

Higher Secondary Education at a glance

EDUCATION IN NEPAL, FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY

Education plays a pivotal role in developing patriotic, disciplined and productive human resources in one hand and strengthening the institutions of democracy and civil society on the other. Be it the time of the Gurukul or the modern equipped schools of today, education has always been the pathfinder in the life of each and every individual.

In the context of Nepal, we have come a very long path to be where we are today. The educational scenario of Nepal in historical perspective seems very interesting. As there were almost no educational institutions in the country during the Rana Period (1856-1950), public access to these institutions was almost non-existent or unheard of. The privileged access of members of the higher castes and wealthier economic strata to education was for centuries a distinguishing feature of society. The Ranas kept education the exclusive prerogative of the ruling elite; the rest of the population remained largely illiterate. With the introduction of the multi party democracy (MPD) In 1951 after the fall of the Rana regime, the establishment of educational institutions was encouraged, however, the institutions of higher education were directly affiliated with Indian Universities and Colleges. But after the establishment of Tribhuvan University (TU) in 1960 under the TU Act, 1959, it started conducting its own examinations since 1960 and also prescribed its own syllabuses according to the need and situation of the country. Many colleges affiliated with TU were also declared open in various parts of the kingdom. Since then, TU has been playing a major role in the development of education in Nepal.

During the period of 1961-1989, the establishment of educational institutions was further encouraged. As the donor community showed keen interest in the strengthening of the educational institutions, Foreign aid was also mobilized in this direction. Under the American aid scheme, the New Education System Plan (NESP) was also introduced in 1971, which, besides other things, stressed on vocational education, and separated the traditional education system from that of the existing one. It aimed at producing a new generation rising up above the tradition of the past.

With the dispensation of pluralistic democracy in Nepal in 1990 after the historic mass uprising, education system took a new direction. The government formed after 1990 encouraged the establishment of educational institutions, including the private ones under the privatization scheme, at different levels. During 1990-1999, attempts were made to increase the literacy rate and improve the quality of education in the kingdom.

In order to make education accessible for girl children, increase, the number of girls enrollment in schools, encourage educated women enter the field of education and ensure greater number of girls complete primary education, a total of 84,399 girl

students, studying at different levels were provided various scholarship in FY 1997/98. In FY 1997/98 through the Basic and Primary Education Project, 86,863 children were made literate. Moreover, through National Non-formal Education Council (NNEC) 4,800 children and 228 thousand adults became literate.*¹

Today, the importance of education has been accepted by the present constitution of Nepal, which provides equal educational opportunities to all citizens irrespective of region, caste, ethnicity, religion and sex

The post 1990 legal provisions have further encouraged every citizen's right to education. In order to create positive environment for this, some structural and institutional changes have been made in this direction. The Ministry of Education (MOE) has been restructured and the Department of Education (DOE) has been setup in the central level during the FY 1999-2000.

The post 1990 constitutional and legal provisions, thus, leave greater room for equal educational opportunities to all citizens.

HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NEPAL, A BACKDROP

It is said that education is a life long process, but the basic education that one gets during the formative years definitely contributes to the shaping of one's future and outlook. This is where; the school and high school education assumes importance.

Today's school is not merely a school it is much more.

Its teachers and staffs together with the guardians and students give it a wholesome environment. A student not only finds a guru here but guides and friends for life. It is a place to inculcate the fundamentals of honored values. The education of the weak brains between the ages of 17-18 is counted within the school education in the international arena.

Further the students of this age group require a disciplined environment of the schools rather than that of the universities because of their sensitive age factor. It was precisely for these kind of reasons that the educational planners, administrators, pedagogues and experts took the initiative to bring about a change in the existing educational structure by incorporating two more years of schooling in it, grade XI and grade XII, known as higher secondary level.

For this purpose, two important seminars were organized in which educational professionals and responsible authorities participated, and eventually concluded with a consensus that the 10+2 system be established and operated with optimum efficiency and effectiveness.

Following this outcome, Government of Nepal decided to introduce the Higher Secondary Education Act, which came into effect in 1989 A.D. Later, as stipulated in the Act, the Higher Secondary Education Assembly was constituted under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education & Sports.

Subsequently Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB) was established in 1989 under the Higher Secondary Education Act.

The Board is involved in running the 10+2 system in the country.

Nepal National Commission of Education 1992 recommended the importance of the 10+2 structure in the education system and viewed it as the first step towards specialization.

Incorporating extra two years in school education was a change in the existing educational structure aiming at meeting the middle level manpower and imparting necessary knowledge and skills to the students pursuing further education.

The higher secondary education in Nepal, is nothing more than the result of globalization, a need to come in terms with the global markets when the world is turning into a global village, and the countries, borderless

Today is the time of multiculturalism, where every voice from every country is striving to have their say. Today the situation may be viewed as an indeterminate set of attitudes that has been shaped by various diversities of cultural and intellectual currents.

Here, education cannot be separated from this politics of existence because it is only through education that one can prove them.

Today's world with its constant and extensive interaction between people of different countries demands a system and standard of education that can earn international recognition.

On the other hand no education system will be viable if it has no relevance to the community and its environs. So, the Higher Secondary education is a critical stage in development of the human resources essential for economic development and social progress of the country.

Passing various difficult phases with the passage of time, education is gradually getting due priority in the regions of our country.

The 1003 higher secondary schools at present and the possibility of its proliferation show that the establishment of the Higher Secondary Education Board will be justifiable in the future to come.

Rationale OF Higher Secondary Education Board

Creating opportunities for graduates of secondary education to pursue higher study is the main intent of the Higher Secondary Education System. However, various other factors in favor of this educational system are mentioned below:

- The 10+2 system is characteristically democratic because, with the opening of 10+2 schools, the SLC-pass students in rural areas will have access to further education. Students aiming for higher education can study at their own surroundings.
- This system is basically oriented to addressing the issue of equity in higher education with emphasis on creating a congenial environment for girls and for deprived and disadvantaged groups of people getting this level of education.
- Relevant curricula, quality text materials and involvement of qualified teachers for effective instructional processes are the major emphases of 10+2 system. Judged from this standpoint, this system will be successful in producing people with high potentials needed for all-round national development.
- Since SLC-pass students are still rather immature, they should not be making firm decisions about higher studies independently, the 10+2 system provides them with constant guidance and counseling services.
- A school is greatly strengthened by older students who can give a lead and example to younger students and the whole intellectual ethos of the school is improved. Similarly, the universities will be greatly improved by having more mature undergraduates who have learned to study by themselves and think critically and clearly.
- The 10+2 structure is significant in bringing about uniformity between educational structures of Nepal and other Asian countries, especially SAARC member states

JUSTIFICATION OF THE CONCEPT OF HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION IN NEPAL

A society empowered with all enabling strengths can be imagined only when the educational programs of the society are relevant to the emerging needs in the social, economic, political and other important spheres of and outside the nation.

Centers of learning at various levels in Nepal have for generations drawn many students in pursuit of knowledge thus by making significant contributions to Nepal's human resource development.

There is a natural urge in every human being to explore and experiment. The urge is even greater with the children of 17-18 years of age. The teachers, the Government and all the sides concerned can channel these urges in a very constructive manner.

In this regard, the 10+2 system has a mission to shoulder a big responsibility to provide contemporary efficient and market driven education to students, while remaining committed to prepare the leaders of tomorrow.

To think well, to feel well, to act well and to be felt well, all are the consequences of good and well directed education, the education which is committed to minorities in education, politics, sex and language. If these things are to be considered the backbone of development in any country, the following points justify the concept of higher secondary education and the establishment of HSEB in Nepal.

- **The Higher Secondary Education is accessible to all classes:**

The Higher Secondary Education has been introduced to provide quality education to a larger part of population. Because of the limited number of universities and campuses and their concentration in the urban and semi urban areas, a large group of students in the rural areas are either deprived of education or are forced to migrate in the urban areas leaving their parents and bearing the responsibility of monetary transactions, which further deviates them from being a total and committed student.

Further the system even promotes female participation, as it is known that still today, a girl has many boundaries in the Nepali society and she still has to face a lot of problem, or she is totally denied in the idea of leaving home for further studies.

In this regard the, Higher Secondary Education Schools established near their home places provide them with the opportunity to be a part of the mainstream.

- **The Education plan initiates for coordination :**

The Higher Secondary education plan decreases the university's burden of responsibility in the proficiency certificate level (P.C.L). This further results in a well-managed university.

Keeping the structure of the Higher secondary level within the periphery of school education will bring uniformity in the education system from the primary level to higher secondary level removing the gulf between the curricula of secondary level and Bachelor level.

- **The Education is relevant to the mentality of the students.**

The students of the age group 17-18 are not mature enough to cope up with the free environ of the university, rather their immaturity requires a disciplined environment where they can find such teachers who can guide, counsel and be friends with them as per their sensitive age factor.

A university has a very liberal and big environment where the urges of the students can go astray when they do not get a regular counseling.

- **Educational uniformity with the SAARC countries**

The Higher secondary education system is relevant to the global and regional perspective. The system is already in existence in the SAARC region so Nepal cannot remain in isolation. Moreover the system even erodes the view that Nepal has a very short duration of schooling and it also strengthens the students' conviction that has to face disparities in connection with the level of education.

SPECIFIED OBJECTIVES:

The structure of school education in Nepal :

Primary level	(grade 1-5)
Lower Secondary	(grade 6-8)
Secondary	(grade 9-10)
Higher Secondary	(grade 11 –12)

The ninth plan as well as the tenth plan (current five year plan)of the government is determined to implement special programs for reducing caste-based, gender based and other inequalities in both secondary and higher secondary levels. The plan also says the proficiency certificate level programs of the universities will be phased out to higher secondary schools.

The report of the Nepal National Commission of Education (1992) reiterated the earlier recommendation to include the 10+2 programme in the education system, and also viewed it as the first step towards specialization. However, it was felt that the programme should essentially focus on the need for meeting the requirements of middle level manpower, and for imparting necessary knowledge and skills to the students pursuing further education.

Specifically, The objectives of Higher Secondary Education then are to:

- Prepare students for the world of work especially in meeting middle level manpower requirements in different fields.
- Prepare students for general higher education and for professional disciplines
- Prepare the youth with competitive strength required for a patriotic, disciplined and productive human resources while contributing to the shaping of one's future and outlook.
- Adopt a system of greater equity in opportunities by reducing regional and ethnical disparity and promoting female participation.
- Aim to produce the ambassadors of culture, who irrespective of caste, class, gender and ethnicity respect the cultures that exist in human society and the politics of plurality.

Functions Of Higher Secondary Education Board.

The main functions are as follows:

- Granting approval for +2 schools.
- Developing and revising curricula and textbook materials.
- Conducting examinations and publishing results.
- Awarding certificates to higher Secondary School graduates.
- Supervising and monitoring Higher Secondary School programs.
- Implementing plans and programs for improving Higher Secondary Education.
- Recruiting technical, professional and administrative staff.
- Designing and implementing training programs for +2 school teachers and other staff.
- Conducting seminars and workshops.
- Undertaking research activities, which focus on various issues in this field.
- Keeping liaison with various national and international institutions

PROFESSIONAL ENDEAVORS:

Despite a lot of obstacles due to its own problems, the Higher Secondary Board has been striving for some concrete progress over the years, which are worth mentioning:

- While remaining committed to its objectives the HSEB has been working to develop its curricula and teachers' manual as per the time honored tradition.
- Increasing number of students' enrolment every year prove the efficiency of HSEB. Moreover, the corporation has its own office of the controller of Examinations to conduct the 11 and 12 examinations throughout the country.
- The Secretariat of the board, organizes seminars, workshops and teacher training programmes both at the central and regional levels, with the objective of enhancing professional competencies of principals and teachers of the higher secondary schools.
- These approaches have generated meaningful results both for the Board and the school in streamlining their future course of activities effectively and realistically.
- The Higher Secondary Education Board is committed to making substantive changes in quality and standard of higher secondary education. For this purpose, the Board has initiated numerous reforming measures relating to curriculum development, examination programmes and teacher preparation in collaboration with 10+2 institutions, pedagogues, educational planners and others.
- A process of reform engendered in the higher secondary education sub-sector is likely to stir other sub-sectors to make their own initiatives of an all-round development of education.

ISSUES FACING THE HIGHER SECONDARY EDUCATION PROGRAMME

The higher secondary education board is still facing a lot of challenges, problems, anomalies and aberrations despite more than a decade of its existence. Irrespective of the concentrated efforts of concerned sides and HSEB itself, a lot of questions still remain unanswered and lot of issues un-addressed.

The structure:

The root of the higher secondary education in Nepal is not very deep. The system of students being enrolled in the University level directly after S.L.C is still into practice in our country. It seems that it will take some more time for the establishment of standard 11 and 12 in the schools as continuity after class 10, the final stage of school education and breaking the tradition of looking at HSE as a part of higher education..

At present, the number of higher secondary education schools in Nepal is 1003. Of the whole, they work variably, via, classes 1-12, classes 11-12, classes 6-12, classes 4-12 and even with PCL and Bachelor level of university campuses.

This has brought a big diversity in the education system.

School management:

Although establishment of Higher Secondary Education has already completed its 10 years, and even though higher secondary education is regarded as the last level of school Education, Education & Sports Ministry and District Education Office have not been able to give their full support towards this program.

Higher Secondary Education is still taken to be a part of University Level, but is joined with school education. This type of situation may create confusion in the education system of Nepal.

Many differences can be seen in the administration of different Higher Secondary Schools. A number of Higher Secondary Schools are processed under the same administration as that of secondary level while some have different administrations for the processing of higher secondary education.

Affiliation:

Till date, the higher secondary schools- rural and urban, remote and near, or affluent and poor, all are given affiliation by the Board on common preconditions like the basis of teachers, physical facilities and economic resource. Therefore the social justice seems somewhat neglected.

As there is no system of giving permission for the processing of schools on the basis of mapping and possible reports, the schools given permission by the board do not have the desired amount of students in them.

Nearly more than one third of the higher secondary programs are not attached with secondary schools. This affects a lot in the development of a psychology that higher secondary education is also a part of school education.

The programs of 10+2's that are affiliated by the Higher Secondary Education Board are much more than that of community based T.U. affiliated campuses.

Mostly T.U. campuses are limited only in the cities and headquarters of districts whereas higher education programs are distributed not only in the urban areas but also in the rural areas and the villages. These types of programs are very useful in removing the imbalance of educational opportunities. But before starting these programs the burden of infra structures like economic, physical and educational aspects is very difficult to resist.

Teacher Management:

Teacher component is the most serious concern in the higher secondary education, but there seems a problem of academic seniority and social credibility in the higher secondary schools.

There is difference in the educational qualification of teachers in the rural and urban areas of Nepal. In the urban areas, the teachers are rarely unqualified (even the part time teachers) up to the level of Higher secondary education (i.e. M.Ed or equivalent) whereas the teachers at the rural areas most of the time are qualified to the level of secondary education only (i.e. B.Ed or equivalent).

This creates a problem in the quality of education the students get that further results in hierarchy between them.

This has caused a situation of uncertainty. To add, regulating teaching load, service conditions and tenure of teachers are almost a blue moon today.

Similarly, the training component of the HSEB has to be made very strong, it is a vital aspect as teachers are the brain smiths for the students.

Physical Infrastructure:

Most of the higher secondary schools have to depend on other organizations and secondary schools for building, classes and physical equipments. The higher secondary classes, which are processed in the secondary schools, are also timed either in the mornings or evenings.

Specially the science schools in the rural areas lack laboratory space and equipment for experimental works.

Physical and academic support to higher secondary schools is crucial in order to build their capacity to absorb the PCL students.

This gives an idea that the programs of the higher secondary board have to be as autonomous as the board itself.

Phase in/Phase out

The Universities have still not yet started effective steps in decreasing the enrolment of students in the Proficiency Certificate Level (P.C.L), which would help in the rise in the number of students in the 10+2 as per the Government's plan. However its step towards stopping the affiliation of new P.C.L programs is worth praises.

Financial Aspects

A lot has to be done in the financial aspects of +2 education where teachers, students and even institutions require an alarming consideration. The government provides free education to the primary and secondary level of education, and enough grants to university education. Though grants are provided to the higher secondary schools, the amount does not meet the requirement.

In the urban areas, both P.C.L and higher secondary are available to students and they choose the education, which costs low, but in the rural areas, less number of colleges results in costly education of +2. But the +2 institutions cannot help it because they run out of the money they collect from students. Moreover these students are also very less in number as everyone cannot afford costly education so the situation of the institution, the teachers as well as the students are worth thinking.

The decision regarding the phase in of PCL to HSE is also an initiative of the government, but the government seems rather low in financial and managerial responsibilities of the sensitive age group.

At present, the HS schools are running from resources generated through private and community sources, relying on the student fees.

There is a wide range of variation in the amount of fees raised by different schools in the urban areas, whereas the schools in the rural areas are not even in a position to raise fees to commensurate their minimum requirements. These anomalies are a challenge to the quality of education that HSEB dreams of.

Curriculum and Textbook

The adoption of the single-track system still needs to be fully implemented in the preparation of the course books. Because of this problem, the students of the higher secondary level still have to depend on the reference materials rather than the textbooks due to lack of resources.

The present curricula have been developed mainly on the basis of experiences gained in the universities.

Examination:

At present, Higher secondary education board conducts the examination of classes 11 and 12 classes separately as annual examinations .On one hand this creates a burden on the board during the examination time and on the other hand, it is seen that examination processing is more focused.

Details of Higher Secondary Schools

Total No. of HSS	1976
Govt. Schools	1313
Private (10+2)	373
0+2	160
Campuses	<u>130</u>
Total	1976

Formation of curriculum and Teaching manual

(i) Implemented curriculum -116 - 51 in XI and 65 in XII

(ii) Teaching manual prepared - 33 subjects of XI and 30 subjects of XII

4. Teacher Training

5000 teachers of different subjects has been trained.