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Role of Vocational Education and Training on Employment and Earning of Youths in Nepal

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Abstract:

The effect of globalization on human capital development is decisive. A country that lacks the means to compete in global market is often left behind. A key contributor in this regard is the Knowledge, skills and positive attitude of the workforce. Education and skills therefore are the driving forces of social development and economic growth of any country. Employment level of the working age group people, its composition and the growth in employment opportunities are the critical indicator of the development process in any economy. The present paper attempts to highlight the positive effects that played by the Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs in livelihood development of the large number of disadvantaged and unemployed population of Nepal. Primary data and information collected from the purposively sampled respondents 405 VET graduates who after training are employed in their occupational sector. Field observation also made for obtaining qualitative information to establish the relationship between vocational training and the gainful employment of the training graduates. The finding of this study revealed that VET plays positive role in employment and income growth. However, it concludes with the recommendation that post training support to the participants is must for functional VET and getting suitable employment in the labor market.

Keywords: Education, Employment, Income, Poverty, Training, Skill Development

1. Introduction

During the past decades there has been a strong trend towards increasing educational attainments among young persons. The most significant development has been the increase in the proportion that completes high school and go on to higher education, but there have been many developments affecting those that do not choose this path. There is now a quite diverse post-school education and training sector that offers a wide range of levels and types of qualifications (Stormback, 2010). According to Stormback, a limited attention has given to the relation of labor market and vocational education and trainings through empirical researches, but in the labor economics there is a study and estimation of casual effect of education on earning. He further emphasizes to the relationship between education and earnings stating that it is the most intensively studied issue in labor economics.

Youth unemployment is a serious problem all over the world. Recent data of ILO (2016) showed that, there are 199.4 million jobless people in the world. The youth that faced the greatest problems were the early school leavers. As documented in a large body of research, early school leavers have experienced a much less successful transition to work compared to those that completed year 12. 21st century has brought profound and fundamental changes to economics, technology, politics, culture, morals, social values and ethics. As a driving force globalization has both expanded the opportunities and added challenges to individuals as well as to the organizations; some countries or some individuals benefitted from more competition and trade expansion and others have suffered increased unemployment and underemployment. Competition in production and services and changes especially in technology has added the job to the education sector to empower the youths to be able to cope with the industrial and economic environment to contribute to economic growth of any nation (Uddin, 2007). The economy becomes more productive, innovative and competitive both in quality and quantity through the existence of more human potential.

The newsletter of International Institute for Education Planning (IIEP) describes globalization's other effects on labour markets in some countries have benefitted from more international competition and trade. Others have suffered increased unemployment, massive youth migrations in those countries where there are few job opportunities in domestic labor market. Yet, at the same time, migration and the transfer of knowledge, ideas, skills and technology through the return of migrants and general mobility are increasingly recognized as valuable, sometimes vital, contributions. Turning migration in to an effective development tool for countries with high immigration is major policy concern in some developing countries (Atchoarena, 2007).

Development partners of Nepal have defined poverty as a person or individual with income of less than 1.25 US \$ a day. Likewise, United Nations Development Program (UNDP) has been measuring poverty on the basis of multi-dimensional poverty indicators where 10 sub-indicators including two each for education and health and 6 for living standard has been set. Likewise, it is measured on the basis of opportunities and accessibility that individual holds to transfer his/her property and skills (Nepal, Economic Survey, 2016).

1.1. Statement of the Problem

Under developed countries like Nepal, where the poverty index is high (21.6%), production of agriculture as well as industrial sector is declining every year and the contribution of these sectors is declining per year, the vocational education and training can be an instrumental to economic growth. The data shows that more than 80 percent of the population engaged in agriculture, whereas the contribution of the agriculture sector to GDP is in declining trend 36.6 percent in FY 2001/02 and 31.6 percent in the FY 2015/016. In contrary to that the non-agriculture sector has gone up from 63.4 percent in 2001/02 to 68.3 percent in FY 2015/016. In one side, more than 512 thousand active youths inter in to the Nepalese labor market each year and in other side the country has capacity hardly to train 100 thousand youth per year only. The data shows that there is a large gap between demand and supply of labor force. The growth of skilled human resources and creation of employment is not satisfactory. More than 1,300 youths leave the country every day. Around 3.48 million youth working in foreign employment are categorized as 1.5 percent skilled, 23 percent Semi-skilled and 75.5 percent unskilled (Government of Nepal, 2016).

Many research analyses highlight the significance of income and income inequality as determinants of poverty. A significant amount of work on poverty has been done using income-based determinants, but poverty is not confined to income or income differentials. Different studies discuss income variables, income growth and income inequality as possible determinants of poverty, and provide mixed evidence. If we assume on the basis of these findings that income variables do not adequately explain poverty alleviation, then we need to explore other possible determinants of poverty like education.

Income generation through employment and reduction of poverty is very important in the lives of the youths. There may be more than one option to those youths who are continuing their study in the colleges/universities, but for those who are out of school and school leaver without higher education have limited options to get employment. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) program is one of the most possible solution of the unemployment of the huge mass of youth because it can open the doors of earnings through self, wage and foreign employment. VET therefore is one of the measures for enhancement and sustainability of youth empowerment.

Since poverty alleviation through education and skill development is one of the major liabilities of the government of Nepal, the study of its related activities that are in operation and their effect and outcome should be studied and programs should be revised accordingly. To explore the role of poverty measures, such studies are an essential.

1.2. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to find out the role of Vocational education and Training in employment and income generation of the youth in Nepal. The education level of an earning household member is an active factor in poverty risk (the risk of being poor), not only for himself/herself but also for his/ her family. Since education can affect a person's earning's positively, estimates of the effect of education are useful for anti-poverty policy perspectives. Poverty reduction is one of the major agenda of government of Nepal since 9th Development Pan and skill development programs are accepted one of the best fundamentals for the achievement of this goal.

The purpose of this paper is to examine the role of Technical and vocational Education in employment, earning and poverty alleviation. The primary intention is to explore whether the vocational education and trainings to the young population of a country has a considerable impact on the employment and earning beside their low level of general education. In this regard, the role played by this education sub-sector is to be studied. More specifically, the study sought to find out the answer of following question:

- i) Are the vocational education and training programs supporting to Nepalese youth to create employment and earning for their living?

1.3. Significance of the Study

The study will be based on the empirical data and collected information through field observation with some of the theoretical implication. Almost all of the developing countries have been finding poverty as a fundamental barrier to development. International development agencies have been assisting to developing countries spending large amount of the fund in the educational and training for the aim of poverty reduction. However, the effect of such programs requires to be studied.

This paper will benefit to the government of Nepal; Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) to focus on employment generation through a functional, technical and vocational education that emphasizes practical knowledge, skills and self-reliance to be fit employable in the self, wage or overseas as gainful employment after completing a certain process of vocational education and training.

2. Research Method

The study employed a descriptive survey. Descriptive survey research defined as one in which a group of items or people are students by collecting and analyzing data from only a few people or items considered to be representative of the entire group or by collecting and analyzing data from the entire population (Nworgu, 2004).

Vocational Education and Training (VET) graduates from different public, private and Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) trained under different projects were the population of the study. The numbers of graduates were selected purposively from the list of the VET graduates randomly collected from different training providers and structured interview questionnaires were send to them. 405 questionnaires were duly completed and collected. A part from the questionnaire, some field survey was also administered for the qualitative data on the role of VET played in employment, income and poverty alleviation.

First of all, the collected data was manually edited and screened on the basis of quality of response. The questionnaire which had not the responses to all questions or the responses were not clear were excluded in analysis. In the second phase, each option of responses

was quantified into numerical values and finally data were entered into SPSS software version 20 to analyze the data. Frequency table, cross-tab, mean and median were generated to describe the data.

3. Findings

In support to the research statement, "VET Program Supporting to Nepalese Youth to create Employment and Earning for Their Living", some supporting questionnaire were asked to seek the information from the graduates like their employment status, earning and income before to join VET, employment status after vocational training, income after graduation in vocational education and other indirect effect of education in the graduates like self-esteem and support in children's education and health. All of the supportive components attempted to find out the relation between VET and poverty alleviation. Income and earnings level of the graduated for both prior to and after the training were examined.

The study attempted to find the VET graduates employment status before attending the training. They were asked what they use to do before the training. The table 1 below presents the status of the graduates before they join in VET programs. Information on engagement of the graduates in different activities prior to the training was also obtained in order to examine whether the VET has brought a change in their lives.

Gender	Status Before Joining VET Program					Total
	Study	Agriculture	Unemployment	The same work doing now	Others	
Female	25 (18.4%)	24 (17.8%)	78 (57.8%)	8 (5.9%)	0 (0%)	135 (100.0%)
Male	64 (23.9%)	82 (30.6%)	88 (32.8%)	18 (6.7%)	16 (6.0%)	268 (100.0%)
Third Gender	0 (0.0%)	2 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (100.0%)
Total	89 (22.0%)	108 (26.7%)	166 (41.0%)	26 (6.4%)	16 (4.0%)	405 (100.0%)

Table 1: Graduates employment status before VET

Source: field Survey: 2015

The table 1 clearly depicts the graduate's employment situation before they join the vocational education and training programs. Out of the total 405 respondent graduates, there were 135 (33.33%) were female graduates and 268 (66.20%) were the male. There were 2 (0.5%) third gender respondents. Out of them 41.0 percent respondent graduates replied that they were unemployed before to join the training. 26.7 percent were involved or assisting their parents in agriculture and 22.0 percent replied that they were studying. A small number of the respondents 6.4 percent were found engaged in the same work of the occupation they are trained.

According to the data it is clear that, most of the youth were unemployed or were partially employed before to join the VET. Although agriculture helps in income and earnings, but this is not commonly regarded as gainful employment. Therefore, the data presented on table 1 indicates that about 91 percent of the respondents were unemployed or under employed prior to the skill training. This clearly indicates that the vocational education and training programs in Nepal are targeting and contributing to the unemployed people.

The study also attempted to identify the income/earning of the youth before they join to the VET in order to find their economic situation and further support to indicate whether these graduates came from poor family. In order to examine that the participants were asked to mention their income before joining the training. Table 2 below showed their income before to join the VET program.

Gender	Earning/Income Range Before to Join VET				Total
	Less than 3000	3001---6000	6001-9000	More than 9000	
Female	10 (5.61%)	18 (10.11%)	0 (0.0%)	4 (2.24%)	32 (17.98%)
Male	29 (16.29%)	66 (37.07%)	33 (18.53%)	16 (8.99%)	144 (80.9%)
Third Gender	2 (1.12%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (1.12%)
Total	41 (23.02%)	84 (47.18%)	33 (18.53%)	20 (11.23%)	178 (100%)

Table 2: Earning and income before to join VET

Source: field Survey: 2015

Regarding to the question on their prior earnings, only 44.0 percent respondent graduates have replied and most of them did not respond or simply denied to mention it. It may be due to their ignorance of income because of agricultural based or very small earning or no direct earning so, they did not like to disclose the status. Among the respondents, 23.02 percent have mentioned that their earning was less than 3000 Nrs. per month. Similarly, 47.18 percent of the respondents have replied that they used to earn in between 3001 to 6000 Nrs. Per month before the training they received. Out of them, 18.53 percent participants respond that their earning was 6001-9000 and 11.23 percent respond that they use to earn more than 9000 per month before they join the vocational training.

According to the above data it is clear that, more than 70.0 percent of the respondents had their income less than 6000 before they took the vocational training. This clearly indicates that, poor youth having very little family income mainly have the participation in the vocational training. After getting the vocational training they have expected substantially receive employment and increase earning.

Employment status of the vocational education and training graduates is one of the most important predictor of the effectiveness of the program. As indicated in the table 3 out of 405 graduates about 88.0 percent overall graduates have reported as employed among which 92.0 percent male were found employed and 85.0 percent female. Most of the male as well as female graduates were found engaged in temporary employment followed by part-time employment in wage and self-employment.

Gender	Never Employed	Self-employment	Business	wage employment	Others	Total
Female	19 (4.9%)	36 (9.1%)	25 (6.4%)	52 (12.9%)	2 (0.5%)	135 (33.3%)
Male	23 (5.9%)	61 (15.1%)	38 (9.6%)	144 (35.6%)	12 (3.0%)	268 (66.2%)
Third Gender	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (0.5%)
Total	44 (10.9%)	98 (24.2%)	65 (16.0%)	198 (48.9%)	14 (3.5%)	405 (100.0%)

Table 3: Graduates Gender wise Employment areas after receiving VET

Source: field Survey: 2015

The above data presented in the table 3 on the VET graduates employment status after completion of the training programs received from the VET graduates indicate that, most of the female as well as male graduates have their employment in the wage employment. As shown in the data, 48.9 percent graduates have secured their employment in the wage employment market and 24.2 percent graduates have self-employment. 16.0 percent VET graduates have started their own business in the occupational areas they were trained. A small number 10.9 percent of the graduates were respond unemployed after receiving the training. However, such alarming employment of women is a breakthrough of it owing to VET.

Through the study it was attempted to examine the caste wise employment status of the VET graduates to identify the effect of the programs in different casts and the benefit received by different social groups from it. The table below clearly indicates the engagement of the different caste group in different employment areas.

Employment status of the VET graduates is one of the most important predictor of the effectiveness of the program. The participant graduates were asked to mention their income/earning status after they took the vocational training. Out of the 405, 341 graduate respondents' response this question. The table-4 below presents the earning/income status of the graduates after they took the vocational training.

Gender	Earning/ Income Range After Completing VET Program				Total
	5000-8000	8001-11000	11001-14000	More than 14000	
Female	51(47.7%)	50 (46.7%)	4 (3.7%)	2 (1.9%)	107 (100%)
Male	119 (51.3%)	84 (36.2%)	27 (11.6%)	2 (0.75%)	232 (100%)
Third Gender	2 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (100%)
Total	172 (50.4%)	134 (39.3%)	31 (9.1%)	4 (1.2%)	341 (100%)

Table 4: Earning/Income after completing VET

Source: field Survey: 2015

A total 84.2 percent t graduate responded the information about their present earning status which is almost double of the respond of the participants of prior training information. This indicates that the participants do not have hesitation to mention their earning after they trained and employed.

According to the table 4 (income after VET) and comparing it with table 2 (Income before training), monthly income of the graduates after completing the training has substantially improved. Before the training the minimum wage they were earning was less than 3000 a month and 23.02 percent out of the total respondent graduates have fallen in this income category. The highest income recorded before the training was 9000 and only 11.23 percent of the respondents were earning this level of income. After the training the minimum wage that the graduates are earning is in between 5000 to 8000 per month. Out of the total respondent graduates, 50.4 percent have this income level. Similarly, 39.3 percent of the respondents have been earning in between 8000 to 11000 per month and 9.1percent found to earning more than 11 and less than 14 thousand per month. Only 1.2 percent graduates respond that their income level is <14000. A noticeable point is that both male and female equally have fallen in this income range. Therefore, the data above indicates that VET programs substantially increased the income level of the graduates equally to male and female.

VET graduates were asked that what had made them to find the present job and most of the graduates respond that skill training has equipped them to find the job. The following table depicts that, the vocational education and training has played instrumental role to the target beneficiaries to receive employment.

Gender	What has Helped the Graduate to find the Present Job				Total
	Vocational training	Academic qualification	Personal identity	Not Applicable	
Female	97 (71.9%)	10 (7.4%)	4 (3.0%)	24 (17.8%)	135 (100.0%)
Male	196 (73.1%)	36 (13.4%)	14 (5.2%)	22 (8.2%)	268 (100.0%)
Third Gender	2 (100.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (100.0%)
Total	295 (72.8%)	46 (11.4%)	18 (4.4%)	46 (11.4%)	405 (100.0%)

Table 5: What had helped to find this job

Source: field Survey: 2015

The above table attempts to clarify the graduates supported with what to receive the employment. Out of total graduates 72.8 percent respond that they are equipped for the job due to the skill training. Similarly, 11.4 percent respond that it is possible because of their academic qualification and 4.4 percent respond that the job they received because of their personal acquaintances with the employer. However, the qualitative information received by the educationist, employers also has argued that the contribution of the VET to the

graduates in getting job is higher even. Even if the employers have good acquaintances with the job seeker, they seek for the skills related to the occupation because they need to increase the production.

The study also attempted to find the other effect than economic outcomes to the life of the VET graduates brought due to the vocational education and training and employment they received after training. The table 5 below depicts the changes brought by the VET.

Gender	Social Effect of training on VET graduates					Total
	Able to Support Family	Increase Self-esteem	Improved Children's Education	Good Earning	Other Effects	
Female	30 (23.6%)	47 (37.0%)	6 (4.7%)	24 (18.9%)	20 (15.7%)	127 (100%)
Male	78 (29.3%)	110 (41.4%)	6 (2.3%)	26 (9.8%)	46 (17.3%)	266 (100%)
Third Gender	2 (100%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (100%)
Total	110 (27.8%)	157 (39.7%)	12 (3.0%)	50 (12.7%)	66 (16.7%)	395 (100%)

Table 6: Other indirect effects in socio-economic situations After VET Programs

Source: Field Survey 2015

The above table 6 has indicated changes that have brought in their lives as a result of taking vocational education and trainings and employment that had because of the education and skill they had. A significant number of graduates repeatedly emphasized that, VET had increased their self-esteem, they are now capable of supporting to their family, and they are able to manage their children's better education and had good earning.

According to the data the major effect of the VET brought change in the graduates live is increase in their self-esteem. 39.7 percent of the respondents claimed that, the education and training had increased their self-esteem. A significant number, 27.8 percent of them respond that the training and employment made them able to support their family. Similarly, 12.7 percent have claimed that they have adequate earning from their employment and a few of them claimed that now they can manage good education of their children. In totality, it can be easily said that the vocational education and training has made the graduates skillful to make an earning, and the earning has brought adequate positive changes in their life.

4. Discussion

There is longstanding evidence that the effects of education on productivity are much more marked when there is a dynamic, supportive environment surrounding schools. However, most of the developing countries have highly focused to education and training system as a solution to unemployment/under employment and poverty reduction (Palmer, 2011). According to the Palmer, without a supportive decent and productive work environment, the education and training system cannot have any real impact on the problem of unemployment/under employment or poverty reduction. A part from this 'work environment, other sectors/areas are crucial determinants of education/training outcomes.

Shirazi (1994), investigated and showed that growth the income affects poverty negatively. In their study, income was found to grow for all segments of the population and, as a result, poverty incidence fell. The study of the Goh, Luo and Zhu (2009) has similarly other finding was that education played an increasingly important role in household income determination for both urban and rural areas. Income gaps have increased between households with more and less human capital endowment (C.Goh, 2009).

Quantifying the real contribution of education to economic growth (Mitch, 2005), concludes that, " Education has always been considered a dominant tool for reducing poverty and inequality through productivity enhancement, which is also a key factor in sustainable economic growth. In the same line Easterly and Levine (2000) described that although, total factor productivity relates to labor, land and capital, the role of labor productivity is more important than all other factors of production. Education and skill definitely promotes labor productivity and consequently, labor productivity positively influences the productivity of other factors of production (Levine, 2000).

Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs are being run with the objective of achieving rapid development of the most of developing countries by making the maximum use of productive labor through the development of entrepreneurship while bringing changes in the traditional production system. Several schemes and provisions like scholarships, collateral-free periodical loans after training, were made in this regard to make access of the women and disadvantaged group to increase their participation in training and employment activities and fulfill the objective of poverty reduction (Uddin D. R., 2006).

5. Conclusion

Vocational Education and Training (VET) programs are in priority of the Government of Nepal. There are several VET projects running in financial assistance of the international agencies. The goal of all the projects is to strengthen the socio-economic status of unemployed youths, especially the women, Dalit and other Disadvantaged Group (DAG), who are deprived of higher education, by providing vocational trainings and make them employable. Similarly, The programs run in the country in assistance of the international development organizations and the government's regular programs under the Council for Technical Education and Vocational training (CTEVT), are found success in fulfilling its objectives of upgrading the individual,, making best use of the human

resources through skilling, providing employment, making available the required manpower to the industry increasing the productivity and contributing sustainable development activities.

As discussed earlier, education plays vital role in enhancing people's earning ability, increase self-esteem, contribute in improving family education, health and poverty alleviation. Training providers attempt to impart the skills to the unemployed, poor, school leaver youth is found to be succeed. However, there is the need to enhance training quality changing the model of the trainings. Emphasis on the practical aspect of technical and vocational education will help to produce productive youths of the nation' and labor force that will be self-reliant or employable in an industry or company. A robust quality assurance strategy will maintain quality in TVET, for which post training support services are to be focused. Study on market demand, industries -based curriculum, quality training, life-long learning would have additional positive effect on employment of the youth.

6. Recommendations

Skills and competence acquired through appropriate training found to be meaningful for both individual and society. If the individual is benefited from employment and earning, then the nation will be benefited through the increase in productivity, income and image. Thus, for the socio-economic prosperity of the country, we should not only depend on the natural resources that we have but also have ability to develop appropriately trained human resources and efficiently utilize human resources needed for the industrial and economic development process.

It is therefore suggested that the following measures if well-articulated will mitigate the problems of the youth unemployment and help to reduce poverty reduction.

- i. The government of Nepal should expand TVET programs both in geographically and subject areas in access of the marginalized people based on market demand and self-employment opportunities.
- ii. Apprenticeship Training model should be focused, training providers should closely collaborate with the industries and government should play a role of facilitator.
- iii. VET Graduates should be encouraged with functional post training supports to increase self-employment and job creation by assisting them with soft loans and/or micro-credit.

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