

**Editorial**

**Researching Education as a Social Process**

Suresh Gautam\* 

*Kathmandu University School of Education, Lalitpur, Nepal*

Having missed some frequency marks in the early years, the *Journal of Education and Research* (JER) celebrates its 10 years of publication in August 2018 with the publication of this issue (Volume 8, Number 2). It has become more diverse in terms of editorial, reviewer and author communities as the years passed by. Likewise, our editorial staff have captured adequate professional development opportunities. With many ups and downs and steep learning curves for all of the editors involved thus far, the turbulent ride over these years has established the journal as one of the leading educational journals in Nepal and beyond. Since its inception, the journal has been accepting papers from a wide range of education and research. The main aim of the journal is to contribute to knowledge building process on education by providing a forum for scholarly work. With a decade-long journey, we look ahead with much enthusiasm to realise the journals' original aim. To disseminate broader perspectives of schooling beyond the system, it endeavours to recognise education as a social process.

**Thinking Differently About Education and Research**

Education has been broadly conceived beyond the traditional notion of pedagogical aspects taking place inside the classroom and thus new learning spaces (Harrison & Hutton, 2014; Dhakal, 2018) and literacies are widely recognised. Such a notion has been expanded to regard education as a social and cultural process. In the line of Jackson (2012), "We need to learn not just how to improve on current practices but also how to think differently about education" (p. 1). Toward this direction, the JER has

\* Editor Email: [sgautam@kusoed.edu.np](mailto:sgautam@kusoed.edu.np)

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3740-9435>



ISSN: 2091-0118 (Print) / 2091-2560 (Online)

© 2018 The Editor.

Journal homepage: <http://www.kusoed.edu.np/journal/index.php/je>



Published by Kathmandu University School of Education, Lalitpur, Nepal.

This open access article is distributed under a Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY-SA 4.0) license.

been acting out to think differently about education, which includes socialization and acculturation in a distinct social and cultural setting.

Thinking differently welcomes all the changing paradigms of education and research from the 'standardized education' system to 'systematic sustainability education' (Davis, Sumara, & Luce-Kapler, 2015). The latter includes a wide spectrum of looking education for the transformation of the highly complex society. In the changing paradigms of education, the research paradigms should likewise reciprocate (Hedlund-de Witt, 2013; Plack, 2005) in exploring the roles and values for the sustainable development of the complex web of human-nature relationships.

In such a complex society, the function of education has been changing through the history of the world in three major ways. And so do education and research. *First move:* scientific education and thinking, in which the purpose of education has been shifted from the form of standard education which started back in the 1600s to promote the motion of the industrialization and imperialism (Davis et al., 2015). In such circumstances, education has served the purpose of teaching structured and objective knowledge to the society (Nicholson, 2016) in which positivism has become a dominant research paradigm to explore cause and effect relationship of the students' performance on the job market.

*Second move:* the democratic turn of education, was the educational paradigm during 1900s, came in response to the fallacies of the standard education, that it was not able to address the need of contemporary society. The rigid framework of education was thought to be changed to address the need of society to educate people for preparing to becoming democratic citizens (Davis et al., 2015). To serve the democratic values of the society, education aims at supporting learning in the changing and subjective world. In this line, the form of the research has been changing as the form of authentic and progressive education. The second move gives sense to the changing educational values for societal progress.

*Third move:* Sustainability education, which goes beyond the anthropocentric education to the eco-centric modality (Davis et al., 2015). The problem of education lies to serve only the human interest without recognizing the coexistence with the flora and fauna, which has an intricate relationship with human civilization. The purpose of education in this move is to live together for valuing the identity of self and other

(Nicholson, 2016). This move of education has been reflected in the multi-paradigmatic research approaches, post qualitative research tradition, and transformative research process. In the continuum of such thinking, the following educational issues under particular research paradigms got space in this the issue of JER.

### **Harvesting Principles Into Practices**

In these three moves, this issue of the JER mainly follows the first move in which knowledge has been measured and recognized. Mona Shrestha and Chris Roffey from Academic Pathways, Social Science and Psychology, Western Sydney University - The College, New South Wales, Australia, envision alternative modes of assessment to ensure the learning of students. The critique on the standard test is possible from the educational philosophies of inclusive and just learning environment. They share that alternative ways of assessment are successful for transformative learning experience.

Emmanuel Olorunleke Eseyin from the Department of Educational Management, Faculty of Education, University of Port Harcourt, Rivers State, Nigeria describes the influence of students' demographic variables on their access to financial aids in public Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. Using post-positivism, he shares that students' demographic variables have an influence on their access to financial grants in public Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria. The implication of this is that the government's expenditure on education will continue to increase in the absence of these alternative financial aids in the public Universities in Rivers State, Nigeria.

Unlike, earlier researchers, Fonteh Athanasius Amungwa from the Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Faculty of Social and Management Sciences, University of Buea, Cameroon, using humanist tradition of the research shares that extreme dependence on the provision of Western formal education cannot solve the problems of a rapidly changing society like Cameroon, which is facing a long-term economic crisis and persistent unemployment of the graduates. He expects the role of education to bring social and cultural changes.

Another author, Ramesh Prasad Chaulagai from Kathmandu University School of Education, Nepal, connects financial well-being with enhanced financial behaviour. He shares that for enhancing financial behaviour, contemporary and contextual financial literacy programs are necessary to educate the individuals. The findings of his study are

useful for policymakers, financial service users, academicians, and financial service providers in Nepal.

Akinjide Aboluwodi from the Department of Arts Education, Faculty of Education, Adekunle Ajasin University, Nigeria, envisioned some creative aspects of entrepreneurial capability among university students in Nigeria. He examines the 'freedom' conditions as likely to assist students to improve their creative thinking and strengthen their entrepreneurial capability. He concludes by urging universities in Nigeria to adopt relevant curriculum in addition to providing students with a decent learning environment to enable them to develop creative thinking that could be used in entrepreneurship education.

### **Conclusion**

These five articles are examples that include the changing shifts in education and research in academia. The JER accepts the shifts from the structured education paradigm and research traditions to creative and holistic approaches. It offers space for alternative thinking and logic to think education as a broader social process.

### **References**

- Davis, B., Sumara, D., & Luce-Kapler, R. (2015). *Engaging minds: Cultures of education and practices of teaching* (3rd ed.). London, England: Routledge.
- Dhakar, R. K. (2018). *Everything's a little mad here! Locating learning spaces in a new education paradigm*. Paper presented at the 10th Annual Asian Dynamics Initiative Conference, 18-20 June 2018, University of Copenhagen, Copenhagen, Denmark.
- Harrison, A., & Hutton, L. (2014). *Design for the changing educational landscape: Space, place and the future of learning*. Milton Park, England: Routledge.
- Hedlund-de Witt, A. (2013). *Worldviews and the transformation to sustainable societies. An exploration of the cultural and psychological dimensions of our global environmental challenges* (Doctoral thesis). Faculty of Earth and Life Sciences, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam, the Netherlands. Retrieved from <https://research.vu.nl/ws/portalfiles/portal/42112561/complete+dissertation.pdf>
- Jackson, P. W. (2012). *What is education?* Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Plack, M. M. (2005). Human nature and research paradigms: Theory meets physical therapy practice. *The Qualitative Report*, 10(2), 223-245.