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Principles and general objectives of education

The national goals of education are the following:

- Nurture and develop personality and inherent talents of each person;
- Instil respect for human values and the will to safeguard national and social beliefs so as to help develop a healthy social unity;
- Help individuals to socialize in enhancing social unity;
- Help individuals keep their identity in the national and international context and help them lead a socially harmonious life in the modern world;
- Help in modernization of the country by creating suitable human resources for its development;
- Teach about the conservation and wise use of Nepal's natural resources;
- Help and bring underprivileged and disadvantaged into the mainstream of the nation.

On the basis of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education in Nepal (2005, revised in 2007), the national objectives of education are as follows:

- help foster inherent talents and the possibility of personality development of each individual;
- help prepare citizens with good conduct and morals for healthy social and collective life style by promoting supreme human values inherent in each individual, national culture and dignity, social values, beliefs and experience;
- help prepare productive and skilled citizens competent to undertake local, national level jobs and also capable for the international job market if needed;
- consolidate social integrity through socializing individuals;
- develop and prepare human resources to build nation by assisting in modernization of the society;
- help conserve and exploit natural environment and national resources and heritages;
- be insightful to social equality and justice and develop conduct accordingly to help create inclusive society;
- foster the feelings of peace, friendship, goodwill, tolerance and fraternity in local, national and international context and adopt ones to conduct accordingly; and prepare citizens capable enough to resolve any kind of conflict;
- prepare globally competent human resources knowledgeable to modern information technology and use it;
- prepare citizens respectful to nation, nationality, democracy, judicious, creative, self-honoured, respecting others and feel proud of being Nepali;

- help prepare citizens committed to conserve and promote Nepali art, aesthetic values, ideals and other specialties.

The vision of school education is to prepare citizens dedicated to promote and protect democracy and human rights, who should possess attributes like dignity of labour, committed to education, enterprising, disciplined, and capable enough to withstand the personal, social and national challenges of the twenty-first century. (MOE, 2010).

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

Article 18 of the (former) Constitution stipulated 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; 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; 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; 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.

Article 17 of the **Interim Constitution** of 2007 stipulates that: (a) each community shall have the right to get basic education in their mother tongue as provided for in the law; (b) every citizen shall have the right to free education from the State up to secondary level as provided for in the law; and (c) each community residing in Nepal shall have the right to preserve and promote its language, script, culture, cultural civility and heritage. Article 33 lists the responsibilities of the State, which include also “(h) to pursue a policy of establishing the rights of all citizens to education, health, housing, employment and food sovereignty.” Article 35 refers to State policies, which include also the following “(8) The State shall pursue a policy of encouraging maximum participation of women in national development by making special provisions for their education, health and employment.”

The second amendment (1993) to the **Higher Secondary Education Act** of 1989 empowered the Higher Secondary Education Board to implement higher secondary education (grades 11 and 12).

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 2001 established a framework for partnerships between local governments (municipalities, village development committees, and district development committees) and the central administration, also



at sub-national level (district level administration of line ministries). Government (public) schools were reclassified as 'community' schools, to be managed by a school management committee.

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 Ninth Plan envisaged setting up a national standard of primary education. A minimum of 180 school days per year are to be made compulsory (MOE, 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). It is envisaged that by 2015 there should be universal access to quality basic education. Provision of compulsory education has been considered for school sector reform programme to be implemented in 2009. The right-based approach to education will apply for the basic education up to grade 8. Basic and primary education is free. The free basic and primary education means free tuition fee and free textbooks. However, schools are free to raise donation from the community and the parents to meet development and maintenance cost of the schools. (MOES, 2007).

Administration and management of the education system

Nepal is a highly diverse country not only geographically but also linguistically, religiously, culturally and in terms of caste and ethnicity. The 2001 Census has recorded 101 different castes/ethnic groups, including those that are not identified categorically. Altogether 92 different languages are spoken in the country and a number of dialects have been registered as mother tongues. Nepali is the official language which is the mother tongue of around 49% of population. The country has been transformed into a Federal Democratic Republic in 2006. The Constituent Assembly was elected in April 2008 to draft and promulgate a new constitution within a federal framework of governance, abiding by the principles of parliament democracy. (MOE, 2010).

Educational planning and management at all levels is under the responsibility of the **Ministry of Education** (formerly the Ministry of Education and Sports, MOES). A Cabinet Minister manages MOE at the political level. Two Secretaries (special provision has been made for basic education) head MOE at the bureaucratic level. At the functional level, there are four Divisions, each headed by a Joint Secretary. The four divisions (each one including several sections) are: administration; higher education and educational management; planning; and monitoring, evaluation and inspection.

The **Department of Education** (DOE), chaired by the Director General, was established in 1999 under the MOE. Prior to its establishment, the Ministry was responsible for overall implementation, supervision and monitoring of the formal and non-formal education programmes. However, a Basic and Primary Education Programme (BPEP) was also under implementation. The DOE was established in order to institutionalize and regularize those activities. With the establishment of the Department, most of the activities carried out by the BPEP were shifted to the Department and the BPEP as a project ceased to function. Due to such legacy, basic



and primary education related activities carried out by the Department were also referred as BPEP II. Now the Department, with its direct line of command with the five regional and seventy-five district offices and with full administrative and financial authority, holds the responsibility of implementing and monitoring educational programmes.

Within DOE, Division of Educational Management, the **Early Childhood Development (ECD) Section** has the following functions: formulate policies relating to the ECD education; prepare ECD programmes in accordance with approved policies; formulate criteria for the approval of the ECD centres; develop the ECD curriculum and textbooks and provide help in the distribution of materials; make arrangements for the implementation of the parental education programmes; coordinate for monitoring and evaluation of ECD programmes; plan and implement ECD-related training activities; work as a liaison office to coordinate activities related to ECD among the line ministries, international NGOs, and NGOs.

The government is committed to improving the access to education for disabled children and to promote inclusive models of education. Within the Ministry of Education, two organs have been established for providing educational programs for the disabled: the **Special Education Council** has the primary responsibility for the development of policy and programmes; the **Inclusive Education Section** is responsible for the implementation of the policy and programmes

Nepal is divided into five educational regions led by **Regional Education Directorates (REDs)**. The REDs are made responsible for bringing out uniformity in the district level programmes and for coordinating, monitoring and supervising the school level teaching learning as well as development activities within the region. 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 coordination 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 75 districts in Nepal that are each, in turn, divided into Village Development Committees (VDCs) and municipalities. In 2010 there were 3,915 VDCs, one metropolitan city (Kathmandu, the capital), four sub-metropolis, and 58 municipalities (MOE, 2010). 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. There are also 1,091 **Resource Centres (RCs)** at sub-district level



which are the main implementing agencies of the educational policies, plans and programmes at the local level. (MOE, 2010).

The **Curriculum Development Centre (CDC)** is an academic institution reorganized in 1997 (it was created in 1971) with the task of designing school curricula and textbooks along with other instructional materials in order to achieve the national goals of education. The Centre conducts annual as well as periodical discussions, interactions and dissemination programmes on the use of instructional materials. It also conducts research-oriented programmes to make school education relevant, practical and competitive. The vision of CDC is to identify itself as an academic institution by developing appropriate curricula, textbooks and other instructional materials to prepare human resources committed to social transformation, qualitative, creative, job-oriented, competitive and capable to face the challenges of the world. The CDC objectives are to: assist in making policies related to school level curricula and textbooks and develop, revise and improve them according to the approved policies; develop and disseminate curricula, textbooks and other instructional materials to maintain the quality of school education; determine the quality standards of school education; determine framework, structure and model of student assessment and assist in its implementation; conduct research on school education, curriculum and textbook; and utilize and promote local knowledge, skills and technologies. The CDC is organized in seven sections: language education; mathematics, science and vocational education; social studies; assessment, evaluation, planning and research; editing and publishing; finance administration; and administration. Textbooks published by CDC are printed and distributed by Janak Education Materials Centre.

The main objective of the **Janak Education Materials Centre** is to develop and produce the necessary educational materials (textbooks, teacher guides, practice books, science materials, educational maps, charts, etc.) and disseminate them with minimum charge in line with the objectives of the government. Besides, in connection with its diversification policy, this Centre produces and distributes the books required for the private schools students. Likewise, this Centre has a plan to produce and distribute the necessary reference books for pre-primary classes and books for higher secondary education. (*Ibid.*).

The **Office of the Controller of Examinations (OCE)** conducts the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examinations. This involves carrying out the policies and decisions of the SLC Board, supervising the exams administered in around 1,400 examination centres in various districts, publishing results, awarding certificates, maintaining records, and disseminating statistical information. OCE also organizes short-term training activities, workshops, seminars, and carries out researches related to the school-level evaluation system.

Another major centre under the Ministry of Education's supervision is the **National Centre for Educational Development (NCED)**. It was established in 1993 along with nine Primary Teacher Training Centres in various parts of the country at the recommendation of National Education Commission (1992). In 1994, with funding from the government and the Asian Development Bank, the Primary Education Development Project (PEDP) developed and implemented teacher and management training programmes through the NCED. It has been restructured as an



apex institution for human resource development under the MOE since 2004; and it is now responsible for human resource development in the education sector. Since its establishment, NCED has been involved in the management and delivery of training to teachers and educational personnel. However, NCED's scope of work has been further expanded with the merging of the then Secondary Education Development Centre and Distance Education Centre into it. In 2010 NCED was carrying out training programmes through its 34 Educational Training Centres established at different strategic locations of the country. Moreover, the previous apex policy-making body called Training Management Coordinate Committee has now been upgraded as **Council for Educational Human Resource Development (CEHRD)** body working under this apex institute for human resource development. (MOE, 2010).

Finally, there are several institutions and bodies that are associated with the Ministry, but that operate with relative autonomy. Six of these are universities: Tribhuvan University, Nepal Sanskrit University, Kathmandu University, Purbanchal University, Pokhara University, and Lumbini Buddha University.

The **Non-formal Education Centre (NFEC)** has been established as a central agency under the MOE in order to institutionalize overall programmes of non-formal education. It has been playing a leading role as an apex body in policy formulation, curriculum and reading materials development, planning, monitoring, coordination and programme implementation for the development and expansion of non-formal education programmes throughout the country. The overall goal of NFEC is to raise the level of adult literacy, particularly amongst women and people belonging to marginalized groups such as *Dalit* (low caste) and disadvantaged ethnic minorities (*Janajatis/Adivasis*), through the provision of appropriate learning and life skills programmes for all youths and adults, thus contributing to achieving poverty reduction and an equitable socio-economic and human resource development. NFEC functions directly under the MOE as a fully fledged departmental organization in close consultation with a high level committee, the **National Non-formal Education Council**, which is headed by Minister of Education regarding policy formulation affairs. The literacy rate for the age group 15 years and above was estimated at 55.6% (43.3% for females and 70.7% for males) in 2008.

The **Teachers Service Commission (TSC)** established in 1999 to make recommendations to the government for the permanent appointment and promotion of the teachers of community schools; to provide the teaching license necessary to the candidates for the post of a teacher; and to provide suggestions on the issues related to service terms and conditions and facilities of the teachers.

The **Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training**, chaired by the Minister of Education, was created in 1989 and revamped in 1993 as a national autonomous apex body of the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) sector committed for the production of technical and skillful human resources required to the nation. The Council is mainly responsible for policy formulation, quality control, preparation of competency-based curricula, developing skill standards of various occupations and skills testing, conducting various research studies and training needs assessment, operating technical schools, and training TVET teachers.



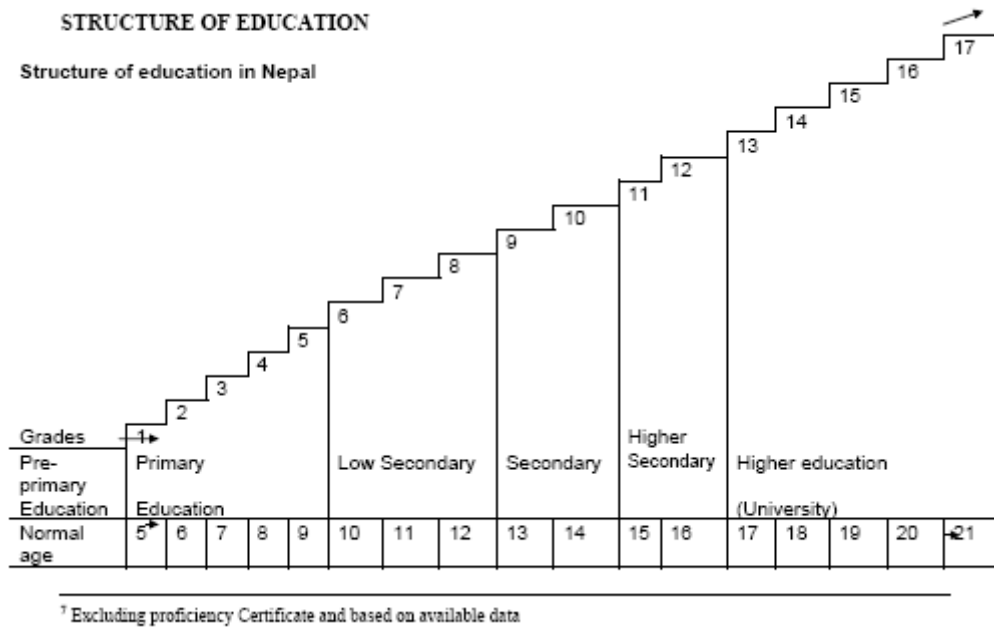
Since the enactment of the Higher Secondary Education Act (1989), the **Higher Secondary Education Board** has extended the secondary school system to grades 11 and 12, implementing the necessary curricula, textbooks and examinations. The Board also established and maintains ties between higher secondary schools and national and international universities. The main functions of the Board are as follows: granting approval for higher secondary schools; developing and revising curricula and textbook materials; conducting examinations and publishing results; awarding certificates to higher secondary graduates; supervising and monitoring higher secondary school programmes; implementing plans and programmes for improving higher secondary education; recruiting technical, professional and administrative staff; designing and implementing training programmes for teachers and other staff; conducting seminars and workshops; undertaking research activities, which focus on various issues in its field of competence; keeping liaison with various national and international institutions.

The **University Grants Commission (UGC)** was established under the UGC Act approved by the Parliament in 1993, and came into functioning during 1994. UGC is responsible for allocation and disbursement of grants to the universities and their campuses, regulating their activities and formulating policies and programmes on establishment of new universities. The main objectives of the UGC are to coordinate among universities; allocate and disburse government grants to universities and higher education institutions; and take appropriate steps for the promotion and maintenance of standards of higher education in Nepal. Recently the UGC has launched the Quality Assurance and Accreditation (QAA) programme, as an important aspect of the higher education reform. Accordingly, a **Quality Assurance and Accreditation Committee (QAAC)** has been formed for the development and implementation of QAA activities. The scope of QAA covers quality audit, quality assurance and accreditation on the basis of voluntary participation of various higher education institutions including public, community and private institutions. It is expected that by 2014 a full fledged national system of QAA will be operational under a National Board of QAA and through an autonomous QAA centre.

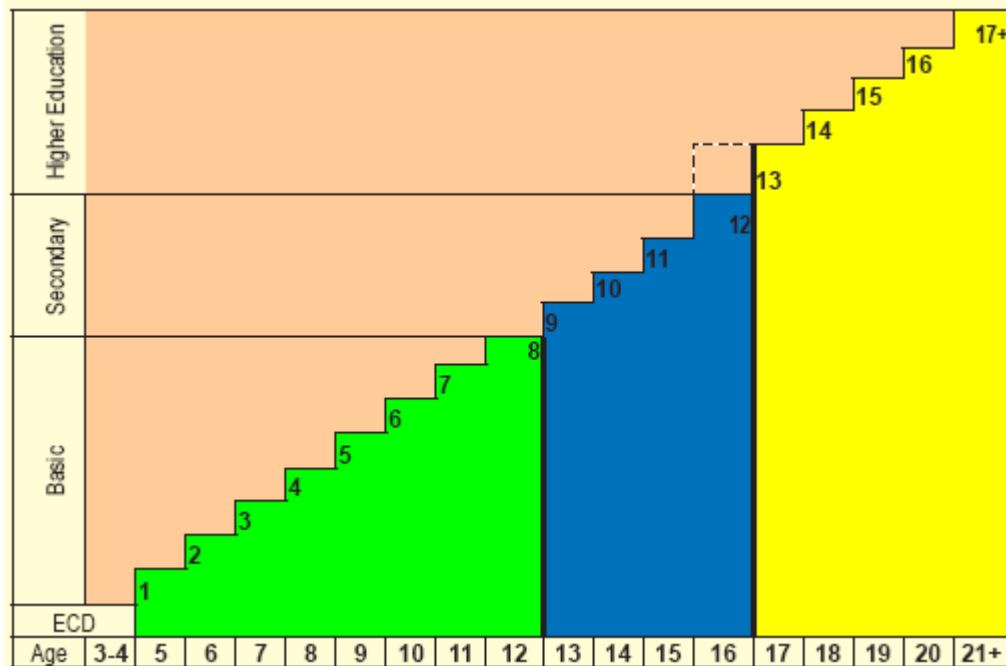
The **Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare (MWCSW)** since October 2000, previously established in 1995 as Ministry of Women and Social Welfare) is a focal ministry for the policy, planning, programming, overall development and coordination of all activities related to women, children and social welfare including senior citizens, orphans, helpless women and disabled. Entities under MWCSW include the Social Welfare Council (an autonomous body governed by a separate Social Welfare Act), the Women Skill Development Center, the Central Child Welfare Board, and the Central Child Welfare Committee. MWCSW has outreach for development activities in the districts through Women Development Offices and District Child Welfare Committees.

Structure and organization of the education system

Nepal: structure of the education system



Nepal: new proposed structure of the education system (2009)



Source: MOE, 2009.



Pre-school education

Early childhood development (ECD) education is for children from 3 to 4 years old. ECD education includes ECD community and school based centres and pre-primary classes. Nursery classes for children below 3 years of age are also offered in institutional (private) schools.

Primary education

Primary education lasts five years (grades 1-5) and the theoretical entry age is 5+. According to the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP), the school sector is to be reorganized into basic education, covering primary and lower secondary education (e.g. grades 1-8), and secondary education (grades 9-12). At the basic education level, three main types of school have been envisaged: foundation school with grades 1-3; primary school with grades 1-5; and upper primary school with grades 1-8. (MOE, 2009). The transition from primary to lower secondary depends on the results of the school-based final examination at the end of grade 5, administered by the school management committee.

Secondary education

Secondary education is organized in three cycles: lower secondary (grades 6-8), secondary (grades 9 and 10), and higher secondary (grades 11 and 12). At the end of grade 8 students sit the District Level examination, and at the end of grade 10 they sit the School Leaving Certificate examination administered nation-wide. Grade 10 graduates can enter higher secondary education leading to the Higher Secondary Certificate examination at the end of grade 12, or enrol in two-year Proficiency Certificate Level programmes offered at university campuses. Specialized streams at the higher secondary level include science, commerce, humanities and education. Technical schools and private technical training institutes are mainly for Technical School Leaving Certificate holders, e.g. students who have chosen a vocational stream after grade 8 and have completed two years of vocational training. The duration of courses is normally two years (in some cases two and a half years). Shorter one-year programmes and skill-oriented, short-term training courses lasting two to eight weeks are also offered. On the basis of the SSRP, lower secondary will be part of basic education and secondary education will cover grades 9 to 12. The proposed SSRP intends to introduce vocational education from grade 9 onwards (MOE, 2010).

Higher education

There are four major fields of studies at the higher education level: general, professional, technical, and Sanskrit. Universities offer three-year bachelor's (four years in the case of agriculture, engineering, nursing and pharmacy; five years in the case of veterinary; five and a half years in the case of medicine), one-year postgraduate diploma, two-year master's, and three-year doctoral degree programmes in several fields.

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). According to the primary education curriculum (grades 1-3) of 2006, schools will open for 220 days, and the teaching and learning process will be for 192 days in one school year (or 32 six-day weeks). The total time spent on teaching and learning in grades 1-3 will be 816 hours per year; and in grades 4 and 5 will be 936 hours. The duration of one teaching period will be 45 minutes, and a period could be determined as the requirement of a lesson. (MOES, 2008).

The educational process

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF, version of May 2005) for school education (pre-primary to grade 12) embodies the principles, structures and approaches upon which specific curriculum elements are to be developed. It consists of the principles and guidelines for developing, implementing and revising the national school curriculum and assessment based on a comprehensive review of the context and concerns of educational development with reference to national needs and international perspectives. Within the NCF, curriculum development is defined as the process of planning learning opportunities intended to bring about certain desired changes in pupils, and the assessment of the extent to which these changes have taken places.

A tentative outline of NCF was developed in 2004 and finalized after discussions with educationists and subject experts. This was followed by a number of activities such as: the analysis of existing curriculum of six core subjects by six task forces in the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC); the technical analysis of curriculum, textbooks, and teachers' guides by five different stakeholder groups from their perspectives; collection of views and suggestions from teachers, students and other stakeholders on the existing curriculum through five regional workshops; and review of national and international documents on curriculum framework and assessment policies and practices. Inputs from all these activities formed the basis for the first draft of the NCF. In the process of reviewing the first draft of the NCF within CDC, thematic discussions on inclusive education, student assessment, technical and vocational education and life skills, local curriculum, and information and communication technology (ICT) education were carried out with concerned experts and officials. After incorporating feedbacks and suggestions from these thematic discussions, the second draft was prepared and discussed with high level officials at the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES, now the Ministry of Education).

CDC has developed a mechanism for collecting information and feedback on curriculum from its users (students and teachers) and other stakeholders. Curriculum updating, revision and improvement are done according to the feedback received from different types of stakeholders and through piloting of the curriculum. In practice, CDC has followed the practice of curriculum updating as per need, minor revision on a five-year basis and major revision in a ten-year period. With regard to the curriculum development process in any subject area, a write-up subcommittee consisting of the Curriculum Officer of the CDC and other subject experts first draft the curriculum. The subcommittee then submits the draft curriculum to the Curriculum Textbook Subject Committee (CTSC) consisting of subject teachers, teacher educators, and university professors for comprehensive review. The CTSC



reviews the draft curriculum on the basis of objectives, content, instructional materials, and assessment methods. If deemed necessary, the CTSC makes necessary additions or deletions and if major revision is needed the CTSC sends it back to the subcommittee for redrafting or revising the draft curriculum. After the CTSC finds the draft curriculum of appropriate standard, it forwards the draft curriculum to the Curriculum Textbook Coordination Committee (CTCC), which is chaired by the Executive Director of CDC, for final review. The CTCC may invite specialists as observers for the review, revision or finalization of the curriculum as per the need. Finally, the National Curriculum Development and Assessment Council (NCDAC) approves the curriculum. If needed, the NCDAC may also form a technical committee to review the curriculum before its approval.

Until very recently, subject committees to design the curriculum were formed separately for different levels up to grade 10, and there was no mechanism that ensured communication and coordination between these sub-committees. Recently, provision has been made to have only one subject committee for all levels from grades 1 to 10, but no provision has been made to include grade 11 and 12 within the school curriculum structure. Reviews of the curriculum from grade 1 to 12 carried out in 2001 and 2004 have revealed gaps in the curriculum of different subjects at different levels. The problems of smooth transition from one level to the other were reported for core subjects like science, mathematics, social studies, and health, population and environment education. These studies have shown inconsistencies in level wise objectives, and have pointed out that the curriculum in most subjects were content oriented with inadequate elaboration. They have also elucidated that the sequencing of content between grade 9 and 10 in some subjects like science and social studies was not in proper order. While social studies was reported to be lengthy and overloaded, mathematics was found to be difficult especially at the secondary level. Overall, the analyses have found the revised primary level curriculum (2003) to be more systematic. (MOES, 2005).

The new primary school curriculum of 2003 has maintained the provision made in 1992 by providing 20% of the curriculum for the study of local contents in social studies, creative and expressive arts, and physical education. It has also made provision for an additional subject for local need based study that may include mother language or local subject. This level of flexibility of studying local need based subjects is not available at the lower, secondary and higher secondary levels. However, it has been envisaged that the new curriculum at the secondary level will allocate 10% to 15% to local content to increase local relevance. Despite the provision at the primary level for local curriculum, teachers are neither trained for using the curriculum in local context nor are they provided with adequate instructional materials to enrich their abilities in developing and implementing the local curriculum. Furthermore, due to lack of well formulated NCF, many decisions related to school education have been taken on an *ad hoc* basis without understanding the far reaching implications of addition or deletion of a core subject. No considerations were made in the past on how an addition of one subject could have adverse effects on curriculum load and subsequently on the test results. This situation has called for introducing new learning areas that address the differing needs of the learners as well as society in the school curriculum and for bringing improvements in the curriculum development, implementation and revision process.

The NCF sets out the foundation policy for teaching, learning and assessment in schools. It identifies the learning areas, key skills and the development of values and attitudes among students through school curriculum. It also emphasizes an inclusive curriculum for all students irrespective of gender, ethnicity, culture, religion, caste, ethnicity, ability and disability, socio-economic and geographical conditions. In terms of guiding principles, the curriculum: will be construed broadly; will be for a broad and balanced education; will be organized around key learning areas; will address diverse curricular concerns through integration; will be outcome focused; will follow a child-centered developmental approach; will recognize the importance of mother language in teaching and learning; will be inclusive; will provide opportunity for local need-based learning; will recognize Sanskrit education as the foundation for Eastern knowledge and philosophy; will provide opportunity for ICT education; will focus on life skills; will orient students towards work; will establish direction for student assessment; and will recognize alternative learning.

The key learning areas are the following: languages (official, national and international); mathematics; social studies; creative arts and expressions; science; health and physical education; environmental education; ICT; local need based study (LNBS); and occupation, trade and vocation. In addition, the curriculum will also define or make flexible provision for extra-curricular activities that complement the attainment of the overall curricular objectives. While each level of school education may have a different combination of the above learning areas in terms of weight, the rationale is to provide students with a well-rounded education that equips them with essential learning and life skills such as communication skills, problem-solving skills, social and interpersonal skills, and self management skills. Curriculum development process draws from these learning areas to construct a comprehensive, broad and balanced curriculum. In line with the child-development approach to learning, the language of instruction will be the mother tongue in early grades i.e. pre-primary to grade 5. There will be provision for language transition from the mother tongue to Nepali and/or English from grade 4. The curriculum of English will include elements of teaching English as a second language. The curriculum of Nepali will also have these elements so that children whose mother language is not Nepali will be taught utilizing second language teaching methodologies. Life skills included in school curriculum must not be confined to any particular subject or learning area, but must be perceived as common requirements across the curriculum. They must include interpersonal skills, coping and management skills, skills for building self-awareness, critical and creative thinking, and making decisions.

Activity-based learning will be introduced as an important part of primary education. Children will be encouraged to do things and learn by practical experience in all subjects. Students from grade 6 to 8 will be oriented towards occupation, trade or vocation through LNBS. Through project work, observing and experiencing work in work places, and performing simple community activities, students could be oriented towards work. At grade 9 and 10, the complexity of the activities on occupation, trade and vocation related subject will be increased so that it will adequately prepare the students to choose vocational stream at grades 11 and 12 if they decide to do so. Schools will be allowed to select appropriate work education/vocational training from among the centrally developed curriculum or to develop a new curriculum under the LNBS learning area that best meets the needs and demands of the local community. Assessment will be based on the learning outcomes



and performance standards set in the curriculum with the objective of improving teaching and learning. This means that assessment will be curriculum-based, student-centered, as well as designed to provide feedback to the teachers, parents, and students. In addition, district, regional and national level examinations will be conducted for monitoring standards and for grading purposes. Hence, a combination of formative and summative types of assessment will form a comprehensive assessment system. Under this comprehensive system, the principles and practices of assessment will be guided by the philosophy of inclusion. (*Ibid.*).

The curriculum of each subject will consist of objectives, learning outcomes, contents, teaching and learning strategies, instructional materials and student assessment strategies. Learning outcomes will describe what students should know, understand value and be able to do as a result of their curriculum experiences. The learning outcomes will become increasingly more complex as students progress through their schooling. In addition, the curriculum will indicate the core content areas and activities to be uniformly used as well as content areas and activities that may be accommodated, adapted and varied to suit local needs. The curriculum of each subject will consist of the following elements: objectives that conform to the accepted national goals and level wise objectives and life skills; core content common to all schools; a segment on the learning area of Local Need Based Study; a segment aimed at developing competencies that are required to meet personal needs and goals; appropriate teaching learning strategies based on the principle of child-centered, activity-based, and issue-oriented teaching and learning process; practical work, project work, field study and types of assignments will be clearly stated; clear description of assessment tools and procedures for using school and curriculum based assessment.

The textbooks for all subjects will be based on the objectives and learning outcomes and a policy on the introduction of multi-textbooks will be introduced. The textbooks from grade 1 to 5 will be translated into different national languages to address the local needs of the students. Supplementary instructional materials for learners with special needs will be developed. The curriculum and textbooks will be disseminated and made available to all schools and teachers in a timely manner. Dissemination of curriculum will be inclusive of content on the need for assimilating life skills approach in the learning areas and instructional strategy to support and build on existing knowledge and skills, positive attitudes, and behavioural changes. The CDC will build a mechanism for curriculum evaluation and research as a requirement for curriculum development, implementation and revision. Research on curricular issues will be an integral part of CDC's responsibilities. It will set up a separate wing to carry out curriculum evaluation and research activities under the leadership of curriculum evaluation and research experts.

The NCF emphasizes the importance of professional development of teachers with a focus on curriculum development and implementation in order to ensure that teachers understand the curriculum content and the processes involved in supporting learning. Teachers draw on their knowledge of subject matter and curriculum to make sound decisions about what is important for students to learn. Therefore, in view of the proposition of new structure of school education and its curriculum framework, there is a need to upgrade the educational qualification of school teachers particularly at the primary level. The Tenth Plan has also stated that necessary measures will be



taken to upgrade the minimum academic qualification of primary school teachers from grade 10 to grade 12. (*Ibid.*).

Pre-primary education

The prime goal of early childhood development (ECD) education is to bring about holistic development of children and to facilitate them to have smooth transition to primary education. More specifically, ECD education has the following objectives: (a) provide an opportunity to develop physical, emotional, social, mental, moral and creative aspects; (b) develop habit for personal hygiene; (c) cultivate habit as per social norms and values; (d) develop positive behaviour and attitude towards school; (e) prepare for basic education. (MOE, 2010).

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 1, 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 at that time required that a child should be 6 years old in order to enrol in grade 1, 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 preschool age children. In most of the cases where younger children are admitted to grade 1, 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 preschool 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 aimed 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 aimed 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, childcare 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. In 1999, an Early Childhood Development Section was established under the Department of Education to look after the ECD development needs in the country (MOE, 1999).

Early childcare programmes such as daycare centers and childcare centers; and early childhood education programmes like nursery, kindergarten, preschool and pre-primary school fall under the ECD programme. There has been a shift in emphasis



from early childhood education to early childhood care and education (ECCE), and from ECCE to ECD. ECCE refers to taking care of children and educating them during the absence of parents. ECD implies overall development of children. The term ECD is the most widely used. The implementation of the ECD programme involves several ministries (Education; Health; Local Development; and Women, Children, and Social Welfare), UN agencies, international NGOs, NGOs, and the private sector. At the central level, the Department of Education has developed a forum for networking of institutions and individuals dedicated to ECD in Nepal. All the organizations working at the national level are encouraged to become members of the ECD National Network. Similarly, at the district and Village Development Committee/municipality levels, a network of ECD service providers has been provisioned at the District Education Office. Furthermore, a National ECD Council has been formed, and District Child Development Boards are being established in the districts. The responsibility to manage and operate ECD centers rests on the local bodies, whereas preprimary classes are the responsibility of the schools with extensive community support and participation. (UNESCO Kathmandu, 2008).

Most of the ECD workers working under the government and NGO initiated programs receive about two-week basic training. However, there is no uniformity in the contents and forms of the training programmes being conducted by different organizations. Moreover, there is no authorized body to provide accreditation and ensure the quality and relevance of the training programmes being offered. In this context the trainers and school supervisors have mentioned that there is a need to develop a standard training package that includes basic components required for the holistic development of children. The respondents have also emphasized in making it mandatory for all organizations including private schools to use while organizing training programmes for their ECD workers. (*Ibid.*).

The ECD Curriculum (ECD Handbook) was published in 2006 for all private schools, community schools and ECD centres conducting classes under the ECD Programme. The main goal of the curriculum is to prepare all children of the age group three and four years to go to primary schools by developing them holistically by the means of various types of entertaining teaching and learning activities. The curriculum has the following objectives: (a) to provide children with the opportunity for their intellectual, physical, emotional, social, (holistic), moral and creative development; (b) to encourage them to set habit towards sanitation and safety; (c) to encourage them for practicing simple good manners; (d) to prepare them for primary education; and (e) to develop in them the feeling of confidence and protection. The curriculum prioritizes children's interest, capability and needs; focuses on the overall development of the children; utilizes knowledge and human resources of the family and community; and gives importance/recognition to contacts and relations with persons, places and materials in children's learning. The educational goals are to:

- develop children intellectually with the positive thinking towards experiences available in their environment and to help them to be healthy;
- motivate children for being cooperative, independent, free, honest and be sociable;
- support moral, social and physical development of children;
- help in developing positive attitude towards social, natural and religious environments;

- involve children in various activities to elicit creative talents
- make children aware linguistically and increase skills in listening, speaking, reading and writing;
- use appropriate language in daily activities;
- develop positive thinking towards language, literature, mathematics, science, and art to increase interest in learning in preparation for the primary level education and lay fundamental concepts in those subjects. (MOES, 2006).

The amount of time to be spent daily in the areas as per the age of the children is presented in the table below:

Nepal. Early childhood development education: daily timetable

Area	Daily time allocation	
	3-year-olds	4-year-olds
Acquisition and establishment of health habit, moral norms and values, and life skills and development	30 min.	30 min.
Free games	60 min.	45 min.
Linguistic expressions	45 min.	60 min.
Planned social activities	30 min.	45 min.
Gross motor development	45 min.	30 min.
Planned learning activities	30 min.	60 min.
Total time per day	240 min.	270 min.

Source: MOES, 2006.

Areas can be arranged according activities as per the subject matters. Apart from the time for the teaching and learning process, the facilitator must allocate at least 30 minutes in the morning and evening for classroom organization and records keeping. ECD centres must be open for 32 weeks in a year, six days a week. Children have to stay in the centre for a minimum of 4 to 4½ hours depending upon their age. The classes can be conducted in the morning or afternoon as per the situation, condition and necessity of the community. For this, the ECD centre committee has to decide with the consent of parents and community. Children enrolling in an ECD centre must spend there at least one year if they are aged 4 years and two years if they are 3 years olds. The curriculum lists the following learning outcomes of basic areas: intellectual concepts and skills (cognitive); health, nutrition and safety/protection skills; physical development skills; and moral/ethical skills. The curriculum also specifies learning outcomes for 3- and 4-year-olds in the following subject-wise areas: language skills (language and literature); mathematics; visual art, working style and creativity; environment science; and social studies. Evaluation of children should be continuous and should help children in their learning process. (*Ibid.*).

According to national data, in 2009/10 there were 4,316 pre-primary classes in institutional (private) schools and 24,773 community and school based ECD/pre-primary classes in the country. The total enrolment was 947,278 children and the gross enrolment ratio (age group 3-4 years) was estimated at 66.2% (67.5% for boys



and 64.8% for girls). The Mountain region showed the lowest enrolment ratio (56.9%), followed by Hill (62.3%) and Terai (63.7%) eco-belts. The highest ratio was in the Kathmandu Valley (127.1%) as a result of more institutional (private) ECD/PPC centers being run in the Valley. In addition, PPCs run by private institutions offer a three-year programme (nursery classes, lower kindergarten and upper kindergarten), whereas the ECDs run by the community and community schools mostly offer a one-year programme. The percentage of children entering in grade 1 with some ECD/PPC experience was estimated at 49.9% (49.8% for boys and 50% for girls). (MOE-DOE, 2010).

Primary education

On the basis of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) for School Education in Nepal (2005, revised in 2007), the main aim of basic education (covering grades 1-8, e.g. primary and lower secondary education) is to develop the innate ability of each child through child-centred education. Its main aim is to produce citizens who are loyal to the nation and democracy and aware of their responsibility towards the social and natural environment. Students are expected to be competent in communicating ideas, independent, hard working, health conscious, and morally sound. More specifically, the objectives of basic education will be as follows:

- develop positive attitude towards the norms and values of democracy and nation;
- develop basic understanding of Nepalese history, society and cultural diversity;
- develop basic knowledge and skill of languages (mother tongue, Nepali, English) for personal expression and communication;
- develop basic knowledge on science, mathematics, environment, health, information technology and life skill;
- develop personal and social etiquettes like cooperation, discipline, morality, social etiquette, helpfulness and honesty;
- develop creative and expressive skills;
- make children aware of the importance of child rights and human rights;
- contribute for all round development of children by developing their physical, intellectual, emotional, and social factors;
- develop life skills such as problem solving, creative thinking, decision making, personal hygiene and the habit of working collaboratively;
- develop civic awareness;
- make inquisitive towards cultural diversity, norms and values, and traditions by respecting cultural diversity;
- develop a strong sense of non-discrimination towards others despite their caste, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, class, and disability;
- develop a positive outlook towards work and respect for labor;
- develop a habit of sharing information and ideas about indigenous occupation or employment. (MOE, 2010).

According to the NCF (May 2005 version), at the basic education level, the curriculum structure is visualized in three stages: grades 1 to 3; grades 4 and 5; and grades 6 to 8. The following learning areas will be offered to develop specific



knowledge, skills, and values in children according to their developmental stages: languages (mother language, Nepali and English); mathematics; arts (creative and expressive art); science (general science, environmental education, health and physical education); social studies; and local need based study (LNBS). The purpose of the first stage (grades 1-3) will be to introduce children to formal teaching and provide an opportunity to develop basic literacy, numeracy and life skills including personal health habits and sanitation. They will also be acquainted with the environment they are living in and will not be loaded with many subjects. At this stage children will learn two languages (any two from mother language, Nepali and English). Regarding other learning areas children will be introduced to basic science, health, environment, and social studies through an integrated approach. The purpose of the second stage (grades 4-5) will be to provide an opportunity for developing knowledge, skills, attitude and values through the experiences of different learning areas and life skills. The learning areas at this stage will be mathematics, creative and expressive arts, science, health and physical education, languages and social studies. The teaching of science, health and social studies will focus on providing experiential learning through adapted curriculum or localization. Similarly, ICT knowledge will be integrated with other subjects. Life skills will be emphasized through the integration of content and method in all subjects as appropriate. Under the language learning area, pupils will continue to learn the same two languages they have learned in grades 1-3. For those who need to make language transition to Nepali or to English in grade 6, the transition process will begin in grade 4 through special arrangements. Regarding the LNBS learning area up to grade 5, it will not appear as a separate subject but will be integrated into subjects in the other learning areas through curriculum adaptation.

At the third level (grades 6-8), students will be offered the same learning areas as mentioned above. However, the Local Need Based Study area will appear as a separate subject. For example, under the LNBS students will have the opportunity to select among various subjects including mother language, ICT, or other practical life related areas such as livestock, horticulture, agronomy, and computer education. The generic life skills such as interpersonal skills, self awareness skills, critical and creative thinking skills, decision making skills and coping and stress management skills will be developed through cross curricular provision. (MOES, 2005).

The table below shows the weekly lesson timetable for primary education in 2004:

Nepal. Primary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade				
	1	2	3	4	5
Nepali language	8	8	8	8	8
Mathematics	6	6	6	6	6
English language	5	5	5	5	5
Social and environmental education (including health education)	6	6	6	–	–
Physical education	3	3	3	3	3
Creative and expressive art	3	3	3	3	3
Environmental science and health education	–	–	–	6	6
Social studies	–	–	–	5	5
Elective subjects (language/others)	3	3	3	3	3
Total weekly periods	34	34	34	39	39

Source: MOES, 2004. Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes.

The repetition rate in grade 1 was above 40% in 1992, 1994 and 1996. In grade 5 it was around 20% in the same years. In 1996, the repetition rate was 24.6% in grade 2, 19.7% in grade 3, 20.6% in grade 4, and 21.3% in grade 5. The drop-out rate was as follows: 23.1% in grade 1; 4.6% in grade 2; 8.2% in grade 3; 9% in grade 4; and 15.1% in grade 5. The annual examination for grade promotion, under-age enrolment in grade 1, and poor school and classroom environments account for the high drop-out and repetition rates (MOE, 1999).

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

According to the Ministry of Education, in 2006 the number of disabled children receiving some form of special education was as follows: 1,499 children were in NGO managed special schools and resource classes supported by the Special Education Council; 450 children were in NGO managed special schools without support from the Special Education Council; 1,956 primary children were in government schools in resource classes supported by Inclusive Education Section of the Department of Education; 890 primary children were in local schools supported by the Inclusive Education Section of the Department of Education; and 1,743 children with physical disabilities are in mainstream schools supported by scholarships. (MOES, 2007).

In 2009/10 there were 32,130 schools (in unit), classified as follows: 24,909 basic schools, including 20,494 schools offering grades 1-5 (primary) and 4,415



offering grades 1-8 (primary and lower secondary); and 7,221 secondary schools, including 4,709 schools offering grades 1-10 and 2,512 offering grades 1-12. The majority of schools in the country offer grades 1-5, i.e. most of the lower secondary, secondary and higher secondary schools also cover the primary grades. A few schools offer only grades 6-8 or grades 9-10. At the higher secondary level it is more common that some schools offer only grades 11-12. Broadly, schools are categorized into four types: community-aided (schools fully supported by the government for teachers salary and other expenses), community-managed (schools fully supported by the government for teachers salary and other funds but their management responsibility lies with the community), community-unaided (schools either getting partial support or no support from the government), and institutional schools (supported by parents and trustees). In addition, there are some religious schools (a total of 665 units at the basic education level in 2009/10) such as Madarasa, Gumba/Vihar and Ashram/Gurukul that have received support from the government when they have been mainstreamed into the formal education system by registering with the DEO and following the Education Act and Regulations. In 2009/10, the total enrolment at the basic education level was 6,505,085 students (of whom 49.8% girls), including 4,900,663 students (of whom 50.1% girls) at the primary level (grades 1-5) and 1,604,422 (of whom 49% girls) at the lower secondary level (grades 6-8). About 87% of the students were enrolled in community schools. (MOE-DOE, 2010).

In 2009/10, the GER was estimated at 141.4% at grades 1-5 level (137.1% for boys and 146.1% for girls), 88.7% at grades 6-8 level (88.2% for boys and 89.3% for girls), and 123.3% at the basic education level (grades 1-8). The NER was estimated at 93.7% at the primary level (94.7% for boys and 92.6% for girls), 63.2% at the lower secondary (64.3% for boys and 61.9% for girls), and 83.2% at the basic education level (84.3% for boys and 82% for girls). The average repetition rate in grades 1-5 was 14.4% (26.5% in grade 1, 10.6% in grade 2), and the average drop-out rate was 6.5% (10% in grade 1). The overall survival rate to grade 5 was estimated at 77.9%. At the lower secondary level the average repetition rate was 7% (7.8% in grade 6), and the average drop-out rate was 7% (8.5% in grade 8). In the same year, there were 153,536 teachers at the primary level (of whom 60,826 were female) and 40,259 (of whom 9,938 were female) at the lower secondary level. Out of the total number of teachers, 37,065 were working at the primary level and 12,323 at the lower secondary level in institutional (private) schools. As regards the primary teachers, 113,096 were trained, 21,203 partially trained, and 19,237 were untrained. At the lower secondary level, 23,021 teachers were trained, 6,078 partially trained, and 11,160 were untrained. (*Ibid.*).

Secondary education

As mentioned, secondary education is organized in three cycles: lower secondary (grades 6-8), secondary (grades 9 and 10), and higher secondary (grades 11 and 12). At the end of grade 8 students sit the District Level examination, and at the end of grade 10 they sit the School Leaving Certificate examination administered nationwide. Grade 10 graduates can enter higher secondary education leading to the Higher Secondary Certificate examination at the end of grade 12, or enrol in two-year Proficiency Certificate Level programmes offered at university campuses. Specialized streams at the higher secondary level include science, commerce, humanities and education. Technical schools and private technical training institutes are mainly for



Technical School Leaving Certificate holders, e.g. students who have chosen a vocational stream after grade 8 and have completed two years of vocational training. The duration of courses is normally two years (in some cases two and a half years). Shorter one-year programmes and skill-oriented, short-term training courses lasting two to eight weeks are also offered. On the basis of the School Sector Reform Programme (SSRP), lower secondary is part of basic education and secondary education covers grades 9 to 12. The proposed SSRP intends to introduce vocational education from grade 9 onwards (MOE, 2010).

On the basis of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education in Nepal (2005, revised in 2007), the aim of secondary education (covering grades 9-12) is to produce competent and healthy citizens who can contribute to economic development and are familiar with national traditions, cultural and social heritage, and democratic values. Its main aim is to produce skilled human resource capable to furnish solid contributions to the all-round development of the country and make them mindful citizen by imparting basic knowledge required for university education. More specifically the objectives of secondary education will be the following.

- develop positive attitudes towards the norms and values of democracy and diverse culture of the nation;
- prepare capable, self-dependent, skilful, and trained human resources for the development of nation;
- instil the attributes like honesty, self reliance, creativity, hard-working, helping, collaborative and accountability;
- develop language ability like listening, speaking, reading and writing for lively participation in day to day social life;
- acquire appropriate skills required to solve day-to-day problems;
- familiarize with the national history, culture, geography, economics, ethnic and cultural diversity and environment for nation's development by promoting national unity, cordiality and peace;
- develop technical and vocational skills and cultivate habit to respect labour;
- develop basic occupational skills and the capacity to earn a livelihood to be self-dependent;
- understand the essence of human rights, social justice and democracy and bring them into practice accordingly;
- develop attitudes to respect individual differences in terms of gender, disabilities, social, economic, geographical, ethnic and cultural variations and be active in building inclusive society by being aware of social evils like racial untouchability;
- develop creative, free, critical and analytical thinking in order to cope with the national and international challenges;
- build capacity to compete at national and international levels. (MOE, 2010).

According to the NCF (May 2005 version), at the secondary level the curriculum structure is visualized at two stages: grades 9 and 10, and grades 11 and 12. The following learning areas will be offered at the first stage of the secondary level covering various subjects: languages, science, mathematics, social science, and

occupation, trade and vocation. During the first stage, students will be given the opportunity to learn subjects like English, Nepali, general science, social studies, and mathematics as core subjects. They will also be required to select one subject from the occupation, trade and vocation learning area. In addition, students will have to choose one subject from one of the following learning areas: language, science, and social science. Schools will provide as many choices as possible. At the second stage of secondary level, the students will have the opportunity to follow two fields of study, e.g. academic and technical and vocational education. In the academic field, there will be separate streams of social sciences, management, and science. The technical and vocational field of study will have streams like agriculture, forestry, engineering and health. There will be three groups of subjects offered: compulsory, specialization and elective in both fields of study. Weight distribution for three groups of subject will be as follows: (a) 40% weight will be given to compulsory and elective subjects and 60% to the specialization area; (b) Nepali, English and social studies will be compulsory subjects for both streams; the social studies subject will cover Nepali studies and global knowledge; (c) students will be given the opportunity to select any one subject as elective different from their specialization. (MOES, 2005).

The table below shows the lesson timetable for lower secondary (grades 6-8) and general secondary education (grades 9 and 10) in 2004:

Nepal. Lower and general secondary education: weekly lesson timetable

Subject	Number of weekly periods in each grade				
	Lower secondary			Secondary	
	6	7	8	9	10
Nepali language	5	5	5	5	5
Mathematics	5	5	5	5	5
English language	5	5	5	5	5
Social sciences/studies	6	6	6	5	5
Science	6	6	6	5	5
Health and physical education	3	3	3	–	–
Population and environmental education	3	3	3	–	–
Health, population and environment	–	–	–	4	4
Art or pre-vocational education	3	3	3	–	–
Sanskrit	3	3	3	–	–
Elective first paper (*)	–	–	–	5	5
Elective second paper (**)	–	–	–	5	5
Total weekly periods	39	39	39	39	39

Source: MOES, 2004. Each teaching period lasts 40 minutes.

(*) One subject, selected from: the language group (including English, French, German, Nepali, Japanese and other languages), the humanities and social science group (geography, civics, history, economics, population, sociology, and environment), or additional mathematics.

(**) One subject, selected from: computer science, home science, food technology, industry, education, office management and accounting, bamboo-work, naturopathy, music, architecture, yoga education, journalism, handicrafts, agriculture, sewing and knitting, auditing, typing and shorthand, photography, Ayurveda, painting, dance, instrumentation, health and physical education.



There are mainly three types of institutions providing secondary-level education: community, institutional, and higher secondary schools. Community schools are usually run by the government or a community. Although the majority receive regular grants from the government, there are also some unaided community schools. Institutional schools are often referred to as 'private' schools. They do not receive regular governmental funding and are managed privately. Concerning lower secondary and secondary education, both community schools and institutional schools cater to these two levels, whereas only higher secondary schools provide education at the higher secondary level (which is often referred to as the intermediate level). (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008).

Once students enter the secondary education system, they are assessed periodically through three types of examinations that are administered during each school year i.e., two trimester tests and an annual examination. Among them, the results of the annual examination are used to decide whether a student will be promoted to a higher grade or not. These annual examinations are administered by subject teachers at the school level (except for the school-leaving examinations conducted at the end of each cycle). To be qualified to take the annual examination, students need to attend at least 70% of their classes during the school opening days. School-leaving examinations are given to students in grades 8, 10 and 12. The responsible bodies for administering the exams differ depending on the level of education. For lower secondary education (grade 8), DEO is responsible for administering the examination, while for grade 10 the Office of the Controller of Examinations under the Ministry of Education administers the School-leaving Certificate (SLC) examination. There is also an SLC examination at the end of higher secondary education (grade 12), administered by the Higher Secondary Education Board. The SLC examinations at grade 8 and grade 10 are considered nation-wide examinations. (*Ibid.*).

Under the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT), in 2007 there were currently 11 zonal level technical schools scattered around the country, three polytechnic schools, two village level Vocational Training and Community Development (VTCD) centers and one national level Training Institute for Technical Instruction. CTEVT has also granted affiliation and recognition to over 110 private training institutions that offer 175 technical SLC level programmes in more than 47 districts. It also conducts standardized skill tests and examinations to certify the skills learned through formal, informal and non-formal means. It is also involved in developing skill standards, revising and standardizing the curricula, developing textbooks and conducting research activities. Vocational education is offered through the general secondary schools with a simple purpose of providing students a general orientation of various vocational areas. The curriculum of the general secondary schools consists of only one subject (a weight of about 14%) as the vocational subject in areas such as agriculture, education, accounting, secretarial services, industrial arts, etc. The vocational courses are offered as optional subjects. As these courses do not promote any employment for school graduates, they have lost popularity among students, and their impact at the national level is minimal. (ADBI, 2007).

By the end of the 1990s the average teacher/pupil ratio at the lower secondary level (grades 6-8) was 1:47, and at the general secondary level (grades 9 and 10) 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 gross enrolment ratio 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 10 students sit the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination administered by the Office of the Controller of Examinations. 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 gross enrolment ratio 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).

In 2009/10, the total enrolment at the secondary level was 1,070,795 students (of whom 523,619 girls), including 790,348 students (of whom 379,826 girls) at the secondary level (grades 9 and 10) and 280,447 students (of whom 143,793 girls) at the higher secondary level (grades 11 and 12). About 83% of the students were enrolled in community schools. The gross enrolment ratio was estimated at 65.7% (66.8% for boys and 64.5% for girls) in grades 9-10, 23.6% (22.6% for boys and 24.6% for girls) in grades 11-12, and 44.7% (44.8% for boys and 44.6% for girls) at the secondary level (grades 9-12). The net enrolment ratio was 40.8% in grades 9-10, 6.8% in grades 11-12, and 23.9% at the secondary level. In the same year, there were 29,109 teachers (of whom 4,528 were female) at the secondary level (grades 9-10) and 14,262 (of whom 671 were female) at the higher secondary level. Out of the total number of teachers, 10,923 were working at the secondary level and 3,478 at the higher secondary level in institutional (private) schools. At the secondary level (grades 9-10), 23,193 teachers were trained, 2,948 partially trained, and 2,968 were untrained. At the higher secondary level, 8,165 teachers were trained, 940 partially trained, and 5,157 were untrained. In 2009/10, the average repetition rate was 6.7% in grades 9-10, and the average drop-out rate was 8.8% (13% in grade 10); the pass rate was 36.8% in grade 11 and 41.9% in grade 12. (MOE-DOE, 2010).

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

A national assessment of grade 5 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:

Grade 5 achievement test scores and basic learning competencies (1999)

Subject	Mean achievement	Basic learning competencies
		(% of the pupils scoring 33 or more)
Nepali	51.46	90.0
Mathematics	27.25	36.4
Social studies	41.79	78.1

Source: MOE, 1999.

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 intended to adopt the policy of granting promotion to grades 1-3 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.

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 5 examinations was to be undertaken under the Basic and Primary Education Project II. (MOE, 1999).

Teaching staff

Teacher education in Nepal began in 1948 with the establishment of the Basic Teacher Training Centre. This institution was later developed into the Normal School in 1956. With the Normal School, different mobile training teams came into existence to deliver training in different parts of the country. These mobile teams and the Normal School were later changed into Primary Teacher Training Centres after the recommendation made by the All Round National Education Committee in 1961. Thus, the development of teacher education continued with these activities. As the establishment of College of Education was materialized in 1957 according to the recommendations of the National Education Planning Commission, teacher education system took a definite course of action. In 1971, the College of Education was brought under the Tribhuvan University as the Institute of Education, and then converted into a faculty. Higher secondary schools (grades 11 and 12) offer a course in education, leading to the 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 postgraduate degree courses in education to prepare teachers and headmasters at the primary and secondary levels.

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, through the Faculty of Education and its constituent and affiliated campuses throughout the country, offers (under general education): two-year proficiency certificate, two-year and one-year bachelor's degree, three-year bachelor's degree, two-year master's degree, and three-year 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 a 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 prospective 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 School-leaving Certificate (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. (MOE, 1999).

At the national level, the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) is ultimately responsible for licensing and selecting permanent teachers. However, the district level holds primary responsibility for teacher management with district education offices playing a crucial role recruiting and deploying/redeploying teachers. Additionally, school management committees at the school level are responsible for the recruitment of temporary teachers in their respective schools. In addition to the minimum academic requirements, all applicants need to pass a teacher licensing examination (administered annually by TSC) to become eligible for recruitment. Once the license is acquired, it remains permanently valid. Applicants are also required to complete practicum training for one to one-and-a-half months for both lower secondary and secondary levels. For higher secondary teachers, there is no teacher licensing system. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008).



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.

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. NCED conducts management training to educational managers, MOE staff and head teachers. Seminars and workshops on different educational issues are also organized regularly for the high level officials and decision makers of MOE. Furthermore, need-based short-term trainings for educational managers aiming at developing professional capacity are also conducted frequently; the duration of the main training programmes ranges from one week to one month.

Since its inception, NCED has been running different kinds of teacher training programmes. In 2010 NCED was running the following types of programmes:

- Primary Teacher Training (ten-month) Programme. Two types of programmes are offered: (a) pre-service training programme (for two five-month semesters) for those who are not directly involved in teaching but aspire to become teachers in the future; this training is conducted by 146 Private Primary Teacher Training Centres (PPTTCs) affiliated to NCED;



- (b) in-service primary teacher training programme, especially for teachers in public schools; it is divided into three packages, e.g. basic teacher training programme, phase I (330 hours); primary teacher training, phase II (660 hours, delivered through distance mode by the Distance Education/Open Learning Division); and primary teacher training, phase III (330 hours).
- Lower Secondary and Secondary Teacher Training (ten-month) Programme. This in-service teacher training programme is also for lower secondary and secondary teachers in public schools. It is divided into three phases: in-service lower secondary and secondary teacher training, module I (330 hours); in-service lower secondary and secondary teacher training, module II (660 hours, through distance mode); and in-service lower secondary and secondary teacher training, module III (330 hours). (MOE, 2010).

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Web resources

Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training: <http://www.ctevt.org.np/> [In English. Last checked: July 2011.]

Curriculum Development Centre: <http://www.moescdc.gov.np/> [In Nepali. Last checked: July 2011.]

Department of Education: <http://www.doe.gov.np/> [Mainly in Nepali. Last checked: July 2011.]

Higher Secondary Education Board: <http://www.hseb.edu.np/> [In English. Last checked: July 2011.]

Ministry of Education: <http://www.moe.gov.np/> [In English and Nepali. Last checked: July 2011.]

Ministry of Women, Children and Social Welfare: <http://www.mowcsw.gov.np/> [In English. Last checked: July 2011.]



National Center for Education Development: <http://www.nced.gov.np/> [In English and Nepali. Last checked: July 2011.]

Non-formal Education Center: <http://www.nfec.gov.np/> [In English; resources also available in Nepali. Last checked: July 2011.]

Office of the Controller of Examinations: <http://www.soce.gov.np/> [In English. Last checked: July 2011.]

Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development, Tribhuvan University: <http://www.cerid.org/> [In English. Last checked: July 2011.]

Teachers Service Commission: <http://www.tsc.gov.np/> [In Nepali. Last checked: July 2011.]

University Grants Commission: <http://www.ugcnepal.edu.np/> [In English and Nepali. Last checked: July 2011.]

For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>