

Government of Nepal
Ministry of Education and Sports
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Research and Information Management Section
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FINAL REPORT

**A Study on the Identification of out of School
Children and Possible Measures for bringing them
into Formal and Non-Formal Education System**

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Submitted by:



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Education is the fundamental right of every child. This slogan is adopted by the world and is working for it through Education for All (EFA) goal. Nepal is also intensively working to achieve the EFA goal. Primary school enrolment rate of Nepal has been increasing. It has reached to 91.9% and targeting for 100% enrolment. In this context, this study has tried to understand the “out of school” children aged between 3 to 9 years. The purpose of this study was to find out the major reasons for non-schooling of children and to suggest measures to bring the ‘out of school’ children to formal and non-formal education system.

The scope of this study is national. The primary level of information/data was collected from 16 sample districts covering all 5 development regions, 3 ecological zones and Kathmandu valley. To collect necessary data and information, the consultants used various survey instruments including Household surveys, Community surveys, School surveys and Resource mapping. These survey tools were administered in 1 metro city, 9 municipalities and 38 VDCs.

In total, 2902 households, 96 communities and 96 schools were surveyed and 96 resource mapping was done. The size of population (from the surveyed households) was 16,218. Of the surveyed population, 5032 were in the age group of 3 to 9. The average family size of the surveyed households was found to be 5.6. Half of the sample population was under 15 to 60 age group and 34% under the age of 10.

The field researchers interviewed a total of 14 NGOs/CBOs, 18 District Education Officers and 18 Local Development Officers and other key informants including parents, teachers and out of school children to collect qualitative information. Such interviews provided an insight into the present situation and possible practical measures for bringing out of school children to education. Checklists were used to guide the discussion and to reach a consensus on issues related to non-schooling children.

Major finding of the study:

1. The total numbers of children between the age group of 3 to 9 are 5032 in the sample area. The percentage of out of children is 8.15 in which, the percentage of out of school boys is 8.6 and girls is 7.7. In total 91.85% i.e 91.4% boys and 92.3% girls are currently going to school.
2. Of the total out of school children, 10.5% are disabled.
3. Out of school children were found more in Mountain belt of Mid-Western Region.
4. The reasons for out of school children are the poor family condition, lack of child friendly school environment and socio-cultural beliefs and rituals.
5. Lack of Awareness about importance of education among the parents was the most prominent reason for out of school children. The study findings reveal that 38.5% of parents in the sample population are illiterate and 21% parents did not have any dream for their children.

6. Most of the parents think that children aged 3 to 5 years are too young to go to school.
7. The parents were found to be unaware of importance of ECD/PPC and these were found to be difficult to access.
8. The percentage of out of school is higher in 3 to 5 age group compared with 6 to 9 age group children
9. In the *dalit* communities, the percentage of out of children is higher and the parental literacy is lower.
10. In most of the cases, children between age group 6 to 9 were engaged in household chores
11. Beside exemption of tuition fee, some children are getting educational accessories support like scholarship, Tiffin, School Dress, Books, Copy/Pencils, and Hostel.
12. Of the total sample only 16.3% of 3 to 9 years children joined ECD/PPC. Similarly 25.7% had joined grade 1; 21.5% joined grade 2; 18.9% joined grade 3; 11.5% joined grade 4; and 6% joined grade 5.
13. Most of the out of school children came from socio-economically weak families and therefore suffered multiple deprivations.
14. Average time taken to reach a primary school was around 30 minutes in most of the sample communities. Also, in 6 communities (6.25% of surveyed communities), primary schools were beyond one hour distance. The government's policy is to build a school around half an hours walk from the child's home.
15. School support programs have demonstrated positive impact in mobilizing community members in decreasing the number of out of school children. Therefore, continuity of various school support programs is essential.
16. In the high altitude mountain regions, people shift their homes in winter and summer, which is one of the reasons for out of school children. In this context, government's support (scholarship, free textbook, tiffin and kerosene distribution) in the schools should be reviewed and revised accordingly. Area based need assessment of out of school children should be done. Need based support program would be more effective.
17. Most of the NGOs, DDC/VDC working in education sector support need based schooling program. It is seen that their support for educational accessories (dress, shoes, stationary, tiffin, bag, sports material, teaching material) has increased number of school going children.
18. Lack of child friendly teaching methods and unfriendly school environment were the major reasons for drop out.
19. On one hand, all school teachers are not trained and on the other, trained teachers do not get enough teaching material to make teaching and learning process effective.

Conclusion:

School support programs are successful in increasing the school enrolment rate to some extent however, there are still out of school children. The school support programs conducted by NGO's have shown positive results in the communities. Special need based programmes for specific area, are some characteristics of NGO activities. Government's school support program (scholarship, free textbook, tiffin and kerosene distribution) has also helped to increase school enrolment rate.

The reasons behind the out of school children are poor economic condition of the family, climate, unfavourable school environment and socio-cultural beliefs and rituals. Similarly, ECD/PPC is not in easy access for out of school children. Parents' ignorance to importance of education, disabilities of children, parents' unwillingness, involvement children in the household chores and unaware of ECD program are some major reasons of out of school children. Also, lack of child friendly and disabled friendly environment at school, school at long distance and punishment practices are also some reasons behind out of school and drop out.

Recommendations:

Child schooling cannot be fully successful without parents' initiation. Until and unless parents learn the value of education, it is difficult to motivate them towards their child's education. The following are some recommendations made based on the study findings:

Educate parents on value of education: It is very essential to educate parents on the value of education for their children. This can be done easily in collaboration with NGOs, local bodies, mobilizing *Aguwa* and promoting non-formal and ECD classes.

- Local NGOs have conducted different awareness programmes and income generation programmes working with different user groups and committees. NGO should be mobilized for the implementation of targeted programs on increase in child enrollment and aware parent and children.
- Mobilization of *Aguwa* will be effective to visit out of school children's home for counselling children and parents.
- Local bodies like health post, agriculture and livestock service centre and VDC can be used for educating parents.
- The promotion of adult literacy program in every community must go side by side. It is very essential to encourage adult, especially mothers to join in adult literacy program.
- ECD program is helpful for children as well as mother. It is known that 3 to 5 year old children are not supportive in household chores and therefore, if a mother sends her children to ECD, it becomes easy for her to do the housework. So, an ECD program in nearby community is essential.

School Environment: One of the reasons of school drop out of children is the learning environment at school. Most of the teachers do not use child friendly teaching methods. Large number of students per class is another problem. To improve school facilities, the government has to make minimum requirement criteria in physical facilities for a school. Only a building, rooms, desks, benches and chalkboards are not enough for teaching and learning process. Teaching material, trainings etc are also very essential for effective teaching and learning process. Most of the schools lack these facilities.

School based teacher training: The environment of school and training centre is completely different. The training centres are full of all kinds of teaching facilities. Teachers learn different teaching technique to teach school children. Because of the school environment, they cannot utilise what they have learnt from the training centre. Therefore, Teacher training must be school based.

Teachers training in clinical supervision approach can be the most effective way of training teachers. Teachers should be trained in using local resource material. They must be trained in handling children according to their psychology.

Since, teachers are the advocator of education; they must be able to convince parents about value of education to their children. For this, a teacher must have counselling skills to counsel parents and children as well.

Pocket based non-formal education program: In many places of Nepal, schools are not in easy access to people. There are schools beyond one hour of walking distance. In such a situation, it is difficult for 3 to 9 years age group children to go to school. Therefore, non-formal education program should be organized regularly in such areas until a school is built for them. Attempts should be made to make education an enjoyable experience rather than a difficult one. Children should take learning to be fun and not as a punishment.

Educational support: Government of Nepal provides free primary education. But parents still have to spend on educational accessories; school dress, bag, shoes, Tiffin, stationeries. Also, some public schools charge an exam fee and extra money for additional facilities. So, in Nepal, free education should include all educational accessories and other supports. Such support together with child friendly environment in school is very essential to bring *hard-core groups*, out of school children and the dropouts to school.

Parents, Teachers, District education officer, Local Government and other stakeholders practice various roles and responsibilities and attempts should be made to increase awareness among the stakeholders to implement their roles and responsibilities successfully.