

FAAN Newsletter

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From the President



December 4, 2002 marked the 5th Fulbright Alumni Association Nepal (FAAN) Annual General Body Meeting. The distinguished Fulbrighters who held the Ministerial Portfolio in the cabinet of His Majesty's Government at that time, Dr. Badri Prasad Shrestha, Minister of Finance and Mr. Dipak Gyawali, Minister of Water Resources were our guests of honor. One of the significant event was the introduction of FAAN to the International Fulbright Community. It was a matter of pride for me to represent FAAN at the US Fulbright Association's 25th Anniversary Conference as well as Fulbright Association International Alumni Meeting held on October 10 - 13, 2002 at Washington D.C. The theme of the Conference was *Dialogue of Cultures: Fulbright*

Contribution. It was indeed a great pleasure to meet and interact with International Fulbright representatives. Nepal was the only country representing our region or SAARC countries. The Founder President of the German Fulbright Alumni Association, Mr. Oliver Steinmetz, expressed surprise to know that there was an active Fulbright Alumni Association in Nepal. The US Fulbright Association has set up a Listserv for Fulbright Alumni Organizations worldwide. FAAN also has access to this listserv. FAAN has been moving forward. We have been successful in increasing our Life Members beyond hundred. I believe that we can further strengthen this organization and contribute more nationally and internationally.

I would like to request fellow Fulbrighters who have not become members to join the association. I also request all our members attend the upcoming Annual General Body Meeting and elect a New Executive Committee. I am very much thankful to US Education Foundation Nepal (USEF) for providing us their continuous co-operation and support. I would specially like to thank Mr. Mike Gill, the Executive Director for his generous guidance and support in many ways and Ms. Constance C. Jones, Director of the American Center for her good wishes and encouragement. My sincere thanks also go to the FAAN Advisory Board Members for their valuable advice and FAAN executive members for their support. My special thanks to Mr. Suman Basnet, our executive member and Mrs. Seema Rajouria, a well-wisher of FAAN, for their valuable help in bringing out this newsletter. I believe FAAN has a great future and wish every success of the Organization. Wish you all a very happy, prosperous and peaceful New Year.

Dr. Dilli Devi Shakya

Monthly Talk Program

The Monthly Talk Program is of the key activities of FAAN. It brings experts from various fields to talk about their area of expertise. The talk programs continue to be the forum where topics and issues of public interest are discussed. During the past year, the topics ranged from medicine to conflict resolution. The details of the various talk program are as given below.

August 20, 2002: Nepal and World Summit on Sustainable Development

Dr. Minendra Rijal, the then member of the National Planning Commission, presented his views on how the World Summit on Sustainable Development pertains to Nepal. He expressed the view that the World Summit had discussed and explored many issues that can help the sustainable development programs of the member countries.

June 17, 2003: Conflict in Multicultural Settings and Nepal in Conflict: Options for Interventions and Opportunities for Change

Two speakers recently back after completing the Fulbright programs spoke on conflict resolution. Ms. Anjana Shakya, in her presentations about conflict in multicultural settings, said that the suppression of the identity of the indigenous and dalit population, and not poverty, has fueled the Maoist conflict in Nepal. She concluded that only radical change in the educational, administrative and judicial systems would resolve the present conflict. Ms. Shakya is chairperson of HimRights, a human rights advocacy organization. Mr. Ameet Dhakal

Fifth FAAN Annual General Meeting



The chief guests at the AGM, Dr. Badri P. Shrestha and Mr. Deepak Gyanwali with Mr. Yog P. Upadhya, Michael Gill, Dilli D. Shakya and Ram B. Amatya

The fifth FAAN Annual General Meeting was held on December 4th, 2002 at the American Center, Gyaneshwor. Chairman of the FAAN Advisory Committee, Mr. Yog Prasad Upadhayay, presided over the meeting. The chief guests were Dr. Badri Prasad Shrestha, Minister of Finance and Mr. Dipak Gyawali, Minister of Water Resources. The meeting felicitated Dr. Shrestha, also a life member of FAAN and Mr. Gyawali for being nominated as Cabinet Ministers in His Majesty's Government. Both Dr. Shrestha and Mr. Gyawali are Fulbrighters. In the meeting, Dr. Dilli Devi Shakya, FAAN President delivered the welcome address, FAAN Secretary, Mr. Madan Mohan Das presented the Annual Report and FAAN Treasurer, Mr. Ram Bhakta Amatya, presented the Financial Report. There was also a floor discussion on what the future direction of FAAN should be. Organizing home visits for American Fulbrighters, "mapping" of Fulbright potential in Nepal and mobilizing the expertise among Nepali Fulbrighters for water resources development were some of the suggestions made.



Audience at the AGM on 2002

was the second speaker. He is a news coordinator at Kathmandu Post. His topic was "Nepal in Conflict: Options for Interventions and Opportunities for Change". In his presentation, he talked about the various causes of the present conflict in Nepal and suggested that it could be resolved through establish of long-term vision, addressing the root cause of the conflict, devising various conflict intervention mechanisms and preventing further violence.

April 22, 2003: Hepatitis E in Kathmandu

Dr. Robert McNair Scott of Walter Reed Army Institute of Research made a presentation on the prevalence of

Hepatitis E in the Kathmandu Valley. Hepatitis E is usually transmitted through foul water during the monsoon season. It infects people from all socio-economic levels. About 1 to 2% of the Kathmandu valley population fall ill with hepatitis every year. People sick with hepatitis lose over 20% of their annual income as a result of the sickness. Hepatitis E in pregnancy is a major maternal and child health problem.

May 8, 2003: Collective Memory and Landscape

Masumi Hayashi, Professor in the Art Department of Cleveland State University, USA is a Fulbright Regional Researcher. Her research is on "Photographs of Asian Temples and Rituals of Ancestral Worship". Her presentation was titled "Collective Memory and Landscape". This program, which was jointly organized by the Fulbright Commission, Himal Association and FAAN, was held at Rato Bangala School, Baggikhana at Patan Dhoka in Lalitpur.

July 11, 2003: Mediation Law and Practice in the US"

Ms. C. J. Larkin is a Washington University law professor, attorney and a mediation expert. In her presentation, Ms. Larkin spoke about mediation being a more peaceful and informal way of solving disputes. She said that mediation can avert physical violence and also free up police officers, who can then concentrate on more important issues. She has found that 90% of mediations are successful.

Congratulations

FAAN congratulates Life Members

- Dr. Prakash Chandra Lohani on his appointment as the Minister of Finance, His Majesty's Government of Nepal.
- Dr. Dilli Devi Shakya on being nominated as a member of the Tribhuvan University Executive Council
- Mr. Madan Mohan Das for his appointment as the Executive Director of the Nepal Dairy Development Board
- Dr. Prabha Basnet on being nominated as Member Secretary of Social Welfare Council

Obituary

Mr. Santosh Singh (1961-2003)

Mr. Santosh Singh, Educational Advisor at the American Center and a friend of many Fulbrighters, passed away on April 20, 2003, as a result of a fatal electrical accident. In his eleven year career at USEF, Santoshji served in various positions, starting from receptionist, to Information Assistant, then Information Officer and finally Education Advisor. Santoshji was also a talented classical guitarist and a composer of popular Nepali songs. We all miss him and his cheerful and enthusiastic outlook to life. We wish for the eternal peace for his soul and express out heartfelt condolences to his family.

Lessons Emerged from Educational Reform in Nepal

by Dr. Tirth Raj Khaniya, Life Member FAAN

Reform in Nepalese Primary Education

The Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) developed and implemented the *Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP)* and *Primary Education Development Project (PEDP)* using its own resources and financial assistance of the International Agencies. For a poor country like Nepal, the amount of money already expended represents an enormous investment in primary education.

BPEP undertook an ambitious range of activities, including curriculum reform, provision of textbooks and instructional materials, institutionalization of teacher support, improvements in access to and management of education, and improved facilities for the Ministry of Education. PEDP, for its part, undertook development of training programs for teachers and managers, establishment of teacher training centers, and improvement of school facilities.

By implementing the two projects, Nepal achieved substantial accomplishments in the supply side of the reform such as a new primary curriculum, new textbooks, provision of curriculum dissemination and in-service training for teachers, provision of resource center mechanism and training for supervisors and head teachers.

Assessment of Learning

In 2001, the *National Assessment of Grade 3 Students* was carried out to track improvements in students' learning achievement. Specifically, the study asked whether achievement of grade 3 students had improved over the four years since 1997, when a baseline of data was established with the *National Achievement Level of Grade 3 Students, 1997*.

Students were examined in three subject areas, Nepali, Mathematics and Social Studies. The study revealed that there was no visible improvement in the way students were learning Nepali and Mathematics though there was improvement in Social Studies. The projects achieved higher rate of enrollment, promotion and girl's participation. There was overall improvement in the supply side of the reform but not in the achievement of learning outcomes.

Were the projects really successful as was claimed by the Government and Funders?

The claims that the projects were successful were based on factors such as the development of infrastructure, hardware and software; increases in literacy rates; the establishment of a large number of new schools; recruitment of teachers; and the high rate of disbursement of the available funds. In terms of access, and from the perspective of government and funding agencies, the primary education system had been improved. But is this sufficient to argue

that the reform was successful? Of course, not. The reason is that there is no clear indication of the reform in the learning achievement of the students.

At a very basic level, of course, success depends on the criteria used. If success is gauged by improvements in access, provision of inputs as planned, and disbursement of funds, then the projects were successful. Yet if the criteria are broadened to include learning gains, reduced geographical disparities in learning, or acquisition of competence in a core of basic skills, then the projects seem not to have been so successful. The Nepal reform thus raises serious questions about the appropriate criteria for success of an educational intervention. It also raises one of the knottiest problems. If a project has no impact at all on student achievement, what *educational* rationale can there be for tremendous expenditures involved?

Looking at the structure of the newly proposed reforms, the components determined for further funding and perceived criteria of evaluation, it would appear that the government and donors are still not much serious about the quality aspect of the reform. Their attention was and is focussed only on the supply side of the reform and successful disbursement of the allocated funds.

One would wonder how simply the supply side of the reform would necessarily guarantee improvement in the learning achievement of student. Can the country afford to keep trying the conventional approach- i.e. input verses output- model for more than two decades without many convincing results? Therefore, the processes involved in making inputs effective in facilitating learning should be the focus of a reform, which the donors and the government should take into account when new reform initiatives are taken. Success of a reform initiative should be gauged on the basis of how far the learning achievement has been improved.



FAAN President, Dr. Shakya with some of the international participants at Washington DC

Civic Education

by Dr. Dhruva Shrestha, Board and Life Member, FAAN

The global trend in education has been the re-conceptualization of civic education into three components of teaching and learning processes. The three components - civic knowledge, civic skills and civic virtues, which are interrelated, include the fundamental knowledge of democratic theory, good governance and responsible citizenship. They also include the operational skills of cognitive operation and participatory skills of every citizen, and the trait of character necessary for the preservation and improvement of democratic governance and citizenship.

Civic education, therefore, has intrinsic links with democratic citizenship because it improves the knowledge and skills of people in matters related to family, community and the nation. However, unless people are made aware of the values and

responsibilities of good citizenship, they will not be able to perform the role of good citizens. So, attitudinal change through educational intervention could be the best alternative in developing both the skill and knowledge of the people and thereby change their attitude towards acting in civic ways.

Civic Education, being an all pervasive subject, may thus be studied from all perspectives of the society. In the present context, civic education has been a concern for all and there are dozens of organizations in the forefront for initiating programs on civic education. Some are for curriculum development and others for text and material development, training etc.

The Society for the Promotion of Civic Education (SPCE) has been working on the development and implementation of civic education in Nepal. During the course of various activities, SPCE is also trying to coordinate with all organizations involved in the promotion of civic education.

FAAN Lifers

To do away with the hassle of renewing your FAAN membership, it costs only Rs. 2000 to become a life member.

Mr.Yog P. Upadhaya	1952	Mr.Madan Mohan Das	1985	Dr.Chandra B. Joshi	1998
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