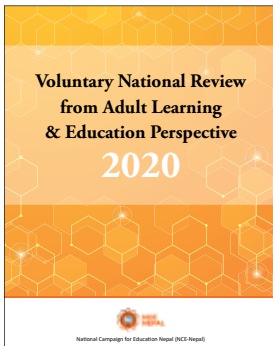


# **Voluntary National Review from Adult Learning & Education Perspective 2020**



National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE-Nepal)



**Editor:** Mr. Ram Gaire

**Research and Analysis:**

Dr. Indra Mani Rai

Ms. Shradha Koirala

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## Preface

National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE Nepal) with ECOSOC status organization is a national network of different 409 member organizations that includes I/NGOs, teacher organization, journalists and community organization working for strengthening of the public education system in Nepal by ensuring the educational rights of children and adults that provisioned in the constitution. Established in 2003 as Nepal chapter of Global Campaign for Education (GCE), NCE Nepal has been engaged in the education campaigning through researches, capacity enhancement initiatives, community mobilization and networking. In addition, NCE Nepal is also working for the promotion of agenda and issues of adult learning and education as these agenda are in least priority of the governments' plans and policies. Since, ALE is significant issue for achieving the sustainable development goals 4 and E 2030, it is important to address the issues of ALE in the plans and policies of government. Hence, as the leading network of the different civil society organizations, NCE Nepal in the support of regional level Network Asia Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) has been conducting the advocacy on establishing Adult Learning and Education (ALE) agenda in Nepal especially in the discourses of public education strengthening. For this, numbers of researches, reviews and monitoring as well as advocacy and capacity development initiatives were conducted at the federal, province and local level. As a part of it, review of Voluntary National Review (VNR) was conducted from the ALE perspectives for providing suggestions to the National Planning Commission (NPC), a responsible body of VNR process of Nepal and province and local government. The objective of this initiative was to influence the VNR process from civil society and ensure that ALE related agenda are addressed and incorporated in the VNR Report of Nepal.

The findings and recommendations from the review was used as advocacy tool for submission and delegation from NCE Nepal and it was also used in holding the policy debates and discourses in around ALE in Nepal. Also, the outcomes of the NCE Nepal's review was taken as country report and case for the regional level comprehensive report that was prepared by ASPBAE to influence the Asia Pacific Forum for Sustainable Development (APFSD) organized by UN ESCAP and High Level Political Forum organized by UN Headquarter. Also, NCE Nepal based on the findings are recommendations from VNR review made the regular follow up with the government and advocates for prioritizing on ALE agenda and lifelong learning opportunities to the marginalized communities who has been deprived from the rights to education, skills and empowerment. In addition, the report was used as advocacy tool during the COVID 19 pandemic for the advocacy in the attainment of SDG 2030 agenda including ALE as achieving quality lifelong learning is one of the priority agenda of SDG4.

For this initiative of NCE Nepal, the coordination and support from Government of Nepal, Ministry of Education, Science and technology (MoEST), social development ministry of province government, local governments and CSOs was highly crucial. Hence, I would like to thank to the aforementioned agencies for their support. Furthermore, the continuous support in the initiation and work of NCE Nepal from the member organizations, network, partner organizations and district coordination committee is also appraisable. Equally, I am grateful to the Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Organization (ASPBAE) for the financial, technical support and guidance. Also, I would also like to thank Dr. Indra Mani Rai for the review and preparing this report. Last but not least, the effort and hard work of the NCE Nepal's secretariat team for the development and publication of this report is also memorable and appreciable.

**Thank You.**

Regards,  
Dilli Ram Subedi  
President

# Acronyms

<b>ALE:</b>	Adult Learning Education
<b>CA:</b>	Constituent Assembly
<b>CBS:</b>	Central Bureau of Statistics
<b>CLCs:</b>	Community Learning Centers
<b>CTEVT:</b>	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training
<b>CSOs:</b>	Civil Society Organizations
<b>DCCs:</b>	District Coordination Committees
<b>ECDC:</b>	Early Childhood Development Center
<b>ECOSOC:</b>	Economic and Social Council
<b>EFA:</b>	Education for All
<b>ESC:</b>	Education Service Commission
<b>FY:</b>	Fiscal Year
<b>GDP:</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GNI:</b>	Gross National Income
<b>HLPF:</b>	High – Level Political Forum
<b>ICT:</b>	Information and Communication Technology
<b>IMF:</b>	International Monetary Fund
<b>MDGs:</b>	Millennium Development Goals
<b>M &amp; E :</b>	Monitoring & Evaluation
<b>MoEST:</b>	Ministry of Education, Science and Technology
<b>NCE Nepal:</b>	National Campaign for Education Nepal
<b>NDAC:</b>	National Development Action Committee
<b>NPC:</b>	National Planning Commission
<b>NSDES:</b>	National Strategy for the Development of Education Statistics
<b>ODA:</b>	Official Development Assistance
<b>PERF:</b>	President Education Reform Fund
<b>PMEP:</b>	Prime Minister Employment Program
<b>SDGs:</b>	Sustainable Development Goals
<b>SSDP:</b>	School Sector Development Plan
<b>TVET:</b>	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
<b>USD:</b>	United States Dollar
<b>VNR:</b>	Voluntary National Review
<b>WHO:</b>	World Health Organization

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# National Context

## 1.1. Political Context

**I**n Nepal and elsewhere, informal or indigenous nature of adult learning and education was ubiquitous and closely aligned with the everyday livelihoods, spiritual and socio-cultural needs of the community and of people. However, the formal and non-formal adult learning and education practices were guided by the Nepal's political history that has a lot of twists and turns. One hundred and four years of long authoritarian Rana regime that was overthrown by people movement in 1950 largely restricted the non/formal adult education. Then after, the democracy stored providing space to monarchy. Soon after few years of democratic rule, King Mahendra took over introducing Panchayat rule up to banning political parties. But, he was more open in national development and education of people and hence the non-formal education as a form of adult learning began with a little bit narrow views of literacy programs. Schools and universities were opened rapidly as the priorities of people. King's rule continued for 30 years with less freedom to people expressing their voices of rights. The Constitution of Kingdom of Nepal 1990 was then formed as a product of first historic people's movement that established constitutional monarchy. The constitution was supposed a milestone for restoration of people's right to education.

One particular political group, Nepal Communist Party Nepal (Maoist), expressed

dissatisfaction of the political change and started armed conflict in 1996 with a view to have a radical change in the state system ensuring the social, economic and educational rights of people particularly from the marginalized and deprived segments. The movement expanded clutching each and every corner of the country mobilizing youths as armed forces. A large number of youths remain out of mainstreaming formal education as they rejected the modern education blaming it as the education of/ for bourgeoisie. However, the Maoists' movement contributed to educate a large number of political cadres including people armies in regard to the political, economic and social rights. The social reform agendas of improving socio-economic conditions and ensuring social justice to all segments of people were supported by a large majority of people. Several insurgencies happened and about seventeen thousand people killed and thousands of conflict victim children and youths are still there in vulnerable conditions without their basic rights of living and education.

King Gyanendra dismissed the elected government in 2002 and took over the power of state in 2005 which fueled to form Seven Party Alliance. This gave rise popular second people's movement. This movement led to the power in Seven Party Alliance and Comprehensive Peace Accord with Nepal Communist Party Nepal (Maoist). Interim Constitution was formed in 2007 but again

Madhesi people dissatisfied and Madhesh movement arose with the key agenda of federalism. The Maoists emerged as the largest party in the election to the first Constituent Assembly (CA) in April 2008 with the agendas of promoting justice to the poor, marginalized and deprived communities and religious minorities. The movements gave rise to new Constitution of Nepal 2015 from the constitution assembly formed after the nationwide election of constitution assembly members. The constitution has clearly envisaged the educational rights of people delegating power to local level.

## 1.2. Economic Context

It is often argued that Nepal could not take a path of desired economic development due to political instability including ten years long 'Peoples' War' led by Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) and state restructuring processes. Still, there are a large number of people (18.7%) are under poverty (who earns less than US\$ 1.25 per day). Nepal succeeded to reduce the prevalence of undernourishment (27.3%) and increase access to safe drinking water (35%). The facts indicate that there are still large number of people in Nepal who need to have access of the resources for improving their well-being and capabilities. The average annual growth rate of last three years was 6.9 percent but still huge trade deficit and there is less contribution of industries<sup>1</sup>. However, economic growth is expected to fall in Nepal to a range between 1.5 and 2.8 percent in FY 2020 reflecting lower remittances, trade, tourism and

broader disruptions caused by the COVID-19 outbreak as estimated by WHO, IMF and CBS<sup>2</sup> Nepal. A large number of labor migrants are returning to the country threatening to have further unemployment, poverty and hence health adversities. However, the recent budget of FY 2020/21 has given focus on agriculture (30%), education (11.64%) and health (6.15%) allocating significantly enhanced amount that has created a hope of economic resilience.

Nepal is heavily dependent on remittances, which amount to as much as 30% of GDP. The government seems less successful for creating employment opportunities in home country as annual outmigration of youths of age group 18 to 35 are still 236, 208 in 2019 (that was 519, 638 in 2014)<sup>3</sup>. Most of the youths are from marginalized and deprived communities working in middle east and gulf countries. Out-migration of youths has kept the most agricultural lands unused and unproductive. Though agriculture is a principal economic activity in Nepal in which 65% of population engage contributing to 31.7% of GDP<sup>4</sup>. However, untimely and inadequate supply of chemical fertilizers and delay monsoons often cause lower production. The government interventions of educating farmers on modern agricultural practices seems weaker.

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 has paved the ways for multidimensional development of Nepal. The prime focus lies on promoting socio-economic development

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<sup>1</sup>Fifteenth five-year plan, National Planning Commission, Nepal

<sup>2</sup>Central Bureau of Statistics, Nepal

<sup>3</sup>Nepal Labor Migration Report 2020 (Government of Nepal) accessible at <https://moless.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Migration-Report-2020-English.pdf>

<sup>4</sup><https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/nepal/overview>



through federalization. The state has been re-structured in to three tiered governments (federal, 7 provincial and 753 local) with the promulgation of the constitution delegating power local government to exercise in the context of local people of their own. It has envisaged to lead the nation towards socialism promoting equitable and inclusive development processes. It has given emphasis on ensuring the economic rights of marginalized and deprived communities. Even though the poverty and hunger are still prevalent against women or girls, Dalits, Janajatis and religious minorities. The constitutional spirit seems to promote economic equality and prosperity. 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali' as buzz words proclaimed by the latest government indicate efforts given to promoting well-being and prosperity of people. However, the changes have less been realized visibly at the practical level.

### 1.3. Socio-cultural Context

Nepal is a diversified country in terms of culture, language, religion and geographical locations. There are 26.5 million people with 126 caste/ethnic groups speaking 123 different languages (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS]. 2012). These groups have their own unique ways of living and lifestyles. Majority live in rural contexts with subsistence livelihoods. The distribution of the population shows an ever declining share of the mountain and hill population compared to the Terai population. Among the caste/ethnic groups, Dalits, Janajatis

and Muslim (a religious group) occupying 13.6% (3.6 million), 37.8% (8.5 million) and 4.2% (1.25 million) respectively are marginalized and deprived groups (CBS, 2012). The caste system is still prevalence in one or other ways against legal remedy of avoiding caste based discrimination and untouchability. This appears to be a major barrier of inclusion of the groups historically segmented with less opportunities on economic resources and educational access. They often face discrimination, exploitation and domination, in one or other ways, against having policies on restriction of such injustices. The women, children and disables within these groups are more vulnerable as it is more difficult for them to cope with such social and economic adversities. These groups are underrepresented in political sphere, state mechanisms and mainstreaming development processes. On the other hand, topographical division (Mountain, Hill and Terai) of country has placed a large number of those population under exclusion of development. In other words, the marginalized and deprived communities are facing multiple exclusions due to poverty in geographically difficult regions (Karnali) and even in Terai regions.

### 1.4. Legal Context

Nepal is signatory of more than two dozens of international human rights instruments<sup>5</sup> including regional treaties and agreements. The standards clearly safeguard the socio-economic rights of women, children, disables, indigenous peoples and other

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<sup>5</sup>Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), Convention on the Rights of Child (CRC), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), International Labor Organization (ILO) Worst Form of Child Labor Convention (No. 182), 1999, ILO Minimum Age Convention (No. 138), 1973, SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements for the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia, 2002, Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169) and United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP) and so on and so forth.

marginalized and deprived communities. These frameworks are in favor of promoting social justice, non-discrimination, non-violence, freedom, cultural and economic development, gender equality, equity, access to education and so on. The instruments protect the people of marginalized from any forms of exploitation, abuses, health hazards and educational deprivation. Thus, the implicit interest of different international standards remains on promoting adult learning and education in the process of empowering people and transforming societies. More specifically, Education for All (EFA), Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and in continuum the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)/agenda 2030 have special focus on promoting equitable access to quality education and lifelong learning of all in Goal 4 and promoting gender equality and empowerment of women in Goal 5. These are more explicit articulation of adult learning and education in international commitments of government of Nepal. However, achieving these goals have interlinkages with other goals which will be difficult to achieve without adult education such as short or long term trainings or capacity building and empowerment programs.

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 is the main legislative framework in Nepal that attempts to own many of the rights enshrined in international human rights standards. It guarantees a wide range of fundamental rights of people including right to quality education. The constitution provides

adequate space for adopting SDGs in Nepali context as it advocates for social justice and inclusion, right based approach to socio-economic development, equity, equality and environmental protection in general sense. The government has also promulgated 17 Acts related to the fundamental rights. In addition to this, the national and sectoral plans and programs formulated by the government support the commitment towards the SDGs. Particularly, in regard to education, the constitution ensures the free and compulsory education for all up to basic level and free education up to secondary level. The constitution seems attentive in terms of the rights of most deprived community of Nepal such as Dalits, Janajatis and other religious minorities protecting their right to education through affirmative provisions.

Among three layers of governments (Federal, Provincial and Local), the Constitution of Nepal 2015 provides sole responsibility of local government for managing school education and other non-formal education thereby formulating specific policies, programs and plans. It ensures the right to access on descent employment opportunities acquiring knowledge and skills through vocational and other modes of education particularly for those who are marginalized and deprived communities including rights to women to obtain special opportunity in education, health, employment and social security. Though, it is silent specifically on the issues of adult literacy and lifelong learning as the forms of adult learning and education.

The local levels as forms of governments are under operation with Local Government Operation Act 2017, an Act formulated by the federal government for guiding local levels, that includes the development and educational rights of local governments. Further, as an act of fundamental right of the constitution, The Act Relating to Free and Compulsory Education 2018 and National Education Policy 2019 as newly formed policies are under implementation. In addition, the sectoral plan for achieving SDG 4, School Sector Development Plan (2015-2023) has been developed in order to ensure equitable and inclusive quality education for all. The policies and plans are in line of constitutional spirit for providing education to all identifying education as a fundamental right of people. In addition, the government of Nepal has already developed a roadmap of education 2030 demonstrating commitments and aligning with the goals and targets of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

There is no specific new policy on adult learning and education formed thus far after the promulgation of new constitution 2015. The term lifelong learning appears in association with literacy: 'literacy enables adults to engage in lifelong learning and helps to develop capabilities to sustain their livelihoods and participate fully in society'. The non-formal education policy 2007 that talks about implementing 'programs related to lifelong and continuous education, skill development and income generation' is under implementation. But, the policy is not explicit about the nature of lifelong learning.

Further, adult education is conceived in a narrow term, basically literacy: 'the ability to read and write with understanding and to perform simple arithmetic calculations'. The lifelong learning is understood and linked with income generation as well as with occupational and vocational skills. Thus, it seems that there is no explicit policy that explains the nuanced understanding of lifelong learning rather it is conceived vaguely as a strategy of 'improving literacy' and then livelihoods of people.

The national framework of action for SDG4 attempted to promote the learning needs of all women, young people and adults that were emphasized to meet through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programs. Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) has launched Literate Nepal campaign to eradicate illiteracy in Nepal mostly catering adult literacy and adult education to adults including women and out of school children. After Nepal's commitment on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, it has set the target under adult literacy is 'equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university. It has been further targeted that a larger percent of women, youth and adults having relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. It has further been targeted for the elimination of gender disparities in education and equal access to all levels of education for vulnerable people poor and other disadvantaged groups.



# Integration of SDGs in the national development plans and policies

**F**ourteenth Plan (2016/17-2018/19) was the first plan that incorporated the agendas of SDGs. It emphasized on major mainstays of development such as infrastructure, social, economic and governance. The plan focused on prosperity ensuring access to basic social services and providing adequate food, health and energy and job security. It envisages effective implementation of the SDGs to pave the way for the transformation of Nepal from a low to a middle-income country by 2030 (NPC, 2016). However, the plan recognized less the adult learning and education as one of the key drivers of promoting economic, social and environmental development in Nepal.

The government of Nepal has released the Fifteenth Plan (2019/20-2023/24) which is under implementation as continuation of the 14th plan. 'Prosperous Nepal, Happy Nepali' is the motto of the 15th plan and hence the central focus of the plan is on economic development. The 15th Plan has continued to internalize and mainstream the agenda of the SDGs in national goals, strategies and targets. The result framework has defined 466 indicators in line with the SDGs. The result framework of Vision 2100 B.S. (2043 AD) has also incorporated the intermediate

targets related to the SDGs for 2030. It has been developed with 10 national goals of equitable national income; development and full utilization of human capital potentials; accessible modern infrastructure and intensive connectivity; and high and sustainable production and productivity as prosperity; and well-being and decent life; safe, civilized and just society; healthy and balanced environment; good governance; comprehensive democracy; and national unity, security and dignity as happiness.

In economic aspect, the plan has a target to increase per capita national income to USD 1,585 against USD 1,051 that of the base year of the plan. It aims to achieve an average economic growth of 9.6% per annum, reduce poverty rate to 9.5% from the current 18.7% and increase the literacy rate of the population aged 15-24 to 99 % from the current 70%. For achieving the goals, there are several sectoral policies and programs<sup>6</sup> which focus on economic upliftment through employment generation and sustainable agricultural production of people from marginalized and deprived communities. However, the spread of COVID-19 pandemic in larger scale has threatened to achieve these targets as most of the economic and

educational activities are disrupted for several months. In addition, there are a number of sectoral policies, plans and programs<sup>7</sup> in health sector aligning with the SDGs. The health sector is one that has direct connection with economic the educational development of people.

The 15th plan has envisaged that the education is the backbone of socio-economic development. It emphasizes in competent and efficient human resources through providing quality education to all. It has stressed on free and compulsory education to all and equitable access in technical and vocational education. It has aimed to make quality tertiary or university education to fulfill the human resource need of the state. It ensures to provide lifelong learning of all citizens. Further, it has set the targets to achieve literacy rate of people above 15 years will be 95% from 58% and youth literacy 99% from 92%. In addition, it has targeted to achieve net enrollment rate in basic education 99% from 92% and in secondary education 65% from 46%. The plan has put forward gross enrollment in tertiary or university education is 22%. The plan targets that the human resources trained on technical and vocational education will be 50% increased from 31%. However, the plan seems less sensitive to set the target of other lifelong learning of adults. On the other hand, the targets set by the plan looks more ambitious.

School Sector Development Plan (SSDP-2016-2023) as a key sectoral plan in education is under implementation that focuses on ensuring right to quality education of all giving emphasis on

gender equality. National Framework for Education 2030 and National Strategy for the Development of Education Statistics (NSDES) guide all three levels of government to make their plans and monitor the achievements in SDG 4. The government is also initiating a literacy campaign in 24 districts, along with day meal program where the enrolment rate or literacy rate is low. In order to increase access to education for persons with disabilities, the government has been implementing various programs, including scholarship support. There are numerous other initiatives launched by the government that promote inclusiveness and equity. President's Women Empowerment Program and continuation of the practice of gender-responsive budgeting have contributed towards the upliftment of the status of women.

The government has revised and updated key polices and laws related to the environment and climate and aligned with the achievement of the SDGs. There are several newly (after first VNR 2017) developed sectoral plans and policies<sup>8</sup> formed for promoting environmental sustainability. These policies stress on combating with the degradation of natural resources, environmental conservation, integrated river system resource management, biodiversity conservation and improvement of livelihoods. Further, the plans and policies aim at developing ecosystem resilience, promoting green economy by adopting low carbon economic development, mobilizing national and international financial resources, mainstreaming gender and social inclusion and advancing mitigation and adaptation programs. Nevertheless, these policies envisage less the promotion of education for sustainable development.

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<sup>6</sup>Zero Hunger Action Plan; the National ICT Broadband Master Plan; the 20-Year Roads Plan and the Five Year Road Sector Strategy; the National Tourism Strategic Plan and the National Energy Strategy; the Agriculture Development Strategy (2015-2035); National Agro-forestry Policy 2019; the Prime Minister's Employment Program; the Poverty Alleviation Fund; the programs of capacity building in agriculture and so on which have all been aligned with the goals and targets of the SDGs.

<sup>7</sup>National Health Sector Strategy Implementation Plan (NHSSIP) (2016-2021); the Nirogi Nepal campaign; Multi-Stakeholder Nutrition Plan (MSNP); the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) program; the Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector Development Plan; and so on which have all been aligned with the goals and targets of the SDGs.

<sup>8</sup>National Climate Change Policy 2019; National Environmental Policy 2019; National Forestry Policy, 2018; National REDD+ Strategy, 2018; National Ramsar Strategy and Action Plan 2018-2024; Environment Protection Act 2019; Environment Protection Rules 2020; National Climate Change Financing Framework 2017; National Policy for Disaster Risk Reduction 2018; Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Rules 2019; National Disaster Response Framework 2018; National Framework for Local Adaptation Plan of Action, 2019; The Chure-Terai Madhesh Conservation and Management Master Plan 2017; and so on.



# Integration of ALE into the SDGs: Review of each SDGs reported from the VNR perspective

**N**epal's first VNR was presented in 2017 High-Level Political Forum (HLPF). Nepal presented its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) report at the HLPF convened under the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, this year's HLPF was virtually held from July 7 to 16, 2020, under the theme of 'Accelerated action and transformative pathways: realizing the decade of action and delivery for sustainable development'. In overall, Nepal's report highlights the legal, policy and institutional frameworks that reinforce the aspiration of 'leaving no one behind'. It provides the overview of Nepal's progress on the SDG goals and targets, gaps and challenges that Nepal is facing to achieve the goals. It discusses the attempt of the government on ensuring social justice, environmental resilience and economic growth and sustainability. The report further

analyzes the multi-dimensional impact of COVID-19 as a key challenge particularly in socioeconomic sectors. The following sections provide the review of each of the SDGs reported by the government of Nepal in VNR 2020 from the perspective of adult learning and education.

## **SDG 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere**

The VNR 2020 stresses on the remarkable progress in poverty reduction (estimating 16.7% in 2019/20 from 21.6 % in 2015) and GNI per capita reached USD 1051 in 2019 and USD 1097 in 2019/20, while the target is USD 2500 by 2030. The review identified that the implementation of the targeted programs (as discussed above) and the programs of provincial and local governments are contributing to reduce poverty. It stresses that there are other several factors such as growing social protection schemes and

other measures, access to energy and transport infrastructure, income generating activities through promotion of micro credits, cooperatives, entrepreneurship development schemes and remittance inflows have all contributed to reducing extreme poverty levels in Nepal. However, the review is silent on explaining explicitly the contribution of adult learning and education as one of the key tacit forms of contributing forces on reducing poverty and increasing per capita income of people of Nepal.

### **SDG 2: End hunger and achieve food security and improve nutrition**

The VNR 2020 highlighted the significant improvement of the prevalence of undernourishment (36.1% in 2015 to 8.7% in 2019), underweight children of 6 to 59 months (27% in 2016 to 24.3% in 2019) and stunting in children under five years (36% in 2016 to 31.6% in 2019). The report clearly articulates that the lack of education for mothers particularly in rural contexts as one of the key factors for underweight children. Thus, the review has recognized the value to adult learning and education in health sector particularly in poor families of rural areas. The report has highlighted the different plans<sup>9</sup> for improving health and nutrition. However, there is unclear on how the plans envisage to adult learning and education specifically focusing on health of mothers, adolescents, children and community people. The review puts forward the emphasis given by the government on commercializing the agriculture and progress of per capita food grain production (target achieved by 376kg) for improving the food security and nutrition. Further, it has recognized the challenges of

food security in marginalized and deprived communities. The review has clearly recognized the dire need of investment in adult education that significantly impact the food security and nutrition of children, as educated mothers are found to be more conscious and aware of the nutritional values of various food. Nevertheless, there is no clear articulation of adult learning and education practices implemented for the improvement of food security and nutrition.

### **SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages**

The review demonstrates the remarkable progress made in improving maternal health. The review presents the facts of reduced child mortality (38 in 2015 to 28 in 2019 per 1000), neonatal mortality (21 in 2016 to 20 in 2019/20) and total fertility rate of women aged 15-49 (2.3 in 2016 to 2.0 in 2019). Further, the report depicts the increased proportion of births taking place in health facilities (57% in 2016 to 77.5% in 2019) and skilled health personals (58% in 2016 to 79.3% in 2019). This indicates that the significant number of health workers were exposed to adult learning and education. The review presented fact that the maternal mortality ratio dropped from 258 in 2015 to 239 per 100,000 live birth in 2018/19. However, the report has not presented explicitly the adult learning programs, plans and strategies that contributed to improve these all. The review recommends to focus on preventive care by increasing awareness will be an important additional way to ensure healthy lives for all. It has emphasized on to positioning local level governments to undertake health

<sup>9</sup>Nepal Health Sector Strategy Action Plan (2016-2022), The Nepal Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene Sector Development Plan, 2016-2030 and the Food and Nutrition Security Plan of Action (2014-2024)



activities enhancing capacity to promote the health support programs across the country, especially in rural and semi-urban areas.

#### **SDG 4: Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all**

As a form of adult learning and education, the report demonstrates the significant progress on Net and Gross Enrollment Rate at basic and secondary level of education. It shows the literacy rate of age group 15–24 years (88.6% in 2015 to 92% in 2018/19). On the other hand, it has pointed out the low level (31%) of working group population who still do not have access to vocational and technical skills which is lower than the target (38%). The report presents the encouraging number of internet users (73%) in 2018. However, the report fails to disintegrate the data from gender perspectives. There is very low participation of women in male dominated technical and vocational education training (Joshi, 2019). The report could not capture the adult learning and education in tertiary or university education both of technical and non-technical fields. Similarly, the review could not analyze the progress made through TVET programs and adult learning activities of Community Learning Centers (CLCs).

#### **SDG 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls**

The Goal 5 is specific one that clearly expects the analysis of adult learning and education. However, the VNR 2020 focuses on reviewing more on improved women's economic status (25.34% of women under poverty in 2019/20) but it is silent on how the adult learning and education contributed to bring positive changes in

economic status of women. It highlights the women's literacy (57.7%) far below than men (75.6%). It has tinted that the government has been running massive campaigns of awareness for reducing violence, child marriage, Deuki, Badi and trafficking of women and girls. The review stresses the initiation of government's Gender Action Learning System which aims to economically empower women from disadvantaged communities. The report claims that the government has achieved significant progress on all these initiations. Further, the review puts emphasis on demonstrating progress on women participation in labor force (26.3% as opposed to 53.8% of men), cooperative sector (51%) and leadership at all levels of government (33.8% in national parliament, 34.4% in provincial parliaments and 40.75% in local government bodies). It highlights the institutional mechanisms (such as Department of Women, Women, Children and Social Welfare, National Women's Commission and so on) for promoting gender equality and women's empowerment. It has claimed that there is a change in the mindset in terms of gender stereotypes of people through sensitization programs. Thus, the review assets that Nepal is on track to achieve gender equality and women's empowerment. But, there are no clear indicators articulated to measure quantitatively the women's progress on women's learning and education.

#### **SDG 6: Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all**

The VNR 2020 shows the progress in water supply. It notes that 91% of population has access to water supply rather 49.6% of households have access to piped water



supply in 2019/20. However, providing safe drinking water is challenging as only 25% of the population has access to safe drinking water. Further, the review states the increased use of latrines (67.6% in 2015 to 85% in 2018/19). The report gives the references of initiatives taken by the government through implementation of different policies and programs in line of SDG of ensuring access to safe, adequate and affordable drinking water and sanitation services to all by 2030. However, the report is silent on articulating the efforts of government made through specific policies, programs and plans of adult learning and education that are needful to promote safe water use and sanitation practices.

#### **SDG 7: Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all**

The VNR 2020 reports the remarkable progress of energy supply in most of the households of Nepal with substantial production of energy in huge amount of investment in the partnership of private sector. It claims that Nepal easily meet the target in providing reliable and modern energy to all. Nevertheless, there is no any discussion of adult learning and education.

#### **SDG 8: Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all**

The VNR 2020 particularly focuses on explaining the barrier created by COVID-19 on increasing economic growth rate which was 7.3% in average of the past three years. One of the targets under this goal is achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men.

The report presents the fact of increased employability of both working age group of men and women (69.2% of age group 15-34 years with female employment to population ratio standing at 22.9% in 2017/18). The VNR claims that the increased employability is due to the development of skills in agriculture sector, other small and medium scale enterprises and individual entrepreneurship. The report discusses the progress made in tourism sector that had been providing direct employment to around 45,000 people in 2018/19 and challenges created in the sector due to COVID-19. It has claimed that the government has given utmost priority to enhancing productive capacity across different sectors developing technical skills and capacities.

#### **SDG 9: Build resilient infrastructure and promote inclusive industrialization**

The VNR 2020 reveals the significant progress made (initiations in some of the areas) in infrastructure development through increased investments particularly the access roads, bridges, railways, airports and air transports. Further, it argues that Nepal has made substantial progress in developing its ICT infrastructure encouraging private sector. It asserts that there are increased number of people in Nepal who have access to internet (46.6% in 2016 to 73% in 2018/19), radio (86%), television (72%) and mobile phones (137%). The increased access to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) might be contributed to promote non/formal and informal adult learning and education. But, the learning and education through ICTs is undiscussed in the report. The report presents the employment generated by manufacturing

sector (16.1% males and 13.4% females). However, it is silent on discussing the role of adult education contributed to involve people in manufacturing sector. It argues that the government is in attempt of developing skilled human resources for sustainable utilization of natural resources, environmental preservation and disaster reduction etc. It claims that there has been an improvement in total enrolment in science and technology from 6.8 % in 2015 to 10.6 % in 2019 in order to increase national production and productivity. The report identifies that there is no enough investment in this sector thereby resulting in a low number of experts and lack of specialized institutions. This shows that less priority has given in terms of investing in this sector to promote scientific and technological education.

#### **SDG 10: Reduce inequality within and among countries**

Despite social, economic and geographical disparities, the VNR 2020 clearly reports that there is progress on social (0.5 in 2019), economic (0.45 in 2019) and political (0.71 in 2019) empowerment of people. It claims that the government has initiated to address these structural inequalities through policies, programs and targeted interventions across various sectors at all levels of government for the protection of the rights of the target groups and their empowerment. The report clearly mentions that these interventions include enhanced political and public participation, skills development and capacity enhancement, income generation activities, support for micro enterprises and many other affirmative actions. Thus, the government

has valued adult learning and education in terms of skill development and capacity enhancement as one of the key drivers of reducing inequalities in the society.

#### **SDG 11: Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable**

The review claims that the number of safer houses has increased over the years (40% houses in 2018/19 that was targeted 37.9%) with significant decrease of slum dwellers (0.2 million from 0.5 million households). It states that the government has put efforts on the developing safer human settlements in urban contexts in collaboration with private sector. However, the review has not discussed about educating adults in regard to be safe, resilient and sustainable living.

#### **SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns**

The VNR 2020 presents the significant progress on agricultural production, consumption, use of fossil fuel, use of plastic and recycling of plastics, glass and metal products. It asserts that there is growing awareness among general public of sustainable consumption and production and use of natural resources in a sustainable manner with inter-generational equity in mind. But, it is unclear on what the specific policies and programs that contributed to aware people in general that focus on sustainable production and consumption of natural resources. It recommends to enhance further awareness in the coming years with more targeted programs in collaboration with all the stakeholders in particular the private sector and the general public. This indicates awareness as a form

of adult learning and education is still inadequate in regard to promote sustainable consumption and production.

### **SDG 13: Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts**

The VNR 2020 identifies the adversities created by climate change in the environment, lives and livelihoods of people of Nepal. It has stated the initiative taken by the government to combat with the vulnerability caused by climate change in collaboration with national and international organizations. It has put emphasis on to articulating the government's programs and plans for reducing deforestation and forest degradation and strengthening governance mechanisms. It highlights the implementation of National Climate Change Policy 2019 with the aim of building capacity of disadvantaged groups to face the challenges of climate change. Capacitating stakeholders or enhancing capability of local people concerns on adult learning and education that support them to cope with the impacts of climate change.

### **SDG 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development**

The review gives less emphasis on analyzing conservation and sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development as Nepal is a landlocked country. It recognizes these as a means of transportation for global trade and interlinkage of larger global ecosystem. Even though, the review is silent on discussing the issues of adult learning and education for promoting the global networks and integrity of global ecosystems.

### **SDG 15: Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss**

The VNR 2020 highlights the incredible progress made in conserving ecosystems, forests and biodiversity due to implementation of different programs such as community based forest management and declaration of conservation areas, protected areas and national parks.

### **SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels**

The review reports that the good governance and accountability are a priority of the government and are still a work in progress. It claims that there is remarkable progress on reducing child marriage, violence against girls and women, trafficking of children, women participation in public institutions, disaster and conflict affected populations, justice, caste-based discrimination and participation of other marginalized and deprived communities. It claims that advocacy and awareness campaigns have greatly contributed to reduce these phenomena including governance, accountability and inclusiveness in Nepal. However, the report fails to articulate the specific policies, plans and strategies of awareness programs as a form of adult education that were instrumental to bring these positive changes in Nepal.

### **SDG 17: Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development**

The VNR 2020 reports that Nepal has been making remarkable attempts to expedite the implementation of the SDGs through open, transparent and strengthened global partnerships. These goals call for vigorous and enhanced levels of global partnerships in all dimensions in the spirit of mutual accountability: ODA, trade, investment,

capacity building, institutions and data. It highlights the financing in SDG demonstrates the commitment of the government in sustainable development. It argues that over two-thirds of the aid has gone to productive sectors—agriculture, industry, transport and energy—and the rest to the health, education and environment spheres.



## 4



# Gap Analysis

**T**he VNR 2020 reported by the government of Nepal reveals incredible progress made on most of the targets and indicators of SDGs with quantitative facts and figures as compared to VNR 2017. Particularly, the report shows that Nepal is continually achieving the encouraging results in economic development such as in infrastructure, paved roads, piped drinking water, construction of bridges and sustainable human settlements, energy or electricity production, agricultural production, industries and enterprises, business and so on. The results indicate that it will be easier to achieve the SDGs by 2030. However, the report is silent in many of the goals on

analyzing and discussing capacity building, awareness, training, sensitization and formal, non-formal and informal education as adult learning and education processes contributing to generate the achievements. In some of the aspects (such as in the review of SDG 10 - Reduce inequality within and among countries), it has highlighted more about the social, economic and political empowerment of people enhanced and further to be enhanced through capacity and skill development for maintaining equality in different geographies and social groups.

Goals 4 and 5 are much related to the adult learning and education under the dimension of social sustainability. The

report explains more on the progress made on formal education of children and achievements on non-formal education focusing on adult literacy programs and technical and vocational education. However, the report fails to analyze and discuss about the adult learning through Community Learning Centers (CLCs), tertiary or technical and nontechnical/general education of university. Community Learning Centers (CLCs) are less effective in terms of learning engagement of adults due to lack of resources and inadequate budgets allocation. The education/training/empowerment of adults from other line ministries and CSOs could not have focused to strengthen these educational institutions due to lack of coordination. In addition, the report discusses the positive results of empowerment of women through sensitization programs as one of the key interventions contributing to gender equality. However, it is not so much clear about the groups of women empowered and sensitized through which plans of actions and interventions.

Similarly, the VNR 2020 does not focus on reviewing and discussing the issues of teacher professional development practices which are essential to promote quality education in schools, TVET sectors and even in university setting. Parenting education is another facet of adult learning and education which is undiscussed in the report. The parenting education and teacher trainings on alternative modes of education and learning to combat with COVID-19 pandemic situation as envisaged by new guidelines to facilitate students' learning through alternative means (developed

by Ministry of Education, Science and Technology) are almost unreached in most of the communities (NCE Nepal, 2020). The report presents the progress of literacy rates with numerical facts but it fails to highlight the quality learning in literacy programs and situation of those large number of adults including women or girls in the poorest families of Janajatis, Dalits and other religious minorities. The campaigns and programs of adult and women literacy are still unreached to these groups.

The government has come up with a guideline of promoting Online and Distance Learning in COVID-19 pandemic situation as about 9 million children and adult learners are being deprived of formal school education. But the practices are less effective due to the lack of human resources with ICT knowledge and skills and financial deficiencies (NCE Nepal, 2020). Further, the education of thousands of students of 15 different universities in Nepal are under disruption and the government and university structures are attempting to engage students in distance and online learning. But, most students are not benefited from this alternative mode of education due to unavailability of internet facilities in geographically remote areas. In addition, the short term and long term trainings of CTEVT are completely disrupted particularly in the areas where there are no facilities of internet. However, particular universities such as Kathmandu University and Pokhara University and to name few which are equipped in terms of technologies have satisfactory activities of education. The VNR 2020 is almost silent on these aspects of adult learning and education practices in COVID-19 pandemic situation.



# Policies pertaining to ALE in the current national, province as well as the local context

**T**here is no specific new policy on adult learning and education formulated thus far after the promulgation of new constitution 2015. The Constitution of Nepal 2015 ensures the right to education of all citizens from different social segments. It has also ensured the right to access on descent employment opportunities acquiring knowledge and skills through vocational and other modes of education particularly for those who are marginalized and deprived communities including rights to women to obtain special opportunity in education, health, employment and social security on the basis of positive discrimination. Though, the Constitution has spirit on promoting the access on education for all citizens of Nepal on any modes or means, though it is silent specifically on the issues of adult literacy and lifelong learning.

The non-formal education policy 2007 that talks about implementing programs related to lifelong and continuous education, skill development and income generation is

under implementation. But, the policy is not explicit about the nature of lifelong learning. Further, adult education is conceived in a narrow term, basically literacy: ‘the ability to read and write with understanding and to perform simple arithmetic calculations’.

The sectorial plan for SDG 4 is School Sector Development Plan (SSDP) has an objective of enhancing functional literacy and cultivates reading and learning habits among youths and adults and it has put forward the strategies of improving the programs of adult education and lifelong learning. It has emphasized on scaling up of continuous expansion of libraries and Community Learning Centers (CLCs) for building the reading habits of adults, youths and women. In so doing, it focuses on empowering local governments for developing or designing, planning and implementing the literacy and post-literacy programs. It stresses on collaborative works of national volunteer campaigns, local governments and local civil society organizations.

The national framework of action for SDG4 attempted to promote the learning needs of all women, young people and adults that were emphasized to meet through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skill programs. Ministry of Education Science and Technology (MoEST) has launched Literate Nepal campaign to eradicate illiteracy in Nepal mostly catering adult literacy and adult education to adults including women and out of school children.

After Nepal's commitment on Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, it has set the target under adult literacy is 'equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university'. It has been further targeted that a larger percent of women, youth and adults having relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship. It has further been targeted for the elimination of gender disparities in education and equal access to all levels of education for vulnerable people poor and other disadvantaged groups.

National Education Policy 2019 has come up with the vision of making 'educated, civilized, healthy and capable human resources for promoting social justice and transformation and prosperity of Nepal'. Further, it aims to make all levels of education competitive, technology friendly, employable and productive that meets the needs of the

state. The policy gives emphasis on to declare 'Literate Nepal' concentrating on making educated Nepal through expanding the programs of lifelong learning in the country. In addition, the policy is aware on maintaining equivalence and permeability of qualifications of formal, non-formal, technical and vocational education through developing national qualification framework. It tries to address the inclusive education for all those from disadvantaged and marginalized communities providing life-skills and vocational education through affirmative actions and reservations.

The Act Relating to Compulsory and Free Education, 2075 (2018) stipulates that all Nepali citizens have right become literate or every illiterate citizen shall have the right to become literate. Similarly, Local Government Operation Act 2074 is about the constitutional rights delegated to the local governments. The act has stipulated numerous educational rights of local governments. In regard to adult literacy and lifelong learning, the local governments are allowed to formulate policies, rules and standards of non-formal education, open and alternative continuous learning and community learning programs. The local governments have right to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate the programs adult education and learning related program. Besides, the local governments have right to open and manage the community libraries.



# Organizational/ Institutional mechanism for ALE.

**F**or the implementation of the SDGs, Government of Nepal has formed three level of committees. The country ownership of the SDGs is manifested in the institutional set up of the High-level National Steering Committee chaired by the Prime Minister. This National Steering Committee is responsible to provide policy directives, conducive policy environment and building partnership for achieving the SDGs. Below this lies a Coordination and Implementation Committee chaired by the Vice-Chair of the National Planning Commission. This committee is responsible for guiding the line ministries on mainstreaming SDGs into national, provincial and the local level by proper management of the financial, human and technical resources, effective and efficient mobilization of the internal resources and coordination between the public, private actors and the development partners including CSOs.

Below the Coordination and Implementation Committee, there are nine SDGs Implementation and Monitoring Thematic Committees led by Members of NPC such as Economic Development Committee,

Social Development Committee, Sustainable Production and Gender Mainstreaming Committee, Agriculture Development and Drinking Water Committee, Energy Development and Climate Change Committee, Infrastructure Development Committee and Governance Committee. These thematic committees are responsible for the preparation of the SDG plans, programs, budgets implementation as well as monitoring and evaluation. The high level National Development Action Committee (NDAC) is the apex body of M&E in the government that seeks to relieve coordination bottlenecks and redress problems if that cannot be solved at the ministerial level.

A part from this, local and provincial governments are also responsible for the implementation of the SDG at the local level. Government has envisioned for establishing the SDG implementation Committee for the SDGs at the provincial and local level. The District Coordination Committees (DCCs) at the district level are expected to take lead in the coordination and implementation of the SDGs at the local level. In order to implement the Education 2030 agenda,



Nepal government is in the process of finalization of Education 2030 National Framework for Action.

Besides, the VNR report have also recognized that other government and non-government agencies have also initiated activities including institutional setups for implementing the SDGs. Private sectors, Cooperative sectors have joined hands with the government for implementing the SDGs through job creation and infrastructure building. The VNR report has also recognized the support of development partners and civil society organizations. CSOs have formed an SDG forum, which has identified target groups and formed thematic groups.

Reviewing the institutional structure and delivery mechanisms for SDGs, it

can be noted that a sound coordination and collaboration is a must for the implementation of SDGs. It is because the SDGs implementation structure seems top down mechanism from the national to the local level. Line ministries at the national and provincial level together with the local government at the local level need to have a sound coordination. However, with so much of the SDGs dependent on the initiatives of provincial and local governments, these institutional arrangements have not been seen to be established at local and province levels till the date. The VNR report does not discuss about the delivery mechanisms of Adult Learning Education. Further, it has not analyzed the institutional structures responsible for capacity development, skills enhancement, awareness raising or any other components of ALE.



# 7

## Financing of SDGs and ALE

**F**inancing has been taken as a major challenge in the implementation of SDGs. Nepal aims to manage sufficient financial resources from its public, private and development partners for the attainment of SDGs. However, the SDG preliminary assessment report prepared by

the National Planning Commission indicates a huge financing gap for meeting the SDG targets. Overall, as a share of GDP, the financing gap ranges between nine percent in the 2016-2019 period to a high of about 15 percent in 2025-2030. About 12 percent of GDP is the average financing gap under the

assumption that the real economic growth will be a steady 6.6 percent throughout 2016-2030. Social sectors including poverty, health, education and gender comprise 31 percent of the financing gap as per the estimation made by the National Planning Commission, the public sector is expected to shoulder about 55 percent of the SDG investment requirement, starting foremost with sectors like poverty reduction, followed by agriculture, health, education, gender, water and sanitation, transport infrastructure, climate action and governance. The VNR 2020 report does not explicitly mention about the financing mechanisms adult learning and education. However, in terms of financing the SDGs, the report has recognized the need to improve the domestic resource mobilization, partnership with the private sectors, cooperatives and civil society, development partners as well as the three tiers of the government.

The government has given priority in job creation as unemployment is expected to see a surge as an immediate impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. The budget of the fiscal year 2020/21 has ambitious plan of creating more than 700,000 jobs through various programs. Particularly, the government has been heavily counting on the Prime Minister Employment Program (PMEP) allocating Rs11.6 billion budget with the aim of creating 200,000 jobs for youths through skill development as adult learning and education. However, thousands of youths are daily returning back to India for their jobs as the government is still unable to conduct skill development programs as a form of adult learning and education due to the pandemic.

The annual budgets of government of Nepal are less likely to achieve the SDGs targeted through SSDP programs. Particularly, the government has allocated Rs. 171.71 billion (11.64%) budget in education in the Fiscal Year 2020/21 increasing Rs. 7.96 billion in the last year's budget of Rs 165.76 billion. The increment of the budget seems supportive to some extent to promote equitable quality education. But, the budget is still very less compared to the international practices and commitment made to have at least 20 percent of annual budget in education sector. However, there remains the problems of leakage, mis-utilization or the freezing of the allocated fund. This is because the last year's gap in the education sector was nearly double of the funds allocated<sup>10</sup>. Thus, the budget is less likely to make 9 million children and a large number of adults to cope with the multidimensional educational adversities created by COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal. The budget is less focused on strengthening adult learning and education such as teacher professional development and parenting education, managing lifelong learning through Community Learning Centers (CLCs) and recruiting teachers as there are only fulfilled quotas of teachers in 700 schools out of about 7000 public schools.

Further, the budget is silent for increasing salaries of Early Childhood Development Center (ECDC) teachers and staff who are underpaid. Sidelining the role of Education Service Commission (ESC)<sup>11</sup>, the budget has envisaged to mobilize six thousand volunteer teachers of Math, English and Science allocating Rs. 2.23 million amount. However, there are no any plan

of training and recruitment procedures yet. The budget (Rs. 6.0 billion) allocated in President Education Reform Fund (PERF) has higher possibility of misuse due to lack of specific and scientific procedure making expenditure. The budget seems inadequate in psychosocial counselling of students and parenting education in and post COVID -19 situation. In addition, the budget is silent on promoting educational activities online or

offline through the use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for which the Ministry of Education has developed a guideline. Similarly, there is no explicit provision of sensitization and education of reducing unsafety and insecurity of girls in schools and communities as the multiple forms of violence is one of the key barriers for girls to access equitable quality education.

<sup>10</sup><https://kathmandupost.com/national/2020/05/29/government-eyes-massive-700-000-jobs-within-the-country>

<sup>11</sup>Education Service Commission is as state mechanism that recruits permanent teachers through specific selection procedures.



## 8

# Challenges Ahead Created by COVID-19 Pandemic

**A**s elsewhere in the world, COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted every aspects of human life in Nepal including economic and educational activities. The pandemic has forced to shut down educational institutions for eight months impacting about 9 million students of schools and almost all learners of adult learning centers and universities. In order to mitigate the impact, educational institutions have responded to the closure differently in

different contexts with a range of options for students, teachers, managers and parents, depending on the resources, both materials and human, available to them. Most of the options are digital and mobile technologies combined with traditional technologies such as radio and TV in order to provide at least some form of educational continuity. As distance and online education is dependent on technological facilities, including internet and Wi-Fi, the discrepancies that

exist in their availability are widening the gaps in access and quality of education. The pandemic has had serious impacts on students' learning and well-being and that it potentially widens the gaps between advantaged and disadvantaged children and adult learners of tertiary education in their equitable access to quality education<sup>12</sup>.

On the other hand, most Nepali youths have opportunities of higher education in Nepal. But, they do have less hope of employment and hence about 70 thousand youths migrate to foreign countries for higher education and most of them are working students. The higher education itself is less effective to provide usable education in their lives so that they could engage in their own entrepreneurship. On the other hand, the government seems unable in terms of generating employability in the home country as most youths migrated in abroad for wage laboring (236, 208 in 2019) particularly in golf countries and India with inadequate specific hard or soft skills<sup>13</sup> by which they are earning minimum wages contributing less on remittance as key source of country's income. Moreover, the current annual student intake capacity of both long-term and short-term TVET courses in Nepal is limited to 130,000 which is fewer than the 512,000 young people entering the labor market every year<sup>14</sup>. However, there are youths and adults

with technical and vocational education is 165000 in 2019 that was 50000 in 2015<sup>15</sup>. The scenario of the country that the large young populations are without life skills and access to mainstreaming education which is painful to the county.

Inadequate budget, rhetorical free education, drop out of large number of children and adults, poor learning environment in schools, low achievement of the students, gender disparity in TVET, insufficient teachers, unavailability of disintegrated data of children with disabilities and adults are key challenges to promote inclusive and equitable quality education. Very slow progress on the key indicators indicate that it is difficult to achieve the SDG 4 by 2030 if remains the pace same or similar. Thus, the government should develop strategy of meaningful participation and partnership among the stakeholders encourage to work in line of policies and plan of achieving SDGs. More so, the federal government has to take lead of empowering and capacitating provincial and local governments in regard to development of policies, plans, implementation strategies, monitoring and evaluation and so on in line with the SDG 4 and SSDP. Institutional arrangements of implementation and monitoring should be replicated in the provincial and local governments.

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<sup>12</sup>[https://advance.sagepub.com/articles/Impact\\_of\\_COVID-19\\_on\\_the\\_Education\\_Sector\\_in\\_Nepal\\_-\\_Challenges\\_and\\_Coping\\_Strategies/12344336](https://advance.sagepub.com/articles/Impact_of_COVID-19_on_the_Education_Sector_in_Nepal_-_Challenges_and_Coping_Strategies/12344336)

<sup>13</sup>Nepal Labor Migration Report 2020 (Government of Nepal) accessible at <https://moless.gov.np/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Migration-Report-2020-English.pdf>

<sup>14</sup>NCE-Nepal, VNR Report, 2019

<sup>15</sup>NPC, 2019



# Conclusion

**I**n overall, the VNR 2020 seems monolithic in terms of highlighting the incredible progress made by the government of Nepal in most of the targets and indicators of SDGs even in the transitional period of state restructuring and newer policies formulation by the different layers of governments (local, provincial and federal). The report focuses less on analyzing and discussing the key cross cutting issue of adult learning and education in most of the goals and associated targets and indicators. The complexity of interlinkages of adult learning and education other than goal 4 is almost not articulated on how it has been contributing to achieve the desired results or progress in such significant manner. The review is almost silent on the contribution of TVET sector, tertiary or university education and civil society organization on promoting adult learning and education. Further, it is weaker in terms of analyzing the institutional arrangements and intergovernmental coordination and cooperation in order to smooth governance and effective implementation of policies, programs and plans of educational development with special focus on adult learning and education.

In most cases, it is yet to integrate formally the SDGs in policies and programs of

provincial and local governments. Federal Ministry of Federal Affairs and General Administration and provincial Ministry of Social Development are responsible to educate the local elected representatives in regard to governance and formulating policies, programs and plans of development and education. But, most of the elected representatives including women of local governments are less capable and aware on SDGs and localization of these agendas<sup>16</sup>. In addition, the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted most of the adult learning and education activities. For example, the skill development programs of Prime Minister Employment Fund could not be implemented as planned. These aspects are the concerns of adult learning and education are almost not discussed and analyzed in the report.

The report stresses less on analyzing the impact of trainings, conferences, sensitization, empowerment, capacity building, skill development, other non-formal and informal education through ICTs or media such as radio programs for farmers and students for economic upliftment and environmental preservation and protection. Further, a large number of adults and women are still illiterate and many drop out from the literacy programs as the education they get are prevalent in their

<sup>16</sup><https://asiafoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Nepals-Locally-Elected-Women-RepresentativesExploratory-Study-of-Needs-and-Capacity-Assessment.pdf>

day to day lives. Most youths are untrained with particular hard or soft skills and hence the unemployment is unescapable. This situation compels them to drop out from their education and go to abroad for wage laboring with minimum earning. It can easily be claimed that the government could not invest significantly in education sector. Consequently, the lack of teachers and poor infrastructure and learning materials are always there. The current budget (2020/21) has given less emphasis on the program of strengthening public education (as said by Ministry of Education) which indicates the

lack of coordination among the ministries in Nepal. The coordination with the provincial and local governments are also weaker that has created challenge to achieve SDGs particularly in education. On the other hand, still the indicators developed so far cannot measure major dimensions of inclusive education such as multilingual education practices and use of local curriculum in the context of Nepal. The CSOs have been raising the voices of marginalized and deprived communities but they were less participated meaningfully in the decision making processes.



10

## Key Recommendations

- It is worthwhile to develop collaborative and coordinated work strategies of different layers of governments (federal, provincial and local) in order to promote awareness, capacity building and skill development as adult learning and education for enhancing the economic activities of people.
- Employability of youths is major challenge in Nepal that has been accelerated by the situation of COVID-19 pandemic. Hence, the it is better to promote self-employment programs such as small scale enterprises, agriculture, non-farm activities and business activities through massive training programs and other adult learning practices.
- It is important to promote institutional partnerships particularly with the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) which could contribute to empower, capacitate and educate marginalized and deprived communities in order to eradicate poverty. It is also essential to

build stronger ties with other education actors such as universities and training institutions which will be instrumental to generate positive outcomes.

- It is important to have massive campaigns of awareness on different forms of violence (social, emotional, physical) against women, disables, religious minorities, dalits and other caste/ethnic groups so as to promote just, equitable and inclusive society.
- It is crucial to develop effective programs and plans for professional development of teachers of school and university education as adult learning and education in order to promote quality education for all.
- It needs to promote inter-governmental and inter-ministerial collaboration and collective effort for ensuring equitable

and inclusive quality education (SDG4) for adults particularly in literacy programs and community learning centers.

- The government should focus on proper management of learning through online providing learning resources and training to the teachers and parents for the successful coping of COVID-19 pandemic.
- Post-COVID-19 educational situation seems to be more vulnerable due to economic decline and pervasive unemployment. Considering the situation, the financing in the education sector should be significantly enhanced for meeting the educational needs of the children and adults particularly from underprivileged groups. In so doing, primarily, focus should to be given to identify the needs through comprehensive assessment.



# National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE- Nepal)

National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE- Nepal) in UN ECOSOC special consultative status is a civil society movement with mandates to lobby and advocacy for ensuring quality education for all. The history of NCE-Nepal traced back in April 2003, after obtaining membership from the international network, Global Campaign for Education (GCE). As GCE Nepal network decided to broaden its spectrum on advocacy, all coalition members felt a need of it legal identity. As a result, NCE-Nepal was formally established on 2010 as civil society movement to ensure the right to equitable, inclusive quality education for all.

NCE-Nepal is a campaign for undertaking collective efforts and coordinating among individuals/organizations engaged in promoting the human rights to quality education in Nepal. It works as a watchdog to ensure everyone's rights to education and advocates for the same. It focuses on strategic interventions related to policy advocacy, networking, lobbying and campaigning at the district, regional, national and international levels. Currently, it has 409 member organizations including 48 General members and 361 affiliated members ranging from international and national nongovernment organizations, federation, education media organizations and teachers' community to grassroots institutions working in the field of education and child rights. Besides, it has district coalition in 30 districts covering 7 provinces of Nepal. NCE-Nepal is also a member of Asia South Pacific Association for Basic and Adult Education (ASPBAE) and Global Campaign for Education (GCE). In addition to this it has recently registered as a member of Inter Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE). Being a member of GCE and ASPBAE, NCE-Nepal has access to engage to debates on education issues at local, regional and international forums. It is one of the recognized CSO network to contribute in the national policy making process for education in Nepal as acknowledged by the Government.

## VISION

Equitable inclusive quality public education for all in Nepal.

## MISSION

Lead the creative campaigning to hold the government accountable and to ensure right to quality public education in Nepal with civil society organizations, social justice movements progressive academia and marginalized communities.

## GOAL

To ensure equitable, inclusive, free, compulsory and quality education for children, youth and adult as their fundamental right to education in Nepal.







**NCE  
NEPAL**

For more details:

**National Campaign for Education Nepal (NCE- Nepal)**

Babarmahal, Kathmandu

Ph no: 01-4223420/ 01-6203009

Post Box no: 14421

Email: [info@ncenepal.org.np](mailto:info@ncenepal.org.np)

Website: [www.ncenepal.org.np](http://www.ncenepal.org.np)

Facebook page: NCE Nepal