What's Inside:

**Highlights:**
Selection of Kabita in Sindhupalchowk

**Education in Nepal:**
Statistics and Figures

**gyan:** *n.* knowledge acquired by direct perception
SELECTION OF KABITA IN SINDHUPALCHOWK

“My daughter was 3 years old when her father passed away. Her brother and sister were also very small. Seeing that everyone in the village was sending their children to school, I felt compelled to send my kids to school as well. It is very difficult to live on a farm income and pay for my children’s school fees, their books and their stationery items. Fortunately, my son’s school gave him a scholarship. That really lowered the financial burden of schooling. If someone can provide financial assistance to my two daughters, I would be very pleased, as I would really love to give them a good education. I feel like I will not be able to support their education any longer.”

This is what Kabita’s mother told a volunteer, who helped prepare the scholarship application for her. Kabita is a new student that was recently selected for a NCEF scholarship in Sindhupalchowk. (Sindhupalchowk is a new NCEF region.) Thirteen-year old Kabita lives with her mother, an older brother and an older sister. Her father passed away when she was very little. Her mother, who is illiterate, supports the family by working in a farm. Since Kabita’s (and her sister’s) cost of school attendance is approximately US $120 per year, her mother could not have afforded to send her to school for much longer. With NCEF’s help, she can ensure her daughter continues with her education.
EDUCATION IN NEPAL: STATISTICS AND FIGURES

INTRODUCTION:
Since the early 1950s, when schooling was opened for the public, significant improvements have been made in raising the literacy rate and changing people’s attitude towards education. Although the first school was established in 1853, it was only open to the ruling family and their courtiers. The general public was denied education until 1951, the year when a popular movement ended the autocratic regime and established a democratic system. Hence, the history of Nepal is such that it is a country that fell behind by a hundred year in the field education. Although Nepal has made some progress over the years, half of the population is still illiterate.

The statistical presentation below seeks to address the major topics and concerns in educational development historically and today. A more detailed information can be found in the Nepal Ministry of Education and Sports website:

A. THE LITERACY RATE AND MALE- FEMALE GAP
One of the major issues concerning education has been the schooling of females. Girls are often thought of as assets to be given away upon marriage. Parents, especially in the rural areas, do not send their daughters to school. With programs to emphasize the education of girls, Nepal has seen a great increase in the literacy of females. Although the gender gap is still high, it is nevertheless decreasing. In addition, the aging population has a very small literacy rate, mostly because of not having access to academic institutions. For instance, people who were born in the 1950s or earlier are mostly illiterate because of low literacy rate during their “growing-up” years.

Figure 1. Literacy rate of the Nepalese population since 1952
Figure 2. Literacy rate of males and females and source of literacy

![Figure 2: Literacy rate of males and females and source of literacy]

Figure 3. Percent of female enrollment at different academic levels

![Figure 3: Percent of female enrollment at different academic levels]

**Academic Levels**

- Early Childhood/Pre-primary: Kindergarten
- Primary: Grades 1-5
- Lower Secondary: Grades 6-8
- Secondary: Grades 9-10
- Higher Secondary: Grades 11-12
- Higher Education: College, University or Professional Institutions

*continued on the next page...*
B. PRIVATE V. PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Figure 4. Number of Public and Private Institutions

Another important concern has been the quality of education. Generally, at the secondary education level, private schools are preferred over the public schools, mostly because the latter’s reputation of lower quality of education. However, private schools are mostly located in urban regions and are often expensive. Such schools are not feasible and convenient for people living in the remote areas and those living in limited income. A large number of children attend public schools and then drop out after primary level education. Only a small number of students, most of whom attended private school, find the opportunity to finish higher secondary and higher education.

Figure 5. Percent of students in public and private secondary schools who passed the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) Exam

The SLC is a national level that students take at the end of the tenth grade. Students must pass the exam to move on to higher education. Students who fail to do so have to repeat tenth grade all over again. Some students who pass the exam may discontinue their education due to financial reasons and/or due to household responsibilities. For instance, some parents discourage or stop sending their daughters to school as “daughters are to be given away upon marriage.” The following graph presents one very interesting fact. Percentages of males and females who passed the exam are very close. In addition the results show that the percent of private school students, who pass the exam, is much larger than that of public school students.
C. ETHNICITY

Figure 6: Net enrollment of girls aged 6-10 by ethnicity.

Ethnicity, which is directly related to a group’s economic, cultural and social status in the Nepali society, is another major factor that divides the percent of enrollment of girls. For instance, Brahmans and Chhetris, who used to be regarded as the “top classes” have high enrollment. Whereas, Tharus and Yadavs, who were considered to be in “lower class” have low enrollment. In fact, education was often denied to the “lower classes,” who were commonly called “untouchables.” In recent years, major initiatives have been taken to assist the marginalized groups in obtaining equal education.


Looking at these graphs, it is not difficult to conclude that much needs to be done to improve the availability, quality and equality of education. NCEF seeks to play an important role in the lives of many disadvantaged children who cannot obtain education only because they happened to grow up in midst of poverty or fall in a marginalized group. With the help of our generous donors, we hope to give the gift of light and warmth to many that are still left behind in the darkness of illiteracy and the blizzard of poverty.