachers generally in Nepal¹). In terms of age, Figure 2 shows that all categories were represented, though the 31–40 group accounted for 40 per cent of the total.

Also, 70 per cent of the sample were 31–50 years old. Age does not necessarily correspond to teaching experience; many teachers only secure government positions well into their career, often starting in private schools (where a teaching licence may not be required).

Table 2: Respondents by gender

Province	Female	%	Male	%	Total	%
Province 1	11	14.1	67	85.9	78	10.9
Madhesh Province	20	20.4	78	79.6	98	13.7
Bagmati Province	31	33.7	61	66.3	92	12.9
Gandaki Province	87	45.5	104	54.5	191	26.8
Lumbini Province	22	30.1	51	69.9	73	10.2
Karnali Province	15	17.6	70	82.4	85	11.9
Far West Province	16	16.5	81	83.5	97	13.6
Total	202	28.3	512	71.7	714	100

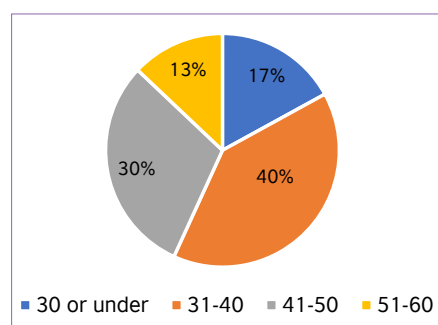


Figure 2: Respondents by age

Figure 3 shows that respondents' teaching experience ranged from less than one year to more than 20, with an almost even split between those having up to ten years' experience (48.9 per cent) and those having more than ten years (51.1 per cent).

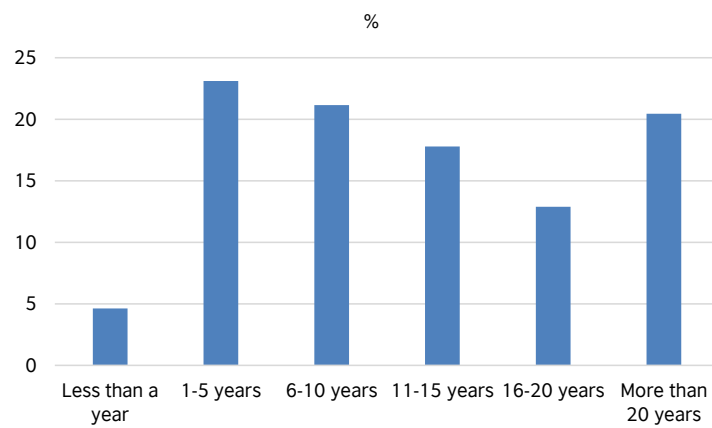


Figure 3: Respondents by teaching experience

¹<https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SE.SEC.TCHR.FE.ZS?locations=NP>

Teachers were also asked about their highest qualification. As there are multiple routes into teaching in Nepal, teachers may hold a range of qualifications, and this is demonstrated in Table 3. Some (14.4 per cent) reported having school-leaving qualifications only (Grade 10 or Grade 12), 34.2 per cent had a B.Ed. (sometimes with non-teaching qualifications in other subjects), while almost 36 per cent had an M.Ed. (also sometimes with non-teaching qualifications in other subjects). Thus, 70.1 per cent of respondents held B.Ed. or M.Ed. qualifications. Over 14 per cent also said they held either a Bachelor's or Master's degree but no qualifications in the field of education.

Table 3: Respondents by academic qualification

Academic qualification	No.	%
SLC/SEE (Grade 10)	6	0.8
PCL /10+2	97	13.6
B.Ed. only	164	23.0
B.Ed. and Bachelor's in other stream	14	2.0
B.Ed. and Master's in other stream	66	9.2
Bachelor's in other stream	32	4.5
M.Ed. only	209	29.3
M.Ed. and Bachelor's in other stream	5	0.7
M.Ed. and Master's in other stream	42	5.9
Master's in other stream	71	9.9
Above Master's degree	8	1.1
Total	714	100.0

In relation to their qualifications, teachers were also asked if they had passed the Teacher Service Commission examination (TSC), which is the formal civil service examination for teachers in Nepal. Passing the TSC has implications for teachers' recruitment, licensing, contracts and promotion. Of the 714 respondents, 53.6 per cent said they had passed the TSC and 46.4 per cent said they had not. Reported pass rates did vary, though, across provinces, from a high of 72.8 per cent among respondents from Bagmati Province (which is the most developed) down to 34.1 per cent in Karnali Province and 34.0 per cent in Far West Province. Unsurprisingly, over 97 per cent of the teachers who had passed the TSC had permanent status.

Teachers in Nepal also hold varying levels of status (see Figure 4). Among survey respondents, 53.2 per cent said they were permanent teachers, with the remainder consisting of temporary teachers (14.8

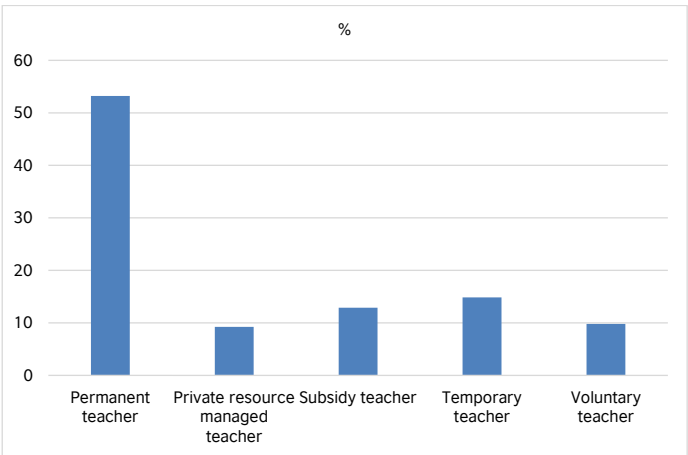


Figure 4: Respondents by recruitment status

per cent), voluntary teachers (9.8 per cent), subsidy teachers (12.9 per cent) and private resource managed teachers (9.2 per cent). Given that formal opportunities for professional development are more likely to be made available to permanent teachers, this finding suggests that a sizeable proportion of teachers in Nepal may be excluded from such opportunities.

Table 4: Respondents by teaching level

Teaching level	N	%
ECD ²	2	0.3
ECD and primary (1–5)	1	0.1
Pre-primary, primary (1–5) and lower secondary (6–8)	2	0.3
Primary (1–5)	104	14.6
Primary (1–5) and lower secondary (6–8)	42	5.9
Lower secondary (6–8)	158	22.1
Lower secondary (6–8) and secondary (9–12)	127	17.8
Secondary (9–12)	255	35.7
Primary (1–5), lower secondary (6–8) and secondary (9–12)	23	3.2
Total	714	100%

Table 4 indicates that the majority of survey respondents (85 per cent) worked wholly or partly with students at lower secondary or secondary level.

Table 5: Respondents by subjects taught

Subject/s	N	%
English	180	25.2
Mathematics	142	19.9
Science	111	15.5
Different primary subjects	66	9.2
Science and mathematics	54	7.6
English and other subject	48	6.7
Mathematics and other subject	27	3.8
Science and other subject	24	3.4
Mathematics, science and other subject	12	1.7
English and mathematics	9	1.3
English and science	5	0.7
English, science and other subject	4	0.6
Another subject	32	4.5
Total	714	100.0

In terms of subject, while 60.6 per cent said they taught one subject only, almost 40 per cent taught more than one, as the various options in Table 5 show. If those teaching different primary subjects are discounted, this still leaves over 30 per cent of respondents who are teaching at least two subjects at higher levels. While the subjects involved may often be related (for example, science and mathematics), this will not always be the case (for example, English and science).

An important element of teachers' context is class size and, as Figure 5 shows, almost 44 per cent said they had on average over 40 students in class. At the same time, 38.6 per cent reported average class sizes of 30 or fewer. Overall, reported classes sizes seemed higher in urban than in rural areas; for example, while only 7 per cent of respondents in urban areas reported average class sizes below 20, the equivalent figure in rural areas was 21.7 per cent. There were also variations in reported average class size across provinces; for example, while in Madhesh Province 59.2 per cent of teachers reported teaching classes

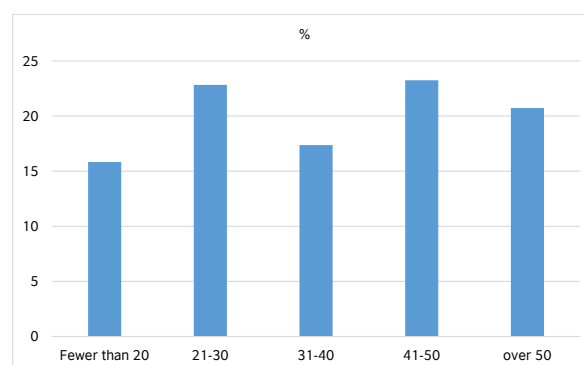


Figure 5: Average class size

of over 50, the equivalent figure in Gandaki Province was 3.7 per cent.

²Early childhood development

4 Participation in and Impact of professional development

Teachers were asked whether they had taken part in any professional development in the previous 18 months. Whereas 67.4 per cent responded positively, almost one-third said they had not. In terms of teacher status, highest levels of participation in professional development were reported by permanent teachers (76.6 per cent) and subsidy teachers (72.8 per cent); in comparison, the figure for private resource managed teachers was 37.9 per cent.

Teachers were then asked about the kinds of professional development activities they had completed, and Table 6 summarises their responses in descending order of frequency. The activity chosen most often (by 67.8 per

cent of teachers) was ‘face-to-face meetings where teachers talk about teaching’; three other activities were chosen by over 40 per cent of respondents – doing action research (49.3 per cent)³, participating in subject committee meetings (48 per cent) and reading books and journals about teaching (42.4 per cent). At the bottom of the list, the least frequently mentioned items were online training (17 per cent), mentoring (17 per cent) and keeping a reflective journal (14.6 per cent). Overall, these results suggest that this sample of teachers had experience of a range of professional development activities. Only just over 30 per cent, though, said they had attended face-to-face training in the previous 18 months. Of these, 74.8 per cent were permanent teachers.

Table 6: Professional development activities in the last 18 months (N=481)

Professional development activities in the last 18 months	N	%
Face-to-face meetings where teachers talk about teaching	326	67.8
Doing action research in your own classroom	237	49.3
Discussing classroom teaching and problem solving in subject committee meetings	231	48.0
Reading books and journals about teaching (including online)	204	42.4
Visiting colleagues’ lessons and discussing with them afterwards	174	36.2
Workshops organised at your school	153	31.8
Being observed teaching by your head teacher or other senior person	153	31.8
Online professional development networks	149	31.0
Face-to-face training (including face-to-face TPD)	147	30.6
Attending educational conferences and events for teachers	139	28.9
Being visited by colleagues and receiving feedback from them afterwards	131	27.2
Supervision visits and feedback from educational authorities	102	21.2
Online training (including online TPD)	82	17.0
Mentoring (receiving support from a more experienced colleague at your school)	82	17.0
Keeping a reflective journal (where you evaluate your teaching and think about how to improve it)	70	14.6

³The high rating of this activity does not imply that many teachers are routinely doing action research of the more formalised kind; it is one of the topics on the official TPD training course, and teachers must do some action research as part of this course.

Teachers who said they had participated in professional development were asked about the extent to which this had impacted on their teaching, and Figure 6 shows that the teachers were generally positive about this. Almost 97 per cent said that professional development had had at least a moderate impact on their work, while for 65.7 per cent there had been at least ‘a lot’ of impact.

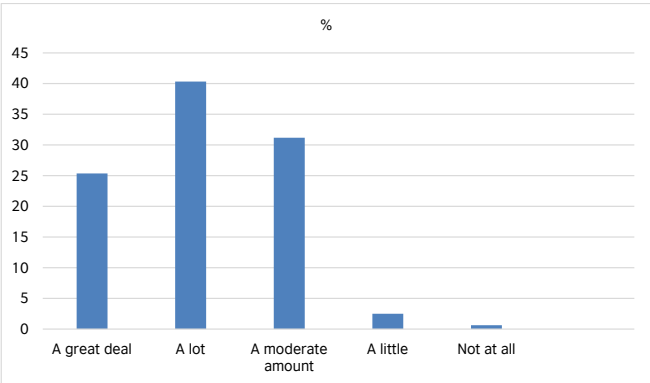


Figure 6: The extent to which professional development impacted on teaching (N=481)

5 Professional development interests

Table 7: What teachers want to learn more about

Teachers were given a list of professional development topics and asked to choose a maximum of five that they were interested in learning more about; Table 7 summarises their responses in descending order of frequency.

Topics	N	%
How to use technology for teaching	542	75.9
Motivating students	468	65.5
Designing/adapting teaching materials	440	61.6
Teaching 21st-century skills/core competencies	390	54.6
Assessing students	309	43.3
Psycho-social counselling of students	294	41.2
Using interactive teaching methods	281	39.4
Lesson planning	192	26.9
Classroom management	171	23.9
Giving students feedback on their work	140	19.6

How to use technology for teaching was the most commonly chosen item (75.9 per cent of teachers), followed by motivating students (65.5 per cent) and designing/adapting teaching materials (61.6 per cent). The three topics chosen least often were giving students feedback (19.6 per cent), classroom management (23.9 per cent) and lesson planning (26.9 per cent). The relative positions of topics in Table 7 do not reflect their importance for effective teaching (assessing students and giving feedback are, pedagogically, more central than using

technology); the responses here, rather, point to the topics teachers are interested in learning more about.

Teachers were asked if there were any other topics they were interested in learning more about, and 391 answered positively. They were asked to write down one further topic, but most repeated items listed in Table 7. The two most common additional answers were digital literacy and IT training, responses which reinforce teachers’ interest in learning about technology and how to use it.

6 Preferred professional development activities

The last item on the teacher survey asked about the kinds of professional development activities teachers were interested in taking part in. They were again given a list and asked to choose a maximum of five preferences. Table 8 presents their responses in descending order of frequency.

Face-to-face training was by far the most commonly chosen item (by 70.9 per cent of teachers). Three items were selected by more

than 40 per cent – online training courses, mentoring (support from a more experienced colleague) and face-to-face meetings to talk about teaching. At the bottom of the list, the two professional development activities least preferred by teachers were supervision visits and observing colleagues' lessons (more teachers, in contrast, wanted to be observed and receive feedback). A few teachers suggested other forms of professional development such as 'demonstration classes'.

Table 8: Preferred professional development activities

Professional development activities	N	%
Face-to-face training courses	506	70.9
Online training courses	331	46.4
Receiving regular support from a more experienced teacher in my school	304	42.6
Face-to-face meetings where teachers talk about teaching	292	40.9
Taking part in online groups where teachers talk about teaching	257	36.0
Being observed by colleagues and receiving feedback from them	251	35.2
Learning to reflect on my teaching	226	31.7
Planning lessons with colleagues	223	31.2
Doing action research in your own classroom	223	31.2
Reading books and journals about teaching	221	31.0
Receiving supervision visits and feedback from educational authorities	199	27.9
Observing my colleagues' lessons	163	22.8

7 Summary

This survey was completed by 714 teachers working in 26 districts across all seven provinces in Nepal. Over 70 per cent of respondents were male and between 31 and 50 years old, although teaching experience (ten years or less or over ten years) was evenly distributed. Over 70 per cent of respondents reported having education degrees, but only 53.6 per cent (most of whom were permanent teachers) had passed the TSC (though pass rates varied significantly across provinces). Most of the teachers worked at lower secondary or secondary level, and 40 per

cent said they taught more than one subject. Overall, a wide range of average class sizes was reported, though within provinces there were noticeable differences in the percentages of teachers who reported working with classes of over 50 children.

Over two-thirds of respondents said they had participated in professional development in the previous 18 months (with highest levels of participation reported by permanent and subsidy teachers). Face-to-face meetings to talk about teaching was by far the professional

development activity teachers most commonly reported doing. Fewer than 30 per cent said that they had taken part in formal training, and those who had were largely permanent teachers. Teachers were quite positive about the impact on their teaching of the professional development they had completed.

In identifying topics they wanted to learn more about, technology (both digital literacy and its pedagogical applications) was that most commonly nominated by teachers. Substantial numbers of them were also interested in motivation and materials development. Rather surprisingly perhaps, lesson planning,

classroom management and giving students feedback were the topics that were of least interest to this sample of teachers.

In terms of the kinds of professional development activities they were interested in doing, face-to-face training was by far that most commonly highlighted by teachers. Online training, mentoring and face-to-face meetings to talk about teaching were also popular choices. Observing colleagues' lessons was the professional development activity fewest teachers (22.8 per cent) were interested in, in contrast to being observed by colleagues, which appealed to a larger proportion (35.2 per cent).

