

# ***NEPAL***

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## Special Education in Nepal

### 1. Background Information

Nepal is the only Hindu kingdom of the world with the constitutional monarchy and multi-party democracy. It is a mountainous country situated between India and China with Mt. Everest, the highest peak in the world (8848m) and Lumbini, the birth place of Lord Buddha. It has typical ecological belts of the Himalaya, the hill and the Terai. The country is rectangular in shape and has an area of 1,47,181 Sq. Km. Nepal with the multi-lingual, multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and multi religious society.

Administratively, Nepal is divided into 5 Development Regions, 14 Zones, 75 Districts with 58 Municipalities and 3912 Village Development Committees. The population of Nepal 23.27 million with the growth rate 2.27% per year. The literacy rate is 58%. The official language is Nepali and there are also other different languages spoken by different ethnic groups in Nepal.

It is obvious that the prevalence rate of disability is high in the south Asian countries. About one third of the people with disabilities in the world are living in Asia and the Pacific Region. This huge number of disability starkly points out the need to create a joint forum and mutual co-operation to address the need of people with disables living in this area, in particular. Nepal as a developing country can not be an exception to this stark reality.

The census Report of 1981 has showed that 5.03 per thousand population are disabled. Similarly the survey conducted on the occasion of International Year of the Disabled Person show that 30 people per thousand has disabled. The WHO has estimated that 10% of the total population are disabled. The household survey conducted by Special Education Unit under the Ministry of Education in 1994 has reported that about 4.5% of all children would need special education. Some national NGOs have also conducted sample surveys on different type of disabilities indicating a variance in the prevalence rate of disability. This rather suggests that a current need is to determine the number of people who require different kinds of educational and medical facilities.

The national census has been just completed in this year but the final report has not been out. After the report is out, the data of different types of disabilities will be reported. This data will certainly help to make effective different plans and programmes in the area of disability.

## 2. Education System for Special Need Children in Nepal

In 1951, the country had only 203 primary schools, 40 lower secondary, 11 secondary, 1 technical and 2 colleges. In 1971 had the government launched a massive Education plan called the National Education System Plan(1971-76). This plan gave the Nepalese Education System a new direction to year by Education System towards the national development. After the restoration of multi party democracy in 1990, the new democratic government constituted another two national education commissions to review the existing education system and recommended viable system of Education for the country. Both education commissions have underscored the need to incorporate Special Education into the regular Education system as being guided by the philosophy of integration and inclusion.

Nepal is the signatory of the world Declaration on **Education for All** and consequently, it has renewed its commitment to provide equal educational opportunities to children with special needs in the country. Currently, Nepal is providing free education up to grade 10 of the secondary level. Constitutionally, Education, Health and Social welfare of people with disables have been guaranteed by the fundamental priorities. There is a provision for providing primary Education in the mother tongue.

The 9<sup>th</sup> plan (1997-2001) has forwarded the concept of inclusive schooling and recommended the development of regional resourced center to consolidate the services for the cause of people with special needs scattered over various ecological regions of the country. In general, the broad policy of the government is to include all children with needs in regular educational structure by maximizing the concept of inclusion and working out suitable strategies to translate it into class room nearly.

Since 1994, the government has started operational sing the National Education system on the phased basis by introducing the concept of resource class and resource teachers in the regular schools. The current emphasis is however towards the inclusive classes and inclusive teachers as an integral part of the regular schools.

The structural provision for the inclusion of special needs children starts with the regular school providing resource class facilities for blind deaf and mentally retarded children at the primary level. At the secondary level, special education council of the Ministry of Education and Sports has supported four national disability related NGOs that

provide schooling on special Education and integrated classroom setting. The four national NGOs, National Association for the welfare of the Blind (NAWB), Association for the welfare of the Mentally Retarded (AWMR), National Disable Association (NDA) and Welfare Society for the Hearing Impaired (WSHI) have been providing school level education through the schools run under them with the financing supports of Special Education Council. Presently, there are 33 special schools of four disability areas associated with above NGOs with the principal focus on special school approach.

The National Organization for the administration of the education system is divided into four levels Ministry of Education and Sports at the center level, Department of Education at the Center level, Regional Directorates (5) at the regional level and The District Education Offices(75) at the district level. The Department of Education as a policy implementation unit. This department has Special Education Section which is responsible for planning, implementing monitoring and evaluating the special need education programme. The District Education Office at the district level are located close to the areas of implementation with school supervisors as resource persons and focal persons to monitor and assist the operation of the resource class in the regular schools of the districts. The National Special Education Programme initiated in 1994 with 6 districts has now reached 35 of 75 districts with 207 resource classes in three disability areas. Eventually the programme will cover all 75 districts.

The resources classes operated in the regular schools have 10 students, each handled by a trained resource class teacher and assisted by a care taker. All the students in such resource classes are provided residential facilities with cost-free education and other services to promote the participation of the physical disabled children in the regular school system, and monthly scholarship of Rs. 50.00 each is provided by the Department of Education (DOE), Special Education Section (SES). A rough estimation is approximately 10% children of the total population with disabilities have received educational facilities at the school level.

In 1971 Special Education Council was formed under the chairmanship of Ministry of Educational and Sports. The main objectives of Special Education as follows-

1. to make for policy for special education programme
2. to run the programme
3. to provide funds for the programme
4. to make arrangements for text books, curriculum educational materials supervision and to give directions for Special Education Programme

In 1996 the Special Education Council prepared and approve the special education policy.

## The main function of the Special Education Council

- 1) Conducting sports competition among disabled persons.
- 2) Conducting training for the disabled persons.
- 3) Cultural programme competition among disabled persons.
- 4) Collection of data disabled persons.
- 5) Distribution of scholarship to the disabled students.
- 6) Monitoring and follow up of the organization's programme and co-ordination with NGOs.

The community participation in special education programme is invited and ensured through the formation of resource class management committee chaired by the community. The committee is responsible for managing the resource class developing infrastructure facilities, creating community awareness collecting and utilizing community resources and establishing linkage between the government authority and people in the community. More over the Special Education Programmes are running with mutual co-operation of DANIDA and other national level NGOs.

### 3. Curriculum

Special needs Education children do not have separate flexible curriculum as such as the plan of the government is to eventually include all children with special needs in the regular school system, a flexible and tailor made curriculum is under the consideration of government with the broad framework of the national curriculum. The deaf and the blind are taught the same national curriculum through Nepali sign language and the Braille script up to grade 10. The curriculum adjustment and adaptation are being considered as a priority more by Ministry.

Special Education Section under the Department of Education has developed some teaching learning materials for their use by resource teachers in the resource classes. Some of the NGO run schools have developed Educational materials in the form of teaching and learning aids to address the needs of the children.

A couple of special schools, such as, the schools for mentally retarded and physically disabled introduce pre vocational skills in the form of chalk making candle making, wearing, knitting carpentry. A couple of the schools for the blind have started to provide computer operation skills, printing and other secretarial skills.

### 4. Teachers Training

The Ministry based service trainings prepare teachers for the primary schools at the University level, long term pre-service training is provided with the aim of preparing special Education Teachers for the secondary schools. The training is degree oriented and

the degree, such as, 3 years Bachelor degree and one year bachelor in special education are earned by teachers and Department of Education provide short term intensive in-service training to each resource class teachers. Sometimes NGOs also conduct the short term teaching oriented training. The training methodologies employ a range of methods, such as, discussion, demonstration, small scale investigation, role play, brain- storming session and other forms of participatory approaches.

## **5. Research and Evaluation**

In 1998, a status evaluation of special need of evaluation programme was carried out by an independent research organization. The research has printed out the need to consolidate the resource class and teacher training system to pave way for the initiation of inclusive schooling. Residential facilities provided to the students were satisfactory according to the study, but a concern was raised for the courage of children under such facilities.

### **HMG's Aims and Objectives for Special Education Programme Adopted by Ninth Plan (1997-2001)**

For Special Education Programme, the course books, the course of study and other educational materials will be provided as an " Inclusive School Programme". The free distribution of these materials will be made available according to the need of people.

The scholarship for higher education will be provided for those students who are disabled and talented. In totally of disables, the only one percent has got chance for educational trainings regarding this reality to provide trainings opportunity the teachers training and Inclusive School Programme will be extended to five percent more.

At percent there is not any effective organization that can give trainings to the disables. That is why the programme will be lunched in all Five Development Regional Areas for their development. Attempts will be made to prepare the capable manpower to find out the problem of disables and work for them in the districts where the Special Education Programme is to be implemented. The training center will be established in each Five Development Regions and non-formal education programme will be extended for income generating activities.

### **Enhancing International Mutual Co-operation among Countries in the Asia-Pacific Region**

There is diversity in economic situation, cultural practice, education status and Geographic structure among the nations in Asia Pacific Region. Many of the countries are facing poverty, higher illiteracy rate, starvation and so on very badly. Due to above reasons the situation of the disabled people extremely miserable in those countries from every respect of living.

Disability is to be boarder crossing issue and it should be taken as the common problem in nations within the region. Common commitment by nations is essential either to reduce disability rate or improve the condition of the disabled people.

Nepal always believes in to solve that similar sort of problems mutual co-operation and common commitment. In the context of special education different countries may have different practices and approaches. Among the those approaches and practices, the most effective one should be shared and practiced in the region. To carry out this goal, the exchange and usage of information technology should be priorities.

As to the problem or needs of the disabled people are similar to great context in the region.

Nepal not only gives the priority of the mutual co-operation in international sector regarding to special education but also it works having network among the concern GOs, INGOs and NGOs within the country. We need to have both national and international organizations working in the field of disability in Nepal and Effective coordination among them has done, too. Special Education Council, Ministry of the Education and Sports has been working successfully having co-operation of NGOs like Nepal Association for the Welfare of the Blind (NAWB), Association for the Welfare of the Mentally Retarded (AWMR), welfare society for the hearing impaired (WSHI) Nepal Association of disabled (NDA) for the to provide education for the disabled in this nation. Similarly, having special education unit the Department of Education Ministry of the Education and Sports has been providing education for the children with disabilities by developing mutual co-operation of the NGOs like National Federation of the Disabled-Nepal (NFD-Nepal).

As the mutual co-operation, among the organizations working in the Disabilities, field in Nepal, there should be co-operation and solidarity among nations in the region to achieve the goal of education for the disabled persons (Education for All).

Importance of mutual co-operation:

1. To share the information of the efforts and achievements among the nation in the field of special education programme in the region.
2. To develop the environment where disabled people easily can access education in the region.
3. To improve and expanse the Information Technology regarding to special education in the region.
4. To strengthen the relationship among the disabled people and nations within the region.

The areas where the mutual co-operation should be necessarily enhance:

**1. Information technology**

None of us deny that this is the age of information and technology. Many countries in the regions have use the modern Technology even in the field of Special Education and come up with wonderful achievement as the result. Therefore Transformation of Technology should be in the rights of the every nation on the regions. It is better to have information centre and make its effectiveness properly.

**2. Curriculum Development Strategy**

Different nation have varies design of curriculum and teaching materials in the region. Some of the nations certainly have deserved base quality and some have developed poorly. Thus, attempts should be made to develop similar types of curriculum and teaching methodology in each nation by not stopping the process of quality improvement.

**3. Effectiveness of Teacher Training**

Teacher Training is also one of the part factors of Special Education. There should be mutual cooperation to transfer base practices and theories to train the teachers who involve in the special education sectors.

**4. Teaching Materials Development**

Every country uses different types of teaching materials in the field of special education. Therefore if we have environment to share the materials and technology with regions, we can provide more scientific and effective special education.

**5. Financial Cooperation**

Money is not every thing but it makes world go around. It is clear that many countries are facing poverty, terribly due to very bad economic condition and they seem to be unable to provide education for disabled children in our region. If there is no support from other countries for their poverty elevation, there is very little change that they could improved there special education. As the matter of fact there should be very nice mutual cooperation to improve the financial situation among the countries in the regions.

**6. Assistive Devices**

There are many countries, in which disable people are unable to attend in education due to the lack of assistive devices. Such as wheel chairs, slate stylus and so on but fortunately, some of the countries have such devices and also technology to develop them. Therefore attempts should be made to have mutual cooperation to provide the environment that the every

needy disabled should have right to use assistive devices as they need in the regions.

#### How to Enhance Mutual Co-operation among the Countries in the Asia-Pacific Region

Nepalese views in the following ways mutual cooperation can be enhance:

- providing platform for each nation through seminar workshop trainings
- exchanging information, ideas and technology.
- developing understanding, solidarity in making policy strategy and implementing them.
- providing opportunities for exchange visit for the representatives working in the INOs, NGOs & GOs in the nations.
- by establishing an information collection and discrimination center some where in the regions.