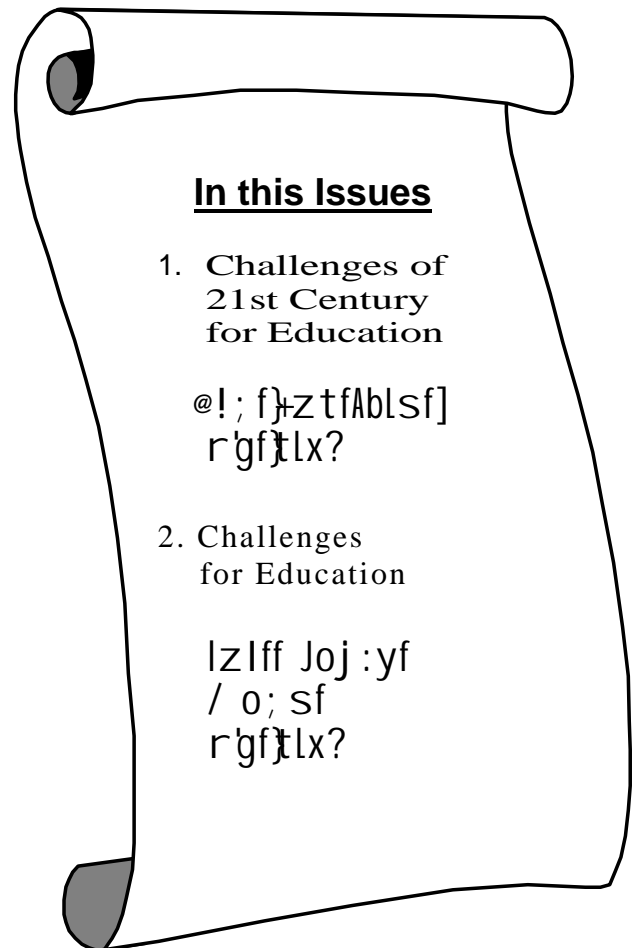


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Literacy Watch
BULLETIN

March 2000- No. 14

Life Long Learning an Agenda for 21st Century



Editor-in -Chief: Mr. T.M.Sakya

<u>Editorial</u>	; Dkfb slo
<p>We were talking about 21st Century for a long times. Finally we are already in the 21st Century and new millenium. As expected tremendous changes and development are taking place in the field of Science and Technology, Globalization of the Trade, Information Revolution and Democratization. Some people think that Nepal is not ready for 21st Century. But there is no choice we are already thrown into it. Now the situation is swim or sink. According to various thinking and predictions 21st century will be an Information Age and a Knowledge Society. So in order to prepare ourselves for the tasks and challenges this century presents, we will have to improve our education and training system so that we could provide necessary knowledge and skills to our people especially our younger generation needed to cope with the challenges of the 21st century. We look at the some places in Kathmandu ,we could notice Internet is widely used. Similarly our market is flooded with goods imported from other countries in the sprit of open trade. But Kathmandu is not Nepal. We have vast area outside Kathmandu and most of our people live in rural areas. How we could bring the benefit of 21st century to majority of Nepalese is a big challenge. As mentioned elsewhere education system is the one, which should prepare our people for 21st century. In the 21st century everybody including the educated experts will be required to learn continuously because the knowledge they have got in the schools and college are out dated and obsolete. They need to learn new technologies and knowledge. So it is said that in 21st century there could not be terminal or finished education. Education has to be continuing and recurrent. Another greatest challenge is how to provide necessary education and skills to vast number of rural youth who would be required to cope with the new challenges. Non formal education provides a best promise for this. But the Government and International donors have not given any attention to Non Formal Education. We hope this Bulletin will draw the attention of all policy makers and legislators that the challenge of 21st century is real. We cannot escape from it, because it is the challenge of the time we prepare or perish. If we do not want to be perished we have to take the challenges seriously.</p>	<p>clxn] xfdl @! ; f}ztfAbldf 5f}. lj Zj df lj 1fg / klj lwsf] lj sf; , lj Zj Jofkls/Of glt, ; Fgf kj fxsf] lj :tf/ / k}hftfGqs/Ofn] 7hf] kl/j tG Nof0{x\$} s/f ; a}f0{yxf g}5 . clxn\$] olunf0{1fg / ; Fgf kj fxsf] ou elg65 . 0-dh / 066/g0sf] cflj isf/af6 lj Zj g}; fE/f] ePsf] 5 . t/ ljsl; t / ljsf; f}dV b}x?sf] lj rdf leGgtf a9L/x\$}5 . To; sf/Of xfdl] h:tf] lasf; f}dV b}x?n]@! ; f}ztfAbLsf] kl/j tG; t 7hf rgf}lx?sf] ; fdgf ug{ dl:sn kl//x\$}5 .</p> <p>xfdf] b}zsf u}dLof u/La lg/lf/ hgtfx? zx/l hgtfx?sf] thgfdw}kl5 k/\$f 5g\ loglx? ; f} / ; fwgsf] kxFeGbf w} 6f9f 5g\ . o; \$f/Ofn] @! ; f}ztfAbLsf] rgf}L ; fdgf ug{ pglx?nf0{ s; /L lzIff / ; lkdhs tfIndsf] Joj:yf u/L ; lfd tNofpg] tyf efjllk9Lsf oj-f-0j tlx?nf0{ s; /L ; lfd agfpg] of] klG 7hf] rgf}Lsf] s/f e0/xsf] 5 . jf:tj df o:tf] lsl; dsf] cj; / cgf}krfl/s lzIffn]lg/Gt/ ?kdf lzIff lbg] sfo\$0 agfP/ dfq kbfg ug{ ; S5 . cgf}krfl/s lg/Gt/ lzIffn] lzIff / lasf; ; E; u}n}hfg dbt ub5 . t/ xfdl] b}zsf] ; /sf/ / c}t{f}li6«o bft[; :yfx?n] cgf}krfl/s lg/Gt/ lzIffsf]lj sf; kl\$ k6Ss} Wbfg lb0/x\$} b}lvbG . To; h] o; ah}lbg] b}zsf]Joj:yfks tyf glt lgdf0fstf?nf0{ lzIffsf]gltdf Jofks ; wf/ u/L cgf}krfl/s lg/Gt/ lzIffsf]lj sf; u/} @! ; f}ztfAbLsf] rgf}t; u ; fdgf ug{ ; Sg]gful/s tof/ ug{ cfj Zos ePsf] To; tkm{ Wbfgfsif0f ug{ vf}h\$}5 .</p>

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Challenges of 21st Century for Education

We have just entered into the 21st century and the new millennium. Everybody is aware that vast change is taking place in the world due to breath taking progress made by science and technology and globalization exemplified by changes like Internet, E-commerce, DNA engineering, Micro- biology, etc. It is worth mentioning the report of the Round Table Symposium held in Beijing, China which described the fast pace of the change like this " the world has never changed so rapidly. Beginning in 1991s a series of technological revolutions commenced. Three of these now exist. They are based on the technologies of silicon chip, which has generated information revolution, the manipulation of the DNA molecule which has created the biotechnology revolution and the creation of new advanced industrial materials . There is no reason not to think that these three will not be joined by others 1990s".

Let us look at the dominant trends in the field of science and technology, communication, globalization and democratization. The emerging trends in those fields will definitely shape the future.

Science and Technology

At present new and advanced knowledge in science and technology is being generated at a faster rate than any time in the history. The communication worldwide is almost instant through electronic and satellite devices. The nature and applications of the new science and technology especially in the field of genetic engineering, macro cross national ecology, materials science, laser science, super conductivity science, immunology science and several others is transforming the world drastically. The present age is already described by varying names such as information age, mechanic age, third industrial revolution etc. The value emphasis is greatly shifting from "Materials" to "Information and

Time", and "Knowledge and Services". In the next few years they will certainly bring tremendous changes with far reaching impacts in the civilization of human beings.

The advance made in material technologies have made it possible to manufacture materials which are lighter, stronger and highly resistant to heat. These materials have already been replacing the traditional materials in the manufacturing industries. Biotechnology on the other hand, is again providing a lot of promise for bright future through applications in agriculture, forestry, medicines etc. Genetically engineered products such as stable proteins, hormones, bacteria, insulin are already being produced on commercial scale. These developments are already revolutionizing national and international norms and manufacturing processes. Therefore we have to learn how to cope with the fast pace of and the nature of change. Similarly we have to change drastically what we teach and how we teach. Many of the traditional disciplines of the science curriculum are becoming sterile and obsolete. Writing about the progress in the field of science and technology the Newsweek (January 1, 2000) writes "We will deploy gene therapy and micro biology (the use of extremely tiny devices and medicines) to cure a number of nasty disorders. We will perfect organ transplants from animal to save people's lives. We will find ways to rewire our brains to repair individual deficiencies. Computers will be unbedded in almost everything supplying instant information and offering instant responses. As the Internet expands, some even believe that nations will eventually be replaced by cyber communities". This demonstrates euphoria in the industrialized countries. But for Nepal this may present nightmare. The universities and industries have not conducted any basic science The universities treat science as

preparatory for engineering and medical to modernize the course. The course of study in science is out dated and obsolete. The Academy of Science and Technology as well as the Ministry of Science and Technology both have not done any research and development activities. The industries in Nepal are in primitive stage.

Globalization

A few years back people were talking about open economy. But now a new term globalization has become very commonage. Globalization is a process integrating not just the economy but culture technology and governance. People every where is become connected attached by events in for converse of the world. Global markets global technology global ideas and global solidarity can enrich the lives of people everywhere. But to-day globalization is being driven by market expansion-opening national boarders to trade, capital, information –outpacing governance of these markets and their repercussions for people. This type of global comparative market may be the best guarantee of efficiency but not necessarily of equity. When the market goes too far in domiciling social and political outcomes, the opportunities and reward of globalization spread unequally and inequitably – concentrating power and wealth in a small group of people, nations and corporation, marginalizing the others.

The challenges of globalization in the new century, is not to stop the expansion of global markets, the challenges is to find the rules and institution for stronger governance–local, national, regional and global–to preserve the advantages of global markets and competition, but also to provide enough space for human community and environmental resources to ensure that globalization works for people-not just pupils research.

Therefore there are many people who oppose globalization. Following points

course, so they have not taken any step to highlight the viewpoints of advocates and opponents of globalization.

Advocates and Opponents

- ❑ Advocates of globalization: Emphasis on economic growth.
- ❑ All can enjoy the achievements of science and technology
- ❑ Economic and political freedom together with competitiveness bring efficient allocation of resources
- ❑ Poverty alleviation
- ❑ IMF and World Bank as prime supporters.
- ❑ *Opponents of globalization: Emphasis on Equity*
- ❑ Rich getting richer and poor becoming poorer
- ❑ Globalization favors will –to-dos
- ❑ A form of colonization that minimizes the decisive role of the state
- ❑ Fuels economic inequality
- ❑ UNDP and ILO as the practical opponents

The case of Nepal, while talking about globalization, we must understand that the national economy has not even internally integrated. Market institutions and forces are yet to emerge in a competitive way. Nearly half of the population lives in absolute poverty and illiteracy. More than 80 per cent of the population earns livelihood from agriculture, which, however, constitutes only 40 per cent of the country's national income. For want of proper planning process, commitment, accountability and integrity of the government and lack of people's participation in development activities, forty years of planned development efforts to solve these problems have been little successful in their objectives.

In an attempt to globalize the national economy, the government, elected after the restoration of multiparty democracy in 1990, went for an open, liberal and private sector led

economy. Trade, investment, foreign exchange, financial and industrial sectors were subsequently deregulated, de-licensed and privatized. Although the euphoria brought about by economic liberalization resulted in a satisfactory performance of the economy for a few years, the so-called success was soon over. Hasty liberalization and improper sequencing of globalization measures subsequently resulted in slow down in industrial activities, low economic growth rate, and worsening income distribution.

Opening up the Nepalese economy to the global order in early 1990s created much room for foreign borrowing along with widening market for domestic products. As exports of the country went up by five folds, so did the foreign debt of the government. From less than 37 per cent of the national income in 1990, foreign debt swelled up to 56 per cent in 1998. Part of the surge in debt is due to devaluation of the Nepalese rupees,

somewhat wrongly exercised as a tool of export promotion following the outward orientation of the economy.

Why Economic Liberalization and Globalization is opposed in NEPAL?

- ◆ Poverty aggravated further instead of reduction
- ◆ Gap between rich and poor further widened (lowest 20% consumes 8% and highest 20% consumes 45% of national income; moreover, in Kathmandu the highest 20% consumes 90%).
- ◆ Inflationary pressure on prices
- ◆ Foreign dominance in decision-making
- ◆ Failure of privatization programme
- ◆ Urban-centered development
- ◆ Insufficient investment in social sector
- ◆ Further marginalization of backward communities, women, children and old and disabled people.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

IT or ICT are catchword these days. Information and communication technology is moving so fast that it is becoming difficult for so-called well educated people to keep abreast with the latest development. A few years back fax was a novelty. But now E-mail and Internet have become so common that without them people will not be able to compete in this very competitive world. Across the world and Asia Submarine, fiberglass wireline, wireless and satellite telecom links are expanding at an explosive pace. "Asian nations regard the Internet as offering them a chance to improve global competitiveness, explain Jackson "To do that, they feel they have to wire themselves to obtain better access to overseas market."

Wireless connection to Internet using GPRS are "always on" and run at speeds in excess of 100 kbps, versus today's GSM connections that take time to dial up and run at only 9.6 kbps. Internet is bringing change in global trade. E-commerce or trade has already become a reality.

The issue is "How can we say that the half of the human race which has yet to make or receive a telephone call, let alone use a computer, is taking part in globalization? We cannot without insulting their poverty... Thus the central challenge we face today is to ensure that globalization becomes a positive force for all the world's people, instead of leaving billions of them behind in squalor."—**Kofi Annan**, Secretary

General of the United Nations upon presenting a plan for the Millennium UN summit stated on 6–8 September 2000.

Secretary General **Annan** made this presentation on Monday, 3 April 2000 and offered a sweeping list of proposals of objectives. Not surprisingly, many of these proposals focused on Information Technology and the Internet among them.

As was the case with the Journal entry on Sun Microsystems Chief Scientist Bill Joy, speaking on issues of social responsibility for scientists and technologists. ("Why the Future Doesn't Need US") this Journal entry continues to highlight the growing challenges we face as IT Managers--- the foot soldiers of globalization.

"The social reality we face today is that only certain countries are reaping the true benefits of the information economy and even more troublesome—only certain segments of the populations of those countries. Large numbers of people, even in the United States, have neither the income nor the access to enjoy the benefits of this burgeoning age of instant communication and global access to people, ideas, capital and wealth".

The alternative, as amply demonstrated by the WTO protests in Seattle Washington, in 1999, is the loss of social cohesion and the building of resentments upon which those who feel left out of the new economy will be willing and able to act. Not everyone embraces the idea of a post-human future, because the human who will be left behind exploited, or cursed they see as themselves.

Developing Countries Get Excluded from Global Network

Developing countries suffer many of the world's most virulent and infectious diseases, yet often have the least access to information for combating them. A US medical library subscribes to around 5,000 journals, but the university in the developing countries has only 40 medical books and a dozen journals, all from before 1993. Worse, the library in a large district hospital consists of a single bookshelf filled mostly with novels.

Distance learning, through teleconferencing and increasingly, the Internet, can bring critical knowledge to information-poor hospitals and schools in developing countries. The potential is great-but technology alone is not a solution. Three cautions:

- ▶ □ Information-poor schools and hospitals are often poorly connected. Even at the university level, where there is connection, up to 1,000 people can depend on just one terminal. A single computer is not enough: an entire telecommunications infrastructure is needed.
- ▶ □ Equipment is a necessity, but to be part of a solution distance learning requires institutions, skills and good management. Distance learning technology is of little use without relevant course content and strong staff support. Technology cannot work where there are no support staff to help pupils get the best from the network.
- ▶ □ Information is only one of many needs. Email is no substitute for vaccines, and satellites cannot provide clean water. High -profile technology projects risk overshadowing basic priorities. The main constraint is inadequate resources for health and education systems as a whole.

Democratization and Awakening of the Disadvantaged Population

Beginning from 1980 many dictatorial regimes gave way to democratic system in Latin America, Africa and the Arab States either through violent revolution or through peaceful means. Democratic movement also swept across Asia in 1980s.

Democratic and Representative form of government has been appreciated by the people in general especially by educated and middle class people who enjoyed free speech. They welcomed various organizations. Human rights and people's welfare have become the topics of many meetings and seminars. But question arises how long, the people will remain satisfied if the democracy did not provide development in the form of improvement of quality of life of the people. It is feared that the people will be disillusioned with the democracy if it did not provide them bread and butter. Moreover deterioration of law and order situation, inflation and corruption have already been rejected by the people. The political science organization of Nepal called POLSON has found that many people especially in some hilly areas are saying that earlier system i.e. Panchayat system was better than the new system.

The "Himal" magazine (April 15-30, 1999) has published result of its opinion poll conducted all over the country involving more than 8000 people. One of the questions asked was "what is the main problem the country is facing? ". The response was 28.6% said lack of development in the country; 27.6% said high prices of daily necessary commodities; 8.4% said unemployment, 7.1% said corruption and only 4.7 % said problem of law and order.

Similarly another question was "what are the main sources of danger for the democratic system of Nepal?" The response was 79.6% said behavior of the political party and its workers and leaders; 10.6%

said Maoist movement; 2.6 % said interference from the palace and 2.05% said foreign hand.

This century, notably in the last few decades, is witnessing a unique resurgence of human spirit, struggling into the light from out at the margin women, minority peoples, the economically and socially dispossessed and politically rendered voiceless. This is a development in irreversible course. These divisions have underlined that diversity and not uniformity, pluralism and not homogeneity, organic and undifferentiated, are the paths of development into the future.

One of the dominant forces will be the population of women. Since Second World War the working force of women has increased to two hundred percent.

The Nairobi Forward Looking Strategy for the Advancement of Women has emphatically recognized the important of education for the advancement of women and it states "Education is the basis for the full promotion and improvement of the status of women. It is the basic tool that should be given to all women in order to fulfill their role as full members of the society. Governments should strengthen the participation of women at all levels of national education policy".

Besides the women other traditionally disadvantaged people are also awakening to utilizing the freedom provided the democratic system and the spread of education. In every nation some region or area regard themselves as economically cheated by the central authorities. In Nepal Kathmandu valley consumes most of the resources from the government budget and a very little is left for the other parts of the country. Apart from economic inequality, there are also long-festerling linguistic and ethnic groups who feel suppressed by the majorities and elite's of the society. During the drafting of the constitution of Nepal in 1992, religious, linguistic, ethnic groups of

Nepal such as Rai, Limbu, Tamang, Gurung, Bhojpuri, Tharu, Maithali and Nawars and religious groups such as Buddhists, Muslims, Christians raised their voices that their languages and religion should be given proper representation in the constitution. But rather than attempting to accommodate these grievances the constitution drafting committee and the interim government simply perceived them as the threat to national unity and virtually dismissed them out of hand. Actually healthy democratic system should tolerate the widest possible diversity and there is nothing unusual or frightening about the existence of such groups so long as the political system remain in equilibrium.

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Challenges for Education

The role of education in this fast changing world will be quite different within the next decades more than it has changed since the modern school was created by the printed book over 300 year age. At present knowledge is becoming the true capital and the premier wealth producing resources. The concepts of natural resources based growth and development approach has been replaced by human resource based development model.

They need such an education system, which can turn the youth of the country as enormous energy and power to adjust themselves to the future.

The brief analysis of the trends in science and technology, economy, mass media and democratization above clearly indicate that the people without literacy and basic education will not be able to function in future. Therefore we must provide literacy and basic education to all children, youth and adults as soon as possible within this century so that we as a nation could embark upon the new century with confidence.

Changes need to take place in the concept of what we learn, what and how we teach and thus understanding the meaning of knowledge. We need to create an atmosphere where by the people learns continuously.

In the new knowledge society, there does not exist the word as "Terminal" or "Finished" education. Everybody requires continuous education. It should be interdisciplinary or

interwoven with other related deciplines. People having advanced learning should come to educational institutions for renewing their learning. Education shouldn't be confined to educational institutions only. Employing agencies should also take the role the responsibility of educating their employees as and when needed.

Moreover, Basic Education and Literacy may be adequate for those who would be working in the traditional sectors of economy such as agriculture, mining etc. but the people who would be working for productive and service industries would require appropriate Secondary and Higher Education including computer literacy. We must use both Formal and Non-Formal approaches to provide education from primary to tertiary levels. Open Education system has been proved as good as any class-based system. From the survey it shows that average Internet users are all college graduates.

Promotion of values, environmental protection, understanding of different cultures etc have become vital concern of education. Not much emphasis has been laid on those important aspects to day. Those studies could not be promoted through compartmentalized disciplines. What is required is multidisciplinary approach.

The new media such as the television, the video cassette, recorders, computers and others related technology have tremendous

potentiality to provide more information, more learning environment to the children, youth and adults. They could be used in schools and out of schools. We can not close our eyes and ears towards those possibilities because they will knock at the door of every one of us. If we could not use them for constructive educational purposes, the media may be used with negative consequences.

Life-long learning was advocated by UNESCO more than two decades ago and the concept was further strengthened by the Report to UNESCO of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-first Century - *Learning: The Treasure Within* (1996). The report mentions four pillars of learning in the next millenium: (i) Learning to know; (ii) Learning to do; (iii)

Learning to be; and (iv) Learning to live together.

From the above analysis, it is clear that our formal school and college education have to be improved drastically. We have reports of high Level Education Commission, but the situation has not improved yet. It is also indisputable that Nepal cannot take benefit of the century keeping about half of its population illiterate and another half as neo literate. We must provide basic education in schools and out of school.

Moreover we must improve our Non Formal Continuing Education System so that we could provide continued education linked with development for those who need and want them. This is the need of the time.

NRC-NFE is Publishing " A Literacy Resource Center Newsletter - Literacy - Breakthrough " on September 2000 in collaboration with ACCU.

This newsletter will be helpful to people to make aware of the importance of the Literacy and it will contribute in achieving "Education for All".

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3	Mr. Bikash Ghimire	Member	- NGO Forum
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8	Mr. Prakash Singh Adhikari	Member	- IFCD
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