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**Ensure rights of persons with disabilities to education in federal Nepal**



© UNESCO -A visually impaired person actively participates in the workshop "Ensuring rights to education for persons with disability"

**Over 70 participants including 50 persons with disability representing four development regions gathered in Kathmandu on 16 and 17 January to discuss ways of ensuring the rights to education for persons with disability in federal Nepal. The workshop, the first of its kind focusing on persons with disability and federalism, drew the attention of the concerned authorities to activities aimed at moving educational policy and practice in a more inclusive direction.**

Organized by the Disability Independence Development Association Nepal in cooperation with the National Federation of Disabled Nepal, the workshop was part of the UNESCO/UNPFN project “Planning Effective Delivery of Education in a Future Federal State”.

Tap Raj Pant of UNESCO said, “This interaction intends to broaden the scope of debate to ensure the rights to education of the persons with disability in federal structure. I am hopeful that the issues and suggestions will bring a practical perspective to the debate and will help Constituent Assembly members and policy makers to fill the gaps and reduce structural barriers in education”.

 Birendra Raj Pokharel, a Facilitator at Abilis Foundation Nepal, stressed on the need of providing disable-friendly curriculum, textbooks and classrooms. He said, “Disable people have the same level of competency as able ones, they are lagging behind due to limited access to the information and communication technologies in education”.

Similarly, Prof. Basu Dev Kafle from Tribhuwan University opined that a multispectral approach is needed to make the long awaited federalism effective, emancipate citizens and reduce inequalities. He highlighted the importance of granting full inclusion; eliminating structural and policy defects; ensuring proper planning with a higher emphasis on functionality, put an effort on federally defining community involvement in the education sector; and finally working towards the implementation of the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

Hari Lamsal, Joint Secretary at the Ministry of Education, assured the nomination of a focal person in the Education Policy committee to represent the rights and needs of persons with disability. He also guaranteed the participation of one nominee from the persons with disability group in upcoming meetings.

At the end of the discussion, participants drew special attention to the need of integrating a letter-wise grading system and inoculating technical education in the curricula. Proper trainings for teachers, disabled-friendly infrastructures, community participation and reviewing the policy inadequacy and high level focus on functionality of the systems have been identified as priorities.

The workshop was chaired by Honourable Ranju Jha, Chairperson of Parliamentarian Committee for Women, Children, Elderly People and Social Welfare.

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