



Teacher Education and Issues of Professional Development for Quality and Creativity of Teachers

Janardan Paudel

Central Department of Education, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur, Nepal

janardanpaudel245@gmail.com

Abstract

This article aims to show some of the necessary viewpoints needed in teacher education programme and teachers themselves to promote quality and creativity of teachers. Teachers should be known as the main backbone of a country. It is known that all vertebrate animals or creatures are stronger physically than the non-vertebrates. In the same way, without teachers with high quality a community cannot develop effectively. If communities are developed effectively, it means, a country is developed in a prosperous way. To develop a country today, teachers need to think of teacher education as professional development and in the same way, a country needs to manage. Our ancient teachers have transformed primitive life into the condition as we see today. Teachers should develop strong confidence within themselves to teach. Teachers should have quality and creativity in teaching and so should be the goal of teacher education. Teaching is the type of profession which should be universally acknowledged. A teacher would be like a spiritual being in the past and the same quality should be maintained at present, for framing the knowledge in students so that the students will be responsible to frame the shape of development of a country. For such type of situation, teacher education should be constructed for teachers' professional development relating to increase their critical thinking skills. If a teacher is perfect in all respects, the students will learn properly. Teacher education must not be thought simply as a process of only obtaining a job, but it should be looked in a broader sense with the philosophy of the universe and the nature as well as a teacher as a source of providing the truth. Only a teacher with quality can provide the facts. For this capacity, professional development and creativity are necessary skills. The methodology of this study is based on document analysis and experience of the author.

Key Words: *Constructivism, Creativity, Critical thinking, Professional development, Teacher education*

Introduction

Human beings have been superior to other creatures because of the sense of the development of education in them. First of all, the idea of being united while leading wild life in forest was the beginning of education. And taking the same case we have a proverb today "Unity is Strength". Gradually these tribesmen developed their community and started to select their leaders and set a family life and their children were taught by a true teacher. This process may have taken thousands of years and many generations may have passed with oral teaching system before writing system was originated. Today our legends and their writers have been great sources of our knowledge which have helped in our professional development and creativity. So, teacher educators should be perfect in delivering true knowledge to the teachers so that students do not feel bored in their learning process. The teaching system of our ancient teachers made us gain the knowledge of the universe as we see today. So a teacher should be a wise person and teacher education should support in building quality of teachers.

Methodology

This research study is based on qualitative research method. And the data for analysis are fixed through documents and the author's own experience. The headings and sub-headings are fixed for discussion and analysis; and they are presented descriptively using thick language. Regarding literature review, it is within text body under each heading.

Objective

The objective of this study is to discuss some points with the point of view of teachers' professional development to promote quality of education and creativity.

Status of Teacher

Teaching itself is a very complex work which requires vast knowledge to deal with learners. Also, learning to be a teacher is a zigzag journey. It needs different kinds of practical experiments regarding knowledge. A teacher and education are related and inevitable terms to each other. About education in Muslim community, Khalediy (2011) has stated as follows:

The Qur'an recommended education through the persuasive approach of preaching and advice. This guidance can be done if the soul is pure, the heart is open, and the intellect is good. The educators must understand this as being most important in the education of the children, and prepare the young ones for their psychological and social development, leading them towards behavioural and mental maturity (p. 16).

As mentioned above, we find very true nature of education from Qur'an. A teacher should have made pure soul and open heart to be a teacher and develop social, psychological and spiritual mentality of the students. A teacher is like a brick for social development and mental perfection. If a teacher is qualified, students learn better and become respected citizens.

Furthermore, a teacher is a very much respected person having authority and knowledge of reality who knows about god and nature. A teacher should cultivate good habit and quality to be a believable person in society. He should be competent without false reality in him. So, a teacher is not a materialistic person but should be equipped with spirituality within him. This status should be maintained by the teachers of twenty- first century. So, teacher education should not be taken as a simple term.

Training and Education

These two terms are highly mentioned side by side for the right direction of knowledge. About education, Hornby (1989: 385) has written as, "System of training and instruction (esp. of children and young people in schools, colleges etc) designed

to give knowledge and develop skills". This definition has given focus of education relating to training. In the Greek system, Socratic dialogue was also a kind of system of training to pupils. By using the same system, Plato taught Aristotle. Both Plato and Aristotle have been thought as father for our modern educational, sociological, political, spiritual and scientific knowledge.

About training and education, Ur (1996:3) has stated as follows:

The terms 'teacher training' and 'teacher education' are often used interchangeably in the literature to refer to the same thing: the professional preparation of teachers. Many prefer 'teacher education' since training can imply unthinking habit formation and an over-emphasis on skills and techniques, while the professional teacher needs to develop theories, awareness of options, and decision-making abilities – a process which seems better defined by the word 'education' (p. 3).

Teacher education should be for their professional development so that they will be real teachers. What to say; Is an angel a real teacher? or the god? Teacher education should relate to the spiritual heart to be well trained rather than being full with materialistic view. Training and education are related to impart knowledge. Training makes teaching a wonderful profession if conducted by specialists.

Teaching Challenges Today

Today we are living in the era of globalization and there is flow of people, goods and services from one part of the world to another. About teaching challenges for the twenty first century, Arends (1994) has stated as follows:

No crystal can let us look fully into the twenty-first century, which we have just begun. Certain trends, however, are likely to continue, and some aspects of education and teaching will remain the same, while others may change rather dramatically. On one hand, the tremendous changes occurring in the way information is stored and accessed with computers and over the internet will certainly change many aspects of education (p.7).

Globalization has made people cross the boundary of the borders of the countries around the world. Due to this reason, teaching in the past and teaching at present is psychologically and sociologically different. Today teaching should be done with respect to the theory of globalization. Someone who graduates from Nepal or India he/she should get equivalence of degrees all over the world. In the past, teaching was done at a narrow place, inside a classroom, but today our classrooms are for a global world. We are living in a multi-lingual and multi-cultural society today. To cater the problems of education today, a teacher needs knowledge of English, modern technology, computer, internet, multi-media power point and more study for exposure. A teacher should follow constructivism. Moreover, a teacher should be up to date in day to day world activities today. Something irrelevant is known immediately today. So, teaching should be very careful and relevant today.

Professional Development

Teacher training is as a source of professional development. Different kinds of training programmes should be conducted for the professional development of teachers. In this twenty-

first century information technology has played main role for the professional development in every sector. The use of computer and internet has been of great importance. About information and communication technology, National Centre for Educational Development (2011: 1) has stated as follows:

Information and communication technologies (ICTs) which include radio and television, as well as newer digital technologies such as computers and the internet have been touted as potentially powerful tools for educational change and reform. When used appropriately, different ICTs are said to help expand access to education, strengthen the relevance of education to the increasingly digital workplace, and raise educational quality by, among others, helping make teaching and learning into an engaging active process connected to real life (p.1).

For professional development in teaching, it has been necessary to use computer and internet equipments frequently. A teacher should know to open computer, select relevant materials from internet, download them and save for use. Teachers should be able to make power point multi-media for classroom use. And schools and colleges should also provide such types of facilities. Digital camera and emails are also equally important. So, for professional development, Teachers need quality training, motivation in learning for teaching, studios for exposure with sufficient knowledge of technology.

Problem in Teacher Education

There are many kinds of burning issues related to teacher education today. Many changes in teaching learning activities from teacher-centered to student-centered have taken place. About problems of teacher education, Desai (2012) has stated as follows:

Unlike in the past when the teacher was entrusted with transferring the contents of curriculum to a passive audience of students, today new experiments are being tried out in the classrooms that include project based learning, development of thinking skills, and discovery learning approaches. Some of the problems of teacher education are: problem of selection, small time period for teacher's training, incompetency of students and teachers, problems of practice teaching, problem of supervision of teaching, lack of subject knowledge, and poor academic background of student-teachers and lack of facilities for professional development (p. 54-58).

To make teacher education successful, the student-teachers should be highly competent and well qualified. A teacher should function as an architect of knowledge and training also should support in the same way. Today it has been a trend in countries like Nepal; the academically poor persons are involved in teaching field with political source. Their training and delivery are also weak. The teaching profession should be attractive to involve bright academicians. Teaching license should be given after completion of particular training but not through the exam of simply general knowledge. So, the system is also not in order for teacher education. The system should be reformed considerably by making teacher training curriculum. Because of the materialistic view, the present day teachers are in declining phase in moral quality, which should be cultivated in them before involving in teaching.

Critical Thinking and Creativity

It is very important aspect of teaching learning activities that skill of critical thinking should be developed in them. If teachers develop the skill of critical thinking, they can deliver their subjects more effectively to the students. Regarding critical thinking, Dewey (1909: 9) has written as, "Active, persistent, and careful consideration of a belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds which support it and the further conclusions to which it tends (as cited in Fisher, 2011 : 2). Critical thinking is known as a process of reflective thinking and use of argument and logic. For any kind of events to happen, there should be some reasons and to go into depth of something, study and practice are needed for teachers to have maintained their teaching quality. Critical thinking skill makes the teachers able to think of something into depth. They should have knowledge about objective and subjective truth. They should be confident in giving opinions and making conclusions. The teachers should have knowledge of formal and informal logics as well as deductive and inductive argument.

Critical thinking brings someone to conclusion of the problems they face. With the development of critical thinking skills, the teachers will have the power of – analyzing, observing, evaluating, problem- solving and researching. Critical thinking skills make an individual mentally independent. It is also necessary to understand issues, to express ideas, to clarify beliefs as well as analyzing and solving the problems. Creative thinking is the process we use to develop ideas that are unique, useful and worthy of further elaboration. Creative thinkers take multiple perspectives on a problem. So, the courses of teacher education should be designed with critical thinking and creativity skills.

Application of Constructivism

The application of constructivism has got great importance in the professional development of teachers. Constructivism is a theory of knowledge whose application has got far-reaching consequences for the study of cognitive development and learning. Naylor & Keogh, (1999, p.93) have defined constructivism as follows:

The central principles of this approach are that learners can only make sense of new situations in terms of their existing understanding. Learning involves an active process in which learners construct meaning by linking new ideas with their existing knowledge. (as cited in Jones and Araje (2002, p. 2).

Constructivism has played great role in the sector of teaching and learning. A teacher should not join in the field of teaching profession with passive ideology but should be active to construct and deliver knowledge to the students. A teacher will be like an actor for delivering knowledge. But knowledge will not be passively received, but it should be built with the process of cognition. Cognition is the process by which knowledge and understanding will be developed in mind. About constructivism Glasserfeld (1983) has mentioned as follows:

Constructivism is a theory of knowledge with roots in philosophy, psychology, and cybernetics. It asserts two main principles whose application has far-reaching consequences for the study of cognitive development and learning as well as for

the practice of teaching, psychotherapy, and interpersonal management in general. The two principles are:

- (1) Knowledge is not passively received but actively built up by the cognizing subject;
- (2) The function of cognition is adaptive and serves the organization of the experiential world, not the discovery of ontological reality.

Cognition generally functions as being adaptive and concerns with changing to deal with different situations which assimilates the experiential world. Every learner wants to follow truth and reality and the idea of constructivism helps in finding the fact. Human beings will not be built by out-looking shape but a human is shaped by education. The main function of the application of constructivism in education is that, education makes mortals as immortals. Regarding constructivism in education, Applefield, Huber and Moallem (2000:4) have stated as follows:

The field of education has undergone a significant shift in thinking about the nature of human learning and the conditions that best promote the varied dimensions of human learning. As in psychology, there has been a paradigm shift in designed instruction; from behaviorism to cognitivism and now to constructivism (Cooper, 1993). Certainly one of the most influential views of learning during the last two decades of the 20th century is the perspective known as constructivism.

A teacher should try to think correctly and use the language carefully to have real meaning of the universe of teaching. It is because teaching and learning should be evolutionary. A teacher should go towards the broad area of epistemology because it is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge and finds out whether knowledge is possible or not and accordingly suitable methodology should be used. So, a teacher should have knowledge of ontology (nature of existence of concept), epistemology (nature and origin of knowledge) and methodology how to gain knowledge.

The knowledge of philosophy and psychology is important part for a teacher to have developed constructivism teaching practice and professionalism. To know something means to know what parts it is made of and how they have been put together. Our cognitive capability may not produce a true picture of the world but it enhances the management of experiences. Constructivism has got a revolutionary aspect in the sense that knowledge can't be true to match the ontological reality but it will be within the experiential constraints of acting and thinking. Constructivism is also related to the building of meaning because it is in between our communication and language. A teacher should always try to build a student's construction of knowledge by which the student will be attempting to make sense in his/her experiential world. A teacher's primary responsibility is to transfer knowledge to the students directly. The process of teaching and learning should focus on the interactions between teacher and students. So the application of constructivism in education plays prime role to know how teachers and students construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things and reflecting on those experiences.

Conclusion

The rule of nature is that every creature tries to protect itself on its own way. Similarly, a teacher should try to protect him or her by the use of knowledge and skill. Also, teaching profession is the need of the state and the plan of teacher education should be made accordingly. The teachers of the present era lack moral quality in many respects which needs to be reconstructed in them. It should be thought that by avoiding the feeling of spirituality, teaching profession cannot be continued.

Today we are in the age of technology and it should be used in education field for teaching and learning process. Regarding educational technology, Kumar (2009: 4) has stated as, "Educational technology is a complex, integrated process involving people, procedures, ideas, devices and organization, for analyzing problems and devising, implementing, evaluating, and managing solutions to those problems, involved in all aspects of human learning". Today teachers do not have to depend upon textbooks only. They should prepare teaching materials using modern technology. But it has not been in many schools and colleges and students have to listen to lengthy lectures. The investment on teacher education has been useless.

Teacher education is a must for delivering quality education. Regarding this situation, Khaniya (2007) has stated as follows:

In absence of necessary skills and abilities, teachers do not seem to be able to impart expected skills and knowledge to students effectively. The teacher training programmes developed so far have not incorporated pedagogic skills and knowledge determined through needs assessment. Recruitment of teachers specially the untrained ones, has been a problem in this field (p. 73).

It has been the reality that teachers are enrolled on the basis of source and force due to political power, in Nepal. Such type of manpower does not take care in own profession. But the purpose of education should be towards social transformation for democratic society. Education should diminish social injustices. Teacher education should reform many things theoretically and practically. The curriculum of teacher education should be designed according to changing needs of society. So, teacher education should be for professional development and critical thinking skills to impart quality education to the students. As a whole, students should develop creativity in them but not rote learning.

References

- Arends, R.I. (1994). *Learning to Teach*. New York: Mc Graw Hill.
- Desai, A. J. (2012). *Problem of Teacher Education in India*. Published in International Journal for Research in Education (IJRE). December 2012, Vol. 1, Issue: 1, ISSN: 2320- 091X, (pages: 54-58).
- Fisher, A. (2011). *Critical Thinking: An Introduction*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press.
- Glaserfeld E V. (1983) Learning as a Constructive Activity. In Proceedings of PME-NA, Montreal, Canada. (Reprinted in C Janvier (Ed.) 1987, Problems of Representation in the Teaching and Learning of Mathematics (3-17). Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, N.J.).
- Hornby, A.S. (1989). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*. Fourth Edition. Delhi: Oxford University Press
- James. M. Applefield, Richard Huber and Mahnaz Moallem. Constructivism in Theory and Practice: Toward a Better Understanding. Published in *The High School Journal* Vol. 84, No. 2 (Dec., 2000 - Jan., 2001), pp. 35-53 Published by: [University of North Carolina Press](http://people.uncw.edu/huberr/constructivism.pdf) Retrieved on 15/ 08/ 2016 from <http://people.uncw.edu/huberr/constructivism.pdf>
- Jones, M.G. & Araje, L.B. (2002). The Impact of Constructivism on Education: Language Discourse and Meaning. In *American Communication Journal*, Volume 5, Issue 3, Spring 2002
- Khalediy, K. (2011-2010). *Education and Methods of Teaching in Islam in the Era of Az-Zarnooji*. Retrieved on: 2014-09-17, from; [http:// www.qsm.ac.il/arblanguage/docs/majalla/3+4/eng=2=Kalid.pdf](http://www.qsm.ac.il/arblanguage/docs/majalla/3+4/eng=2=Kalid.pdf)
- Khaniya, T. R. (2007). *New Horizon in Education in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Kishor Khaniya.
- Kumar, N. (2009). *Educational Technology: Theory and Practices*. Delhi: A.I.T.B.S publishers India National Centre for Educational Development (2011). *Online Offline Professional Capacity Development Training*. Sanothimi: Bhaktapur, Nepal
- Ur, P. (1996). *A Course in Language Teaching Practice and Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.