

# Education in Nepal's Print Media

## 2015



शिक्षा नीति तथा अभ्यास केन्द्र 

Centre for Educational Policies and Practices  
(CEPP)

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**Teeka Bhattarai**  
**Sindrela Dewan**



शिक्षा नीति तथा अभ्यास केन्द्र  
Centre for Educational Policies and Practices  
(CEPP)

Tinkune, Kathmandu, Nepal  
Email: [info@schoolingnepal.org](mailto:info@schoolingnepal.org)  
[www.schoolingnepal.org](http://www.schoolingnepal.org)

# Table of Contents

Abbreviations	iv
Foreword	v
Executive Summary	vi
1. Introduction	1
2. Objectives	1
3. Method	1
4. Scope and Limitations	3
5. Results	3
5.1. General Trend	3
5.2. Topical Trends	5
5.2.1 Earthquake and Schools	5
5.2.2. Higher Education	7
5.2.3. Teachers	8
5.2.4. Politicization of Education	9
5.2.5. Teaching Quality	11
5.2.6. Examination and Results	12
5.2.7. Delivery of Textbooks	14

# Abbreviations

CEPP	Centre for Educational Policies and Practices
CIAA	Commission for the Investigation of the Abuse of Authority
DoE	Department of Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
HSEB	Higher Secondary Education Board
JEMC	Janak Education Materials Centre
MoE	Ministry of Education
SMC	School Management Committee
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SSDP	School Sector Development Plan
TCMD	Teachers Can Make a Difference
TLC	Temporary Learning Centre
UDMF	United Democratic Madheshi Forum
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

## Foreword

We are pleased to present this document as a part of civil monitoring of education that CEPP has been doing for last a couple of years, primarily voluntarily. Objective of this trial edition is to invite comments and explore collaboration to deepen and widen the cause of education. Although, we have been doing it and publishing electronically, this is for the first time we have a hard copy for your perusal.

English version cover some Gregorian year, such as 2015 in this case. We have and are working to bring out another one in Nepali covering Nepali financial year (July to July).

We take this opportunity to thank the investigators for their persistence to undertake this job. Also thanks are due to Dr Suresh Tamang for going through the document and checking its consistency and coherence.

Dr Krishna Paudel  
Chairperson  
CEPP

# Executive Summary

Education is considered as an inevitable part of modern day life and so is the media. The effort seeks to draw a sketch how the media portrayed the picture of education in Nepal in 2015 from the perspective of Centre for Educational Policies and Practices (CEPP)'s interest around public education. This annual report includes basic statistics on media coverage and highlights the major trends. The following key topics around education that were covered in the Nepali media this year:

- Earthquake and Schools
- Higher Education
- Teachers
- Politicization of Education
- Teaching Quality
- Examination and Results
- Delivery of Textbooks

The news from the following print media was scanned:  
Kantipur Daily  
Shikshak (Teacher) Monthly and the Himalayan Times Daily  
Himal Khabar Patrika (Nepali news magazine) Fortnightly

The last one is in English and the rest are in Nepali language. First, frequency and contents of the news related to education were tabulated and most frequently occurring topics were analysed.

In 2015, most of the matter covered in the media was related to earthquake and its impact on educational activities. In April then following in May, the massive quake

of 7.9 magnitude hit Nepal badly. A large number of public schools were badly damaged. Fourteen districts of Central Nepal were hard hit. Some of the teachers and students also lost their lives during the quakes and some are left disabled. School personnel were spared that it did not happen on a school day. After the quake, many news related to the construction of Temporary Learning Centre (TLC) for the schools, budget for damaged schools, psycho-social support and counselling were widely covered in the media.

There were both positive and negative news about the school teachers. Positive news such as some of the teacher's hard work that made a significant difference in school management and teaching learning was covered. Mass resignation of teachers because of their fake certificates was quite frequently taken up. A lot of news covered was about the teachers being engaged in the party politics and its effects on education particularly during Terai agitation.

One of the frequently covered areas on the news as in previous years was the examination and results. The final School Leaving Certificate (SLC) is considered as the most critical and widely talked matter. The Ministry of Education (MoE) is to adapt the "Letter Grading System" in the SLC examination from this year and it was naturally a matter of discussion in the media. Unavailability of textbooks seemed a regular matter of reporting in Nepali media. Most news covered that the textbooks were not available in schools by the time the new session began. A few stories were covered aimed at attracting students in higher education and how the Government of Nepal who has been trying to improve the quality education in Nepal.

## **1. Introduction**

Education is considered as an inevitable part of modern day life and so is the media. Today, these two have been regarded as the basic needs of every individual. Most countries recognize education as a right. People's right to information is increasingly being recognized. Media has emerged as the powerful medium to public communication. The media and education in the long run shape the thought process of the society. Therefore, CEPP seeks to assert education as an equalizer to the conditions of people and the media as a vehicle of carrying such a notion.

With these ethos in mind, the selected print media from 1st January to 31st December, 2015 were scanned for mostly covered educational subjects considered important concerning school education in Nepal.

## **2. Objectives**

It has at least three fold objectives:

- a) To understand the trend of issues and solutions taking place in the country so that
- b) points for interventions are better identified both by
  - i) policy makers and
  - ii) activists and the civil society for actions and,
- c) contribute to media persons reflecting in deepening the understanding of issues around educating the media person.

## **3. Method**

Stories in the media were scanned and categorized for two purposes;

- a) to understand what kind of stories are carried in the media, and
- b) to explain how media takes up the issues and how

the educational issues from political-economic perspective can be viewed.

Annex I shows the monthly distribution of the news stories published along the topics

The following media sources were chosen to collect stories about education in Nepal:

1. Kantipur Daily(Nepali)
2. Himal Khabar Patrika Fortnightly (Nepali News Magazine)
3. Shikshak (Teacher) Monthly (Nepali)
4. The Himalayan Times Daily (English)

Reasons for choosing the first two are their volume of circulation combined with the variety of publication houses. One English daily newspaper was chosen for the potentially different segment of audience it may be targeting and also does not belong to the above two houses. Shikshak was obviously the education magazine that has mainstreamed itself. For the purpose of the balance, no issues relating to teachers will be taken, i.e. only other educational issues taken up by the magazine are scanned.

Following is the basic category for scanning and analysing educational content in the media (presented irrespective of their relative frequency in the given year):

1. Teachers
2. Politicization of Education
3. Privatization of Education
4. Higher Education
5. Teaching Quality
6. Policies Issues
7. Vocational Education
8. Literacy
9. Infrastructure
10. Parents and School Management Committee (SMCs)

Highest scoring 7 categories from the above are analysed in a bit detail. However, each year, new emerging topics are clustered based on their frequency. They are dealt to the extent that they are more frequent than the category 'Others'. This year following have emerged as important subjects:

11. Earthquake and Schools
12. Examination and Results
13. Delivery of Textbooks

Last year corruption in education emerged as an important topic that almost made no place this year understandably due to agitations in Terai and the Earthquake.

#### **4. Scope and Limitations**

There are two major limitations: it has not been possible to analyse what proportion the education covers out of the total content of the media - specific to a publication or in general. It's beyond our capacity at the moment. Another is to weigh the significance of a particular story relative to its place. Obviously, weight age of the front-page story and a column in the inner pages makes a big different.

Nonetheless, the approach and methodology adapted gives a reasonable picture of the happenings in the education sector. It is well understood that a story for the media dies down once it has made to the headlines. Some issues such as corruption - it is not under the reporting radar or actually it has reduced. Definitely, analysis needs to be widened and deepened. This is an intentional prototype for the attention of the concerned.

## 5. Results

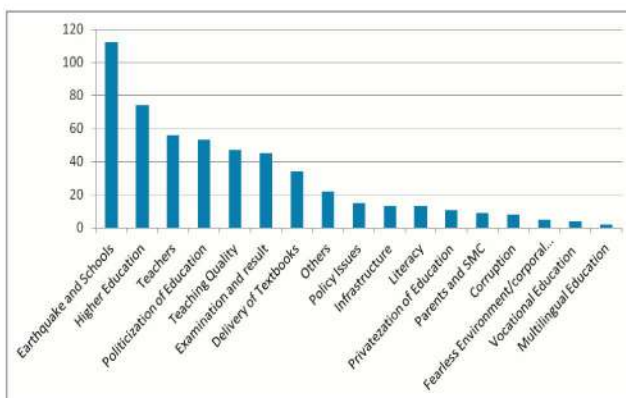
### 5.1. General Trend

Apparently, chart 1 shows that the most frequent occurring news in 2015 was the earthquake's impact in schools. Two massive earthquakes hit Central Nepal on April 25 and May 12. Over nine thousand people were killed and thousands lost their properties. Next, higher education, examination and results, teachers, delivery of textbooks, teaching quality and politicization of education got the most attention.

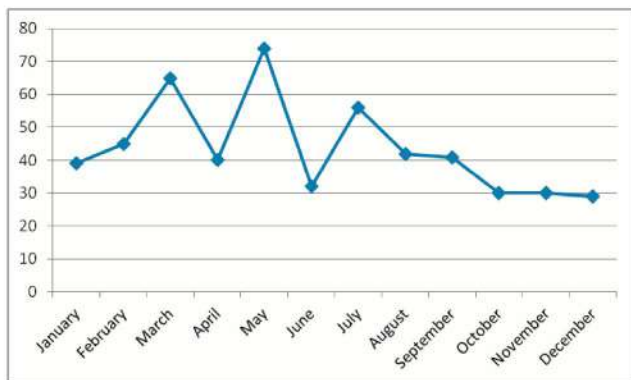
Other topics such as multilingual education, parents and SMCs, vocational education, corporal punishment and corruption got least attention in the news. In comparison with last year, SMCs and parents who have very important roles in the education, but the media has failed to give even minimal coverage this year.

Teachers mostly score high in publication. Exam re perennial results and delivery of text books is a perennial subject for the media to pick up. Quality of Teaching and Politicization of Education were new categories decided this year on .

**Chart 1: Frequency of news articles in media related to public education in 2015**



**Chart 2: Monthly distribution of the news in education in 2015**



The chart 2 shows that education makes the most news in the months of March, May and July. March normally, attracts high coverage of the news around education as the new academic session begins this month. High number of reports in May is due to the earthquake this year. Normally in July, due to the results of SLC and the hustle-bustle of selecting Schools College are captured by the news. But the news still covered about the earthquake and related issues. On average 44 news stories per month on education are carried out by the media.

## **5.2. Topical Trends**

The following section describes the details of the news media coverage under its major topic areas:

### **5.2.1 Earthquake and Schools**

A number of school buildings were collapsed due to the massive earthquakes of 25 April and May 12 following it. Consequently, the news covered by the media around education during this year was highest in May as already mentioned. As per the Department of Education

(DoE), a total of 18,147 classrooms were slightly damaged and 5,003 schools in 14 districts have been completely destroyed. Therefore, the MoE had allocated 300,000 to 75,000 rupees for the construction of temporary classrooms to each school. Luckily, only a few teachers and students were harmed by the quakes as the day that shook the nation was a Saturday - a public holiday. Still about 30 teachers and 230 students lost their lives during the quakes.

Because of the massive quakes, the government of Nepal decided to close all the schools for the safety of students and teachers. The schools were closed up to 30th of May (Jestha 16) - the media reported. It was also covered in the news that it was difficult to reopen schools in some places due to insufficient classrooms. The argument to open the schools as soon as possible was that students could get counselling services and they could also learn more about the quake and how to deal with it. The media also reported that people also used other types of buildings as schools.

Classes were held under tents and open spaces. Due to the lack of space, many students had to be squeezed in smaller classrooms for studies. Volunteers from different organizations as well as government supported to build TLCs. However, some schools faced difficulties with the damaged TLCs afterwards the media reported. It was covered by the media that technical teams of the government visited all the schools in different districts to assess the situation and safety of the physical infrastructure. Most of public school buildings were tagged with red stickers which meant it was dangerous to use them. The private schools on the other hand did not want the red stickers even if it was severely damaged. The media have also covered examples of such motives of few private

schools in Kathmandu who had been repairing the damages quickly before such an assessment was conducted. Government schools were reported happy for being red-flagged so that they can make one more excuse not to teach even when building was safe.

Students and teachers were given psychosocial support and counselling to recover from the trauma. The media covered a lot of news about the psychosocial counselling services that were provided to the students as well as the teachers in the quake affected areas. Several of these events were reported with relevant photographs in the various media.

Some private schools as well as the government provided stipends to help students who either lost their parents or properties due the earthquake. Students from most affected 14 districts got the priority for such assistance. It was covered by the media that some of the TLCs were also damaged. It's been already several months that MoE has announced the reconstruction of the schools would begin but it was still not yet implemented by the end of the year. The MoE decreed that the public school buildings would be constructed as approved design everywhere. The design requires that a primary school should have five classrooms; lower secondary would have eight classrooms; secondary level would have 12 classrooms; and higher secondary would have 16 classrooms. This also requires one each room for principal, computer lab, store, library, accounts, and teachers. Similarly, separate rooms for music, drawing, Early Childhood Development (ECD) and the toilet; and all rooms would be wheelchair friendly as the media quoted the Ministry.

### **5.2.2. Higher Education**

Second highest news covered in the media was

related to Higher Education this year. Although it is not our area of interest as our work is focused on the basic and primary level. However, we have analyzed and included the news coverage starting from grade 11 and up on the category. While, the recent endorsement of 8th amendment to the "Education Act 2028" has proposed a change of category of schools in two broader level such as basic and secondary. A lot of news was around the scholarships announced by the Higher Secondary Education Board (HSEB) especially for earthquake affected students. Likewise, many news was found related to admissions for higher education and other academic programmes by different colleges in the capital and major cities. Other few news were related to student affairs, including political issues on campus.

### **5.2.3. Teachers**

This year, mass resignation of school teachers topped the news in the media.. As the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA) began investigating the authenticity and validity of the academic certificates submitted by the teachers in different districts, the teachers started to resign from their jobs - the media reported. Among these resigning teachers, some were qualified for pension for serving for 20 years or more. Also among these resigning teachers included those who were suspected to keep the 'ghost teachers' to teach on their behalf. In Ilam district, it was difficult to continue classes due to the mass resignation of the teachers in several schools.

There were around 33,000 non-teaching staff working in more than 30,000 public schools around the country. Therefore, the MoE is preparing to provide salary and facilities to non-teaching staff in public schools. Many teachers from different schools faced financial crisis due

to the lack of timely disbursement of the funds. The salary of some teachers was managed through door-to-door donation campaign in Bajura as reported in the media. To bring about creativity and behavioural change, their teaching methods need to be more learner centric, action-oriented and focused more on encouraging students to make their own assessments and experiments. Lack of full attention to their jobs was also another subject covered by the media when it comes to teachers. The media described that a lot of teachers sending their own children to 'private schools', involvement of teachers in other occupations, engaging themselves in party-politics, were the main causes of teachers not paying attention in their classrooms. Some of the news reported that teacher's negligence and irregularity were the main problems among the public schools in Nepal.

Few positive news was covered by the media about teachers this year. On the occasion of 36 National Education Day, the MoE awarded 13 public schools for being the best schools in the country. Barudeshor Higher Secondary School from Eastern region, Tarud Secondary from Central, Kanti Higher Secondary from Western, Bhairawa Higher Secondary from Mid-Western and KailaliSamaig from Far-Western Region. Students, parents and teachers were the major actors for being the best schools especially teacher's hard work made these schools different from others. Mr. Deepak Shrestha from Beni was selected as an icon of "Teachers Can Make a Difference (TCMD) Campaign" for changing the face of a public school. According to him, the computer classes, parent's meeting and child-friendly rooms made parents to believe on them and could change the school. The teacher's hard work and refraining from local politics in the schools were the main causes that his school was selected as a model school - he was quoted saying. Media normally does not take up news TCMD.

#### **5.2.4. Politicization of Education**

Another frequently raised subject in the media was teachers' involvement in party-politics. They were mostly blamed for poor quality education due to their engagement in political parties, Their involvement in political activities than in the classrooms contributed significantly to the degradation of education in public schools. Teachers spend time in the district headquarters for attending meetings and program leaving the schools unattended. On the other, students were reported not paying attention to their studies because of irregularities and negligence from their teachers. Required content of several subjects were not completed in time.

Besides the teachers, many parents and SMC members were also found involved in local politics. Some news covered that it was difficult to make any major decisions due to different political ideologies represented in the SMCs.

This year, media covered news on Terai agitation and India's undeclared blockade of fuel at the border check points. The United Democratic Madheshi Forum (UDMF) that had been agitating in Terai for more than three months prevented millions of children going to schools. Future of over a million Nepali children was at risk when they were out of schools for an extended period. Media reported there was a risk that students might drop out schools altogether. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is reported that over 1.6 million children's studies was affected due to the agitation in Terai. Media also reported that 60 percent of educational institutions in Terai were closed and over 30 lakhs of students from Terai region were badly affected due to the strikes and the blockade. The schools were open for 140 days out of required 220 days during this year.

The fuel crisis also severely hit schools in the capital and major cities this year as reported in the media. Some of the private schools in Kathmandu valley were forced to close and prolong their holidays due to the acute shortage of petroleum products. To protest against the strikes and the blockade at the Indian border and check points, hundreds of students formed a human chain around the 27 kilometres stretched up to the Ring Road in the capital. Although, the government did not allow the students to join the human chain that was reported in the media.

#### **5.2.5. Teaching Quality**

Education is a basic human right and a public good. Every child has rights to get quality education which is today's need. This year DEO leaders vow to improve quality education in community schools. They decided that the public schools should be developing physical infrastructure using modern technology. They also recommended increasing enrolment in primary level and reducing holidays but discouraging engagement of students and teachers in political activities. So, teachers from public schools were trained to deliver best quality education but it is sad to say that they are not using the leaning in classrooms. Old teaching learning techniques may not be enough for improving quality education. The Prime Minister supported the campaign for improving education this year by making the teachers accountable and the students more committed. Another campaign called "Room to Read" also intensified their works in improving quality education by establishing libraries and providing books. According to Room to Read, children can learn faster through the brightly coloured books, and about 10 million children of Nepal will have such books by 2020.

School Sector Development Plan also starts this year as the media covered is aimed at providing quality education. The

National Centre for Educational Development has also started using the mass media to teach students of grade 10 in eight Terai districts. Main purpose of the programme is to help around 52,000 grade 10 students. Some other news covered was about establishing the library in villages and giving out laptops in remote village.

On the other hand, some barriers were reported like the Terai agitation during the year. Many Terai districts were badly impacted by the Tharuhat Madeshi agitation. As we know schools were claimed to be a peace area but due to the different political issues it was closed where it directly impacted the teaching learning activities. Many courses were not completed on time before the exams.

Although, the Government is trying to improve the quality education, some efforts have been put on making the curriculum creative. Similarly, 13 schools got national prizes this year as the best schools for quality education.

#### **5.2.6. Examination and Results**

One of the frequently covered areas in the news media in Nepal is about examinations. Perhaps, SLC is the single most matter of public attention. Overall results is not satisfactory for many years. Year after year the SLC result of public schools' has always been dismal. No students pass out SLC from many public or community schools. This means that the government investment in students in public schools has been simply a waste of the resources. Out of the total of 4. 5 thousands examinees, 33 percent students passed. This means that means the rest (66 in percent) failed to cross the so called "iron gate" from public schools. Results for technical and vocational streams were much better. The teachers are pointed for doing other jobs other than helping students to learn. They seldom use their skills in the classrooms although they have participated in

various teacher's training and capacity building activities. They generally did not produce and use the educational materials that could have facilitated teaching and learning and improve the score.

Shortage of subject teachers, late delivery of textbooks, the student's irregularity and dependence on guess paper and guides for exams had led everyone to believe that the outcomes of this year SLC result would be no better than previous years. Whereas, few students from remote areas were forced to prepare for the exam even without textbooks. It is still far to realize that other than the commitment of teachers, everything else is less important. Above all, you do not get results by pouring water on the top of the plant - one has to water plants on its roots. This aspect is often missed in the media too. They are mostly behind certain aspects of failure by bringing that out you cover the weaknesses of the system.

Violating the examination code of conduct by the students in SLC examination took some space in media as in previous years especially in Terai. Some of the students were expelled and disqualified instantly from sitting in the exams, while the others were expelled after they were found cheating in the exams. Some invigilators were also suspended for solving the questions on the white board of the exam hall for students during examination. Students in remote areas took their final examinations under the open sky as they did not have sufficient classrooms for the exam. These are other stories around exams carried by the media.

Another frequently covered news this year was about the recent change in the grading system in the SLC exams. The MoE has prepared to introduce the "Letter Grading System" in SLC examination from this year. The purpose behind introducing the new grading system in SLC exam was to

avoid declaring a student fail. As per the decision, there would be nine grades (A+, A, B+, C, C+, C, D, E, and N). Of course, it's more logical than the previously used numerical grading system. According to the MOE, the system will have six categories- 'A+' to the students scoring between 90-100 percent, 'A' to 80-89 percent, 'B' to 60-79 percent, 'C' to 40-59 percent, 'D' to 25-39 percent and 'E' to the students scoring 24 and below percent.

However, Nepal needs change in examination system not the scoring system alone. With more practical questions when each have to write from their perspective - the issue of copying can be addressed much easier. Unless creativity and analytical skills are at its premium - it does not matter so much whether they copy from a chit or reproduce out of their memory. Media and the mass has still to go into probing such issues.

Similarly, "Teach for Nepal's Fellowship" a movement to end the educational inequity that has started the campaign in some schools to improve education quality was also noticed by the media. This is said to have improved the educational quality and rate of success of students in SLC has increased.

#### **5.2.7. Delivery of Textbooks**

The textbooks and educational materials were regular objects of reporting in the media. It is a perennial problem and every year many students primarily in the remote districts have to attend classes without the required textbooks. The media kept on revealing that textbooks were not available on time in many public schools throughout the country. Many students had to wait for more than three months of the beginning of academic session to receive the textbooks in some districts. Some

remote parts of Humla, Jumla, Bajura and Mugu were among such districts. The Janak Education Materials Centre(JEMC)- a government subsidiary claimed that because of the massive quake and the changes of curriculum were to blame for late delivery of textbooks. In some of the districts, students were forced to attend the exam without even having a look of the textbooks. While, in Bajura, students used the photocopied textbooks due to the changes of content of the books from grade eight. It was extremely difficult for those students, the media have reported. In terms of distributing the textbooks on time, Nepal Mudran Udhyog Mahasangh- the umbrella organization of printers had demanded the government to provide them the rights to print all school textbooks because of the JEMC had failed to meet its targets. Owing to this, the government has permitted private firms to print textbooks from grade one to five from this year. While JEMC halted the printing of textbooks since June 28, 2015 due to shortage of printing paper, while private firms have been supplying textbooks on time, media covered.

Often boring and low quality textbooks are the only teaching material used in public schools. They often are the subject of excuses for not teaching in schools although government must provide textbooks as promised. The need for orientating teachers to curriculum over reading out textbooks is critical for the improvement of the quality that media has to go after in the coming days.

## Annex I: Monthly distribution of the news stories published with their topic areas

Month	Categories	Policy Issues	Educational Environment			Pedagogy			Political-Economy			Lifelong Learning			Years New			Total	Remarks	
			Infrastructure	Fearless Environment	Parents and SMC	Delivery of Textbooks	Multilingual Education	Teaching Quality	Corruption	Polarization of Education	Privatization of Education	Higher Education	Vocational Education	Literacy	Teachers	Examination and Results	Earthquake and Schools			Others
January		1				1			12	3	2	3	3	1	9	5		2	39	
February		2	1			9	1		7		3	5	5	2	11	1		3	45	
March		3	5	1	2				1	1	2		7	3	11	25		4	65	
April		1	1	1		4			4	3		11	5		7	1		2	40	
May						1							2	1			70		74	
June				2		1	10		1	1			1		3		11	2	32	
July		3	2			2	4	1	3		5	14	14	2		5	15		56	
August						2	2		9		5	14	14	2	3		3	1	42	
September			2	1		1			7		9	7	7	2	4	1	5	2	41	
October		1	1			3					12	5	5	2	3	1	2		30	
November		2									11	6	6		3	1	4	3	30	
December		2			1				3		4	5	5	2	2	5	2	3	29	
Total		15	13	5	9	34	2	47	8	53	11	74	4	13	56	45	112	22	523	
Average news printed/month																			43.58	

क्षक बन्न चिट

Private education regulation  
Under part 111

Providing quality  
education still a  
challenge Experts

National Education  
Commission in offering

Issues relating to  
education top  
complaints at CIAA

Teachers Service Commission  
demands a separate act

विद्यालय शिक्षाभा  
विदेशी हस्तक्षेप

DEO fails to manage  
school teachers on lien

शिक्षा क्षेत्रका  
द्विद्यार्थी घट

Education Bill  
to be approved in  
two months'

कनिहिलेसम्म  
टहरामा ?