

Educational Development and Improve the Quality of Education in Nepal

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Abstract This Paper provides a brief introduction to the socio-economic context and status of educational development in Nepal. In this paper I will be divided in to two sections. The first section provides an introduction to the Nepalese socio-economic context, which includes culture and tradition, geography and the current development status of the country Nepal. The second section explains the educational development of the country, which includes the quantitative and qualitative expansion of the educational development of the country. Educational development after 1990, Nepal has made remarkable progress, particularly with school participation of all levels of education. The final section explains the current educational policies to improve the quality of education in Nepal.

Keywords: *education, Nepal, quality education*

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1. Introduction

Nepal officially the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal, is a landlocked country in South Asia and the world's youngest republic. It is bordered to the north by the People's Republic of China, and to the south, east, and west by the Republic of India. With an area of 147,181 square kilometers (56,827 sq mi) and a population of approximately 30 million, Nepal is the world's 93rd largest country by land mass and the 41st most populous country. Kathmandu is the nation's capital and the country's largest metropolitan city.

Nepal is a country of highly diverse and rich geography, culture, and religions. The mountainous north has eight of the world's ten highest mountains, including the highest, Mount Everest. The fertile and humid south is heavily urbanized. By some measures, Hinduism is practiced by a greater majority of people in Nepal than in any other nation. Buddhism, though a minority faith in the country, is linked historically with Nepal as the birthplace of Siddhartha Gautama, who as the Buddha Gautama gave birth to the Buddhist tradition. About half of the population lives below the international poverty line of US\$1.25 a day.

A monarchy throughout most of its history, Nepal was ruled by the Shah dynasty of kings from 1768, when Prithvi Narayan Shah unified its many small kingdoms. However, a decade-long People's Revolution by the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist) along with several weeks of mass protests by all major political parties of Nepal in 2006, culminated in a peace accord and the ensuing elections for the constituent assembly voted overwhelmingly in favor of the abdication of the last Nepali monarch Gyanendra Shah and the establishment of a federal democratic republic in May 28, 2008. The first

President of Nepal, Ram Baran Yadav, was sworn in on 23 July 2008.

Nepal is a landlocked nation located in South Asia between India and the Tibet Autonomous Region of the People's Republic of China. The capital of Nepal is Kathmandu, which is also the largest metropolitan area, with about 5 million inhabitants.

Nepal is divided into five development regions and fourteen zones. The development regions are Eastern Region (Purwanchal), Central Region (Madhyamanchal), Western Region (Pashchimanchal), Mid-Western Region (Madhya Pashchimanchal), and Far-Western Region (Sudur Pashchimanchal). The fourteen zones of Nepal are Bagmati, Bheri, Dhawalagiri, Gandaki, Janakpur, Karnali, Koshi, Lumbini, Mahakali, Mechi, Narayani, Rapti, Sagarmatha, and Seti.

Each of these zones is further divided into districts, of which there are a total of seventy-five, as shown on this Nepal District Map. Each district has a headquarters, and is governed by the chief district officer.

In terms of geography, Nepal is often classified into three main ecological zones: hills, mountains, and terai, or lowlands.

Nepal has a population of about 26 million, about 14 percent of which is located in urban areas. The majority of Nepal's population lives in the central mountain area.

2. Socio-Economic Context of Country

Nepal is a small landlocked country in the south Asia, between the Republic of India in the east, west, and south and the People's Republic of China in the north. Nepal has a total area of 147,181 square kilometers. Nepal has a total population 26.6 million that consists of 92 different language groups, 125 caste/ethnic groups, and 10 religious groups (Central Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2011). The

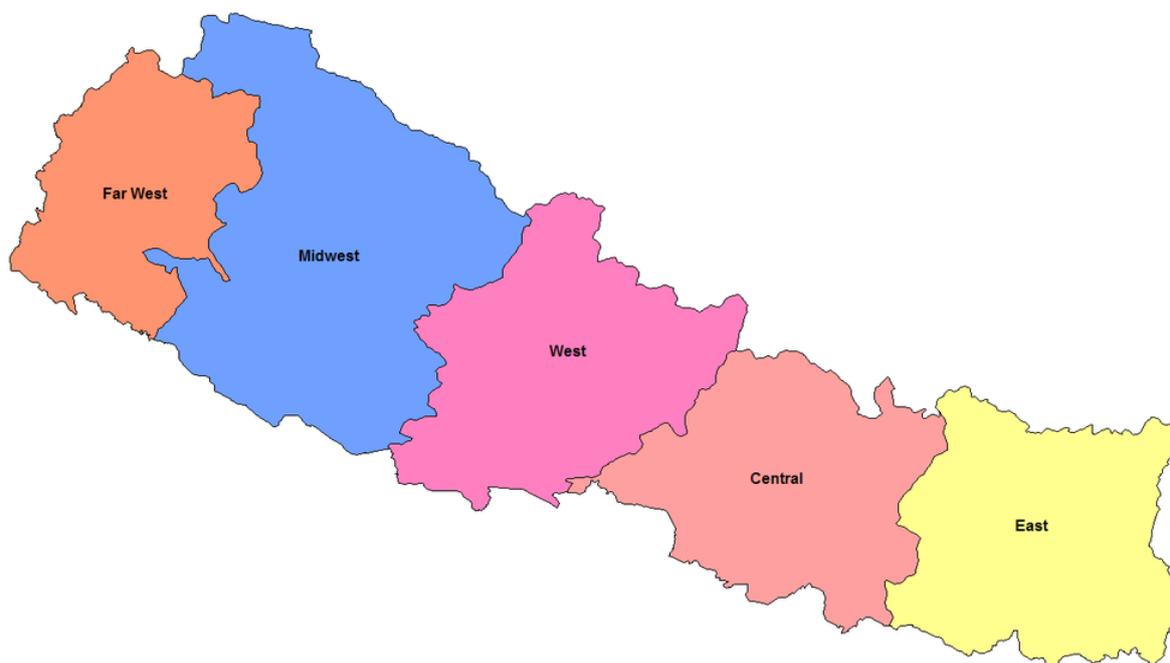
official language is Nepali, which is spoken as a first language by 44.6% of people, followed by Maithili with 11.7%, Bhojpuri with 6%, and Tharu with 5.8%. There are main ten religious groups reported in the 2011 census. The majority in Nepalese people, more than 81%, are Hindus, followed by 9% Buddhists, 4.4% Muslims, and 3% Kirants (an indigenous religion). Nepal society has deep roots with the Hindu caste system, with a hierarchy of different groups of people with in system ancient times. Caste-based exclusion and discrimination are not only historical facts but also are constantly reinvented in the present day through social institutions and relationships.

Geographically, the country is divided into three distinct ecological regions. The mountain region, at the altitude between 4,877 and 8,848 meters, comprises 35% of the land area; the hills, at an altitude between 610 to

4,876 meters, comprises 42% of the land area; and the lowland (Tarai) region, which is an extension of the Gangetic Plains, lies below and elevation of 610 meters and comprises 23% of the land area. For administrative purposes, there are 5 development regions, 14 zones and 75 districts. Each district consists of number of Village Development Committees (VDCs) and municipalities, which are the lowest elected bodies for the governance of the people with in their defined area.

Five Development Region

- 1 Far west
- 2 Midwest
- 3 West
- 4 Central
- 5 East



Source; Nepal Government

Fourteen Zones and seventy five Districts

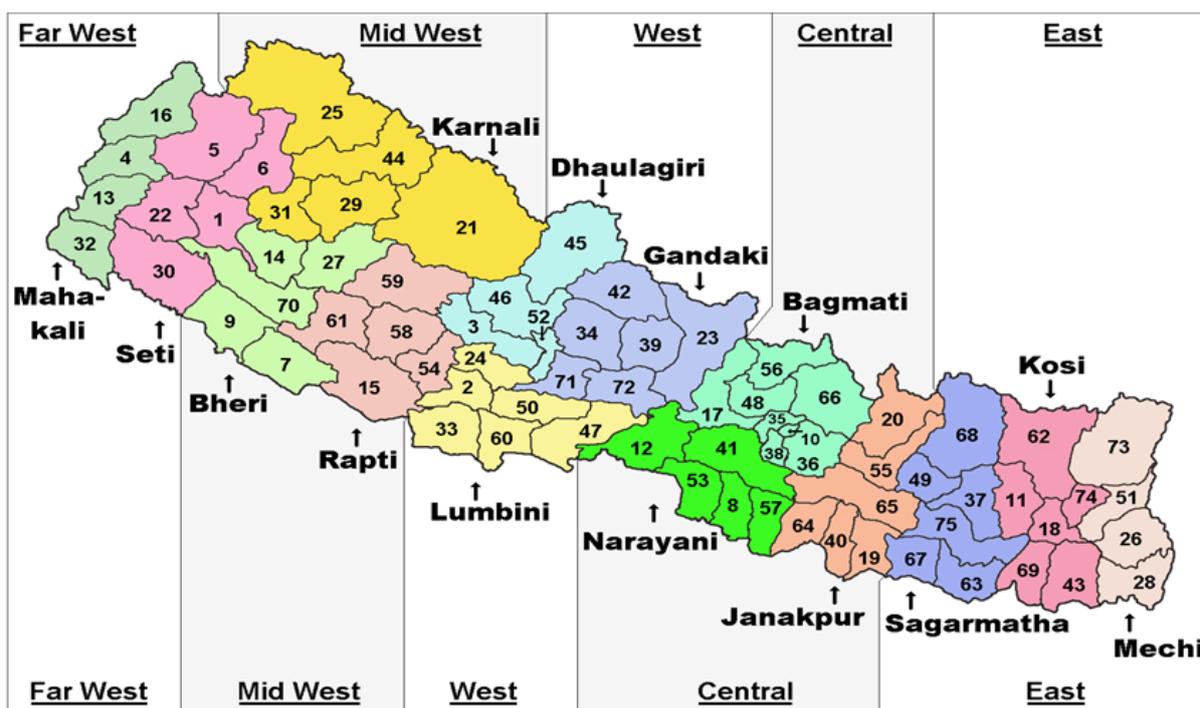
Zones and District	Headquarter
1) MECHI ZONE	1) ILLAM
1. Taplejung	1. Phungling
2. Panchthar	2. Fidim
3. Illam	3. Illam
4. Jhapa	4. Chandragadi
2) KOSHI ZONE	2) BIRATNAGAR
5. Snkhuwa Sabha	5. Khandbari
6. Terathum	6. Terathum
7. Dhankuta	7. Dhankuta
8. Bhojpur	8. Bhojpur
9. Morang	9. Biratnagar
10. Sunsari	10. Inaruwa
3) SAGARMATH ZONE	3) RAJBIRAJ
11. Solukhumbu	11. Solu Sallari
12. Okhaldhunga	12. Okhaldhunga
13. Khotang	13. Diktel
14. Udaypur	14. Gaighat
15. Saptari	15. Rajbiraj
16. Siraha	16. Siraha
4) JANAKPUR ZONE	4) JANAKPUR DHAM
17. Dolakha	17. Charikot
18. Ramechhap	18. Ramechhap
19. Sindhuli	19. Sindhuli Madi
20. Dhanusa	20. Janakpur
21. Mahottari	21. Jaleswar
22. Sarlahi	22. Malangwa

5) BAGMATI ZONE	5) KATHMANDU
23. Rasuwa	23. Dhunche
24. Dhading	24. Dhading
25. Nuwakot	25. Bidur
26. Sindhupalchok	26. Chautara
27. Kavrepalanchok	27. Dhulikhel
28. Kathmandu	28. Kathmandu
29. Bhaktapur	29. Bhaktapur
30. Lalitpur	30. Patan
6) NARAYANI ZONE	6) HETAUDA
31. Chitwan	31. Bhaktapur
32. Makwanpur	32. Hetauda
33. Parsa	33. Birgunj
34. Bara	34. Kalaiya
35. Rautahat	35. Gaur
7) GANDAKI ZONE	7) POKHARA
36. Gorkha	36. Gorkha
37. Tanahun	37. Damauli
38. Manang	38. Chame
39. Lamjung	39. Beshi Shahar
40. Kaski	40. Pokhara
41. Syangja	41. Syangja
8) DHAULAGIRI ZONE	8) BAGLUNG
42. Parbat	42. Kushma Bazar
43. Myagdi	43. Beni Bazar
44. Mustang	44. Jomsom
45. Baglung	45. Baglung
9) LUMBINI ZONE	9) BUTWAL

46. Gulmi	46. Tamghas
47. Arghakhanchi	47. Sandhikharka
48. Palpa	48. Tansen
49. Nawalparasi	49. Parasi
50. Rupendehi	50. Bhairahawa
51. Kabilbastu	51. Taulihawa
10) RAPTI ZONEQ	10) TULSIPUR
52. Rukum	52. Musikot
53. Rolpa	53. Libang
54. Salyan	54. Salyan Khalanga
55. Piuthan	55. Piuthan Khalanga
56. Dang	56. Ghorahi
11) Bheri Zone	11) Nepalgunj
57. Dailekh	57. Dailekh
58. Jajarkot	58. Jajarkot
59. Surkhet	59. Birendranagar
60. Banke	60. Nepalgunj
61. Bardiya	61. Gulariya

12) KARNALI ZONE	12) JUMLA
62. Dolpa	62. Dunai
63. Jumla	63. Jumla
64. Humla	64. Simikot
65. Kalikot	65. Manma
66. Mugu	66. Gumgadi
13) SETI ZONE	13) DHANGADI
67. bhajang	67. Chainpur
68. Bajura	68. Martadi
69. Doti	69. Silgadi
70. Achham	70. Mangalsen
71. Kailali	71. Dhangadi
14) MAHAKALI ZONE	14) MAHENDRANAGAR
72. Darchula	72. Darchula
73. Baitadi	73. Baitadi
74. Dadeldhura	74. Dadeldhura
75. Kanchanpur	75. Mahaendranagar

Source: [4].



Source; Nepal Government 2015

The present reality is the poverty is pervasive in Nepal. The Nepal living Standards Survey (NLSS), conducted by CBS in 2011 estimated that 25% of the total population is below the poverty line. Moreover, there is an enormous disparity in rural-urban poverty, at 35% in rural areas compared to 10% in urban areas, and it is more unequal between social group and region. Despite some progress in poverty reduction in recent years, Nepal remains one of the poorest country in the world, with human development index (HDI) of 0.436 and ranked 157th out of 187 countries in the year 2012 [1].

Agriculture makes a contribution of about 35% to the gross domestic product (GDP), and about 80% of the total population derives their livelihood from the sector. In recent years, besides and other income such as remittance has become one of the major income sources for the country. The income from remittance has helped large number of people to come out of poverty and improve their standards of living.

Nearly 80% total population lives in rural areas. Life expectancy at birth is estimated to be 68 years [1]. According to the (CBS, 2011), the literacy among Nepalese over six years of age has increased from 54.1%

in 2001 to 65.9% in the 2011 census. Disparities exist between gender, urban and rural areas and development regions. Male literacy is 75.1% compared to female literacy at 57.4%. Literacy is substantially higher in urban areas (77%) than in rural areas (57%). Similarly, the western development region has the highest literacy with 66%, and the lowest rate of literacy is in the central region with 57%. There are marked differences in literacy rates between consumption quintiles. While the literacy rate of the richest consumption quintile in the population 6 year and above is 79.3% (male 90.1% and female 70%), it is only 45.3% (male 55.8% and female 37.2%) in the poorest consumption quintile (CBS, 2011). It shows that more women are illiterate than men, displaying extreme gender disparity and inequality in education. With little time left to reduce illiteracy by 50% as set out in Dakar, Senegal for the Education for all goals, it seems highly unlikely that women and the poorest will achieve universal literacy by 2015.

After the restoration of democracy in 1990, Nepalese people had high expectation for the development of their society and improvement of their daily life. However even basic demands such as universal primary education and

literacy for all that constitute a basic human right have not been fulfilled, particularly in rural areas. Building upon the frustration of the people, Nepal Communist Party (Maoist) organized people from rural and remote areas and launched a revolution against the government of Nepal with the aim of overthrowing the Nepalese monarchy and establishing a People's Republic. Then long years (1996 to 2006) of armed conflict ended with the 12-point Comprehensive Peace Accord (CPA) in 2006 between the government and the Nepal Communist Party (Maoist), which transformed the country from a constitutional monarchy to a democratic republic. In 2009 Constituent Assembly (CA) elected was conducted for 240 direct members and 361 proportional members. However, after 4 years of extensive work, the new constitution could not be drafted and another election for Constituent Assembly was conducted in November 2013.

3. Educational Development in Nepal

Nepal does not have a long educational development history. The history of mordent schooling began about 150 years ago, with the establishment of the first school in 1853 (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2003). Traditional schools were mainly focused on Hindu and Buddhist religious and the aim was to prepare priests. A century ago the Rana regime established the western-style of education in the country, which served only the interests of the rulers, politicians, merchants, and the richer section of the society, not the mass of people. After the end of the Rana regime, a democratic government was established in 1950, which lasted only until 1961, but brought fundamental changes in the education scenario and the expansion of school facilities in the country.

Country then a number of initiatives were undertaken to expand educational opportunities in Nepal. The creation of the Nepal National Education Planning Commission in 1953 was the beginning of the systematic development of education in the country. The commission recommended the universalization of the primary education. Similarly, the National Education System Plan (NESP) in 1973 was another important milestone which focused on the development of the primary education sub-sector and emphasized the role of the government in planning, management, and financing. It recommended the free primary education. This plan made significant achievements in terms of the expansion of primary schooling opportunities and uniform curriculum and textbooks for comprehensive school education from grades one to ten, the role of local people in school affairs was discouraged.

To expand the educational opportunities to people, using the external resources of the United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nation Development Program (UNDP) and the United International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) for the first time in the educational history of Nepal in 1980, the Nepal Government initiated an innovative project called the Education for Rural Development Project (ERDP), popularly known as the SETI project. The main thrust of the program was to develop primary education as a vehicle for rural development (MOE, 1999). With the

successful experience of the SETI project, the primary educational project (PEP) was implemented in 6 districts in 1984 with the assistance of the World Bank (WB) and the UNICEF. Consequently, the number of schools increased, contributing to greater number of children attending and completing primary school and making the transition to the secondary education.

With the people's popular movement in 1990, once again the democratic government was restored, which adopted liberal education policies, opening the door for the involvement of the private sector in education. Furthermore, participation in the World Education Forum in 1990, Nepal made a firm commitment on Education for All to provide the quality basic education for all people. Thus, with the technical support of the United Nation Development Programme (UNDP), the government developed the basic and primary Education (BPEP) Master plan (1991-2002) in 1991, which presented a board picture of the primary education in Nepal and provided a good framework for its future development. It also provided impetus for both the government and the international agencies to work together in this effort.

Lesson learned from the past experiences, the ministry of Education (MOE) implemented the new program called Basic and Primary Education Project BPEP 1992-1997) with the financial support of the World Bank (WB), DANIDA, the Japan International Co-operation Agency (JICA) and UNICEF. The main focuses were improving the access to, and the quality and management of primary schools thought out the country. The second phase of Basic and Primary Education Program 2 (1999-2004) was implemented as a basket funding modality with the assistance of Denmark, Finland, Norway, the European Union (EU), and the World Bank (WB) as a core investment program (CIP), and JICA and United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) as a Non-core Investment Program.

Ten years after the Education for All (EFA) commitment made in 2001, the government developed a long term EFA National Plan of Action (EFA, NPA, 2001-2015), which provided a border framework for educational development of Nepal. With in the overall framework of EFA NPA, and Education for All Program (EFAS, 2004-2009) was implemented with the financial assistance of the government of Denmark, Finland, Norway, the United Kingdom (UK), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank (WB) as pool donors and JICA, UNICEF and United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) as non-pool donors, which targeted the achievement of the six goals of EFA.

Currently, to response to the public demand for educational quality and opportunity, the school sector Reform Plan (SSRP, 2009-2015) is in the fifth year of its implementation, and aims to restructure school system. Grade 1 to 8 is considered basic education and Grade 9 to 12 is secondary education. A national level school level school leaving certificate (SLC) examination is carried out at the end of grade 10, and the higher secondary education consists of a bachelor's degree of three to four years and master's degree of two years programs. The Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) is regarded as the highest degree offered by relevant universities. The structure of education system is presented in Table 3.1

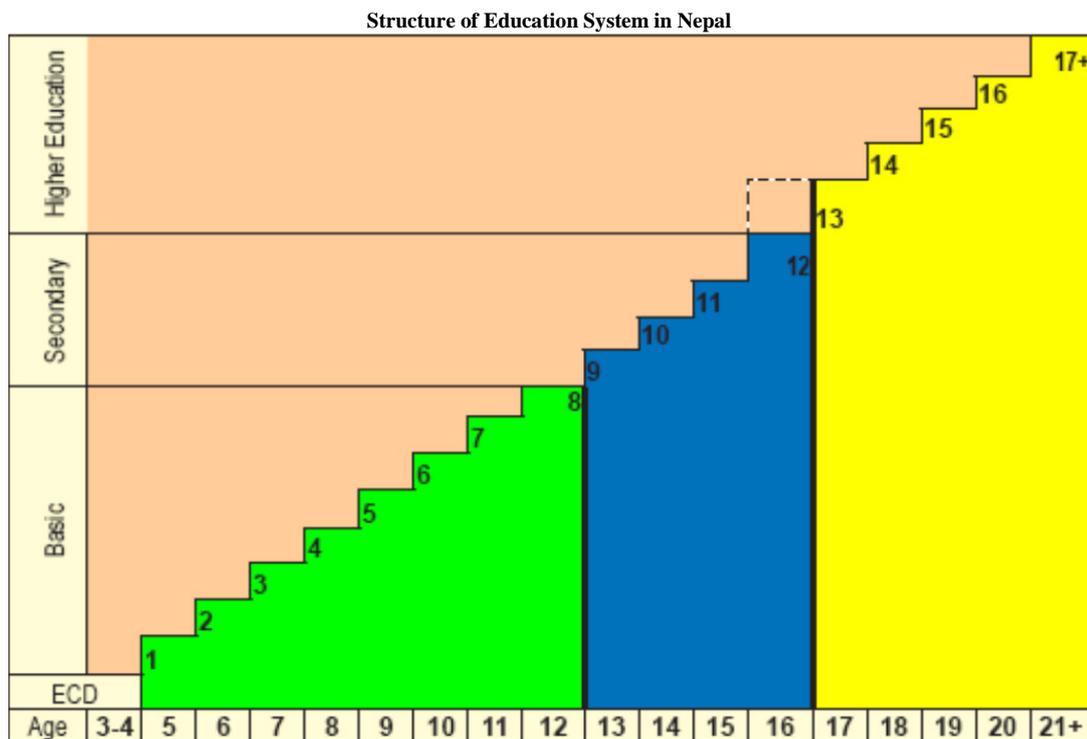
Age	Grade	Previous School System	Current (Grade Secondary)	School School
16	12	Higher Secondary Education (11-12)		
15	11			
14	10	Secondary Education (Grade 9-10)		
13	9			
12	8	Lower Secondary (Grade 6-8)		
11	7			
10	6			
9	5	Primary Education(Grade 1-5)		
8	4			
7	3			
6	2			
5	1			
4				

Source: World Bank, 2009.

The relevant age groups are 3-4 years for pre-primary/Early Childhood Education and Development (ECED), 5-9 years for primary education, 10-12 years for upper Primary education/basic education and 13-16 years for secondary education.

The ministry of Education (MOE) is apex body for formulating education policies and overall management system in Nepal. The Department of Education (DOE) is responsible for planning, budgeting, and monitoring school education. The Curriculum Development Center (CDC), the non-formal education Center (NCED) are the

specialized agencies supporting the DOE at the central level and are responsible for development of curriculum, non-formal education and teacher training respectively. There are five Regional Educational Directorates (REDs) responsible for monitoring the education programs within their respective regions. The District Education Officers (DEOs) are responsible for implementing the educational programs and managing the school system at the district level. Below the district level, the Resource Center (RC) is responsible to provide academic and technical support to school.



The relevant age groups are 3-4 years

Source: [6]

4. School Education and Development

Generally speaking, education is most important indicator of national development. We do not find a country which has developed education system but is socially, economically, and technologically, under-developed. We also do not find a country which is highly developed but the system of education is weak. It can be observed that almost all developed country have a good system of education which is contributing to keep them socio-economically better. It is well accepted that if a country can achieve quality education, it will have high

production rate, low infant mortality, high mother and child care, etc. similarly, with a better system of education, a country can achieve better roads, effective communication systems, good education, and health institution. What is widely accepted is that good school education provides basic foundations for national development. Higher education accelerates the peace of overall development of the country. It is, therefore, argued that without achieving high functional literacy rate thought school education no country can achieve economic and social advancement at a considerable level.

Primary of elementary (aged- 14 years) education plays a very significant role in the development of nation. Based on international experiences and research studies, it is

evident that for a country to achieve overall development, educated labor force is needed though it must be accepted that education alone is not sufficient for all kinds of development of a country. The argument is that without an educated labour force, no economic development can be achieved but it should also be considered that other factors like political commitments, resources, competent management catching up with world phenomena are also equally important for development. It is education produces skilled human resource needed for the socio-economic development of the country. Education is attributed for growth of industrialized economy in the 19th and 20th century. Many countries are still struggling for that. Peaslee [5] in a very comprehensive study revealed that no country in the world achieved significant economic growth before attaining universal primary education. Benavot (1985) also found that primary had a significant positive effect on economic growth of developed and developing countries. The role of education is very significant especially to develop foundations for national development. The following issues can be taken as examples.

Education's role in enhancing earning is unquestionable. The rate of return of education is also high. Research studies reveal that primary education has a high rate of return but people also say that without quality higher education, no quality primary education can be offered. In this way, a country needs both quality school and higher education for enhancing earning capacity of the citizens of the country. As argued elsewhere, it is also necessary for a country to earn high to offer quality education.

5. Educational Policies in Nepal

The MOE (Ministry of Education) thought its various organizations and institutes works to enhance the sector-wide coherence of education policies with an explicit focus on cross-cutting issues such as improving universal access and participation, the quality and relevance of schooling and learning, the reaching marginalized populations. Education policies and strategies are reflected in the legal provision and education plans and programs of the education sector. The Constitution of 1990 and Education Act (2001) included the right of every child to free primary education with the choice of learning in his or her mother tongue. Similarly, the Interim Constitution of 2007 ensures the right to get free education up to secondary level.

Based on the human rights approach to education and in accordance with the principles and provisions of the EFA National plan of action (2001-2015), the School Sector Reform Program (SSRP) (2009-2015) aims to achieve three key objectives:

- 1) Ensuring access and equity in school education
- 2) Enhancing the quality and relevance of education
- 3) Improving efficiency and institutional.

The Education Act (2001) and the Education Regulation (2002) underpin provisions for pre-primary education in collaboration with local bodies (VDCs and municipalities), free primary education with provision of free textbooks to all children, and scholarship and scholarship to girl and children with disabilities. Moreover, it also includes scholarship and free secondary education to all, especially disadvantaged children. Improved

curriculum and textbooks, increased qualification and training for teachers, the provision of female teachers, adequate and suitable physical facilities, pure drinking water, separate toilets for girls, and empowerment of school management committees are some of the key reform measures to ensure the equality school education for all eligible children in the country.

6. Conclusion

The first section provides the brief introduction of socio-economic context of country, while the second section explains the current status of education development of Nepal. After the commitment to the achievement of EFA in 1990, resource in education increase and various programs were implemented. By these initiatives, remarkable progress was seen in improving school participation at all levels of school education of Nepal.

Nepal has achieved genuine progress in increasing enrolments and access to education in the last fifty years. However quality and equity of education is still considerably low. Participation in education remains unequal across income and social groups. The main reason behind this situation may be attributed to the adoption of top-down management approach to education reform after 1971. Education reform programs during 1990s are mainly guided by this approach though in the later part of 90s some elements of participatory approach have been introduced.

Abbreviation

MOE: Ministry of Education
 CDC: Curriculum Development Center
 ECED: Early Childhood Education and Development
 CDC: Curriculum Development Center
 CIP: Core Investment Program

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