

ISSUE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS IN EDUCATION FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF QUALITY MANPOWER IN NEPAL

Dr. Shyam Bahadur Katuwal

INTRODUCTION

I. Background

Human resources are the real wealth of nation. Quality and honest human resources are the fortune of nation. Educational institutions are concerned with developing human resources by expanding capabilities through the process of imparting knowledge and skills to the people. Development of a country in the educational sector is judged not by expanding educational institutions, but ability of producing capable, honest and sincere human resources for the country. As such, schools, colleges and other educational and professional institutes under different universities, boards and councils have been producing human resources required for different professions in the country and abroad. The students of these educational institutions are tomorrow's makers of the nation, whose ability, ethics and attitudes will shape the future of the country. They apply their knowledge and skills in their profession in that way how they had earned and learnt their knowledge during school and college life. If they had earned the certificate unethically, how they can serve the nation better? A joint report of UNESCO and International Institute for Educational Planning (2006:88) has clearly stated that the high incidence of unethical practices and lack of transparency and accountability in the education sector seem to be major impediment of educational development in Nepal and developing and sustaining professional ethics of educational personnel including teachers happen to be important areas of concern. Thus, it is a prime responsibility of all concerns to provide knowledge and skills to the students in well accepted ethical standards, for developing a real sense of citizen. Otherwise, the country may fall in the verge of corruption, immoral and unethical activities and remains always backward.

*Associate Professor, Faculty of Management, TU, Post Graduate Campus, Biratnagar, Nepal

II. ETHICAL CODE OF CONDUCTS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

In general, a sense of right and wrong, and goodness and evilness of actions are considered as ethics. Professional ethics is concerned with acceptable behaviour and conduct of a person or a group when carrying out a work. Ethical behavior means not only obeying rules and regulations but also to do right thing by using appropriate means as per the established and well-accepted values and customs. Education system comprise with a lot of professional groups and stakeholders ranging from teachers, government authorities and machineries, founder of the educational institutions to students, parents and society at large. This sector has accumulated a dream of bright future. The sector can shape the future of the nation contributing in the field of socio-economic, political and intellectual field. It is the sector that produces future professionals, leaders, government authorities, policy and law makers, social workers, judges, law enforcement officers, scientists and provides jobs to many more. Thus, this sector has to operate in accordance to acceptable ethical code for the national development. Unfortunately, now a days, there is one after another news of misconduct or abuse of authority from different section of the education system, like Vice Chancellors and other authorities of universities, Campus Chiefs, Principals, teachers, Examination Controllers and other authorities of examinations machinery, authorities of educational boards and councils, students, leaders of political parties etc.

III. PROFESSIONAL ETHICS: A HIDDEN OPPORTUNITY

Operating an educational institute in ethical ground is not only an opportunity for the growth and development for the institute and matter of pride for the students but also a golden chance of getting better and selected job in labor market for the candidates. In present context of

competition, organisations prefer only for the quality manpower produced by reputed educational institutes. Reputation and popularity of an educational organisation are enhanced not by how much the students it could produce but how far the organisation could produce the ethically sound and successful candidates. Institutes with professional ethics are well recognised and accepted by the society, so that they do not have to search students for admission or worry that the profit might be missing. There is always mob of candidates for admission in the reputed educational institutes like in Harvard Business School, USA and Indian Institute of Management Ahmadabad in management sector. At the same time, the students, who are the product of reputed organisations, are highly demanded with handsome salary and facilities in labour market. As such, country and the employer will also be benefited by hiring the product of such institution, which is established, grown, developed and operating in ethical ways. Thus, everyone should attempt to maintain ethical standards in educational sector for the bright future of the country and its citizen.

IV. WHO IS RESPONSIBLE FOR UNETHICAL CONDUCT?

There is general tendency to blame the candidate for bad or unethical conduct. However, in reality, the candidate is not sole responsible for unethical conduct in his work since a person does what and how s/he had learnt in past. There are other persons and institutions responsible for unethical conduct of a person in his/her working life. The institute from which the candidate was produced is primarily responsible for the bad conduct of the person, in the sense that the institute is seed to produce this kind of person. In this locus, question may rise that how an institute, which was established, grown, operated and developed in unethical ground, can impart good education to their wards and the ward can perform ethically better in their working life?

In this regard, all persons and institutes concerned in the process of feasibility study, recommendation and approval for the establishment and operation of the institute are ethically responsible for unethical performance of the product of the institute. Nevertheless, examination

controller and its machineries including question setters, superintendents and invigilators in the examination centers, answer-sheet examiners, and result publishing unit and its apex body, the system of governing educational institutions and socio-political environment of the country are all responsible for producing such unethical professionals.

We are regularly hearing much news of corruption, malpractices and misbehavior from the people involved in the education system. Such unethical activities are common to hold in the country like Nepal where the founders and principals of schools and colleges and the parents and students themselves want to get 100 % result by hook and crook for personal benefits. Consequently, leakage of question paper before examination, demand for unauthorised approval of school and colleges, demand for bribe and sycophancy, paying undue advantages and privileges to person and organisation, cheating, selection of favourable examination centre, sexual harassment etc. are being common unethical behavior in the field of education system in Nepal.

Not only that, the students and parents also demand for unauthorised admission, concession in fees, guarantee for pass in examination by cheating or paying money have also spoiled the system of education in Nepal. Manipulation and exaggeration of real figure of examination result and abuse other competitors have become common culture of educational institutes to attract students towards own institution for admission. Such malpractices have been supported by a study project carried out by (Nuland et al, 2006). The report states that admissions, examinations and certification are found the major serious sources of unethical behavior in Nepal besides abuse of the components of human resource management in educational sector (p. 85-86). Indeed, misbehavior in many forms can disturb the implementation of planned interventions and, in particular, the correct functioning of the teaching/learning process (ibid: preface). As a result, Nepal has been bearing the cost of such unethical behaviours in education and in its development process with high rate of corruption, misuse of power in politics and administration.

V. CRITICAL APPRAISAL

In Nepal, there is unfair and unhealthy competition especially among private educational institutions in the name of *hundred percent results* in examinations and for the cheap popularity with the sole motto of earning money. Some of these institutions are lured to earn as much money and as fast as possible, forgetting the reality that the organisations which are ethically and morally sound will be honored, respected and recognised by all and thus, most likely to be successful in the long run though in the short run they may lose money. In this juncture, they provide undue advantages to the authorities of universities, educational boards and councils inducing them to conduct unethical activities and frauds in education system in favour of these institutions. Thus, in such a scenario, how it is possible to produce quality human resources for the development of country?

VI. SUGGESTIONS

A number of attempts have to be made to tackle the problems of unethical practices in the education sector. Any attempt, for improving education system in order to materialise the slogan of *quality education for all*, become worthless until and unless the corruption and unethical conducts in examination system, feasibility study and accreditation & approval process have not been checked properly in the right time. That means most essential is to establish corporate code of ethics in order to fight against these challenging issues of education system in Nepal.

For this, employers' organisations like Higher Secondary School Association of Nepal (HISSAN), PABSON and NPABSON, teachers'(also of university) associations and students' unions have to work for maintaining ethical conducts among their members and discourage the corruption and malpractices in education system. Employers' organisation should discourage their members

involving in any kind of bribe and enticement activities during the process of accreditation and approval of the institute, examination and selection of examination centre. Teachers' organisations have to take necessary action to the members who are involved in unethical conduct during examination. Students' unions have to discourage the tendency of cheating in the examination. Parents/guardians should not provoke their children to good marks in the examination anyway. They should encourage their children to labour hard in study and obtain certificate based on their labour but not by cheating in the examination. Political parties/government should not recommend/appoint the person in the educational institutions like universities, boards and councils on the ground of political ideology and the person who offer handsome amount of money to obtain the post in the educational organisations.

Anti-corruption bureau and other organisations, which are established for maintaining ethics in profession, have to be determined and strong to take necessary action on the persons who involve in unethical practice. To discourage malpractices and unethical conduct in education sector, corrupt persons should be punished up to the extent of fire from the government and semi-government jobs forever and ban to operate any kind of educational institution in future. Finally yet importantly, everyone should change his or her attitude that ethical behaviour pays more in the end than tampered benefit at present.

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