Nepal

Principles and general objectives of education

National goals for education focus on the individual child’s development and his/her relationship to society. The aim is to bring out the genius inherent in every individual and to provide an environment that facilitates personality development. In addition, the promotion of supreme human values and the inculcation of national and social norms are considered vital for the child’s social growth. Within a larger context, the child should be taught to maintain his/her identity while living in harmony with the modern age. Functioning in the modern age requires a knowledge of democratic values and norms, including the rights and responsibilities inherent to being a citizen of a democratic country.

Of equal importance to Nepal is the role of education as a promoter of international principles of peace, international understanding, co-operation, human rights and fundamental freedoms. Through a curriculum that includes comparative studies of human behaviour, culture, and other aspects of human creativity, the comprehensive goal is to foster the harmony of the rich and varied elements of Nepali society.

Current educational goals can be summarized as follows:

- To nurture and develop the personalities and innate abilities of each individual
- To instill respect for human values and the will to safeguard national and social benefits
- To enhance social unity
- To help the individual develop his/her identity in both national and international context and lead a socially harmonious life in the modern world
- To aid the modernization of the nation by creating able human resources for its development
- To teach the thoughtful protection and wise use of Nepal’s natural resources
- To help disadvantaged citizens to enter the mainstream of national life. (MOES, 2004).

Current educational priorities and concerns

“Nepal is characterized by a highly complex ethnic and language composition [...]. The national language, Nepali, is the mother tongue of 51%, and spoken as lingua franca by 75%. There are approximately 12 major language groups in Nepal. Nepali

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
is the medium of instruction at all levels of the educational system, with English taught as second language from Grade 4. Use of ethnic languages was prohibited by the one-party state system but the new democratic constitution of 1991 has guaranteed the cultural rights of all ethnic minorities.” (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1995, p. 691).

With the restoration of democracy in 1990, the education system came under scrutiny and was judged to be in need of revision. In response, the National Education Commission was formed in 1991 to restate and implement policies appropriate to current national needs and international principles.

Though the modern system of education was implemented at the beginning of the century, a series of political and social events have disrupted its natural progress. Many of the most current policies and practices are a product of major revision efforts implemented since the beginning of the 1990s. Facilitating accessibility by making improvements quantitatively and qualitatively, is the primary goal of education planners and legislators.

There are a number of issues confronting the education system. Rural and remote areas of the country are still deficient in educational facilities. Participation of girls and of disadvantaged communities in education is low. Drop-out and repetition rates are particularly high, and high failure rates in the School-Leaving Certificate examination at the end of secondary education (Grade X) have remained unresolved. In order to address these problems, the government’s strategy focuses on various issues such as: improving the quality of primary education; reducing wastage at the primary level; improving the curriculum; increasing girls participation; increasing education opportunities for disadvantaged communities and out-of-school children; raising community and private sector participation in education; and improving teachers performance.

As a part of the process, discussions are ongoing relative to how the efficiency of the whole education system and the service delivery capacity of the Ministry of Education can be improved. Arguments are being put forward in favour of increased community participation, participatory management of the system, and more decentralized organization.

The Ministry of Education has launched a variety of practically-oriented programmes aiming at improving accessibility and quality. The Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) has been in operation since 1993, focusing on curriculum and textbook development, in-service teacher training, recruitment of female teachers, construction of facilities, and early childhood preparedness. The BPEP II covers the period 1999-2004.

The Primary Education Development Project (PEDP), funded by the Asian Development Bank (ADB), was introduced in 1992 to provide primary school teachers with training opportunities and exposure to improved content and pedagogical aspects. Under this plan, progress is being made on the infrastructure building of the National Centre for Educational Development and eight Primary Teacher Training Centres. The training of 49,200 teachers will require teacher trainers, managerial staff and the preparation of training packages for all personnel.
involved. In addition to human resources, this plan calls for the construction of 1,000 new primary schools.

The Secondary Education Development Project (SEDP), in effect since 1993 with the support of the ADB, intends to strengthen secondary education and reinforce Science, English and Mathematics teaching components, in particular through teacher training and curriculum development, in order to prepare students for national and international career opportunities. Concrete goals include the training of 8,000 teachers of mathematics, science and English; improving library and laboratory facilities in 1,000 secondary schools; and improving the efficiency and quality of the SCL examination system.

In addition, the Participatory Management Development Programme (PMDP), funded by the UNDP, works at the administrative level to attain the goals of sustainable human resource development, achievement of basic education for all, and provision of higher quality education.

National policies and strategies focus on the following:

- Access to basic and primary education will be expanded by increasing the number of schools; new initiatives will be taken to make primary education compulsory in a phased manner. Local bodies will be empowered to enforce free and compulsory primary education.

- Secondary education will be offered on a tuition-free basis. In order to make secondary education compatible with international standards, higher secondary education (Grades XI and XII) will be implemented in a phased manner.

- The access to higher education will be widened by increasing the number of institutions and universities throughout the country.

- In order to increase the literacy rate, non-formal education schemes—particularly literacy programmes—will be implemented on a national campaign basis. For out-of-school children aged 6-14, educational opportunities will be provided through a non-formal approach.

- The number of technical schools and vocational training centres will be increased; the number of technical institutions of higher education will be increased and the existing ones will be strengthened.

- Emphasis will be placed on raising female participation in education. Incentive schemes will be further strengthened and expanded to attract girls to schools and reduce drop-out rates. A policy of appointing at least one female teacher in each primary school will be implemented.

- Curricula will be revised and the quality of the educational process will be improved. Physical facilities at schools will be upgraded and teacher training programmes will be expanded.
• Special education programmes will be extended and made more relevant and effective; emphasis will be given to appropriate skill-oriented training programmes.

• Suitable policies will be adopted to encourage private sector involvement in education. The private and non-governmental sectors will be encouraged to contribute to the expansion of technical institutions of higher education, in particular general higher education. The participation of the private sector will also be encouraged in the establishment of medical and engineering colleges.

The Education for All (EFA) vision of Nepal is to ensure that all children have quality basic and primary education, in caring and joyful environment and receive primary education especially in their mother tongue without having to feel prejudices in the form of cultural, ethnic or caste discrimination. Besides, the school and educational places must have gender balance in terms of teacher post and student enrolment. It is also envisaged that almost all adults get not only literate but also engaged in continuous learning through Community Learning Centres (CLC) and that varieties of appropriate learning and life skills education materials that are contextual and directly beneficial for youths and adults are made available through different modes including CLC. The EFA goals are targeted to be achieved gradually phase by phase by 2015. The targets are set to be fulfilled in the following phases: (i) by 2005; (ii) by 2007, (end of the Tenth Development Plan 2002-2007); (iii) by 2012, (end of the 11th Development Plan); and (iv) by 2015. (MOES, 2003).

It is envisaged that by 2015 there should be universal access to quality basic education which is relevant to the current time. EFA campaign is the key strategy to be followed for giving a concrete form to the vision.

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

Article 18 of the Constitution specifies that: (a) each community residing within Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language and culture; and (b) each community shall have the right to operate schools up to the primary level in its own mother tongue for imparting education to children. According to Article 26, the State: shall pursue a policy of making the female population participate, to a greater extent, in the task of national development by making special provisions for their education, health and employment (7); shall make necessary arrangements to safeguard the rights and interests of children and shall ensure that they are not exploited, and shall make gradual arrangements for free education (8); shall pursue such policies in matters of education, health and social security of orphans, helpless women, the aged, the disabled and incapacitated persons as will ensure their protection and welfare (9); and shall pursue a policy which will help promote the interests of the economically and socially backward groups and communities by making special provisions with regard to their education, health and employment (10).

In accordance with the **Local Self-governance Act** of 1999, committees are established at the district and village levels for managing and monitoring school activities.

The **Education Act 7th Amendment** of 2002 recognises both the school-based pre-primary classes and community-based Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres.

Primary education is free. Under the Ninth Plan (1997-2002), the government envisaged compulsory primary education as a strategy to achieve universal access to and completion of primary education. The current strategy aims to mobilize local bodies and communities to achieve universal primary education and, through the provisions of incentives, to attract children to school. The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) envisaged setting up a national standard of primary education. A minimum of 180 school days per year are to be made compulsory (Ministry of Education, 1999). Free and compulsory education will mean the introduction of legal obligations for families to send to school their children who are in the age group 5 to 10 years until they complete five years of schooling. Compulsory primary education will be implemented in a phased manner. (MOE, 2003).

**Administration and management of the education system**

Educational planning and management at all levels is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education (now the Ministry of Education and Sports). The Minister and his/her supporting staff direct the activities of three major divisions: the Administration Division, the Educational Administration Division and the Planning Division.

The functions of the Administration Division include personnel management, recruitment, transfers and promotions. In addition, the division is responsible for public relations and property management. The division consists of five sections: General and Personnel Administration; Financial Administration; Legal Counselling; Store and Property Management; and Engineering.

The Educational Administration Division is also divided into five sections: Non-Formal Education; Training and Social Welfare; Women's Education; Higher Education and Scholarships; and School Administration.

The Planning Division prepares annual agendas in line with the national educational policies. This division also carries out monitoring and evaluation activities in conjunction with programme implementation. Its final task is to maintain a database in order to provide information on educational activities. The division consists of three sections: Programme and Planning; Evaluation and Monitoring; and Statistics and Computers.

Nepal is divided into five educational regions led by **Regional Education Directorates** (RED). Headquarters are located in Dhankuta (eastern region), Kathmandu (central region), Pokhara (western region), Surkhet (mid-western region), and Dipayal (far-western region). The Directorates are instrumental in maintaining

uniformity and co-ordination within their respective regions. To achieve this objective, the REDs conduct research; appoint staff to the District Education Committees and the Teacher Education Committees; and recruit teachers for the lower secondary and secondary schools of the region. They are active in: conducting the nation-wide School Leaving Certificate examinations; organizing training seminars for administrators and teachers; supervising formal and non-formal programmes; and overseeing the financial administration for lower secondary and secondary schools.

The five educational regions are further divided into districts. There are seventy-five districts in Nepal that are each, in turn, divided into four to fourteen supervision blocks. The amount of supervision blocks is proportionate to population and geographic size of the district. Each District Education Office (DEO) implements district-level policies following the instructions of the Regional Directorates and the Minister of Education. Having closer relations with individual schools, DEOs provide professional support to school administrators, teachers, and students; recruit and transfer teachers; prepare statistical reports; establish new schools and strengthen existing ones; organize training seminars and extracurricular activities; and conduct district-level examinations.

While REDs and DEOs do respond to the needs specific to their regions, major decision-making is highly centralized. However, as efforts are being made to make primary education universally free and compulsory, the empowerment of regional offices will be necessary to enforce such legislation.

There are also a variety of constituent offices that serve the Ministry’s mandate. The Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) develops curricula, textbooks and materials. It also organizes seminars and workshops, carries out studies on curriculum-related problems in schools, arranges for free textbook distribution in primary schools, and provides reference materials for pupils.

The Distance Education Centre addresses the needs of school teachers and students via radio. With the comprehensive goal of making education accessible to all, it broadcasts programmes to train teachers and non-formal programmes for adults and out-of-school children.

The Office of the Controller of Examinations conducts the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examinations. This involves carrying out the policies and decisions of the SLC Board, supervising the exams, publishing results, awarding certificates, organizing seminars to improve the system, maintaining records, and disseminating statistical information.

The last major centre under the Ministry of Education’s supervision is the National Centre for Educational Development. It was created in 1993 to provide technical support and train education personnel for the comprehensive goal of technologically advanced administration operations.

Finally, there are several institutions and bodies that are associated with the Ministry, but that operate with relative autonomy. Three of these are universities: Tribhuvan University, Mahendara Sanskrit University and Kathmandu University.
The **National Council for Non-Formal Education** implements policies aimed at promoting and expanding non-formal education. The **Janak Material Centre** publishes and distributes textbooks.

The **Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training** was revamped in 1993 to operate technical schools, train teachers at the Technical Instructor Training Institute, assess manpower needs, and establish standards and testing.

Since the implementation of the Higher Secondary Education Act, the **Higher Secondary Education Board** has extended the secondary school system to Grades XI and XII, implementing the necessary curricula, textbooks and examinations. The Board also established and maintains ties between higher secondary schools and national and international universities.

The **Special Education Council** has been established to develop policies for special education programmes and to co-ordinate and supervise activities implemented in this field.

In order to strengthen and consolidate activities related to basic and primary education, since May 1999 the Ministry of Education has established a **Department of Education** (DOE) at the central level, headed by the Director General. The DOE is responsible for planning, programming, implementation and monitoring of basic and primary education programmes through its regional and district-level offices. The National Centre for Educational Development, the Distance Education Centre, the Curriculum Development Centre, and the Non-Formal Education Centre have been entrusted with responsibilities in specialized areas such as teacher training, curriculum and textbook development and non-formal education, respectively (Ministry of Education, 1999).
Structure and organization of the education system

Nepal: structure of the education system

Pre-school education

Pre-primary education is available only to a small minority of children exclusively in urban settings. All pre-primary schools are private and charge fees. The Basic and Primary Education Project is working to broaden the network of pre-primary educational institutions.

Primary education

Primary education lasts five years (Grades I-V) and caters to children aged 6-11. Some 20% of schools operate in combination with lower secondary classes (Grades VI-VIII), and 10% have all Grades (I-X). Primary education is not yet compulsory.

Secondary education

Secondary education comprises three cycles: lower secondary (Grades VI-VIII), secondary (Grades IX and X), and higher secondary (Grades XI and XII). At the end of Grade X, students sit the School Leaving Certificate examination. Specialized streams at the higher secondary level include science, commerce, humanities and education. Technical education at the higher secondary level is offered in trade schools and private technical training institutes. Courses usually last two years. Shorter programmes (one-year) and skill-oriented, short-term training courses lasting two to eight weeks are also available.

There are four major fields of studies at the higher education level: general, professional, technical, and Sanskrit. Four major universities offer bachelor’s (three
years of study; four years in the case of engineering and medicine), master’s (two years of study) and doctoral degree programmes in the fields appropriate to their specializations. There is also one university in the private sector. Tribhuvan University, in the public sector, constitutes about 90% of the total higher education enrolment.

Curricular requirements explicitly mention that there is a need for a minimum of 180 school instruction days. Due to change in academic calendar, in the year 2000 the school session was fixed at 10 months only. On the average, it is estimated that there is a total of 188 school open days, out of which only 164 days (or about 33 weeks) are available for classroom instruction. (CERID, 2002).

**The financing of education**

The major sources of educational financing are the central government’s budget, local communities, international and non-governmental organizations, and the private sector. Expenditure on education, as a percentage of total government expenditure, increased from 13.5% in 1993/94 to 13.7% in 1995/96.

The distribution of the 1995/96 education budget was as follows: 54% to primary education; 18% to secondary and higher secondary education; 17% to the universities; 4% to technical and vocational education; 2% to the administration; and 5% to other expenditure.

The central government is fully responsible for teacher salaries. It also financially contributes to facility construction and maintenance through the Basic and Primary Education Project, but labour and resources are provided by local communities. In financial terms, the government has provided 60% of the needed construction costs and communities have contributed the remaining 40%. The Primary Education Development Project, funded by the Asian Development Bank, provides financial assistance for facility construction as well.

With the exception of private institutions, the higher education system is highly subsidized by the government. Government’s financial support accounts for about 91% of the Tribhuvan University budget and 98% of the Mahendra Sanskrit University budget. The private sector contributes between 20% to 25% of total higher education expenditure. Efforts are being made to increase the participation of the private sector in the financing of higher education.

According to national estimates, in 2003 the budget of the education sector represented 15.8% of the government budget, 3% of GDP and 2.8% of GNP. (MOES, 2005).
The educational process

Pre-primary education

Pre-primary education is not currently part of the formal education system. A very limited percentage of children have access to private, fee-paying pre-school establishments exclusively in urban areas. The Basic and Primary Education Project has included the promotion of early childhood activities on its agenda.

Community participation in the development of early childhood development (ECD) has been the strategy of the government since the Seventh Plan (1987-1992). Accordingly, provision was made for opening pre-primary schools by communities, NGOs, groups or individuals. This provision was made primarily to address the problems of the high repetition rate in Grade I, which was particularly due to the enrolment of under-age children. Many schools needed to open different sections, particularly for low achievers, which consisted mainly of under-age children coming to the primary schools with their elder siblings. Although primary school regulations require that a child should be 6 years old in order to enrol in Grade I, many instances of primary schools have been found where a large number of children below that age have been admitted. This situation has arisen because of the lack of other provisions for pre-school age children. The situation is likely to remain for some years to come. In most of the cases where younger children are admitted to Grade I, children stay in the school for two years or more. Some schools have formed what they call children’s classes.

In the early 1990s, pre-primary classes were established to enhance the quality of primary education by preparing pre-school age children for school. This was also an important strategy to reduce the high repetition and drop-out rates at primary level. The Ninth Plan aims to make early childhood centres different from the primary school, and to make them community-based centres for the overall development of a child within a playful and enjoyable environment. The high-level National Commission for Education (1997) has also emphasized the need for developing child-friendly ECD centres in the community. Through this strategy of community-based ECD, the government aims to build up partnership with the communities in management as well as in cost-sharing. Under the provisions of the Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP) II, in order for a community to run a Shishu Kakshya (SK—child-care centre), it should first of all form a management committee to work out the details of running an ECD centre, then formally apply to the District Education Office for permission to run the centre. The community must provide a room and other physical facilities necessary for running the SK. The community should also make provision for the salary of the SK teacher. The BPEP II responsibility is limited to providing training to the SK facilitators, making some of the teaching/learning support materials and facilitator guidebooks available.

The Pre-primary Education Unit in the Curriculum Development Centre has developed a pre-primary curriculum. It has conducted a number of training activities for pre-primary teachers. In 1999, an Early Childhood Development Section was established under the Department of Education to look after the ECD development needs in the country (Ministry of Education, 1999).
According to national estimates, in 2004 there were 4,032 ECD/pre-primary centres in the country (1,692 aided and unaided community centres and 2,340 private centres). Total enrolment amounted to 512,151 children and the gross enrolment ratio (GER) was estimated at 39.4%. (MOES, 2005).

**Primary education**

Primary education should bring out and reinforce the qualities inherent to children and instil in them a respect for values, norms and beliefs which engender civic, scientific and environmental awareness. Pupils should acquire competence in literacy, basic mathematics, and survival and social skills.

All curricula are centrally defined and public schools must follow the official curriculum and use the prescribed textbooks. In 1993, after a test and trial phase, the new primary curriculum was introduced. The table below shows the weekly lesson timetable:

### Primary education: weekly lesson timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Number of weekly periods in each grade</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepali language</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English language</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social and environmental education</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical education</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative and expressive art</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental science and health education</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elective subjects (language/others)</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total weekly periods** 34 34 34 39 39


By the end of the 1990s, the average teacher/pupil ratio at the primary level (Grades I-V) was 1:39. Sparsely populated and remote mountain areas in the north of the country had a ratio of 1:28. Populous and plain areas in the south (Terai belt) had a ratio of 1:47, and in the central hills region the ratio was 1:37.

The internal efficiency of the system is a matter of concern. “For every 100 children who start Grade 1, 18 will complete primary school in five years, and 37 will drop out in the first five years. The remaining 45 students will repeat grades, with about 15 eventually finishing the primary cycle and the other 30 eventually dropping out. Overall, then, only about one-third of those starting primary school will ever finish Grade 5.” (Williams *et al*., 1993, p. 7).

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
The repetition rate in Grade I was above 40% in 1992, 1994 and 1996. That in Grade V was around 20% in the same years. In 1996, the repetition rate was 24.6% in Grade II, 19.7% in Grade III, 20.6% in Grade IV, and 21.3% in Grade V. The drop-out rate was as follows: 23.1% in Grade I; 4.6% in Grade II; 8.2% in Grade III; 9% in Grade IV; and 15.1% in Grade V. The annual examination for grade promotion, under-age enrolment in Grade I, and poor school and classroom environments account for the high drop-out and repetition rates (Ministry of Education, 1999).

According to national estimates, in 2004 there were 24,746 primary schools (of which 2,858 in the private sector). There were 4,030,045 pupils enrolled and the number of teachers was 101,483 (of whom 30.1% women). The GER was estimated at 130.7% and the NER at 84.2%. In 2003, the completion rate was estimated at 50.4%. (MOES, 2005).

**Secondary education**

Secondary education carries on the objectives of primary education, with an added emphasis on the values and norms of a democratic way of life. The fundamental goal is to educate concerned and active citizens. At the lower secondary level, the educational process is directed at building character and learning the dignity of labour. Advancing into secondary school means that students will learn self-reliance and will be prepared for higher learning.

Secondary education develops the basic primary curriculum and begins to incorporate more diversified elements. The table below shows the lesson timetable for the lower general secondary (Grades VI-VIII) and general secondary (Grades IX and X) levels.
By the end of the 1990s the average teacher/pupil ratio at the lower secondary level (Grades VI-VIII) was 1:47, and at the general secondary level (Grades IX and X) was 1:22. Sparsely populated and remote mountain areas in the north of the country had a ratio of 1:28 and 1:14, respectively. Populous and plain areas in the south (Terai belt) had a ratio of 1:62 and 1:28, respectively, and in the central hills region the ratio was 1:41 and 1:19, respectively. At vocational schools, the ratio was 1:5.6. According to national estimates, in 2004 there were 1,444,997 students enrolled at the lower secondary and 587,566 students at the secondary level. The number of teachers was 25,962 (of whom 16.3% women) and 20,232 (of whom 8.6% women) respectively. The GER was 80.3% at the lower secondary and 50.4% at the secondary level. In 2003, the overall completion rate (lower secondary and secondary) was estimated at 66.2%. (MOES, 2005).

At the end of Grade X, students sit the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination administered by the Office of the Controller of Examinations. “The critical issues in secondary education relate to internal and external efficiency, access, participation and equity, administration, supervision and financing. The dropout rate of students at lower secondary level is 45 percent; 50 percent dropout at the upper level; less than 30 percent pass the final SLC examination.” (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1995, p. 694). In 2003, the SLC pass rate was 46.2% (36.4% in the public sector and 82.9% in the private sector). According to national estimates, in 2005 the total enrolment at the higher secondary level was 163,272 students. The GER was estimated at 14.5%. In 2003, a total of 1,506 schools were affiliated to the Higher
Secondary Education Board (HSEB), of which 539 in the public sector. (MOES, 2005).

Higher secondary education (Grades XI and XII) is divided into four streams: humanities, commerce, science and education. Nepali and English are core areas in each stream. In addition, each stream has a series of elective and optional subjects relating specifically to the chosen academic field. Higher secondary education has recently been introduced as an upward extension of secondary education and will be implemented in a phased manner. This eventually will lead to a phasing out of the Proficiency Certificate level courses at the university level, shifting this responsibility to the HSEB. Technical education at the higher secondary level is offered in trade schools and private technical training institutes. Courses usually last two years. Shorter programmes (one-year) and skill-oriented, short-term training courses lasting two to eight weeks are also offered. In 2003, the number of institutions affiliated to the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training included 110 technical SLC-level private training institutes, 73 polytechnic institutes, and 34 short-training institutes. (MOES, 2005).

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

A national assessment of Grade V pupils was carried out in the framework of the Education for All 2000 Assessment. The achievement test was conducted in three subjects: Nepali, mathematics and social studies. The following table shows the results:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Mean achievement</th>
<th>Basic learning competencies (% of the pupils scoring 33 or more)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nepali</td>
<td>51.46</td>
<td>90.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>27.25</td>
<td>36.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social studies</td>
<td>41.79</td>
<td>78.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Statistically, significant differences have been found in the mean scores of boys and girls. In Nepali, girls performed significantly better than boys, whereas in mathematics and social studies, boys performed better.

The government has adopted the liberal promotion policy as a strategy for achieving age grouping in the first years of primary education. As a first step towards this end, the government will adopt the policy of granting promotion to Grades I-III children by linking it with a continuous assessment system and recurrent teacher training. Under this policy, a minimum level of learning will be determined for each grade and the learning will be assessed continuously. Low-performing students will be provided learning assistance to help them achieve the minimum learning levels. For unachieved learning outcomes, the children will be provided opportunities to learn them in upper grades.

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
Continuous assessment of pupils’ learning achievement is a key element of a quality improvement strategy. The development of instruments for continuous assessment of pupils performance in order to facilitate the introduction of liberal promotion and the improvement of Grade V examinations will be undertaken under the Basic and Primary Education Project II (Ministry of Education, 1999).

**Higher education**

Universities in Nepal are not directly managed by the Ministry of Education but are closely associated to it. Additionally, they are substantially funded by the national government.

The Tribhuvan University was established in 1959 as a national institution for higher education. In 2003/04 there were sixty constituent campuses and 278 affiliated campuses throughout the country. Bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral degree programmes are offered in four different faculties, five technical institutes and four research centres.

The Mahendra Sanskrit University, established in 1986, offers degrees at the intermediate (Uttar Madhyama), bachelor’s (Sastri) and master’s (Acharya) levels. This university also manages two Sanskrit secondary schools and is specialized in teaching Vedic and Buddhist philosophies and practices. In 2003/04 there were 13 constituent campuses and 12 affiliated campuses throughout the country.

The Kathmandu University (2 constituent campuses and 11 affiliated campuses in 2003/04) was conceived in 1991 through private initiatives. It has five different schools, each with its own degree programmes. The School of Science offers three- to four-year bachelor’s/honours degree courses in physics, chemistry, biology, mathematics and pharmaceuticals. A master’s degree can be achieved in one or two years. The School of Management offers the MBA degree course and a one-year preparatory course. The School of Engineering offers a four-year bachelor’s degree programme in electrical/electronic engineering, mechanical engineering and computer engineering. At the School of Arts, three- to four-year bachelor’s/honours degree courses in literature, economics, urban and cultural studies, Nepalese studies and music are offered.

In 2003/04 the Purbanchal University had 3 constituent campuses and 67 affiliated campuses. The Pokhara University had two constituent campuses and 25 affiliated campuses.

The system for evaluating students’ achievement is in the process of change due to the recent addition of higher secondary education. Universities are in the process of phasing out the current Proficiency Certificate level courses and eventually shifting the responsibility to the Higher Secondary Education Board.

According to national estimates, in 2005 there were 147,123 students enrolled at the higher education level for an estimated GER of 5.8%. (MOES, 2005).
**Special education**

Special education is a priority issue for Nepal, where an estimated 15% of the total population is considered to be physically or mentally disabled. The current approach integrates disabled students into the general public school system. Concurrently, there are special schools for some disabled students. In 1993, 245 blind pupils were studying in twenty-five integrated schools and one special school, whereas 386 mentally retarded, 396 blind pupils and 145 physically disabled students were enrolled in seventeen, eight and seven special schools, respectively. The overall objective is to incorporate disabled pupils into the mainstream schools, so their talents can contribute to national development and international understanding.

The Special Education Council is an autonomous, but government-affiliated institution devoted to the needs of disabled persons. Its main functions are: (a) developing policies for special education programmes and co-ordinating, monitoring and supervising their activities; (b) opening new schools with special education programmes; (c) developing materials and evaluation procedures for special education; and (d) mobilizing the necessary human and financial resources and providing assistance to special education activities.

**Private education**

Almost all of the 4,000 private schools in Nepal have pre-primary nursery and kindergarten classes. Most of these private schools have three sections: nursery, lower kindergarten and upper kindergarten (Ministry of Education, 1999).

**Means of instruction, equipment and infrastructure**

The source for all school textbooks is the Janak Educational Materials Centre (JEMC), earlier known as Educational Materials Organization, established in 1958. Since the introduction of the New Education System Plan in 1971, the JEMC has been producing and distributing school textbooks across the country. The Centre has been rendering services as a public limited company under the Company Act of the Kingdom of Nepal. The Board of Directors is comprised of representatives from concerned ministries and organizations.

**Adult and non-formal education**

The coordinating body for non-formal education programmes is the National Council for Non-Formal Education, created in 1992. Established policies include: (a) a cluster approach to literacy expansion; (b) distribution of free materials; (c) an effective monitoring system; (d) increased participation of NGOs and the private sector; and (e) a focus on women.

For children between the ages of 8 and 14 who have not had access to primary education, the aim is to compensate their lack of education through special courses and then integrate them into the normal schooling track. Adults aged 15-45 are taught functional knowledge and skills in reading, writing and mathematics. Adults also have

Compiled by UNESCO-IBE (http://www.ibe.unesco.org/)
the opportunity of continuing their education beyond the basics through post-literacy and continuing education programmes. A provision is made to link such programmes with development activities operating on a local level.

Grassroots involvement is vital to the non-formal education approach. The implementation of strategies mainly depends on local participation. While the Council provides policy directives and supervision guidelines, it is the community that researches, designs and implements the programmes. Teachers in the non-formal education system are identified as “facilitators” and they are appointed not on a regular basis, but on a programme basis. Facilitators are selected from the members of the community who have completed secondary education and they normally receive a two-week training course on conducting non-formal classes.

Literacy rates have climbed steadily since the last half of the century. In 1991, approximately 55% of the men and 25% of the women were literate, a major improvement from the 1952-54 figures of 10% and 1%, respectively. “A national campaign has been underway in a phased manner, since 1990, aiming at providing literacy to an estimated 5 million adults by the year 2000. The goals are to (a) enable individuals between 15-45 years of age to read, write, and do simple mathematical calculations; (b) increase adults’ awareness of their own environment and develop positive attitudes and self-confidence; (c) provide information essential to daily life; (d) inform participants about democratic principles and the political and developmental systems of Nepal. The Ministry of Education has been successful in developing an integrated programme which is used by over 50 non-governmental agencies operating in most areas of the country. Despite this, however, only 100,000 adults are being reached yearly against a target of at least 600,000 if the 2000 AD goals are to be met.” (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1995, p. 695).

Relatively few adults and children have been involved in a non-formal education programme. Available figures show that in 1993/94, 162,476 persons were on the Council’s agenda. An additional 261,714 persons were being addressed through non-governmental organizations. Other non-formal education programmes are provided by the Distance Education Centre. The Centre seeks to reach a vast spread of the population by means of radio.

According to national estimates, in 2001 the overall literacy rate was 53.7% (65.1% for men and 42.5% for women). (MOES, 2005).

**Teaching staff**

Teacher training activities in Nepal began with the establishment of the College of Education in 1957. In 1971, the College was brought under the Tribhuvan University as the Institute of Education, then converted into a faculty. Higher secondary schools (Grades XI and XII) offer a course in education, leading to a Certificate of Education. Graduates in education of the Higher Secondary Education Board are allowed to enter the two-year bachelor’s degree programme in the Tribhuvan University. The private University of Kathmandu’s School of Education also offers three- to four-year bachelor’s degree programmes and one- to two-year post-graduate degree courses in education to prepare teachers and headmasters at the primary and secondary levels.
The recruitment into the teaching profession is made through free and open competitions for any qualified citizen, without any quota or reservation system. The district teacher selection committees select primary teachers and the five regional teacher selection committees select lower secondary and secondary teachers. The Tribhuvan University’s Faculty of Education and the Higher Secondary Education Board (higher secondary schools, 10+2 stream) are the main agencies providing pre-service teacher training. The Tribhuvan University and its constituent and affiliated campuses throughout the country offer: two-year proficiency certificate, two-year and one-year bachelor’s degree, two-year master’s degree, and doctoral degree programmes in education. Proficiency certificate programmes are open to holders of the School-Leaving Certificate (SLC). Students who have obtained the proficiency certificate in education are allowed to enter the two-year bachelor’s degree programme. One-year bachelor’s degree courses are for bachelor’s degree holders in other subject areas.

The main objective of teacher training programmes is to prepare student teachers, both in subject matter and in teaching methodology. Graduates in education, with mathematics as a major subject, must study courses similar to those of the graduates in humanities, with mathematics as a major subject. Education courses also cover subjects such as: teaching methods; educational or student psychology; foundations of education; learning theories and evaluation; human development; etc. Prospective teachers have also to spend a period of practice in schools.

The required qualifications to teach at the primary level are the SLC and at least a ten-month period of training; at the lower secondary, the proficiency certificate (intermediate) and at least a ten-month period of training; at the secondary level, the bachelor’s degree and at least a ten-month period of training. The required period of training for appointment as permanent teacher was introduced only recently. As there are no agencies offering such training programmes for SLC holders, some private teacher training agencies have started their own operations. In the future, the minimum qualifications required to become a primary teacher will be raised from the current SLC pass to undergraduate level education—at least higher secondary graduation. Pre-service teacher training and teacher certification will be made compulsory (Ministry of Education, 1999).

In most cases, teachers’ working conditions are not satisfactory. The working environment is not very encouraging. Most schools and colleges have poor physical facilities and are poorly equipped. Salary scales are established according to the public service salary scale. Though the teaching profession is socially reputable and has many indirect benefits, it is generally not considered a financially rewarding one. However, job opportunities are so scarce that being appointed as teacher is not easy and candidates experience a stiff competition. Career opportunities are scarce, especially at the primary level. However, the categorization of school teachers by different classes and a promotion system are being introduced.

The geographical characteristics of Nepal create problems which are difficult to cope with. The northern belt of the country, with its high mountains and valleys, is a remote and very cold region. In such areas, human settlements continuously move up and down in order to avoid excessive coldness, and schools shift up and down as well. In lower areas, schools are not shifted, but they remain closed for about three or
four months due to snow. Sometimes, after the winter vacations, schools are officially open, but there are no pupils in the class because they have not yet returned. Retaining teachers in such a harsh environment is a major problem. A remote area allowance is granted in order to attract and retain teachers in such difficult situations. The amount of the allowance varies, depending upon the remoteness of the area, the highest being a 100% addition to the salary.

On average, a teacher has to spend four to five hours per day in actual teaching activities. In addition, teachers are expected to work not only in the classroom, and to interact with their students as well as with the community. A teacher is expected to be: a social advisor, a development agent, a mediator between the community and the authorities, the elites and the poor, the traditional values and the modernity. Teachers in private educational establishments are not in a better position than public school teachers. In general, they work more and are paid less. Some well-established private schools, however, pay high salaries, but teachers have to work hard and there is no job security.

The total number of teaching staff in Nepal amounts to more than 100,000. About 48% are trained and the proportion of women in the total teaching force is only around 15%. At the primary level, about 95% of teachers have the minimum required qualifications, but only 45% are academically qualified and trained. At the lower secondary level, these percentages are 93% and 31%, respectively. At the secondary level, about 90% of teachers have the required qualifications, but only 41% are academically qualified and trained.

In-service teacher training is a high priority for the country. The National Centre for Educational Development (NCED) is an apex body for conducting in-service training programmes for educational administrators, managers, technicians and primary school teachers. The Basic and Primary Education Project also provides in-service training to primary teachers. Under this project professional support is provided to teachers through weekly meetings within one school cluster. A school cluster is generally comprised of ten to fifteen schools with one school acting as resource centre. This programme has been launched in recent years in forty districts. Professional support to teachers is also provided through radio and television programmes, educational journals, magazines and periodical publications. Seminars and workshops are regularly organized by government agencies, NGOs and teachers associations.

For secondary level teachers, the only agency providing in-service training opportunities is the Secondary Education Development Project. This project offers in-service training only to science, mathematics and English subject teachers.
Educational research and information

The Regional Education Directorates and the District Educational Offices conduct research within their respective regions. The Curriculum Development Centre carries out curriculum-related research.

“Whatever significant research that has been carried out was pioneered by the University’s Centre for Educational Research, Innovation, and Development (CERID). However, lack of government funding and reliance on donor, project-specific assistance has prevented the development of systematic research. A particularly weak area is that of policy research. The Ministry of Education is developing its own educational management information system and a school mapping exercise is under way which will provide very valuable baseline data for use in future evaluations.” (Khaniya & Kiernan, 1995, p. 698).

References


Web resources
