

# **Special Education Teachers' Knowledge on Inclusive Education Provision in Nepal**

**Nam Raj Neupane (PhD)**

Assistant Prof.: Central Department of Education, TU

E-mail: neupane.navaraj2034@gmail.com

**Dhruba Prasad Niure (PhD)**

Associate Prof. Central Department of Education, TU

E-mail: dhrubapn@gmail.com

## **Abstract**

*The study aimed to explore the knowledge and awareness of the teachers of special schools regarding the inclusive education policy of Nepal. The study was guided by a qualitative paradigm followed by a descriptive design. Five special schools from Kathmandu Valley were taken as sample schools, of which two were chosen from Kathmandu, two from Bhaktapur and one from Lalitpur districts by the convenience sampling method. Similarly, 15 teachers (three teachers from each school) were selected purposefully. The semi-structured interview protocol was administered to the teachers for collating in-depth information. Teachers were found to lack knowledge of inclusive education policy. Their acquaintance and familiarity with components of the inclusive education policy, such as limited knowledge of disability and structural provision, was found lacking, whereas they were quite familiar with the disabled-friendly environment and the educational rights of students with disabilities. Their knowledge of functional assessment was very poor compared to other components of the policy. Similarly, teachers lack knowledge and understanding of inclusive school culture, as mentioned in the inclusive education policy of Nepal.*

**Keywords:** *Special Teachers, Inclusive Education, Policy, Knowledge.*

## **Introduction**

Laws, acts, policies, and rules are the broad guidelines for designing instructional programmes. This is one of the most common phenomena across countries in the world. Harman (1984) views policy as a purposeful action directed towards the accomplishment of some intended or desired set of goals. Similarly, Dye (1992) defines public policy as the choice of the government about doing or not doing something of public interest (as cited in Cooper, Fuserrali, & Randall, 2004). In a real sense, the policy is a political process where needs, goals and intentions are translated into a set of objectives, laws, educational policies, and programmes that

in turn affect resource allocations, actions, and outputs that are the basis for evaluation, reforms, and the generation of new policies (OECD, 2017; Cooper et al., 2004).

Therefore, a policy is a tentative guideline for the whole education system, including special education, providing goals to be achieved, curriculum to be developed, students' enrollment criteria to be employed, teachers to be recruited, training packages to be developed, facilities to be managed, time schedules to be planned, instructional processes to be implemented, evaluation techniques to be employed, and the like. School teachers have a central role in formulating education policies and implementing them effectively in school classrooms. (O'Connor, Yasik, & Horner, 2016). Therefore, it is a matter of concern what the teachers know about education policies and how their knowledge of policy contributes to the teaching and learning process and the overall efficiency of the education system.

Policies are formulated to translate them into actions to find desired outcomes, especially in the education field; policies are the roadways to lead efforts to approach the destination (Cooper et al., 2004). Education policies consist of the practices of educational activities such as teaching methods, student counselling, and assessment of students' learning outcomes (Jongmans et al., 2007). Furthermore, teachers have a central role in formulating educational policies; however, many schools have limited policy-making capacities because teachers lack policy knowledge and opportunities to be involved in the policy-making process.

Everything that happens inside the classroom is the result of the implementation of educational policies through instructional processes by the teachers (Kerr, 1976), and they should do classroom activities for the best possible benefit of the students. Because what happens in educational institutions affects an individual's life chances (Cooper et al., 2004), once enacted, laws do not go into effect by themselves. Implementation of the policy should be targeted to achieve the intended effects in the educational system (Peters, 1986, as cited in Cooper et al., 2004). In this regard, teachers play a crucial role in translating educational policies into envisaged educational outcomes. That is why teachers must be familiar with these policies related to their profession and professional activities. O'Connor et al. (2016) posited that teachers need to know essential information regarding policies related to their professional work to effectively instruct diverse learners. In other words, the knowledge and awareness level of teachers in relation to special as well as inclusive education policies should be high to make the programme more productive and valid.

It is generally assumed that the goals and objectives of a policy are known to

everyone who is directly concerned with those policies. Therefore, special education teachers are also expected to have knowledge of special education policies. Policy implementation is simply a matter of carrying out administrative mandates (UNESCO, 2009), where the school as an implementing agency should make the teachers efficient and responsible to carry out the policy into action. Since the National Education System Plan (NESP) of 1971 was initiated, the government of Nepal has also been introducing special as well as inclusive education policies, intending that policy implementers can understand concerned policies and bear responsibilities for the consequences of their implementation. Similarly, Rix, Nind, & Sheehy (2005) stated that policy implementers do not always do as told, nor do they always act to maximise policy objectives. Teachers, for example, can refuse to undertake certain necessary activities or implement or substantially modify policies that are not well known to them, such as curriculum reforms. There has been very little research on pre-service teachers' knowledge of related education policies since special education teachers have a crucial role in the identification, instruction, counselling, decision-making evaluation, etc. of students with special needs (O'Connor et al., 2016). In this regard, it is imperative to have the knowledge of special education policy by the special education teachers.

Teachers have legal obligations and rights; therefore, they must be well equipped with the knowledge of related policies for the best interests of their students (National Centre for Educational Development, 2015). When the school teachers do not understand policy or do not want to conduct the instructional activities as per policy guidelines, then the educational programme cannot be implemented effectively (Leschied et al., 2000). This study is therefore essential to assess the knowledge of special education teachers who have been working with students with special educational needs in special schools.

Different tiers of interventions and levels of support are needed for students with different degrees of disabilities. Those children who have a profound level of disability require individualised instruction and intensive care by special education teachers, along with a well-designed special education curriculum (Heward, 2013). But most students with special needs can get enough benefits from a general educational programme as their normal peers (Kirk et al, 2015). However, they need additional support as per the intensity of their disability. Considering the realities, the government has formulated special/inclusive educational policies to address the needs and problems of children with disabilities (Ministry of Education Policy, 2017). And it is intended teachers who work with such children need to know special education policies to adjust their school environment and conduct their instructional activities as per policy guidelines for a successful educational programme (O'Connor et al., 2016; Brauner & Bartlett, 2008). Therefore, teachers must be aware of special/inclusive

educational policies to direct their efforts and instructional activities towards the better learning of the students, ultimately making the education system more responsive, disability-friendly, cost-effective, and hence, successful.

### **Problem Statement**

Many students with special educational needs in Nepal are studying in mainstream general schools with non-disabled peers. Their needs and expectations are different from other normal groups of students which needs to be assessed and addressed (Heward, 2013; Friend, 2011). Such students need individualized instruction and additional support from their teachers to get benefitted from educational programmes. Therefore, teachers should be capable to implement educational policies effectively to enhance both the internal and external efficiency of the education system. Policy implementer needs to be aware and knowledgeable about the relevant policies before undertaking any efforts to put them into action. In this regard, special education teachers' knowledge of related policies is an essential condition for the effective implementation of special education policy.

In Nepal, eight areas of teacher competencies (awareness of content, knowledge of pedagogy, awareness of children, awareness of learning environment, communication and collaboration skills, continuous learning and professional development, legal bases of professional development and information, and communication technology) has been declared; on which the teachers are expected to be acquainted with (NCED, 2015). Among those expected skills, one of the skills is that teachers shall be aware of human rights, child rights, the concept of education for all, and education as a fundamental right. Furthermore, they are also expected to illustrate their behavior in accordance with existing laws, values, and norms. Therefore, knowing relevant policies by the teacher is to be aware of their responsibilities, professional duties they have to render and values inherent in the national education system. In this context, the need for their knowledge of inclusive education policy is considered to be important.

The literal meaning of knowledge and awareness in education is receiving of information from milieu without direct and formal teaching or instructional process. It is also described as the result of self-perception, self-determination and self-reflection. Teachers are usually the first to identify children who may be in need of special services. Thus, it is imperative for teachers to be aware of all aspects of special education laws (O' Connor, 2016). In the case of Nepal, there are not such studies held so far on knowledge and awareness of teachers on inclusive education policies. Teachers are considered as the prominent factor for quality education; but their reluctant behavior in continuous renewable in their

**ILAM Vol. 19, Issue 1, August 2023**

professional development and teaching learning activities results into heavy educational loss. At the same time teachers are also charged for not properly using their knowledge and skills inside the classroom they learnt during the training. Rather they are blamed to have engaged more in non-academic activities like doing politics and business (Loo Niva Child Concern Group, 2013). One major reason for this is perceived as having a lack of a sense of responsibility, and their critical role in educating students with special needs.

There is a handful number of literature found on teachers' knowledge and awareness of concerned policy provisions which indicates that very low attention has been paid to highlighting the importance of knowing special/inclusive education policies by the special education teachers. Regarding the holistic scenario of teacher education, their training curriculum, self-learning behavior, and emphasis on the importance of their policy knowledge, this research study is considered quite relevant to carry out.

**Objective and Research Question**

The main objective of the study was to find out the knowledge of special education teachers regarding the inclusive education policy of Nepal. Hence, the study is an endeavor to explore the answers to the questions such as; do the special education teachers possess adequate knowledge of the Inclusive Education Policy for People with Disabilities? Are they capable to incorporate the intents of the policy in classroom instructional practices?

**Methodology**

The study is primarily a qualitative study followed by an interpretive paradigm (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) with a descriptive design. Out of all 32 special schools in Nepal, all the special education teachers were taken as the population of the study. Five special schools (2 schools from Kathmandu district, 2 from Bhaktapur, and 1 school from Lalitpur district) of Kathmandu Valley were selected by purposive sampling method (Kaul, 2009; Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007). Three teachers from each school were selected on the basis of their seniority of teaching experiences by purposive sampling method. This was done according to the suggestions provided by head teachers of the corresponding special schools. Therefore, altogether 15 teachers were selected as participants in the study. The demographic information of the participants is presented in Table.

**Table 1:** *Demography of the participants*

Gender		Qualification		Teaching Experiences		Training	
Male	Female	Basic	Higher	5 yrs <	5 yrs >	1 month<	1 month>
6	9	8	7	10	5	6	9
15		15		15		15	

*Source: Field Study (2023)*

Semi-structured interview schedule (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Bogdam & Biklien, 2009) consisted of the questions on major components of Inclusive Education Policy 2017 was prepared and administered to the participants of the study. The interview questions were prepared by taking the reference of the Inclusive Education Policy for People with Disabilities 2017 of Nepal. The interview schedule was validated (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007; Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) by getting reviewed by a professor of special education. The interview schedule was administered 25-30 minutes for each individual participant in their leisure time during school hours. The total time spent on the interview was 395 minutes (6hrs 58 minutes). The researcher spent ample time engaging (Merriam & Tisdell, 216) in the research area apart from the interview process thus collecting every single fact regarding the subject of the study for ensuring the reliability of the collected data. The member check (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) method was also used to ensure the reliability of the data. The data thus collated were categorized into similar codes (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The codes were further grouped to form the themes. Thus, generated themes formed the basis for the analysis and interpretation of data.

## Results

The new Inclusive Education Policy has been effective since 2017 replacing Special Education Policy 1996 of Nepal. The Inclusive Education Policy 2017 has been replaced by a new National Education Policy 2019; however, this policy is still considered the most comprehensive inclusive education policy in the history of the Nepalese education system. The inclusive education policy is taken as a milestone for developing inclusive education in the country. The policy is expected to solve cross-cutting issues that prevailed in the field of special/inclusive education in Nepal. Since teachers are at the center of any education system, they have a vital role to translate the intents of policy into practice through the instructional process. Therefore, special education teachers' knowledge of existing educational policies adds value to their professional work. The following major themes are generated as the result of the research questions mentioned in the study:

### Knowledge about Disabilities

Knowledge of disabilities is a critical issue for teachers teaching in classrooms with diversity. The perception of teachers of students' disability determines how they are going to treat their students during the instructional process (Heward, 2013) because a positive attitude of teachers toward their students' abilities can enhance their confidence in doing better in their academic performance. In this study, the knowledge of teachers on perceiving disabilities is guided by the traditional notion that students with disabilities were considered weak, and unable to learn. In this regard, one of the teachers said: *I don't know how many types of disabilities are there in Nepal but teaching the students with disabilities in a regular classroom is a difficult task because their learning abilities are weaker and slower due to their medical condition [Teacher 2 from school A].*

From the above statement, it is clear that the teachers are adequately aware and knowledgeable about the type of disabilities. Eight out of ten teachers even could not tell the exact category of disabilities as mentioned in the policy. Teachers are also found to perceive the disabilities from medical instead of social models. Also, they are not keeping positive attitudes toward the abilities of students with disabilities in their studies:

### Structural Provision on Inclusive Education

There is a hierarchy of organizations to implement education policies in the education system. There are policy-formulating bodies coordinating bodies and implementing bodies in the country. In Nepal, Inclusive Education Council (IEC) is an apex body to formulate special education policies. Similarly, the Ministry of Education (MoE), Department of Education (DoE), Central Level Program Implementation Unit (CLPIU), National Examination Board, and other state and local agencies are the responsible organizations. Schools are the basic entities for implementation policies. Therefore, teachers are expected to know about the basic premises of special education policies. But nearly half the number of the participant teachers were either unknown or little known about the structural organizations which are working for developing inclusive education in the country. In the study, one of the teachers represented their views as follows: *What is the use of knowing policy by the teacher? We have responsibilities in teaching, not knowing policy anymore. What differences can we make in teaching by the knowledge of policy? Nothing..... however, I have heard only about the Inclusive Education Unit of the Department of Education [Teacher 1 from school D].*

The statement clearly stated that the teacher neither thinks about the importance of knowing structural provisions set for developing inclusive education nor is updated in previous knowledge. This is clearly seen in the fact that the "Special

Education Unit" is changed into the "Inclusive Education Division" at the very beginning of the enactment of Inclusive Education Policy 2017.

### **Disability-friendly Environment of School**

The physical environment is the most basic condition for schools to provide education for children. In addition to this, students with disabilities need a barrier-free educational environment. Inclusive Education Policy 2017 mentioned that physical facilities for all types of schools shall be maintained disabled-friendly. School buildings, libraries, playgrounds, and other learning and recreational materials need to be disabled-friendly. The participants of the study were found to have knowledge about the kind of physical facilities needed to make schools disabled-friendly as mentioned by the inclusive education policy but they were dissatisfied with the existing facilities available at the schools. Regarding this issue, most of the teachers have a common opinion: *Every school needs to have disability friendly environment because students with disabilities may come to admit to the schools at any time. You see, even our school being a 'special school' is facing a serious lack of a disabled-friendly environment. Although we are not fully aware of the contents of the policy, we know how to make a school disabled-friendly* [Teacher 2 from School B, Teacher 3 from School D & Teacher 1 from School E].

The opinions of the teachers show that they have knowledge about disabled-friendly environments but special schools of Nepal lack resources to make them disabled-friendly. However, teachers admitted their own weaknesses in knowing the provisions of inclusive education policy.

### **Students' Participation in School Activities**

The Convention on the Rights of Child (1989) ensured that every child has the right to participate in their schools and communities in various activities for their holistic development. Similarly, the learning theories also emphasized students' active participation in quality education. In the same way, students with disabilities also need to have active participation in school activities for their personal development. The inclusive education policy advocates for the active learning of all students in the classroom despite their differences and uniqueness. The teachers should know about the methods and strategies for the participation of students for effective instruction. In the study, teachers agreed that the participation of students brings better learning outcomes; but teachers lack the necessary knowledge and practices in using specific strategies for teaching specific content. In this regard, one of the teachers said: *I know very well; students need to have participated and teachers should ensure that. The policy also speaks about this issue but the problem is that teachers like me are not getting chances to*



*be trained. We need appropriate training and exposure visits to enhance our professional skills and knowledge. Making policy is not enough, teachers also should get trained [Teacher 1 from school C].*

It is a bitter reality of the education system of the country that a large number of special education teachers are either untrained or trained for a few days. In this case, the above verbatim of the teacher seems real explanation of his experience. They think that provisions of student participation mentioned in the policy must be translated into practice. Teachers can make better participation of students in the learning process only when they are equipped with skills and knowledge.

### **Educational Rights of the Students with Special Needs**

Several international conventions, declarations, and protocols have ensured the educational rights of children with disabilities. Many international provisions are ratified and adopted in national policies by the government of Nepal. As a result, of these international provisions, the present Inclusive Education Policy has come into being. The present policy is a guiding document for inclusive education in the country. Therefore, to be acquainted with the educational rights of children with disabilities, it is essential for teachers to keep knowledge about relevant policies. But this study found that a very less number (almost thirty percent) of special education teachers are knowledgeable about the educational rights of students with disabilities. In this context, one of the teachers mentioned the following verbatim: *Of course, I have heard about some provisions on the rights of children with disabilities too. I haven't read these documents thoroughly because my motivation in this job is very low. You know, who can be motivated if he/she is doing the same job for 15 years and neither any provision for permanency nor other sorts of incentives [Teacher 2 of school B].*

Motivation is something that generates enthusiasm in a person to do his/her job with loyalty. Teachers due to lack of motivation are not well motivated in studying policies for their better knowledge. They assume that students with disabilities need special care and treatment at schools as their educational rights but are reluctant to be acquainted with the existing policies and provisions regarding the rights of children with disabilities.

### **Provision of Functional Assessment**

Functional assessment is usually done for the physical, cognitive, sensory, and intellectual abilities of students with disabilities affecting their skills needed for individual functioning. Individual functioning refers to the holistic result of the capacity of an individual to perform tasks related to particular skills to increase their independence. This study result revealed that the provision of implementing

### ILAM Vol. 19, Issue 1, August 2023

objective tests of functional skills of the students during their admission based on the scientific method is not known by the teachers. Rather they use summative assessment including some items along with theoretical questions. One of the teachers stated: *I am sorry, I haven't heard the term "functional assessment" and even haven't read such a provision in inclusive education policy. However, in our practice, we generally assess students with disabilities like normal students. Only the difference in assessing is that we assure flexibility in time and evaluation system* [Teacher 3 from school E].

The policy emphasized the assessment of functional skills of students with disabilities but in practice, teachers' understanding is something different. From the above statement, it is clear that teachers have not familiar with the term "functional assessment" stated in the policy. The crux is that accessible format according to the need of a particular disability is yet to use for functional assessment.

### Development of Inclusive School Culture

An inclusive culture values and recognizes the contributions of all students, their families, and communities in school for teaching learning activities. Inclusive culture establishes a respectful climate, values what a child brings with him/her, and plans for everyone to participate and embrace a community approach in school. An inclusive environment is barrier-free and provides flexibility and autonomy for learning to the child. The Inclusive Education Policy 2017 stated to develop an inclusive culture in the school by enhancing the participation of students with disabilities in school activities and instructional processes. Regarding inclusive culture, one of the teachers said: *"You can see there are students of different religions, cultures, socio-economic status, castes, and other backgrounds. Therefore, you can say, there is inclusive culture in our school. The education policy must have the same intent"* [Teacher 3 of School B]. The opinion is clearly stating that teacher has some misconception about inclusive culture in schools. Inclusive school culture is a broad concept more than just socioeconomic, religious, caste, or gender aspects of individual differences. Teachers' knowledge of inclusive culture cannot represent the holistic idea of inclusive culture as stated in the policy. Another teacher opined: *I know that policy has clearly indicated to development of inclusive culture in schools but the development of such culture is not a joke. It needs a huge number of resources, adequate training, teacher motivation, parents' participation, good school administration, and students' roles are also crucial in maintaining the school environment. It is not easy to practice every theoretical aspect of policies in reality* [Teacher 1 of School A].

The participant seems to be aware of inclusive education policy and

theoretically sound about inclusive culture but in the question of practice, he has been weaker since the teacher is confused about his own role in creating inclusive culture. Teacher knows that inclusive education policy is intended to create an inclusive culture in schools but are ignorant about how policy intent can be translated into practice and what could be their roles in making an inclusive school environment.

## **Discussion**

Delivering twenty-first-century skills and knowledge to students is a tough job for any teacher. Teachers have to be up to date in related policies as well as strategies of instruction including differentiating instruction and use of learning theories. A number of studies have elucidated that knowledge of related policies to teachers adds something to their professional work which is valued during their dealing with students. Policies are generally meant to be translated into action (Cooper et al., 2004) and many stakeholders are involved in implementing them. Without the knowledge of the particular policy, no stakeholder can play a crucial role in translating them into practice.

In the present study, teachers could not define disability from its multifaceted domains as it is emphasized in the policy. They perceived disabilities from a medical model where the role of society is merely neglected. Contrary to this; Inclusive Education Policy 2017 defines disabilities according to the social model of disability. Terzi (2004) calls it a product of social and economic structures which aims to address issues of oppression and discrimination. Gathumbi (2015) opined that a lack of teacher training on pedagogy, knowledge of disability, and strategies for engaging students with special needs creates difficulties in providing quality education. Therefore, teachers are expected to be up to date with policies related to their professional work for a better grasp of their duties.

Teachers are a vital part of the structure of the education system; that is at the center of the system to implement policies into practice (National Centre for Educational Development, 2016). The study suggested that the capacities of the teachers should be supported to work across the network within the education system. For this, teachers need to understand the whole structure and functioning of the education system (European Commission, 2018). The teachers as responsible members of society, he/she must understand how the system works for developing inclusive education. In this sense, the present study results also revealed that special education teachers in Nepal lack knowledge on how a structural provision for developing inclusive education is manifested in the present policy. Unless they do not know the manifestation of the education system, they are in dilemma about providing and receiving necessary feedback.

In the case of special education teachers, it is imperative to have knowledge of policies related to the educational rights of students with disabilities (O'Connor, 2008). Only teachers are such members of society, who can play multiple roles for the better living of their students. Hence, teachers are the advocate of child rights (Heward, 2013) and are expected to have the necessary knowledge on related legislations and litigations. The study also indicated the lack of policy knowledge by the teachers similar to the result in the United States where approximately 67% of special teachers were either unnoticed or little known about IDEA and Section 504 related to special education (O'Connor, 2008).

From the system theory, teachers are the frontline implementers of policy for making a good school environment. The Inclusive Education Policy has been a guiding document for creating disabled-friendly schools and learning environments for the effective inclusion of all students. Teachers being an important input of the education system (Cooper et al., 2004) can contribute a lot to creating a quality learning environment in schools because teachers are also considered to have played the role of manager in school. In this study, teachers are aware of the disability-friendly environment, but they are unknown about how this provision is incorporated into the policy. Quality learning doesn't happen by chance but happens through an effective learning environment (Human Rights Watch, 2011) which is possible only by making the school environment disability-friendly. In this context, Inclusive Education Policy provides a direction for making disability-friendly schools; therefore, teachers should know the policy first and the essential components of a disability-friendly environment and ways of creating them. Children with disabilities often need more support to access and participate in school and community activities as compared to other normal children. Access and participation in activities make learning fun and help to learn in a constructive way. This also helps in socialization and to learn social skills, emotional development, and control of their behavior. In a study, children with disabilities were found to have lower participation both in structured and unstructured activities therefore educators need to consider context specificity in developing interventions to increase participation (Eriksson, Welander & Granlund, 2007). This study revealed that teachers know the importance of participating students in activities but they are found uncaring what has been included in the policy regarding students' participation.

The diversity of students in a classroom in terms of their needs and expectations demands different instructional strategies, instructional materials, and other resources. There may be some students who need treatment plans to support their positive behavior. For this, the assessment of functional skills (Cooper, Heron, & Heward, 2014) is essential because functional skills are not simply about knowledge in some subjects but about knowing when and how to use knowledge and these skills in real-life contexts. Inclusive Education Policy 2017 of Nepal

emphasized the use of scientific and objective functional skills assessment of the students and promotes learning "Green Skills" them. This study found that teachers' knowledge of assessing the functional skills of the students was low because they had unknown what has been there in the policy regarding functional skills assessment. Kovac, Rafajac, & Buchberger (2014) enunciated that knowing policies adds value to the knowledge and knowledge of special education policies should be the part of profile of their professional competency. Therefore, knowledge of relevant policies for special education teachers should be taken as one of the criteria for their professional development.

Inclusive culture in schools is the most important phenomenon to be created in the schools of the twenty-first century because access and participation of students are ensured by respecting their values. Teachers should be knowledgeable in understanding inclusive cultures and concerned policies that promote such cultures in the schools. Nepal being a multicultural country demands more inclusion practices in a classroom environment. Inclusive education policy reflected the essence of inclusive school cultures which the teachers must have understood. Teachers are the "agents of change" and have to work within the sphere of cultural and social context inside the school premises (Pantic & Florian, L, 2015). But, teachers' lack of policy knowledge and understanding of inclusive culture in the study area has been a matter of critical concern. Therefore, knowledge of policies and understanding of inclusive school culture by the teachers helps in enhancing learning autonomy, promoting individual values, respecting people's beliefs, and creating peace and harmony in the school environment.

## **Conclusions**

Teachers are not subjected to study policy with a due obligation in Nepal but their knowledge of existing policy makes them aware of delivering instructions and support services for students with disabilities. Teachers are still guided by traditional views in perceiving disability and are unknown about how disabilities are categorized in inclusive policy. They even are less aware of the structural provision in policy regarding its formulation to implementation. Teachers are well known about the essence of a disability-friendly environment but they think that studying policy is not mandated for them so their acquaintance with policy is found low. Similarly, teachers considered that participating students in the activities are good for their holistic development. For their better participation, teachers expect to get more opportunities for training and exposure. Teachers assume the fact that students have disabilities have rights to education which is ensured by several national and international policies. However, they knew this fact from other sources, and not because most have them yet to study the policy for inclusive education. The study further revealed that teachers have hardly heard

the term assessment of functional skills. Teachers tend to alter only some provisions of formative assessment for students with disabilities as compared to normal students. Teachers need to follow the current inclusive education policy to better assess the functional skills of students with disabilities. Similarly, the teacher should broaden their understanding and knowledge of inclusive policy and inclusive school culture. Special education teachers in Nepal require more exposure and training on understanding and implementing the inclusive education policy of Nepal.

## Implications of the Study

This study is quite a unique endeavour to explore the knowledge and awareness of special education teachers about the inclusive education policy of Nepal. This research provides a new horizon for other researchers and scholars to undertake similar studies in the field. The study will open an opportunity for future discourse on the necessity of systematic inclusion of policy content in teacher training packages. Equally, it provides impetus to other teachers to take concern for existing policies for adding values to their individual experiences and better discharge of their professional duties. As this article raises the issue of the importance of knowledge on relevant policy for teachers, it also incites policymakers, people working in education outside of school, school personnel, and other stakeholders to keep knowledge of policies for the overall benefit of society.

## References

- Bruner, D. Y., & Bartlett, M. J. (2008). Effective methods and materials for teaching law to pre-service teachers. *Action in Teacher Education*, 30(2), 36-45.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education*. Routledge.
- Cooper, B. S., Fusarelli, E. V., & Randall, E. V. (2004). *Better policies, better schools: Theories and applications*. Pearson Education, Inc.
- Cooper, Heron, & Heward (2014). *Applied Behavior Analysis* (2nd ed.). Pearson Education Limited.
- Creswell, J. W., & Poth, C. N. (2018). *Qualitative inquiry and research design* (4th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Creswell, J. W. (2015). *Educational research* (5th ed.). PHI Learning Private Limited.
- Curriculum Development Centre. (2007). *National curriculum framework*.

Authors.

- Department of Education. (2006). *Non-formal education policy*. Retrieved from [http://www.moe.gov.np/assets/uploads/files/NFEC\\_Policy\\_English1.pdf](http://www.moe.gov.np/assets/uploads/files/NFEC_Policy_English1.pdf).
- Eriksson, L., Welander, J., & Granlund, M. (2007). Participation in everyday classroom activities for children with and without disabilities. *Journal of Developmental and Physical Disabilities, 19*(5), 485-502.
- European Commission. (2018). *Teachers and schools' leaders in schools as learning organizations*. Author.
- Friend, M. (2011). *Special education: Contemporary perspectives for school professionals* (3rd ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Guthumbi, A., Ayot, H., Kimemia, J., & Ondigi, S. (2015). Teachers and school administrators' preparedness in handling students with special needs in inclusive education in Kenya. *Journal of Special Education and Practice, 6*(24), 129-138.
- Harman, G. (1984). *Conceptual and theoretical issues and educational policy: International survey*. Croom Helm.
- Heward, W. L. (2013). *Exceptional children: An Introduction to special education* (10th ed.). Pearson Education, Inc.
- Human Right Watch. (2011). *Future stolen: Barriers to education for children with disabilities in Nepal*. Retrieved from <https://reliefweb.int/report/nepal/futures-stolen-barriers-education-children-disabilities-nepal>.
- Jongmans, K., Beijaard, D., & Biemans, H. (2007). Teachers' professional orientation and their involvement in school policy making: Results of Dutch study. *Educational Management and Administration, 26*(3), 293-304.
- Kerr, D. H. (1967). *Educational policy: Analysis, structure, and justification*. David McKay.
- Kirk, S., Gallagher, J., & Coleman, M. R. (2015). *Educating exceptional children* (14th ed.). Cengage Learning.
- Kovac, V. Rafajac, B., & Buchberger, I. (2014). Croatian teacher competencies related to the creation and implementation of education policy. *C.E.P.S Journal, 4*(4), 51-73.
- Leschied, A., Dickinson, G., & Lewis, W. (2000). Assessing educators' self-reported levels of legal knowledge, law-related areas of concern and patterns of accessing legal information: Implication for training and practice. *Journal of Educational Administration and Foundation, 14*(2), 38-67.

**ILAM Vol. 19, Issue 1, August 2023**

- Loo Niva Child Concern Group. (2013). *Politics in schools of Nepal: A study report on political parties' interference in schools of Nepal*. Author.
- Merriam S. B., & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation* (4th ed.). Jossey-Bass.
- Ministry of Education, (2017). *Inclusive education policy for disabled people in Nepal (2073)*. Author.
- NCED, (2015). *Teacher professional development training: Training manual*. Author.
- Nepal Law Commission, (2072). *Constitution of Nepal 2072*. Retrieved from [www.lawcommission.gov.np](http://www.lawcommission.gov.np).
- O' Connor, E. A., Yasik, A. E., & Horner, S. L. (2016). Teachers' awareness of special education laws: What do they know? *Insights into Learning Disabilities, 13*(1), 7-18.
- Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. (2017). *Education policy implementation: A literature review and proposed framework*. OECD education working paper 162(2). Retrieved from [http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP\(2017\)11&docLanguage=En](http://www.oecd.org/officialdocuments/publicdisplaydocumentpdf/?cote=EDU/WKP(2017)11&docLanguage=En).
- Pantic, N., & Florin, L. (2015). Developing teachers as agents of inclusion and social justice. *Education Inquiry, 6*(3), 333-351.
- Rix, J., Nind, K. S. M., & Sheehy, K. (2005). *Policy and power in inclusive education: Values into practices*. Routledge.
- Terzi, L. (2004). The social model of disability: A philosophical critique. *Journal of Applied Philosophy, 21*(2), 7-9.
- UNESCO. (2009). *Policy guidelines on inclusion in education*. Author.