



Faculty Perspectives on Professional Development in Nepalese Higher Education

Surendra Giri ^a , Kamal Raj Devkota ^b , Om Chandra Thasineku ^a , Dipak Khanal ^a ,
Arun Kumar Kshetree ^c 

✉ kamal.devkota@cdded.tu.edu.np

^a Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development, Tribhuvan University, Nepal,

^b Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

^c Butwal Multiple Campus, Butwal, Tribhuvan University, Nepal

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Abstract

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This paper is a part of a comprehensive research conducted by CERID, TU, on professional development practices of the faculty members in higher education in Nepal. Delving into different professional development practices including research and publications, this paper unpacks the aspirations and challenges that the faculty members experienced in relation to their professional engagements. Quantitative information derived from survey and qualitative information derived from a series of FGDs, interviews and case study were analyzed to unpack the existing professional practices and aspirations that they university faculty members have had regarding their professional development. More importantly, this paper unfolds the challenges that the faculty members confronted with while engaging in different professional development practices involving research and publications, grants and facilities that they receive in this regard, professional development spaces that the concerned universities and campuses have created for them. This paper suggests that the policy makers and the concerned authorities of the universities and the affiliated campuses should stress the continuous professional development practices of teacher faculty members in their policies and programmes. This strengthens the overall quality of the teacher performance and quality of higher education in Nepal.

Keywords: Professional development, higher education, faculty research, publication

Introduction

Continuous Professional Development (CPD) is a long-term process that often starts with the pre-service academic degrees and continues throughout the career journey (Villegas-Reimers, 2003; Mitchell, 2013). Mitchell (2013) defines CPD as a process of maintaining and enhancing knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their academic careers. Bellibaş et al. (2021) state that CPD is related to teachers' learning, pedagogical skills, and transforming their knowledge to their students' learning success. CPD requires the cognitive and emotional involvement of teachers individually and collectively, the capacity and willingness to examine where each one stands regarding convictions and beliefs, and the perusal and enactment of appropriate alternatives for improvement or change. All this occurs in particular educational policy environments or school cultures, some of which are more appropriate and conducive to learning than others (Avalos, 2011). CPD helps to change in the education system and prepare teachers to receive the knowledge and skills as a part of professional development, if not they received professional development as a burden and less effective (Aminudin, 2012; Panda, 2017).

While historicizing CPD, National Education System Plan (NESP) the first time clearly stated the academic and professional qualifications for being teachers especially at school education. According to it, at least training lasting for ten months was required to become teachers. National Centre for Education Development (NCED) made some initiatives aiming at the professional development of teachers and in-service teacher training programme since its establishment in 1971. The Teacher Professional Development (TPD) envisages to provide knowledge and skills for direct implication and develop the teachers' capacity to achieve expected professional demand. Teacher training is a strong part of TPD (Pokhrel & Behera, 2016).

Pre-service and in-service teacher training programs are currently operating in Nepal. Pre-service training as teacher education is provided by universities as a part of higher education. Currently, six universities are serving pre-service teacher education programmes. Tribhuvan university (TU), Purbanchal University, Nepal Sanskrit University, Kathmandu University (KU), Mid-Western University, Far Western University and Nepal Open University have been running teacher education programmes. However, TU occupies the biggest share in terms of both student enrollment and subject areas, for example, English Education, Mathematics Education, Science Education, Economics Education, Nepali Language Education, Health Education, Population Education, Economic Education, Geography Education, Physical Education, History Education, Political Science in Education and Social Studies in Education. Introducing teacher education programme in all these sub-fields of teacher education is to produce qualified teachers required for the school education in the country. Besides, in order to fulfill the number of teachers, TU including some other universities have introduced one year Bachelor Degree programme in teacher education specializing the above-mentioned subjects. One more programme that TU has introduced is teacher education in digital pedagogy which Open and Distance Education Centre (ODEC) has been running to produce the teachers having the rich knowledge and skills in digital pedagogy/ICT use in schools and universities. Finally, Faculty of Education, TU has more recently implemented Post Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) for strengthening the professional development of the prospective teachers.

For more than a six decades, Tribhuvan University is producing a large number of teacher educators with specialization in different subjects in teacher education. However, due to the lack of proper implementation of the teacher education courses from the side of the university officials and concerned, teachers having less efficiency in professionalism have been produced and are involved in academic institutions (Dhakal, 2008). Yet, FoE, TU has implemented teacher education courses and produced teachers required for the schools and colleges in the country. Besides, Kathmandu University has also implemented several courses in teacher education targeting to fulfil the national needs in education. Since 2005, Purbanchal University also provides pre-service secondary level teacher education through distance mode. More recently, Far Western University (FWU) and Mid-Western University (MWU) have implemented a number of teacher education courses targeting the national and regional needs of teachers and teacher educators. However, despite all these attempts of different universities, FoE, TU is the one serving in pre-service teacher education for decades engaging its large number of constituent, community and private campuses (Dhakal, 2018). Since it occupies a large number of students pursuing pre-service teacher education, it is often blamed not to have been able to produce the pre-service teachers with the expected quality.

In this context, this paper unpacks how teacher professional development practices are undertaking in Nepal. It also unfolds the challenges that higher education institutions and the faculty members are experiencing while engaging in teacher development practices. Finally, it brings some policy-practice inputs regarding the continuous professional practices in Nepalese higher education.

Methodology

Guided with the cross-sectional research design, this study covered the higher education institutes across all seven provinces in Nepal. While sampling the institutes, the ecological regions were considered well to unearth the experience and professional development trajectories of the teacher educators working in the different regions especially rural settings in Nepal. Campus types such as constituent, private and community-based in terms of ownership and QAA-certified and non-certified in terms of quality accreditation were also considered to unpack how the certification matters in the professional development of the faculty members.

Based on the above-mentioned indicators, the sample included 23 campuses across the 3 ecological regions: 8 from the Tarai [Southern plain], 6 from the Mountain, 2 from valley, and 7 from the Hill region. All seven provinces were covered through representative sampling in which 4 campuses Koshi, 3 from Madhesh, 3 from Bagmati, 4 from Gandaki, 3 from Lumbini, 3 from Karnali and 3 from Sudurpaschim. The sample included all types of campuses selecting 12 constituent, 8 community and 3 private campuses. Out of 23 campuses, 15 campuses are affiliated to TU, 3 to Mid-West University, 2 to Far-west University, and one to each of Pokhara, Kathmandu, Purbanchal universities. Altogether, 676 teachers from the 23 campuses took part in the survey. Out of 676 teachers, 14.6 percent were affiliated to the campuses in the mountain region, 33.3 percent to the hilly region, 32.1 percent to the Tarai region, and finally, 20 percent teachers to the valley as shown in the table below.

Table 1: Distribution of Teachers by Geographical Location

Location	N	Percent
Mountain	99	14.6
Hill	225	33.3
Tarai	217	32.1
Valley	135	20.0
Total	676	100.0

In Table 2, there is the account of the distribution of teacher samples (total size = 676) in the seven provinces of the country. Out of the total sample size of teachers, 13.2% were from Koshi. Similarly, Madhesh, Bagmati, Gandaki, Lumbini, Karnali and Sudurpaschim provinces had 14.9%, 21.3%, 13.0%, 7.1%, 21.2% and 9.36% sample teachers respectively.

Table 2: Distribution of Teachers Samples across Provinces

Province	N	Percent
Koshi	89	13.2
Madhesh	101	14.9
Bagmati	144	21.3
Gandaki	88	13.0
Lumbini	48	7.1
Karnali	143	21.2
Sudurpaschim	63	9.3
Total	676	100.0

The information was collected from both primary and secondary data. The primary data were collected self-administered questionnaire from the survey among 676 sample teachers across different campuses. In this survey, quantitative data were collected by administering campus survey questionnaire among the teachers for the preliminary data related to socio-demographic and qualification, professional experiences of the teachers who were engaged in teaching. Other qualitative methods including focus group discussion were also used along with the teacher survey. The secondary data were collected from journals and research papers and reports concerning Higher Education Project (1989-2002), Second Higher Education Project (2007-2014), Higher Education Reform Project (2014-2020) and Education Management Information System (EMIS). Research team also consulted necessary documents from the National Planning Commission (NPC) and some documents of higher educational institutions. The research team designed the survey based on these documents.

A structured questionnaire was developed and implemented to for the large-scale survey with the teachers. The teachers were selected. The second phase of study was conducted to analyze issues and challenges related to professional development of teachers via case study and teachers FGD. Twenty-three FGDs were conducted to further ensure the trustworthiness of the data obtained from the campus survey forms and interview of campus chief interviews in the first phase of data collection. Six to eight participants from each campus were involved in the FGD and they were requested to share their ideas and experiences in the same question. In some cases, it was hard to limit them and to ask question to another participant because they all had endless ideas, bitter feelings and suggestions to share. Eight core areas of professional development in higher education related questions were included in the first round of the discussion session which was followed by brief guidelines for a short discussion session. The discussion sessions were audio-recorded to maintain scientific rigor and to ensure that the data were trustworthy. Another research tool was the case analysis. For the case study, a semi-structured interview guide was used to collect data from the study participants and in-depth group interviews were conducted. The purpose of using open-ended interviews was to, as explained by Patton (2015), capture the essence of participants' experiences and enlighten the researcher about the points of view of the participants without the assumptions of the researchers' thoughts contaminating the research itself.

The interviews and group discussions were recorded. As reminders of the events and significant things that occurred there, the researchers wrote field notes in the form of points when we went to the field. After returning from the field at the end of each day, the detail notes were prepared. The field notes also contained descriptions of professional development perspectives, dimensions, various types of professional activities, significant components and currents

issues related to professional development, factors available in the field and other important preliminary information useful for the study.

A number of case reports were developed in detail on various aspects of the teachers’ aspirations, needs, issues and problems of professional development of faculties in higher education. These works have considered as case study, which has been used to establish more profound understanding of the qualitative data collected from different key respondents and voluntary participants’ faculty members. Education and Humanities and Social Sciences streams were the main focus of the study. Therefore, purposive sampling method was applied while selecting 23 districts for 23 campuses of six universities.

In the initial phase, the relevant documents published by UGC, SHEP, HERP, NPC and so forth were reviewed by the study team to develop the research strategies. The study adopted various tools and instruments to collect the qualitative as well as quantitative data. In this regard tools such as –campus survey form for teachers, case study and FGD guidelines were developed, pre-tested and administered. The core researchers of CERID were mobilized as field researchers, taking into consideration of the gravity of the study. The faculties from the FoE were also deployed as field researchers under the supervision of the core researchers. The gender balance and previous experience in the similar task were given priority while outsourcing the field researchers. A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect the data for the preliminary information of teachers from survey. The teacher survey was carried out in the face-to-face mode in all of the campuses and the FGDs were also conducted there at that time.

Different quality check mechanisms were applied at the central and campus levels while collecting and managing data. The team leader and the study team members took overall responsibility of the survey and supervising the works of data collection in the field. The accuracy and quality of the data was ensured throughout the data collection, cleaning, coding, and entry process. The collected data were managed separately for qualitative and quantitative study. The qualitative data were transcribed and translated in English for further analysis. Similarly, Excel and SPSS software were used for the further analysis of the quantitative data.

Results and Discussion

Socio-demographic Status of Faculty Members in Different Types Campuses

The table below presents the socio-demographic status of the sample along with gender, professional experience and stream of education that they work in higher education.

Table 5: Socio-demographic Status of Faculty Members

Social demographic Variable		Numbers	Percent
Sex	Female	85	12.6
	Male	591	87.4
Caste	Brahmin/ Chhetri	576	85.2
	Janjati	94	13.9
	Dalit	4	0.6
	Muslim	2	0.3
Educational Status	Masters	567	83.9
	M.Phil	14	2.1
	Ph. D	95	14.1
Type of Campuses	Constituent	473	70.0
	Community	143	21.2
	Private	60	8.9
Disciplines	Humanities and social sciences	259	38.3
	Education Stream	417	61.7
	Up to 5 years	148	21.9
	6 -10 years	157	23.2
	11 - 15 years	213	31.5
Work Experiences	16 - 20 years	63	9.3
	21 - 25 years	52	7.5
	26 - 30 years	25	3.7
	More than 30 years	18	2.7
	Total	676	100.0

The table shows that the sample comprises 87.4 percent male and 12.6 percent female participants. In terms of caste/ethnicity, there was an overwhelming percentage of the faculty members (85.2%) belonged to Brahmin/Chhetri which is followed by Janajati (13.9 %) and there were only four faculty members from the Dalit community and two from the Muslim. Likewise, the table also shows that 66.1 percent faculty members of the sample worked at the constituent campuses, 25 percent in the community campuses, and 8.9 percent work at private campuses. Similarly, 38.3 percent faculty members were from Humanities and social sciences and 61.7 percent were from faculty of education.

The table also shows that the number of male faculty members is higher than that of female ones. It implies that there is still a valid question of gender equity in terms of teacher recruitment in higher education in Nepal. Equally, teaching faculties of constituent campuses were found to be more experienced and had a greater number of teaching years compared to those of the community and private campuses. This indicates that the teachers initially teach in the private campuses, then select public campuses and finally try to settle into the constituent campuses where there are many facilities for them in comparison to other types of campuses. The teaching faculties of constituent campuses have more qualifications compared to those of other types of campuses as the teachers do not have to think about any other issues apart from their professional development. It also shows that the duration of the job experiences of the participant faculty members was up to five years (21.9 percent), between 6 to 10 years (23.2 percent) and the majority of participants were with 11 to 15 years of experience (31.5 percent). Only 9.3 percent participants were having 16 to 20 years of job experience and only 2.7 percent of participant teachers had more than thirty years of work experiences.

The table no. 6 shows the educational qualifications of the participant teachers in different types of campuses. Most of the participants were having the basic Master’s Degree (83.9 percent). Only 14.1 percent of the participant teachers reported to have completed Ph.D. and only 2.1 percent of the participant teachers said to have completed M. Phil. degree from different universities. It means the majority of campus level teachers have Master’s degree which is the basic qualification for getting the job of University Faculty.

Table 6: Educational Qualification of Teachers by Campuses Type

Work experience	Constituent		Community		Private		Total	
	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent	N	Percent
Masters	372	78.6	140	97.9	55	91.7	567	83.9
M.Phil.	11	2.3	2	1.4	1	1.7	14	2.1
Ph.D.	90	19.0	1	0.7	4	6.7	95	14.1
Total	473	100.0	143	100.0	60	100.0	676	100.0

The analysis of the FGDs and interviews with the faculty members and campus administrative personnels showed that teaching faculties of private and community campuses felt less secured in comparison to the teachers of constituent campuses. One more critical point raised during FGDs was that the teaching faculties of community and private campuses were engaged in other jobs in government or non-government sectors. Therefore, as the campus administrators have frequently pointed out in the interview, the younger faculties of the community and private campuses were always looking for other opportunities and took their campus teaching job as a temporary or part-time engagement. They also pointed out that more capable human resources pay less interest to engage in teaching careers at community and private campuses for a long time. Not only this, the teachers in the private and community campuses normally aim at getting the job in the constituent campuses anywhere as they have more professional development opportunities and job security once they enroll in the constituent campus.

Institutional Support and Encouragement for Professional Development

When the faculty members are professional, they can support to promote development of the overall system of quality education in higher education. Regarding the professional development of faculty members in higher education and support from higher educational institutions, these play key role for improvement in teaching-learning process in classroom situation and enhance the quality of learning. Different supports from higher educational institutions was expressed during FGDs by the participant faculties and these were the rewards and appreciations from the campus chiefs or head of departments, increase in pay and other incentives, campus investments for further study, research activities, trainings, curriculum orientation programs, dissemination, research publications as well as the physical infrastructure like good staffroom, computer, internet and printer as well as rich library.

Perceptions and Experiences of Teachers about Rewards and Appreciation

Majority of the participants noted that higher education as a whole should provide incentives and rewards for professional development that can result in improvements in teaching-learning process in the classroom contexts. The participant faculty members during discussions stated ‘teaching needs to be rewarded but nothing [about teaching] is rewarded here.’ Support system for the faculty members was not established; but they just got regular salary only without any reward and incentives in the constituent campuses only which is not guaranteed in many of the private and public campuses. Some of the teachers of community campus mentioned that very few token of support for fieldtrip and educational tour from the campuses was provided. There is no any provision of punishment and reward in the higher education in Nepal in constituent campuses; but the major private campuses have regular reward and punishment systems up to termination from the job and some public campuses also have the system of reward and punishment on the basis of the result analysis.

Training Opportunities for Faculty Members

The participant faculties from central department, during FGD mentioned their perceptions and experiences about the training program and a participant faculty (T6) mentioned that there was no provision of training for newly appointed teachers as well as experienced teachers in TU and there is no any new course orientation programs as well when the courses are changed or modified. After recruitment in army or police force as well as civil servant sectors the government spends a considerable amount to increase their working efficiency and prepares qualified human capital but in education field there is not even a single penny spent on newly appointed teachers /pre-service training of new teachers. Likewise, another participant faculty (T7) pointed out that some of the central department teachers were involved in short term training programs which focused on ICT and technical part of the professional development and they ignored the academic and pedagogical expertise.

Similarly, another participant faculty member (T6) clarified that the faculty members were provided with the opportunities for visiting and participating in seminars or workshop session in other universities by the campus/university for professional development. The Dean’s office is directly concerned with the professional development of faculties and it provides foreign visiting opportunities only to very limited faculty members. Even short/long term seminars/symposiums are limited to central level; but unfortunately, the selection of the faculties is highly biased in many ways mainly political bias is common in TU.

Curriculum Design and Curriculum Dissemination Program Orientation

The FGD information from perceptions and their experiences of the central department’s participant faculties showed that central departments revised the syllabus from time to time; but they did not care about the problems faced by the teachers while updating the syllabus. In most situations, the authorities are not interested in curriculum dissemination or orientation programs and if sometimes there is dissemination of curriculum, it is just a ritual and to show other authorities that there were such programs organized. It was said by the participant faculties that due to short period of time; it was difficult to get proper information about the courses changed and their best delivery process. Likewise, during the FDGs outside the valley one participant faculty (T5) mentioned that the curriculum dissemination program is not available to all the teachers and the teachers, lucky enough to participate in the programs, do not have the tendency to share what they have learnt to the remaining faculty members or their friends in their home campuses. Therefore, to prepare an efficient teacher, a good system of professional development should be mandatory.

Similarly, contract teachers are tagged with the name of “*Karar-Farar*” part-time teachers have also been excluded from the facility of training or curriculum dissemination programs as they are not supposed to be permanent there. In the same way, a participant faculty from the central department (T3) mentioned “in curriculum orientation trainings, the head of department gets an opportunity for curriculum dissemination. Only those who are involved in the course design in the Dean’s Office get the opportunity to participate in the dissemination programs. But for the teachers in or out of the valley, participating in the curriculum orientation program has become “*Akash ko phal ankha tari mar*” (something that can’t be achieved or tested, but just heard or read about). Similarly, the opportunities for curriculum design are also limited within the circle of some limited faculty members inside the valley. There is a lack of widespread debate about the format of curriculum and course structure due to the financial benefit and hidden interest of book writing as well as so-called book writers. In TU as well, the curriculum design and course development process are not systematic; very few power holders get the contract to revise the curriculum and develop the courses and the courses are

not distributed until they prepare the so-called textbooks.

ICT and Physical Facilities

During the FGD in central department a participant faculty (T5) mentioned that there are no sitting rooms and chairs for all the faculty members even in some central departments. There are not enough chairs, benches, computers, internet, printers and even sitting chambers for all the faculty members. Depending on the projects, some departments such as English, Mathematics and ICT department etc. have availability of rooms, chairs, computers and internet facilities to some limited faculty members. Similarly, another participant faculty (T1) mentioned about the facilities provided to the senior teachers and faculty members of most of the central departments do not have facility of sitting rooms for academic discussion, water leaks from the roof during rain, no internet, no printer, no maintenance of existing resources and tools. Internet is available in some project-based departments but internet capacity is fragile.

Faculty Members' Personal Efforts for Professional Development

There are different components included within personal effort such as participation on seminars and workshops, participation in national and international conferences and workshops, participation in academic work and research activities organized by local campus Research Management Cells (RMC), research report and article publication, participation in curriculum construction and dissemination programs and so on for professional development of faculty members. Some of the core components included in professional development of faculties are presented here based on information from FGDs for the present study.

Participation in Seminars and Workshops

Quality of HEIs is strengthened when there take place workshops and seminars on a regular basis. They are more interactive and participatory forms of learning compared to traditional lectures. During the FDGs with the community campus faculty members, the importance of workshops and seminars was highlighted in their professional development. The interviews and FGDs indicate that everyone got some opportunities to participate in the workshop and seminar activities in the campus level but very few members got opportunities to participate in broader/national and international level seminars and workshops. From province one community campuses of Himayan area the teachers expressed their experiences of participation in workshops; they participated in four workshops and training program (NELTA-2; virtual-2) during two years period by their own efforts. The community campuses having QAA certificate provided opportunities to their teachers to participate in both national and international conferences of NELTA and workshops. But very few teachers outside valleys got opportunities to participate in the international conferences. However, the teachers' team from mountain region of province six Jumla Campus mentioned that they did not get opportunities due to lack of information, geographical difficulty and lack of initiative process of the national level agency conducting seminar and workshop for professional development in Nepal. Private campus teachers also mentioned that they participated in national level seminars and workshops which helped to increase their professionalism and teaching skills through e-learning, co-sharing of learned knowledge. From Mid-Western University Campus, Surkhet some teachers reported to have participated in international level seminars and frequent participation in trainings conducted at local level. Thus, the higher education faculty members in different types of campuses have some opportunities for professional development through seminar and conference participation at local, national and international levels.

Curriculum

Curricular engagement is the core component of teaching and learning process in higher education. It covers the pedagogical content structure, teaching materials and technology, teaching, learning and evaluation components which are essential for the professional development of the faculty members. During FGDs, we got information about curriculum development and the perceptions of the faculty members. The FGDs from constituent campuses, the participant faculties mentioned that they rarely had the opportunity to participate in curriculum design and curriculum related trainings, orientation and dissemination programs. The trainings regarding curriculum can be conducted only when new curriculum comes into existence. The QAA certified community campus teachers reported of not having opportunities to participate in the trainings regarding curriculum designing and minimal faculty numbers, who are familiar with TU authority persons got opportunities in curriculum orientation and dissemination program. Similar voices also expressed by PokU, and FWU faculty members that very few limited faculties participated in curriculum designing and dissemination programs. The faculty members of TU constituent campuses outside the valley clearly mentioned that the curriculum designing and dissemination program were very rare to them as a participant faculty (T7)

told that they had heard that some teachers participated in the curriculum training conducted by dean's office, TU; but most of them did not have any solid information. As the participant teachers promised to train the remaining teachers, there is no chance for that. They do not even discuss in the campus level among other faculty members. The faculty members of Mid-Western University Campus, Surkhet expressed their experiences that the subject committee provides opportunities to participate in trainings related to curriculum. Private campuses faculty members said that they discuss among them about their subject curriculum in the beginning and end of the sessions.

Research Activities for Academic Degrees

Engaging in research activities at campus level is very important ways of professional development. In case of community campuses, the research programs are being conducted with opportunities; but very few activities were mobilized at the campus level and master degree level orientation program for students at end of semester and faculty members got opportunities for participating in that program at the campus setting. Some of the neighborhood campuses are also invited for participating faculty enhanced program and research methodology training organized under the support of UGC Nepal and in that program some of the faculty members got opportunities for just participating in that program through their individual interest and effort. The faculty members of QAA certified community campus also expressed their views that there were many research related activities conducted by campus and they participate; but they did not do personal efforts for research activities and very few members had done research degree in their personal effort with minor support from the campus. Community colleges from province five reported that they published journals and they are trying to publish the peer reviewed journal. Constituent campus participant faculties also mentioned about their publication as those who have ways to publish their articles in the journals are publishing them but not from the publication of campus. Similarly, Constituent campus participant faculties expressed their views that there were very few research related programs in their campuses. Similarly, Pokhara University participant faculties also told that the college and faculties encourage them to participate in research programs and for MPhil and PhD programs. In the same way, the teacher participant faculties of private campuses said that there were opportunities available to carry out research with additional materials provided to them by the college administration. But unfortunately, there were no programs conducted by college related to research, journal and article publication.

Existing Challenges and Problems in Higher Education

The participant faculties have the main role in teaching-learning (T-L) process which is the heart of quality education of any country, which is directly linked with professional development of faculty members. Thus, during FGDs the core issues were extracted from participant faculties' experiences and have been categorized into the following dimensions: family level, campus and community level/political level. The challenges and problems encountered during the T-L process were asked with the teachers at three levels.

Family and Home Environment Issues in T-L process

The family and the home environment are crucial factors of professional development of the teaching faculties. A participant faculty (T3) of the Central Department said that most of the teachers don't have ICT friendly environment at their homes. Only a few teachers are qualified for T-L process by combining technology and assessment system. Due to teachers' mindset, they are lacking the latest knowledge of ICT. The students are very smart in using ICT whereas teachers have difficulty in adjustment. Likewise, another participant faculty (T4) pointed out that it is difficult to purchase new devices such as computer, high speed internet facilities for T-L process because of the weak household financial condition of the teachers and their salary is also not sufficient to afford to all necessary ICT facilities. According to the teachers of the QAA certified campuses, they have conflict in their families and are suffering from psychological stress due to their involvement in all the three shifts (morning, day and evening) in the campus. Therefore, the T-L process has been disrupted in their campuses. The FGD information of the teachers from Central Department of Education was that there is minimal facility of ICT room/conference hall/discussion room that contributes to ICT skills development for T-L process in the campus. Even if there are those facilities, there is no regular repairing/maintenance of ICT-Lab and the computers. The part-time teachers of constituent campuses also expressed their views during FGDs. One among the participant faculty members explained that that they received too low salary to live in a homely environment. If issues of part-time teachers are not managed institutionally, the T-L process will be hindered. They are not getting even the minimum salary on time. There is a lot of discrimination with the part-time teachers in the campuses. The participant faculties of constituent campuses mentioned that the physical facilities of the campus were old, due to which there were difficulties in the T-L process. Due to the political pressure of students in the campus, difficult situations were created in

the classroom T-L Process.

Community and Political Level Issues in Teaching-learning Process

The central level participant faculties mentioned that the community hates the teachers. The teachers of QAA Certified campuses told that sometimes due to fee issues in campus, conflict arises between community, student unions and campus and it creates difficulty in teaching-learning process. The leaders from the community give pressures in the implementation of semester system. They raise their voices to deny the condition of regular attendance.

Research and Publications for Career Path

While talking about the publications in higher education, there are three main indicators to be observed if the higher education in Nepalese context. Firstly, how have the campuses been running small-scale and/or large-scale research studies, and how have the teaching faculties and students been engaged in these studies, always matter the academic quality and academic excellence. The analysis of the FGDs with teaching faculties and interviews with campus chiefs shows that the teachers and students were less engaged in the research works. Even the course contents related practicum, project works and discovery learning have been implemented to fulfill the criteria of assessment rather than stressing on real learning. The campus chiefs, as informants, stated that they lack the budgets for initiating the research studies. Of course, the campus chiefs reported that they have formed Research Management Cells (RMC), which are said to have worked as being connected to the process of Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA). However, in reality, RMC has not been able to conduct research works at the campus because the campus does not have sufficient budget in this regard. Only a few campuses and central departments observed reported that they had some initiation of collaboration with other NGOs and INGOs for research. For example, Central Department of Education has collaboration with NORHED, and Central Department of Economics has another collaboration of Ministry of Finance, Government of Nepal. Besides this large-scale collaboration, other campuses and departments have very few opportunities of research programs.

From the publication point of view, the campuses observed were found to have published some academic journals. Yet, due to the lack of sufficient budget and skilled human resource in this area the journals have not met the quality indicators of the academic journals. As reported by the teaching faculties, research and publications are based on teachers' self-initiation rather than institutional support. During their FGDs, teachers pointed out that they feel lack of institutional support for learning academic writing and writing for the scholarly journals. Some of the teaching faculties of the central department are found to have published some scholarly articles, and are found to have some opportunities to engage in research activities. However, the teaching faculties of the campuses outside Kathmandu valley reported that they hardly have the exposure for academic writing and writing for the high ranked and indexed journals. Neither the university central system nor the campuses have been serious in this regard.

Aspirations for Professional Development

The analysis of the FGDs with the participant faculties of different types of campuses shows that there are three major categories of teacher aspirations: aspirations related to professional and capacity development, aspirations related to engaging in conducive teaching-learning environment, and finally aspirations related to incentive and job security. Regarding the first category of aspirations, the participant faculties interviewed reported that there should be the encouraging environment and logistic as well as academic support for professional development of teachers. Of course, there are certain support systems like study leave, sabbatical leave etc. Yet, university and campuses should plan and develop programs related to professional development and capacity enhancement. One among such programs could be the opportunity to engage in research and research collaboration. In this regard, the UGC, central university and the concerned campuses should allocate some budget for the research. When the teaching faculties know that they have budget for research and research collaboration, they initiate policy and policy evaluation research for school as well as tertiary education. There will also be the opportunity to have institutional and interdepartmental as well as interdisciplinary research collaboration as the QAA certified campuses are compelled to have the five percent of their total budget for research activities. The teachers of the campuses outside Kathmandu valley reported that they have very limited chances of getting engaged in research activities which should be considered well and re-planned by the central university system.

Aspirations related to engaging in favorable teaching and learning environment matter a lot in quality service of the campuses. The participant faculty members consistently reported that they have hardly an excellent and conducive

teaching and learning environment at their respective campuses. Most of the campuses do not have even the separate teacher cabin including e-library and good learning space for the teaching faculties where they could prepare the lessons, could carry out their research works and supervise research students (Devkota, 2021). The participant faculty members also pointed out that just teaching what they know and what they have written in the 'old diaries' does not work for the quality education to the 21st century students. Their expectation is to update themselves with the ICT use in the classrooms and become skillful in their subject matters. However, the university and concerned campuses should have a thoughtful plan for preparing teachers and supporting them for enhancing the quality of their service. Equally, political interventions and "*bhagvanda*" in appointing (policy makers, executives) system is pointed out as a barrier for ensuring the quality of education in the university.

Finally, aspirations related to incentive and job security were strongly raised by the participant faculties in the FGDs. Especially, the teachers who worked part-time were found to have more class responsibilities at the observed campuses. However, the part-time teachers interviewed reported that they always have a threat of job insecurity. Even more they are paid less, and not paid timely. Similarly, the teachers outside Kathmandu valley often reported that they hardly get selected when they have had competitions for the research funds from research division and UGC. The teachers outside Kathmandu Valley hardly got chance to work in the subject committees and subject experts no matter they are professionally sound and have good expertise. However, the teachers of Kathmandu valley are often engaged in curriculum designing, course development and course dissemination programs.

Conclusion

Regarding the academic human resource in higher education institutions, teachers of all positions (i.e. Professor, Associate Professor, Lecturer and Teaching Assistant) were recruited and promoted in the constituent campuses. However, private and community-based campuses hardly have the teachers assigned to the positions of Professors. The number of Associate Professors working in the Community and Private campuses is also smaller in comparison to the constituent campuses. Thus, compared to constituent campuses, the remaining two types of campuses are running with lower-level teaching cadres. Most of the teaching staff were found having the basic qualification of Master's degree (83.9%), M Phil (2.1%) and PhD (14.1%). The presence of PhD holders in the teaching cadres is dominantly higher in constituent campuses, while their presence is rare in community and private campuses. This is the evidence that the teaching learning activities in the constituent campuses is far better and the qualified workforce. There can be of greater value for the proper development of the students and the society through teaching and research by them.

Qualitative data (FGDs and informal discussions) indicate that teaching faculties in the private and community campuses have a feeling of insecurity in jobs compared to the teachers in constituent campuses. As there is government assurance in the constituent campuses, they feel more secured and have more opportunities of professional development. In the case of private and community campuses, teachers were even found engaged in other full-time jobs and working in the campus on part time basis – the young generation teachers trying to seek other government jobs if possible. This situation has created de-stability in the presence of teachers in these institutions to some extent. In the academic aspect, the faculty members were found to be maintaining the regular teaching-learning business. Since many teachers are engaged in other than the teaching and learning activities, they may not profess the expected content, pedagogical and research competencies (Khanal, et al, 2024). The faculty members need to be provided with ample opportunities to engage in workshops, forums and research programmes for their professional development (Holdsworth et al., 2008).

Teachers were found having three sorts of aspirations: (i) willingness to have logistic and academic support for developing themselves professionally, (ii) willingness to acquire favorable teaching-learning environment, and (iii) willingness for incentive and job security to fulfill the required needs. Regarding the first aspiration, though support systems are found including the provisions for study leave, these supports are limited in the case of community campuses and almost absent in the case of private campuses. Opportunity for engagement in research has been provided through UGC on competition basis; but there are problems related to research budget in campuses. Regarding the aspiration to get engaged in favorable teaching-learning environment, teachers reported the absence of such environment as that they do not get a separate cabin for study in the campus. Sometimes political interventions on academic matters also have disturbed their business. Aspirations related to incentive and job security are genuinely raised by the part-time and temporary/contract teachers in particular – who are working with less amount of payment. As Nicholls (2014) argues professionalism should not be tested, rather it should be reformulated. The part-time and early career teachers should be given ample opportunities to reformulate their professional life, identity and professionalism.

Regarding the publication of scholarly journals and research articles, some of the campuses were found to have published academic journals. However, these journals had not maintained 'scholarly' quality due to the lack of sufficient budget and skilled human resources. Rather than being the institutional initiative, research and publications are based on teachers' self-initiation. However, some of the teaching faculties in the central department and other campuses were found to have published some scholarly articles. In the case of teaching faculties in campuses outside Kathmandu valley, exposure for academic writing activities is almost nothing. Neither the university system nor the campuses they work in, have been so more serious on the continuous professional development of the teaching faculty members. Therefore, the policies and programmes of the universities and their affiliated campuses need to integrate the continuous professional development of the teaching faculty as one of the key indicators of the quality higher education in Nepal.

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