

## **Role of NGOs in the Development of Non Formal Education in Nepal**

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### **Role of Non Governmental Organization(NGOs) in Promoting Basic education and Poverty Alleviation.**

If we discuss first about the place of the Non Governmental Organization(NGOs) in the civil society, it would be helpful to understand the importance of NGOs and to appreciate the role of NGOs in the promotion of mass education and other community development activities. As the parliamentary democracy, the concept of civil society also has been learned by the developing countries from the Northern countries especially the Western Industrialized countries. NGOs are the part of civil society. UNDP(1993) has defined the Civil in these words:

*“ Civil society is together with State and Market, one of the three ‘Spheres’ that interface in the making of democratic societies. Civil society is the sphere in which social movements become organized. The organizations of the civil society, which represent many diverse and some times contradictory social interests are shaped to fit their social base, constituency, thematic orientations(i.g. environment, gender, human rights) and types of activity. They include church related groups, trade unions, cooperatives, service organizations, community groups(NGOs) and youth organizations as well as academic institutions and others.”*(1) The civil society helps the developing countries to strengthen their democratization process. Since elected or selected rulers when they have got power they have a tendency to become intolerant towards the institutions of the civil society and they try to control them. Sometimes they also try to control market forces, but lately the market forces have become strong enough to defend themselves. Similarly other institutions of the civil society also should be made strong to help the people to defend themselves from the exploitation both from bad rulers as well as from bad market forces. Mr Remesh Thakur writes “ There are three broad reasons for the rise of NGO influence. Political space for them opened up with the end of the Cold War. New issues like human rights, environmental degradation, and gender equality came to the forefront of public consciousness. These are the issues

on which NGOs enjoy many comparative advantages over governments in terms of experiences, expertise, and political credibility with the public.”( The Japan Times, Monday, October ,18, 1999.) Similarly poverty alleviation is also an area where NGOs could play a role as a watchdogs and as helpers to the government at all levels and donors. Since poverty alleviation without basic education and training new skills to poor people would be a big failure. Therefore the, NGOs should make enough noise to warn both the economists and politicians especially international pundits of poverty that poor people could come out of vicious circle of poverty getting empowered through education and training. They would not be able to free from poverty trap accepting handouts from rich people and their institutions. Therefore NGOs have to play more vigorous role for basic education for the poor people especially in South Asia and Sub Saharan Africa. Some people tend to argue that basic education is a sphere of the government, but the situation in those Sub Regions is such that there are more children and youth out of school than in schools. Those out of school children and youth are not being looked after by the government in South Asia and Sun Saharan Africa. Therefore a question arise whether NGOs should show an innovative methods to provide education to them both in schools and out of schools them adapting some innovative methods and advocate with government to pay more attention to the educational needs of the vast number of out of school children and youth *or the NGOs and other organizations of the civil society become silent spectators of this unfortunate massive human tragedy.* Many NGOs in Bangladesh, India and Nepal have taken up this challenge and they are shown that provided there is a better local participatory planning and relevant education Non Formal Education could be a viable means to provide basic education to those who would have been excluded from education if the countries rely only on formal primary education alone. They are working hard to convince the government to pay more attention to this problem.

According to Peter Bowden, NGOs influence is becoming more significant in

- (a) .Making the people as the center of the development objective;
- (b) .Making the people self reliant through the formation of saving and credit groups, micro credit, lunching small scale income generating enterprises ,marketing etc.
- (c) .Making the development process participatory involving the people in real sense i.e in planning process, implementation and evaluation of community based programs;.
- (d) .Maintaining flexibility in planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs taking into consideration of the people’s culture and tradition (2)

The observations made by different experts about NGOs could be summarized as stated below:

**Strength of National and local NGOs working with community at grassroot**

1. They are near to the field and they can establish rapport with community leaders and community people, because they work with them not for them.
2. Activities which need people's participation and cooperation could be done by NGOs better than government officers, because they approach them as friend and helpers not as bureaucratic officials.
3. If the International NGOs goes to the field the people think that they are donors. So they expect money from them for any thing.
4. NGOs performances and accountability could be easily measured by the government, NGOs and local people.
5. They could help local community to become self reliant and in dependent.
6. They could provide technical backstopping by the selves and they could mobilize technical expertise from other agencies.
7. They could help to establish link with local government offices, district govt. offices and central govt. offices and international agencies.
8. They could help to promote publicity campaign of the local initiatives through local and national newspapers.
9. They could help to get legal assistance to the needy people and protect the rights of the vulnerable section of the people from exploitation and violence.

One of the editor of the Volume Four of the " Education and Development: Tradition and Innovation" "Non Formal and Non Governmental Approaches" James Lynch observes " the range of activities in all sectors in which NGOs are involved in responding to human needs, is vast, for NGOs have many advantages ( and not a few disadvantages) over the major multilateral internationals. One area where local knowledge, continuous presence, specificity of target population and small scale intervention of some NGOs afford them a major opportunity is in facilitating enabling environments for participatory development and for the empowerment of excluded and disadvantaged populations. In some cases,

NGOs can respond more quickly than the major multilaterals in providing relief services...They may provide a significant proportion of primary services in a given country, such as in health, water and sanitation and primary education, often at low cost

and on a non formal basis...Often NGOs pioneer model and innovations which the generalized by bilateral and multilateral...Pressure to redefine education's mission and modalities of its delivery will be likely to demand increased rather than less involvement of NGOs and non formal methods of delivery"(3 ). The observation made by James Lynch on the strength of NGOs is redefining mission of basic education for rural poor people and role of NGOs in this task is very pertinent in many developing countries including Nepal especially in difficult situations.

Since NGOs are an integral partners of the democratic process, the attempt from the government and donor agencies will go a long way to promote democracy and poverty alleviation in the developing countries. At present many people make mistake adult franchise is only means of democracy. Therefore many political leaders and the government officials have very negative view about civil society institutions including NGOs. With the assertion of the market forces NGO's role become more important to defend the interest of the common people

### Types of NGOs

Non- Governmental Organizations (NGOs) have been born and nurtured as the product of some individual's or group's perception of a need, and their subsequent organization of a structure to meet that need. Mr Perter Bowden has given examples of different types of NGOs such as Development NGOs, Advocacy NGOs, Women NGOs, Religious NGOs, Environmental NGOs etc.(4)

The World Bank has made an extensive criteria for NGOs (5). In defining NGOs it says:

1. It is a non profit making, voluntary, service oriented organization, either for the benefit of members( a grassroots organization) or of other members of the populatio (an agency).
2. It is an organization of private individuals who believe in certain basic social principles and who structure their activities that are servicing..
3. It is a social development organization assisting in empowerment of people.
4. It is an independent of any external control with specific objectives and aims to fulfill tasks that are oriented to bring about desirable change in a given community

or area or situation.

5. It is an independent, democratic, non-sectarian people's organization working for the empowerment of economic and /or socially marginalised groups.
6. It is an organization not affiliated to political parties, generally engaged in working for aid ,development and welfare of the community.
7. It is an organization committed to root causes of the problems trying to better the quality of life especially for the poor, the oppressed, the marginalised in urban and rural areas
8. It is an organization established by and for the community without or with little intervention from the government; they are not only a charity organization, but work on socio-economic-cultural activities.
9. It is an organization that is flexible and democratic in its organization and attempts to serve the people without profit for it self.

The World Bank has also classified NGOs in terms of their missions. The types of NGOs are :

- (1.) Charitable NGOs
- (2) Service Oriented NGOs
- (3) Participatory NGOs and (Class organizations)
- (4) Empowering NGOs.

Similarly it has classified them by levels of their operation.i.e.

- (a) Community Based Organization
- (b) Citywide/District wide Organization
- (c) National Organization and
- (d) International Organization

### Three Phases of Development of NGOs

Phase I: Most of the NGOs are at first organized as an emergency service providers when some natural disaster happens like earth quack, flood, land slide, epidemic etc.

Phase II: Then gradually they take up people's welfare oriented development program such as setting up health post, saving and credit groups for women, starting literacy

classes etc. But in such cases the impact will be very small and localized

Phase III: In order to empower the marginalised people and to undertake advocacy role with the government, power holders in the society and to promote international solidarity the third type of NGOs came about. Those NGOs undertake innovative methods of education, health service and rural development as experiment and with the example of such successful innovative models of people's empowerment and development, the NGOs would try to persuade the government to conduct more people oriented programs and they also try to convince International community to put pressure on the governments that they include people oriented program involving local people and NGOs in the donor assisted programs. Such program would be human rights, environment preservation, women empowerment, poverty alleviation etc.

Because if the poor people are not provided help by the socially conscious people organizing into NGOs and if the poor local people are left alone the poor local people in South Asia in general and in Nepal in particular have no political space to improve their quality of life vis-a vis the local land lords, money lenders and bossy local governmental officers.

Therefore in Nepal the National Resource Center for Non Formal Education (NRC-NFE) and other NGOs have been working with the people to initiate local development and empowerment program at the same time it has formed a " Literacy Watch Committee" like Human Right Watch Group for advocating to the government as well as with donors that Learning new knowledge and skills will help to improve the earning capacity of the poor people and with more earning they would be able to improve their quality of life individually and collectively. This we call a COMMUNITY LEARNING,EARNING and LIVING IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM .In order to implement we must encourage the local people to establish a Community Learning Centers(CLC) owned, established and managed by the local people. The National Literacy Watch Committee of Nepal, has been publishing bi monthly Bulletin called "Literacy Watch Bulletin" which has done advocacy work both inside the country and outside the country with International community. This has been appreciated both inside and outside the country.(6)

But we have to be very careful and we cannot romanticize NGOs.Because there are many NGOs which have been set up to gain personal benefits. So we have a saying in

Nepal that some NGOs are Pocket NGOs, some are Briefcase NGOs and Some are Real NGOs. Therefore it is the duty of the government and donors that they try to encourage the genuine NGOs and censure the bad NGOs setting up a strict criteria to be followed by all NGOs.

Actually NGOs are recently facing many criticism like they are donor driven and they harp the tune of some international lobbyists in the First World countries etc. Mr.S. Akbar Zaidi of Pakistan says”A number of authors have expressed alarm at the probable erosion of legitimacy of NGOs as a consequence of taking money from donors (Dicher,1996;Edward and Hulme,1996;Nijam,1996 etc).They feel that it may not be possible to have an independent outlook or mission if they rely on donors funds. Because of their dependence on this money, their accountability gets shifted’ upward’ ,rather than where it ought to be, ’downward below at the grassroots’. He quoted Adil Najim(1996) who said ‘ the intellectual undertaking of NGOs enquiry remains predominantly donor driven, giving rise to an obvious patron-client relationship between NGOs and donors. Donors assert financial control by seeking accountability for the designed purpose.. funds are provided to serve policy goals and, all too often only where it can be demonstrated( or at least argue) that particular policy goals i.e. those shared by the donors will, in fact, be pursued. So donor ‘s policy become NGOs agenda” Actually the title of his article is very interesting i.e. “NGOs Failure and the Need to bring Back the State.(7).

But the critics forgot to notice that the governments in South Asia have not been able to provide the service to the people who elected them to serve the people for more than fifty years. The governments after the government get elected promising that they would work for providing basic education for all, reduction of poverty, women’s development etc. But after getting the government seats they do not fulfill the promise. Now the question arise whether the billions of people should be left without any help? or some socially conscious people get organized into NGOs and try to help the people and at the same time go on advocating to draw the attention of the power holders in the government and the society at large.

### **Relationship between Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs**

There is also a debate going on whether the donor should provide assistance to Southern NGOs directly or they should channel the funds through the NGOs of the Northern First World Countries. In Nepal the First World Northern countries NGOs are conducting basic NFE program by themselves. Bi lateral donors such as USA and the British Government have adopted a policy to bring their own British and American NGOs to work in Nepal. This has weakened Nepalese National NGOs and the local NGOs have become subservient to the Northern NGOs. Times and again the national NGOs have complained that they cannot compete with the Northern NGOs like PACT, the World Education Inc. etc of America and these Northern NGOs are perpetuating dependency syndrome among the local people. Therefore the NGOs Round Table held on 23 March 1999 recommended that the INGOs who is in fact Northern NGOs should not implement the program directly in the field they should help national NGOs to implement the program in the field to promote self reliance and sustainable development among the local people .(8)

In this regard Mr.Anthony Bebbing and Mr.Roger Riddell article titled "Heavy Hands, Hidden Hands, Holding Hands, Intermediary NGOs and Civil Society Organization" is very pertinent. As he said the Northern NGOs could be heavy hands, hidden hands or they could be friends holding hands of the Southern NGOs. The article has observed that the donors are increasingly providing assistance to Southern NGOs because they are near the field, they are more able to mobilize local participation and cooperation. This has made NGOs in the North unhappy that they are loosing source of fund and leverage to control Southern NGOs. But providing direct assistance to Southern NGOs is more effective and economical. But this does not mean that the Northern NGOs have no role. His conclusion is that the Southern NGOs are near the field, close to the people so they are better accountable to the people, better performer and more effective in strengthening civil society than the Northern NGOs. But the Southern NGOs need help of Northern NGOs in policy advocacy with the donor governments, synthesis and dissemination of information, providing access to expertise in different fields. So the suggestion is that the Northern NGOs and Southern NGOs should be real partners holding each others hand. Their suggestion is to develop a new approach of joint programming and helping each other in the implementation and monitoring and evaluation of the programs between Northern and Southern NGOs.(9)

### **History of NGOs before 1990's Revolution..**

In fact the history of NGOs in Nepal is very short indeed. Before 1990, the Panchyat regime under the absolute power of the King exercised tight control over NGOs. The Social Service Council under the chairmanship of the Queen of Nepal did not allow the ordinary people to establish a NGO. Only the people who have a strong link with the palace could open NGO. At that time only a few national NGOs which were established in 1950s such as Paropakar Sangha and the Gandhi Smark Nithi operated and other NGOs such as International Red Cross Society, Save the Children U.S.A,UK,Japan, Action Aid, Plan International ,The World Education Inc,PACT were allowed to establish their branches signing contract with the Social Service Council on the mode of operation and on the total amount of fund to be spent for their projects. But the situation has changed dramatically after 1990 revolution which over threw the Panchyat regime.and established multi party democratic system of government.

After 1990 many NGOs have been established mainly in Kathmandu and in other major cities. At first class organizations such as labors organization, teachers organization, women's organization, government employees organization, etc sprang up to fight for their class interest affiliated with some political parties. Then the development NGOs.were established. There are about 5978 government registered NGOs and about 15000 local NGOs which have not registered yet in 1995.According to the NGO Act the Chief District Officer's office register the NGOs. These development NGOs undertake variety of works such as women empowerment and development, family planning message and facilities distribution, health, environment, rural development, community forest, education etc.(10)

Especially the Nepalese NGOs are very active in the field of Non-Formal Education. According to the recent survey it was found that about 60% p.c. of the NGOs work for education especially for non formal education combined with other development message

NGOs contribution in expanding basic education through non formal method among rural population who did not have got chance to attend formal primary schools was recorded very significant. According to the Government Report in 1992/93 the NGOs

provided NFE program to 52% percent of the total learners and in 1995 NGOs coverage went up to 60 % percent of the learners.

### **Effectiveness of NGOs in promoting NFE in Nepal**

Various evaluation studies have said that NGOs are more effective in promoting Non Formal Education in Nepal. For Example “the World Education Inc(An American NGO) conducted a study in 1995 of NFE program conducted by the six sample NGOs and its finding was that the NFE programs were successful in increasing class attendance and the learners could increase reading and writing skills very significantly. At the same time those program s were found helpful in ensuring more knowledge on different subjects in general and health education in particulars(11).

The Center for Education Research and Innovation for Development (CERID) of the Tribhuvan University conducted a study in 1996 in a number of villages. According to the study of the total number of learners surveyed 72%p.c. were fully literate, 70% could read easily,65%p.c. could achieve reading comprehension,66% were able to write simple sentences. In the mathematics 29% p.c could perform all four functions of calculations, 79% could add,59% could subtract,33 % could multiply and 22 % could perform division. Besides that 50% p.c of the women joined saving and credit group of women,90% know how to prepare oral rehydration solution and 80 use family planning devices. The study also revealed that 30 % p.c of the learners relapse into illiteracy if they were not given to continue to learn after the NFE classes.

The research studies also points out that the NFE classes conducted by the government was not working properly, because NFE program conducted by the government has to follow too much bureaucratic procedure and there were undue political interference in the government run program. Moreover the government officials were always half hearted when they have to work for non formal basic education.

The same study was of the opinion that the NFE basic education classes conducted ny

NGOs were found more successful to implement Non Formal education Programs because of the following reasons.

A) Non Formal Education(NFE) program has to be flexible to meet the needs and interest of the learners, for which the NGOs have shown remarkable capacity..

B) It is a mass program. NFE program needs to mobilize people's participation and cooperation. Such people's mobilization could be done by NGOs not by the government

C) NFE program should combine empowerment and functional knowledge and skills based on participatory discussion and dialogue with the local people.

D) NFE program demands dedication and democratic behavior on the part of the instructors. Many NGO workers were more dedicated than their government counterparts

E) NFE Program is essentially an innovation in education, for which NGOs in Nepal have man power, but the government does not have.

F) NGOs in Nepal usually start their NFE classes forming a credit and saving scheme of the participants, therefore NFE classes become not only education activity, but also income generating activity for the poor. This promotes self help and self reliance.(12)

### **NGOs in other South Asia countries**

**India** has the long history of NGO movement starting since their struggle for independence. Therefore NGOs are playing very significant role in the promotion of basic education in India. Mr B.K.Passi writing the Chapter No 4 of the volume three of the Education and Development: Tradition and Innovation has given detailed account of NGOs effort in India to promote innovation both in formal and non formal education. In conclusion he said " We have seen from the literature that a large number of innovations has flourished within the framework of non formal education. I would suggest that India should have planned for Non Formal Education for All, rather than Education for All by the year 2000".(13)

The one of the purpose of the Social Action Program of **Pakistan** 1995 was fostering the NGOs role in education The National EFA assessment Report of Pakistan,1999 admitted that the programs launched by NGOs in basic education and literacy at the provincial and local levels are in addition to the government program. Some of the program run by well established NGOs are reported to be very effective and productive"(14)

**Bangladesh** has a very strong network of NGOs which are doing remarkable work in the field of basic non formal education.

The EFA Assessment Report of Bangladesh 1999 says" It is recognized that some non formal education program cater to the same learning needs as the schools and could provide for alternative channels of Education which cannot be covered by formal schooling. While the non formal approaches have room for flexibility and innovation, their efficiency and wide acceptance is dependent on maintaining quality and standards. Those children who cannot or do not enrolled in primary schools, those who drop out from schools, the adolescents who relapses into illiteracy or those young and adult who have never benefited from any schooling would perpetually remain in darkness unless some non formal opportunities are opened up for their education. The Department of Non Formal education took initiative to design programs to cater to the needs of these segments of the population(i.e. Integrated Non Formal Education Program) and engages NGOs on contract to impart basic education.Besides this some National NGOs such as BRAC,GSS,DAM etc have their own basic formal and non formal education program in most parts of the country".(15)

### **International Cooperation for Non Formal Education and NGOs**

The discussion mentioned above tried to argue that strengthening civil society is urgently necessary to promote real democracy, market system at the same time help the poor people to break their poverty trap.. Actually the donors should recognize that NGOs are essential partners of civil society which could help them to make their poverty alleviation a success making the poor people self reliant through non formal education and skills training. This means donors must show genuine willingness to work with local NGOs through National NGOs touching the real causes of poverty which are illiteracy and lack of access skills and capital. If they do not want to take up the challenge of the root cause of poverty, donors are not really not interested in poverty alleviation. Their slogan of poverty alleviation is just public relation tactics. Promoting literacy will empower the poor people and this will strengthen human rights and democracy at the grass root level. Therefore there no alternative of poverty alleviation and democratization process except making poor people literate and educated to help themselves. This would demand on the part of the government, civil society organizations (NGOs) to undertake people's life oriented relevant education designed and implemented with active participation of the people in the true democratic spirit.

The government on its part, should strengthen its mechanism from central level to the grass root level to become watchdog of the NGOs activities so that the genuine NGOs could work freely and punishing the bad NGOs. The experience in the developing countries have amply demonstrated that genuine NGOs could help the people especially women, poor people both in rural and urban society and people living in difficult conditions providing locally relevant education and other services. They could pioneer innovative method of providing services including health, education, environment, women empowerment, micro credit etc. Therefore if the donors are really genuinely interested to help in poverty alleviation, they should work more and more with genuine NGOs. Similarly they should help the government of the developing countries to make favorable situation where government and NGOs could work hand in hand. The donors should help the governments in developing countries that it is axing in the people's program if they do dot work together in real sprit of partnership. Specifically speaking the Government of Japan has said in its ODA Annual Reports of 1996 and 1998 that it would give priority to poverty alleviation, environment conservation and women empowerment.(16) To make those programs successful effective actions have to be taken at the grass root levels where the national and local NGOs are more effective than the government agencies. Therefore the Government of Japan should work with Japanese NGOs to help NGOs in developing countries to undertake effective planning and implementation of programs related with poverty alleviation, environment and women development working together as real partners. The experience of East and South East Asia have already demonstrated that both formal and non formal education walking side by side could produce remarkable result in providing basic education to the children and youth inside the school and outside the school.

### **Concluding Remarks.**

As discussed widely that NGOs are particularly very strong when it come to the area of Women's Empowerment, raising Environmental Concern among the poor people, helping poor people to get organized to defend themselves from exploitation and violence. They are particularly strong to provide basic education through non formal methods to the out of school children and Youth. But we must take note that the persons

working in NGOs may have good intention and service motive, but many of them lack professional competencies in different fields of their work.

In Nepal a survey was conducted to identify capacity building needs of the local NGOs. The survey found out that the local NGOs need training mainly on three areas i.e.(17)

1. Mobilization of people's cooperation and local resources
2. Project planning, writing and implementation including account keeping and audit,
3. Preparation of technical resource materials like local curriculum, learning materials training of instructors and supervisors and learners achievement tests. After the survey the NRC-NFE, Nepal developed manual for training of the NGO personnel

Therefore there must be serious attempt to provide appropriate training opportunities to NGO personnel in different fields to build their capacities. Strangely this issue has not got any attention from governments and as well as donors.

One of the problems is that most of the NGOs are concentrated at the capital of countries and other big cities. Therefore it is necessary to encourage the local people to set up their own NGOs called Community Based Organizations (CBOs). In order to promote CBOs, training facilities for the local volunteers become much more important. At present NGOs workers learn from trial and error method on the job. This is not very satisfactory situation.

Similarly NGOs are said to be donor dependent. The fact is that the NGOs in the developing countries do not have their own source of income and the government in many countries do not give any financial help to NGOs. So they have to seek help from NGOs or other donors.

What is required is that the governments in the developing countries should have clear policy how the government and NGOs could work together. There could not be situation where only government could do all the jobs. Similarly the NGOs also cannot do all the tasks without government's help. This is the age of democracy whereby the civil society should be made strong. It is already very clear to the governments and donors that, the government should not and cannot do every thing. The government and NGOs should work together helping and complementing each other. The NGOs have

demonstrated in many countries that they could do more effective work where people's participation is required. Actually they could provide help to needy people faster than the government. Regarding the issue of Normal Education versus Non Formal Education, it is quite clear that the developing countries will not be able to provide basic education through formal education alone in spite of massive investment by the national government as well as the international donor agencies. Therefore the developing countries have to develop non formal education system to provide basic education for out of school children, youth and adults for some times until the formal primary education become fully capable to enroll, retain and graduate all the children and youth from the formal schools. Non formal education will also have the role to upgrade the knowledge and skills of the workers and farmers for long times. Since the NGOs are more flexible to respond to the needs of the disadvantaged people and NGOs are more willing and capable to undertake innovation in Education, the National Nepalese NGOs should be strengthened to undertake NFE programs.

At present the government's hand is full in trying to correct many problems of formal primary education especially teachers recruitment, placement, training and making them responsible to their duties. Actually this is the main problem of formal primary education in Nepal that the teachers are not trained, they do not teach in the schools full time and they are too much politicized. The political parties in general and the party in government in power in particulars should first stop politicizing the teachers. The parliament must pass a strong legislation that it is illegal for the teachers to be politicized and the law must be enforced strongly. Then the next task of the government is to streamline the mushrooming private schools without real quality. These tasks will keep the government busy for some times to come. Therefore the Government and National NGOs should work hand in hand to development essentially an innovative non formal basic education. Actually NGOs are in better position than the government to take up such innovation which combines education with development oriented knowledge and skills with active participation of the people. In order to make the people's need based basic education available for all. The government has to change its mind set that all the education activities could be undertaken either by the government or by the private sectors only. There is a third sector that is people's sector which get organized through civil society organizations like NGOs.

Actually the rural people do not want just simple education and literacy for education sake, they want education which empower them to make their own decision and to improve their quality of life through better knowledge about health, hygiene, family

planning, environment conservation, formation of saving and credit groups and income generating vocational skills. ***Therefore the NGOs of Nepal have developed a concept and program called “Community Learning Center”(CLC).*** The Community Learning Center(CLC) organizes non formal education program to help the local people to identify their problems through mutual discussion and dialogue. After identifying the problems, they classify them into mainly three categories

- (a) the problems which they could solve by themselves
- (b) problems which they need local government's help and
- (c) the problems for which they need the help of the central government.
- (d) Then they form various groups such as Women's Group, Youth Group, Children's Group, Horticulture Group, Vegetable Farmers Groups, Buffalo Raising Group, Fish Raising Group etc. NRC-NFE and some other Nepalese NGOs are helping the CLCs to train the group leaders and to mobilize resources for providing training from the government offices and private firms.
- (e) Each group prepares micro plans what they will do when and how. The NGOs help the CLCs in the preparation of the micro plans and to implement them.
- (f) The NGOs help to train local people in different trades and to develop learning materials for different trades. The NGOs also help them in monitoring and evaluation of the projects. This is an example the people could improve their quality of life integrating learning, earning and living process together. This is entirely NGOs initiated program which has become very popular in Nepal. The government has appreciated the program, but it has not been able to help the NGOs to expand the program.(18).

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