

## **A Review on Educational Policies of Nepal –by Nahakul K. C.**

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### **Abstract**

*Education is a basic human right. The Constitution of Nepal has specified education as a citizen's right. Education is the basic foundation of the development of any country. Therefore, it is the duty of the government to provide quality education to all its citizens. To this end, the Government of Nepal has adopted the policy of "Education for All" and provided free education up to the secondary school level in community-managed schools. Internet based library method has been applied. It is a Review of the existing status, government policy, NTA policy, and AEPC strategy on the promotion of energy services and internet services were conducted to prepare the action plan. In conclusion, Government of Nepal has realized the importance of the computer education and use of science and technology, information technology, digitization of the curriculum through of use of applications and modern teaching methodology.*

**Keywords:** Education Policy, Nepal, Review

### **Introduction**

As Nepal is a highly diverse, caste-based, multi-ethnic, and multi-linguistic society with very low development indicators, the article focuses on barriers to education and related issues across different socioeconomic groups (Neupane, 2020). Nepal's new constitution created a significant opportunity for education development. School-level education now falls under the jurisdiction of municipal government, and the involvement of local government and local communities can be expected to deliver better results, as the beneficiaries of education play a central role in school management. To formulate appropriate policy, it is essential to understand the current situation the current situation can be extracted by the policy review. The policy is developed by government and mandated to schools, but government does not commit funding to resource infrastructures or train teachers in information and communication technology (ICT) use. Instead, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) have stepped in and provided resources and training. Thus, two separate systems have evolved (Rana, Greenwood, & Fox-Turnbull, 2020).

Numerous attempts have been undertaken to transform learning and the schooling system in Nepal during the 1990s and the first decade of the 21st century. In 1992, the Government of Nepal agreed to adopt the *Education for All* policy, signed by many other countries internationally, at the World Summit Thailand 1990.

### **Objective**

To review the education policy of Nepal

### **Methods and Materials**

Internet based library method has been applied. It is a Review of the existing status, government policy, NTA policy, and AEPC strategy on the promotion of energy services and internet services were conducted to prepare the action plan. This was complemented by relevant government policy, the 15th national plan, and policies related to electricity, telecommunication, and education. During the desk review, the past and existing policy documents related to the assignment and review of the present and past projects in the field of energy access, internet access and alternative education medium was conducted.

### **Discussion**

#### **The Constitution of Nepal 2072**

The Constitution in Nepal, 2015 has mention to being committed to socialism based on democratic norms and values including the people's competitive multiparty democratic system of governance, civil liberties, fundamental rights, human rights, adult franchise, periodic elections, full freedom of the press, and independent, impartial and competent judiciary and concept of the rule of law, and build a prosperous nation (Dhungel, 2020).

The Constitution of Nepal gives a right to free and compulsory basic education (Grades 1 - 8) and free secondary education (Grades 9 - 12) to all children. Access of children to early childhood education and development is also guaranteed by the constitution, along with free school education with scholarships as a fundamental right for Dalit children. Children with disabilities are also constitutionally assured free education with the required support. In this regard, the 753 local government bodies/municipalities are mandated to manage basic and secondary education. The Constitution has given the right to develop necessary education policies and plans to local

municipalities to manage school education at the local level. Article 31 of the Constitution enshrined Nepali people's rights relating to education. The following rights are included in the constitution of Nepal.

1. Every citizen shall have the right of access to basic education
2. Every citizen shall have the right to get compulsory and free education up to the basic level and free education up to the secondary level from the state
3. The citizens with disabilities and the economically indigent citizens shall have the right to get free higher education in accordance with law.
4. The visually impaired citizens shall have the right to get free education through brail script and the citizens with hearing or speaking impairment, to get free education through sign language, in accordance with law.
5. Every Nepalese community residing in Nepal shall have the right to get education in its mother tongue and, for that purpose, to open and operate schools and educational institutions, in accordance with law.

The constitutional mandate to ensure rights relating to education from early childhood education to grade 12 has been delegated by the article 11 (8) of the Local Government Operation Act to the local level government while the undergraduate and university education are divided between the federal and provincial levels.

### **The Education Act, 2028**

2028 BS is considered as a milestone of Nepali education system. King Mahendra enforced the National Education System in 2028 BS. The first education act became effective in 2028 BS and is being effective till now. Before that policy, the schools were run by government, community as well as private level. Following the new policy these all types of schools were brought under the government. Private sector was not allowed to run schools at all (Dhungel, 2020).

The eighth (2073 BS) and the ninth amendments of the Education Act are the main policy documents guiding school education. Hence local levels received mandates from constitution but not received similar level of cooperation, funds and qualified human resources from the federal and provincial governments and administrative staff to fulfill their mandate. The Government is in the process of promulgating the much-awaited new Education Act. The approval of the new Act is expected to provide clarity on mandates, roles, and responsibilities of the LG units as well as clarity on the roles and responsibilities of the federal, provincial, and LGs in the management of

the education system. The Education Act (2028 BS) eighth amendment (2073 BS) has made a provision for the formation of a five-member School Property Protection Committee chaired by the District Administration Officer in each district.

One of the functions of this committee is to make provisions for registering the unregistered land acquired in the name of some schools. There are many schools operating without land certificates, and these schools often face problems in receiving aid or loans from national and international organizations for school construction or renovation. Now it has become a duty of the municipalities (Palikas) to make necessary arrangements to register the land and buildings which are received in the name of schools. According to the Education Act, the main responsibility for protecting a school's property lies with the School Management Committee and the head teacher.

The eighth amendment of the education regulation (2071 BS) is currently guiding school education. The regulation provides guidelines relating to the permission for establishing schools, and regarding school operation. One important focus of the eighth amendment is the provision for merging schools. A school can be merged if it does not have sufficient infrastructure, if there are a very limited number of students, or if two or more SMCs agree to run as a single school. Provisions for school classification have also been made. The schools are classified as A, B, C and D categories based on the facilities they have. The classification is based on Physical facilities; Teacher competencies; Accountabilities and transparency; School operation process; Education/learning achievement; and Other achievements.

The ninth amendment of the Education Act (2074 BS) has made the following provisions regarding the management of the community schools. There will be three streams of Secondary Education: (a) General, (b) Sanskrit, and (c) Technical and vocational.

- The medium of education will be Nepali, English or both languages.
- Schools will be required to implement the curriculum and textbooks as approved by the Government.
- To operate, supervise and manage every community school there will be a School Management Committee (SMC) consisting of nine members. The tenure of the SMC shall be three years.

### **The School Sector Development Plan (2016-2023)**

Schools can significantly help pupils in developing life skills that are useful in their lived contexts. However, academics have observed that students often learn knowledge and skills in schools that are largely unrelated to what they learn at home and in the community (Rai, 2020).

The SSDP is a comprehensive plan covering the overall development of school education by considering equality, quality, efficiency, government and management, and resilience. Programme guidelines and directives are developed and provided to implement the SSDP in schools. At the school level, SSDP focused on improving access to safe environments that enable learning and strengthening child peer support mechanisms (Badal, 2020). It has stressed the need for access to education in safer schools with resilient infrastructure and child-friendly environments. It has specifically pointed out the need for gender-inclusive practices, compliance with the MECs, use of mother-tongue languages as a medium of instruction, relevant and good quality curricula, and reliable school-based assessment systems at the basic education schools. Similarly, it has focused on providing teacher management (deployment and redeployment) and professional development support for improving the teaching and learning of science, language (Nepali and English), and maths. The plan has also stressed the need for specific professional development support for technical and vocational teachers. The development of a School Improvement Plan (SIP) in each school is the most important primary instrument to initiate reform programs in schools and has the ultimate objective to improve pupil achievement. Based on the SIP schools develop yearly work plans and receive approval from the SMC for implementation.

The SIP is also considered a very important instrument for managing and governing schools. It is supposed to be developed in a bottom-up process in which community members, parents, and other stakeholders are actively involved. Ensuring the active participation is a major challenge, and observations show that this is often not happening. The approved SIP from SMC will be submitted to the LG office as it was previously submitted to the District Education Office. Based on the plans received from schools, the LG education plan will be developed and submitted to the municipality education committee for approval, and once it is approved the budget will be released to the schools.

To date, for most schools, the SIP is mainly a requirement used to secure budget release. In smaller and less well-resourced schools there is a lack of the required capacity to use SIP as an instrument to initiate school improvement planning. The plan should be the key instrument for the

development of the school and for improving its management, and in this regard, it should form the base for performance monitoring. There is a need to develop the school-level capacity to monitor infrastructure development, management, and students' achievements. Therefore, the new Education Act needs to be promulgated at the earliest opportunity so that LGs/municipalities can formulate their own regulations. The LGs, municipalities, and schools need to develop and use school improvement plans as active instruments in education sector management.

### **Education sector plan, 2021-2030:**

Digitalization has brought significant changes to education, particularly in the context of learning through various digital platforms and access to technology (Gurung & Shrestha, 2023).

The ten-year education sector plan recognizes the challenge of increasing access of students to ICT resources and technical education. Hence, it aims to strengthen connectivity and increase access to equipment in schools. The plan aims at supporting 7181 schools. It also emphasizes investing in other ICT infrastructures need for education. This plan has put forward the vision with “A School with Complete Infrastructure” with the provision of electricity to run appliances in the schools as an integral part of the infrastructure development in the school. The education professionals find the use of digital tools and technology challenging task due to difficulties in keeping students motivated and providing them with the practical and complex skills required in contemporary society even, graduates in the field often lack the skills expected by the ICT sectors, leading to a significant skills gap (Gurung & Shrestha, 2023).

### **Local Government Operation Act, 2074**

The Local Government Operation Act 2074 does not explicitly mention that local government is responsible for secondary education; and to realize constitutional commitments to free and compulsory education to all, the Act Relating to Compulsory and Free Education has been developed and education policy has committed to allocating 20% of the budget to education (Gandharba & Gaire, 2021).

The mandates of the education section are provided in the LG Operation Act. The act outlines 23 mandates, responsibilities, and rights of LGs regarding school-level education:

1. Formulate, implement, monitor, evaluate and regulate policies, laws, standards and plans related to ECD, basic and secondary education, parental education, non-formal education, open and alternative continuous learning, and community learning and special education.

2. Establish, operate, manage and regulate community, institutions (enlisted in Public Trust, Private Trust and Company Act) and schools of cooperative nature.
3. Operate, manage, monitor and evaluate technical education and vocational training.
4. Assure mother-tongue education in schools.
5. Manage assets of schools that have been merged or closed.
6. Operate and manage education committees.
7. Help establish School Management Committees in schools.
8. Ensure that all schools have names.
9. Manage lands, assets and other properties of Community Schools.
10. Enhance the quality of education, including timely distribution of reading materials.
11. Appoint and redeploy teachers and non-teaching staff of Community Schools.
12. Conduct school mapping exercises, including the right to open, merge and regulate schools.
13. Ensure the availability of timely and priority-based physical and other infrastructures and materials support to Community Schools.
14. Conduct grade eight examination.
15. Collect, analyse and improve learning outcomes of students.
16. Ensure free and compulsory basic education, including the provision of incentives and scholarships.
17. Assure that out-of-school children receive tuition and coaching services to encourage (re-) enrolment.
18. Ensure that local knowledge, skills and technology is being used in school education.
19. Coordinate and manage reading rooms/corners and local libraries.
20. Coordinate and regulate exchange visits for secondary schools.
21. Assure timely grants to Community Schools and ensure an effective school governance system.
22. Ensure professional development of teaching and non-teaching staff.
23. Operate extra-curricular activities in schools.

The thrust of the act is to receive the required financial and technical support from the federal and provincial government to the local governments to ensure its function. However, local levels constitutional mandates have not yet been fully supported by both political and bureaucratic culture at the federal level. There are lack of proper infrastructure including electricity that

supports modern teaching practices, shortage of experts, and local leaders are not sufficiently experienced to handle these challenges appropriately; more generally, local institutions have limited human and financial resources (Sapkota & Malakar, 2021).

### **The Act Relating to Compulsory and Free Education, 2075**

The act relating to compulsory and free education mandates the local level to make provisions for necessary lab, materials for extra-curricular activities, sports materials, sports infrastructures, computers, and access to information technology (Gurung & Shrestha, 2023).

### **Education policy 2076**

In its article 10.48 from the ministry of education, science and technology has put the communication and information technology as the integral part of the modern education system and put emphasis on the enhancing infrastructure to support such technology that includes the reliable and quality electricity supply to run such appliances. It has provided emphasis on use of technology, internet in the teaching process, and expand high speed internet system in the rural schools in collaboration with the Nepal Telecom Authority. The education policy has envisioned for the establishment of e-library, virtual laboratory, virtual classroom, online class, e-portfolio, ICT in its curriculum and introduction of podcase, web seminar, edu-cast, makerspace with the development of apps to run in the computer and mobile systems (Neupane, 2020). All these activities will be supported with the provision of reliable school electrification system so that these facilitates are available in the all the public school including in the rural area. The policy has emphasized in using mobile, tablets, and providing capacity building support to the teachers with provision for ‘mentor teacher’.

The **education vision paper 2079** published by MOEST has also envisioned in providing alternative energy technologies in the rural schools for use of technology in the schools. Gradually, IT based teaching curriculum would be introduced in the school, with the establishment of e-library in each secondary schools. The vision paper provides emphasis on developing online education materials and to be used by the teachers and students in accessing the online coursebook and other reference materials. Also, the science technology innovation (STI) policy 2076 has emphasized in using IT based education system and promoting innovation at the school level. All these efforts require reliable electricity system in the school infrastructure. The education system master plan for 2021-2030 prepared by the ministry has put forward the vision with “A School with Complete



Infrastructure” with the provision of electricity to run appliances in the schools as an integral part of the infrastructure development in the school (Rai, 2020).

### **Digital Nepal Framework, 2076**

It is being implemented with the objective of creating human resources that can utilize new economic opportunities through initiatives such as the creation of a sophisticated teaching-learning environment in the education sector. It covers topics such as assisting in teaching, enriching learning experiences, and improving educational outcomes. The framework is designed to enable Nepal to harness its growth potential by leveraging disruptive technologies and driving socioeconomic growth. 80 action plans -short-term, middle-term, long term to implement Digital Nepal Framework. Out of eight priority sectors, education is one of the sectors with a focus on providing an Online Learning Program, Education management system, and Smart Classroom (Rana, Greenwood, & Fox-Turnbull, 2020).

### **National Information and Communication Technology Policy, 2072:**

The ICT policy of 2072 aims to transform Nepal into an information and knowledge-based society and economy. The policy promotes e-learning systems to extend the reach of educational services, including teachers' training programs. It also emphasizes the need for the development and adoption of IT-enabled Educational Management Information Systems within public and private educational institutions will be promoted and facilitated to improve the quality of managing educational delivery activities, operations, and monitoring. The integration of computer skills into the teaching and learning process at primary, high school, and tertiary levels are to be promoted and facilitated according to the policy (Sapkota & Malakar, 2021).

### **Telecommunication Act, 2053:**

Nepal Telecommunication Authority of Nepal (NTA) is collecting 2% of the Gross Adjusted Revenue as Rural Telecommunication Development Fund (RTDF) annually from Telecom operators as per the Telecommunication Act 2053 B.S. NTA has used the RTDF to connect public schools, hospitals, and local governments in 74 districts of Nepal. The latest report of NTA indicates that 100 percent of the local governments, healthcare facilities, and secondary schools have been connected to the internet. The project has provided broadband internet service to 5,225 community-managed secondary schools. In addition, NEA has taken the program forward by

setting up IT laboratories in 1,000 community-managed secondary schools across the country (Rana, Greenwood, & Fox-Turnbull, 2020).

According to Nepal Telecom Authority (NTA), broadband internet service has been provided in 5,225 secondary schools till March 2021. NTA has implemented the project of providing broadband internet service using the funds of Rural Telecommunication Development Fund. Aiming at supporting the government's Digital Nepal campaign, NTA started this project in 2019 in association with the internet service providers. These initiatives targeted by the ministry requires better school electrification facility to run the computer, internet, online classes and getting access to the education materials. The facilities connected under the RTDF scheme will have free access to the internet for the first two years. However, after the first two years, these institutions will have to pay to remain connected.

## **Institutional roles**

### **Governments**

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology has launched an e-learning portal for grades 1 to 10 where students can access course materials online and offline. E-learning portal: <https://learning.cehrd.edu.np/>

Schools are under jurisdiction of Local government through the constitution provision and local governance operation act. Civil society at the local level are responsible in formation of school management committee and take necessary decision in implementing various programs and infrastructure services in the school. The civil society could play an important role in ensuring reliable and quality electricity services in the school to run the computer, IT, internet and online resources and also the develop mechanism for payment of the tariff against the services (Dhungel, 2020).

### **Civil Society**

At the time of lockdown, Room to Read was providing education materials to the students and communities through traditional (i.e., radio) and modern (i.e., social media) forms of media. Similarly Teach for Nepal initiated the distance learning programme in Tulsipur Sub-Metropolitan city. These are examples of creative methods private businesses and non-profit organizations funded by international donors are working to ensure that Nepal's young people are not only able

to continue their education through this pandemic, but that they have the technical know-how to succeed in today's world. The civil society at the local level could integrate the school electrification to the community training programs focused on skills development of income generation—essentially enabling them to learn for themselves how to raise standards of living and in the process enhancing some financial resources for its operation (Gandharba & Gaire, 2021).

Civil society at the local level are responsible in formation of school management committee and take necessary decision in implementing various programs and infrastructure services in the school. The civil society could play an important role in ensuring reliable and quality electricity services in the school to run the computer, IT, internet and online resources and also the develop mechanism for payment of the tariff against the services.

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### **Private sector**

Ncell and NTC, have launched special data plans like Mobile Class Data Pack and e-Shikshya Package for students and teachers, they are not accessible to all students in the poor rural area. This problem extends to faculty which are struggling to design effective online curricula, which requires a stable connection. Many need to convert paper-based courses to online content and gather additional resources (Rai, 2020).

One mode for sustainable operation is through the PPP arrangement where national governments and other public sector entities (partner with actors outside the public sphere to implement energy and educational projects together. Generally, PPPs have received support because of their ability to produce higher quality services at a lower cost than either public or private partners can do in isolation. Advantages include attracting private capital investment, increasing efficiency and effective use of resources, and improving budget certainty and the maximization of assets

The services could be leased out to private sector in energy service company model in providing services to the school (Rana, Greenwood, & Fox-Turnbull, 2020). The private sector firms provide, install, maintain and operate the off grid systems, and the equipment is owned by the private company rather than the end-users at least for the first 10-15 years to allow the company to recover its investment and accumulate some operating profit. The financing for the installation needs

especially in the beginning should come from several sources: government budgets, the private investor as well as donor or programmatic support. The technical assistance along with the grant from the donor can also benefit from training and capacity building.

### **Conclusion**

Government of Nepal has given high priorities on availing quality infrastructure services that includes reliable supply of electricity to run the IT equipment, computer and digitize school education. Government of Nepal has realized the importance of the computer education and use of science and technology, information technology, digitization of the curriculum through of use of applications and modern teaching methodology. For this reliable electricity supply is a must and government has provided emphasis for providing reliable electricity service to the schools and use them in enhancing the teaching methodology and introduction of technology in the school and students.

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