

Assessment of School Essentials in Nepal

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Doi : <https://doi.org/10.3126/ppj.v3i01.59025>

Abstract

This paper examines the importance of educated and trained teachers, updated curricula, latest technologies, efficient management committee, school buildings with spacious playgrounds in executing the educational plans formulated to impart quality education to the youths of the current generation so that they can contribute to the future development of Nepal reaching different positions and places. How can schools perform better and what are the necessities that help to cater quality education? The objective of the article is to revitalize the initiatives be taken and would be taken for the holistic development of the education and educational institutions that are committed to fueling the country with the quality human resources that can affect the multidimensional development in varied approaches. The findings of the paper have been that the digital competence is tremendously significant that can boost up the pedagogical approach. The quality of teachers determines the standard of the schools whether they are public or private. The exploration reveals that the role of frequent training and conferences is indispensable in capacitating the teachers who are one of the most crucial aspects of the educational institutions. The research demonstrates that without the development and motivation of the teachers, even advanced curricula and sophisticated buildings cannot be adequate enough to execute the education plan to ensure quality education. Therefore, the focus of the school management must be on the development of teachers' competence and career for the sustainable development of the academic institutions.

Keywords: Advanced curricula, Digital competence, quality education, school management, updated technologies

Introduction

School as one of the socializing agencies for children is dedicated to providing quality education so that every child can become a productive force in the future. Humans after their birth go through the process of being civilized and skilled. Their families/homes are the places wherein they learn many things including identification of members in the respective family such as mother, father, sister, brother, grandmother, grandfather so on knowledge on belongings, family rules, and regulations, societal duties and beliefs and values that their families have had since the time immemorial. They keep learning about their surrounding and particularly mother and father keep teaching them about who and how they can do. More than this, the children learn that their parents are the important people in their lives. Accordingly they behave and stay obliged to abide by the instructions. However,

this paper examines school—the second socializing agency for humans—and its essentials without which children cannot attain and perform as properly as they can.

When children are well-equipped with the tools and instruments which are usually required in teaching-learning process primarily in formal education, they can perform better and can achieve their goal. The facilities usually available in public schools in Nepal do not fulfill the standard needs for students although the indirect investment in education by Nepalese taxpayers is adequate. The paper discusses the problems and challenges caused by the authorities who lead the management system of public schools. Besides, the article intends to impart some suggestions that can help the concerned to upgrade the standard of public schools by availing the essentials in every school and by assuring the quality of education that can be possible when all the stakeholders such as students, guardians, teachers, school management and government authorities coordinate, collaborate and cooperate with each other to achieve the collective goal i.e. quality education.

Discussion

The paper encompasses five different essentials that a public school needs for better performance of students and teachers. The current scenario shows that most of the public schools in Nepal lack almost all essentials that are detailed in this article. The essentials that a school needs to have are as follows:

1. Educated and trained teachers
2. Updated curricula
3. Latest technologies
4. Efficient management committee
5. School buildings with spacious playgrounds

Educated and Trained Teachers

Provided that a society seeks to ensure the quality education, every component of the school must be strong, contributive and productive. Hence, the teachers are one of the most crucial aspects of schools. Training can help to scale up their career and to enhance their satisfaction and motivation. The process affects the quality of education assumed to ease the teaching and learning process. The school has to provide opportunities to all the teachers to explore potential and to boost up them so that they can impact on quality education of students. Training, seminars and higher education opportunities to update their knowledge and can help teachers to cope with the fluid situations that they face with the passage of time. Instead of playing with the rotten knowledge even, the teachers should seek opportunities to qualify them and upgrade their stance and boost up their performance for the development of both school and themselves. Accordingly to Nadovezajelic & Kedzo, certain things of the teachers must be underscored for the expected results in the schools. Teacher's background characteristics, their professional knowledge and skills, working conditions, freedom and their morale and status are some of the crucial facts which affect the teaching-learning activities at schools (387). Provided a teacher does not have any

professional knowledge or lacks professional training, skills, and freedom, she or he will certainly not be able to perform well. Incompetence and not having professional skills are the barriers to both the development of the respective schools and their career development.

The work division and responsibility distribution in accordance with the competence and interest of teachers should be accomplished in order for ensuring better implications of their decisions and actions in schools. Similarly, the regular training and conferences should be organized for promoting the quality of the teachers. Their proficiency and motivated participation in teaching learning activities can result into the expected target.

There is a close relationship between digital competence and pedagogy. The digitally competent teachers generally perform better in the classroom. Their knowledge on the use of different software materials available in the internet can smarten their performance. The current situation of pedagogical activities in Nepal demonstrates that teachers are trained and educated about the latest technologies and even the education commission when announcing the vacancies for teachers of different levels conducts the examination of the computer proficiency of prospective candidates who seek to enter the teaching career. The provision of testing candidates' digital competence amplifies the possibility of selecting technology-friendly teachers for the students in the public schools.

The similar provisions do not seem to be in practice regarding the teachers of the private schools. Some of the private schools undoubtedly facilitate their teachers to be trained about the technologies, whereas many of them do not prioritize the training and conferences for the teachers. The management mostly seems reluctant in investing for the career development of teachers assuming that teachers are not loyal to the schools. In their perspective, teachers are likely to move to other professions or they can go to other schools when they get lucrative perks and benefits. Consequently, the students in the private schools are taught by the untrained teachers in most of the cases. The government of Nepal is responsible for monitoring and controlling the career development programs and should check whether such programs are implemented or need to be implemented in case of both public and private schools. Besides, the concerned authorities should encourage the private schools for facilitating and conducting intensive training and conferences for the teachers as well.

The lack of training on the part of teachers can cause low quality of teaching and learning activities. The expected outcomes from in schools are not possible without the proper training and education to the teachers. David Orr et al. state, "The lack of specific pedagogical training, another reason advanced for poor teacher performance is the lack of adequate education in relevant subject knowledge" (2). This applies to all levels and grades of teachers in Nepal. Teachers including of private and public schools must excel in their respective subjects in order for both effective performance in the classrooms and career development. Generally untrained teachers are considered less educated because they cannot undertake the responsibility digitized classes. Besides, such teachers cannot be as much interactive with the students who are technology friendly. Their lack of training becomes a barrier to the effective performance of students as well. According to Orr et al, the trained

teachers are those who have the required formal education or even more in some cases. On the other hand, the less educated teachers have a formal initial training with the below level of the required formal education (2). Due to lack of both formal education and training as per the requirement of the school, the teachers cannot stay confident during the teaching and learning activities inside the classroom as well as outside the classrooms. Therefore, even after the selection of the teachers, they should be trained about their respective subjects and the extracurricular activities.

Updated Curricula

As there is the need of refreshing a computer used continuously for a long period, the schools should operate the curricula updated in accordance with the demand and need of the time. Scholars and researchers explore something new almost every day in their respective discipline. Their contributions to the existing knowledge need to be incorporated in the syllabi of the schools. The principal of every academic institution needs to be open and flexible for changes and novel ideas generated in every discipline and subject taught at her or his schools. The updated curricula enrich both teachers and students tremendous freshness and energy to cope with the current affairs of the world. The outdated and worn out syllabi bore both teachers and students. Schools and their management committees must welcome new and constructive suggestions of the experts and should show preparedness to adopt and execute them in their academia. Before the improvement and modernization of the curricula, the objectives of the National Education Board of Nepal should be up-dated and redefined. What the primary objectives of the have been so far and what they should be for the expected outcomes of teaching and learning in both schools and colleges of Nepal needs analyzing and critically scrutinizing. The practice of the European countries regarding the primary and secondary education that “define the “quality” of inputs at higher educational levels; such a policy task requires comprehensive educational reform in countries which are lagging behind. Nevertheless, it should be emphasized that the major limitations of the study follow from the limited data resources and some concerns about the quality of the data reported by Eurostat” (Nadovezajelic & Kedzo 402). Even the European countries calculatingly operate the schools and their supervision and evaluation of the schools in terms of quality and quantity are regularly accomplished so that they can take certain extra actions to improve the existing conditions. The studies done on the schools demonstrate the need of the policy for ensuring the quality of education.

The modern curriculum usually cover the creative, critical and conceptual thinking as expected to be internalized by the students through the formal education. Beverly L. Wood et al recommend some basics to be incorporated in the school curricula. They present:

1. Teach statistical thinking
 - Teach statistics as an investigative process of problem-solving and decision-making.
 - Give students experience with multivariable thinking.
2. Focus on conceptual understanding

3. Integrate real data with a context and purpose
4. Foster active learning
5. Use technology to explore concepts and analyze data
6. Use assessments to impose and evaluate student learning. (54)

The points as recommended by Wood et al can enrich the formal curricula and if such things are implemented by all the concerned parties including teachers, students, and school management, of course, the expected outcomes can be attained. Besides, the students can cope with the problems facing the world efficiently and effectively.

Latest Technologies

Technology speeds up and reduces human endeavors in almost every domain of life. Teaching and learning if is well-equipped with the latest technologies including projectors, tutorial software, Microsoft team, smart board, computer laboratory, electronic library, smart means of communication, the positive implications are certain to be reflected in the performance of all the team members such as teachers, students, principal and the management committee of the school. Since we all have started to calculate every second of our life and value that accordingly, saving time by using technologies will justify our prudence and smartness. The more educated we become, the more value we begin to add to the time we have for a particular task. The best way to do more tasks in a limited time frame can be possible when we get to use the latest technologies. School management must focus on the availability of the latest technologies so that every member of the school can learn to save time for a greater cause. With the use of technologies, students can learn language efficiently and effectively. Teachers can facilitate learners in the classrooms without being tired; the management can save time by holding virtual meetings and can provide orientation classes to the teachers for their career development online. The principal can surveillance the teachers and non-teaching staffs through CCTV cameras from her or his chamber.

Sharing tutorial materials by emailing to students by teachers for the classroom activities and home assignments can make teaching-learning process effective and can help all the concerned to stay engaged positively and productively. In fact, technology drives all the parties including teachers, students, guardians, management and principal for the expected results. The management can hold regular meetings with the guardians from their respective places without being physically present in the schools and can update each other about the progress of the students.

To enhance the knowledge of teachers and students, their access and ability to digital domain is indispensable. According to Maria Napal Farile et al, “digital competence involves not only basic technical mastery, but also the development of abilities (1) browse, evaluate, and manage information; (2) communicate and collaborate; (3) create digital contents; (4) preserve safety; and (5) solve problems, both in formal, non-formal, and informal contexts” (2). Indeed, digital competence encourages people to benefit from the possibilities of new knowledge and get able to solve the current challenges due to lack of

technologies and other physical resources. The role of teachers can be made effective provided that they are well-equipped with the technologies and the skill to operate the available technologies. They are the leaders and performers as their leadership and performance make the teaching learning process productive and result-driven. Digital competence boosts up their “proficiency in using ICT in a professional context with good pedagogic-didactic judgment and his or her awareness of its implications for learning strategies and the digital *bildung* of pupils” (Krumsvik 252). For the desired outcome, the teachers need to have digital competence as it helps to attain efficiency in the performance.

Efficient Management Committee

The management committee refers to the people who undertake the responsibility of managing resources, and taking risk of the investment done in the school. The members may be the founders including the principal of the school. Sometimes, the principal may be a hired leader to administer the school. In both cases, the management committee needs to think of the resources including time and money for the operation of the courses. Each member of the committee should be mindful about the goals and the plans for achieving by executing the plans. Efficiency is the subject of doing something with minimum resources and saving precious time and money to achieve the goal. Reflecting on the significance of efficiency and effectiveness in the school education of Europe, Ozana Nadovezajelic & Margareta Kedzo state in their paper that the differentiation “between quantity and quality measures of educational inputs and outputs, which enables us to discriminate tertiary education efficiency and tertiary education effectiveness. Since there is no consensus regarding the appropriateness of available inputs and outputs, it seemed inappropriate to make an ad hoc decision to include some and to exclude other inputs and outputs” (386). School management must take an account of whether there is equilibrium of inputs and outputs. If something goes wrong in any of the aspects of the school, the management needs to investigate into the appropriate and inappropriate methods of operating the curricular and extracurricular activities by involving both teachers and students in order to customize the expenses made in the course.

Most of the school management committees in Nepal play ceremonial roles although they must execute innovative policies and work to upgrade the status of their respective schools. They need to focus on teachers’ training programs as the frequent participation of the teachers to the intensive training and coaching of the teachers can retain the prestigious position of the teachers. Besides, the teachers can grow and develop in their respective careers as they see possibilities of growth and scaling up in teaching career.

School Buildings with Spacious Playgrounds

To operate the classes, sufficient space for buildings and playgrounds is needed. We cannot imagine onsite classes without classrooms. The size and furniture of the classrooms for effective teaching and learning activities matter. The school management must consider this aspect seriously. If the classrooms are congested and there is small space for sports or there is no playgrounds at all, students cannot be engaged and both teachers and learners may not perform well to achieve the objectives of the syllabi prescribed for the students.

When the classrooms are well-ventilated, both students and teachers can breathe in the fresh air. None of them feel suffocated. Health is equally important and this aspect can be enhanced provided students are encouraged for participating in sports and games. Spacious playground is the motivational factor that can cue learners to play games and to stay competitive in the sports organized by the school. In Nepal, most of the private schools and some of the public schools do not have spacious buildings and playgrounds. Although students and teachers have tremendous potentials, they cannot concentrate on the extracurricular activities due to lack of the sufficient space for learning and playing. The stakeholders of the schools need to be mindful regarding this aspect.

Conclusion

The paper has explored the essentials to be a modern school in Nepal. For the holistic development of the school, all the concerned parties including school management, teachers, and students should work together with due respect to the curricula, technologies and tools. The priority must be given to the development of the teachers regarding their competence and career through frequent formal training and motivational factors including incentives and rewards monetarily and socially. The respect for the teachers can help them to stay motivated as they would feel valued provided that the school management focused on their growth and development.

The paper has investigated into the need of the updated technologies. There is a close relation between pedagogy and technology and the very tie can be strengthened by providing training to the teachers with priority on the digital competence. The digitized teaching and learning can help them to become confident and can have the effective and efficient classroom activities. The school management committees of both private and public schools in Nepal need to rethink about their role in accelerating the speed of their respective schools. Overall, they must collaborate with the teachers and the government authorities in this regard as the betterment of the school is possible by synthesizing the energies of all the concerned. However, the quality of teachers that can be enhanced through training and updated curricula with digital competence must be the priority.

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