

Editorial**An Academic Journey Toward Educational Excellence**

Achieving educational excellence is often a dream for education systems and institutions. There could be, however, different understandings on educational excellence. Considering our values, diversities, and orientation we might have different interpretations of educational excellence. This makes educational excellence a contextual phenomenon. Nevertheless, it can still be said that some of the conditions for achieving educational excellence and its characteristics could largely be similar across the world because as human beings some of our values are similar irrespective of who we are, where we live, and what we think and do. It is thus an important part of educational discourse to explore aspects of educational excellence from different perspective. The articles in this volume contribute toward such discourse.

Children are one of the key actors of education and are active in the educating and learning process. From the very early time, several scholars have written and expressed their ideas on these key actors of education and contributed to the discourse on our understandings of children. One strong aspect of educational thinking is realizing educational processes from the perspective of children. As part of this very discourse, Gross and Wehner, in the first article of this issue, argue that there have been contradictions and misunderstandings in such thinking and call for a new research in the context of diversity of the life-world of the children. According to the authors, this would have important theoretical and practical consequences in enhancing the pedagogical process.

A teacher's teaching is greatly influenced by what she or he believes about aspects of teaching like pedagogy, environment, student characteristics, her or his own role as a teacher, etc. Writing in the context of a teacher's belief in mathematics teaching, Belbase in his article expresses dissatisfaction with the present practice of preparing future teachers which does not give much space to teachers' belief system. He thus calls on teachers to engage in reflecting on their different beliefs about teaching and learning. According to him, reflecting one's own belief is the first step to understand participants' or students' belief system and this

has very important consequence in enhancing the teaching learning practices. Belbase's article is also an important contribution to our research practices.

The third article in this issue is by Chinnapah, Cars, and Grinberg which brings forth the discussion of global efforts towards quality education for all. Taking international and comparative educational perspective in assessing the quality of education in offer in different countries, the paper concludes that despite important educational accomplishments in those countries education quality has still been one of the major challenges in some of the countries. In order to address such challenge of improving the quality of education, the writers call for realizing the diversity of learning conditions and environment across and within countries. The writers assert that any effort to improve educational quality in any country should reflect such realization and should aim at enhancing individual's learning potentials.

In his article on middle level leaders in Nepali institutional schools, Kafle explores their lived experiences and arrives at a conclusion that depending upon where a person is working, she or he might be experiencing marginalization and helplessness. Such a finding raises various questions on the leadership style and approach our educational institutions are adopting. This is also important because effective leadership is one of the key prerequisites for better educational performance and outcome. The article thus calls for further discussion in Nepali education policy, practice and research on different aspects of educational leadership and management.

Adamu's article on intergroup relations among ethnically diverse students in a university in Ethiopia is very important in that the article shows how broader national or societal, political and ethnic relations influence the environment in an educational institution and try to control the relationships among students from diverse ethnic contexts. Using the frame of ingroup and outgroup, the writer has shown how university students, however, contest such influence and favor the development of positive intergroup relations. One important policy implication of this article is that willingness or capability of education managers, be they at central bureaucracy or in an education institution, is vital in managing such relations.

The final article of this issue is about the paradigmatic tension in the research process. The writers of the article Gautam and Luitel express their dissatisfaction toward both the dominant view of positivism that derives from the standard western modern worldviews and

is based upon proposition and deduction as well as toward other research paradigms that are said to give space to highlight local perspectives. The writers however disagree with such dualism in the research practices and instead argue for a Third Space research methodology drawing from the best practices of both approaches. According to them, such blending gives space to all voices but at the same time gives preferential space to the local voices. The article thus is an important contribution to realize the context in which the educational processes function and thereby address the concerns toward educational excellence.

The six articles in this issue of the journal are the contribution toward a discourse for educational excellence. We believe that such discourse needs to be continued, extended and strengthened with more wider participation of actors at all levels – local, national and international. As the articles in this issue have shown it is important that we make such discourse in the localized context but at the same time have broader perspectives. On our part, we are committed to continue with such discourse because we believe educational excellence is positively related with the social transformation. This way, we are thus contributing toward social transformation through educational excellence.

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