

# Patterns of Education and Literacy In A Village Panchayat of Central Nepal

*Tod Ragsdale*

## Introduction

Some sixteen years ago, when an old adage that schools in Nepal are as scarce as snakes in Ireland was often taken as literal truth, Bernard Pignède made the somewhat remarkable discovery that in relatively isolated Dansing-Mohoriya village some eighty percent of the Gurung men from nineteen to eighty were literate. Eight percent of the women also could read and write. The latest national census in 1954 had shown the corresponding figures for the country as a whole to be eight percent and seven-tenths of a percent (Pignède. pp. 66-68). Even in 1971 they were respectively still only twenty-four percent and four percent.

The village school was then only two years old, and the young teacher who had come from Kathmandu to staff it had left it sitting empty after six months. The high rate of literacy was all the more impressive because Gurungs speak a Sino-Tibetan language. The men had been taught to read Nepali, which is Indo-Aryan, the official language of Nepal. Ironically, this was done while they served in "foreign" armies, those of the British and Indians<sup>1</sup>.

Pignède observed that literacy in Nepali seemed to follow a "downward filtration". Those who received no direct training, mostly women and children, seemed to pick up basic literacy skills as if by osmosis from the army veterans. Pignède observed children composing letters for the fun of it, as "play".

It would be good to speculate that Pignède's findings might apply throughout the Gurung community, at least from the standpoint of government efforts to promote general welfare through public education schemes or in the context of national integration. But generalization is impossible, for statistics are not collected on the basis of ethnicity, and detailed census figures at the village level are inaccessible.

To provide at least a partial check on Pignède's high evaluation of literacy among the Gurungs, I have outlined some of the main patterns of education and literacy in a village panchayat with a Gurung population some three times that of his. In order to do this I conducted, with the help of panchayat ward members, a census of my own at the beginning of 1974. The figures represented in this paper, being the results of an on-going research project, cannot be taken as final. But the over-all patterns seem quite clear, and hopefully information will come to light which will enable us to speculate on how general these patterns are--not only among Gurungs but among other ethnic groups with a high proportion of men in military service.

The Village Panchayat

The Village Panchayat lies approximately six miles north east of Pokhara town in Kaski District. As with most villages in Nepal, the only way to reach it is by foot, and this involves a climb of about two thousand feet and from three to five hours. According to my census the population is just over two thousand. Its inhabitants share the distinction of being "rural" with ninety-six percent of Nepal's population

The Village Panchayat is not a "village" but an arbitrary entity created for formal administrative and political purposes. It is made up of eleven main settlements, five of which are nuclear villages of thirty to fifty houses. The settlements are scattered along ridges over an area approximately four square miles and at heights between four and six thousand feet.

Gurungs make up about sixty-three percent of the population, between twelve and thirteen hundred people. They are divided socially into endogamous groups, "Four Caste" and "Sixteen Caste". The former are often hierarchically ranked Ghale, Gothane, Lama and Lamichane; but villagers generally say that whoever has the numerical superiority has the most power and prestige. Locally it is lamas. They are four hundred people comprising six *khalak*, or separate family lineages. Half of these belong to one family which has dominated the history and politics of the Village Panchayat for two hundred and fifty years since two brothers migrated to the area from western Kaski. They fought as far as the Punjab with the Shah armies and later served the Subbas of Ghanpokhara, a Gurung family which dominated the region's salt trade for many years (c.f. Messerschmidt).

In the past, Sixteen Caste Gurungs were socially inferior, and this was signalled by their exclusion from all but one of the nuclear villages, to the lower and more remote parts of the Panchayat. Opportunities arising from military service have tended to homogenize wealth and status among the Gurungs, however, and men of this group now live in homes indistinguishable from those of their Four Caste neighbors<sup>2</sup>. In the Village Panchayat the Sixteen Caste, with a population of two hundred, are a small minority among Gurungs, and without such access to outside military employment it is hard to see how they could have improved their position so dramatically.

The approximately seven hundred non-Gurungs are mostly low caste who play an important part in the economy of this rural Panchayat. They are field laborers for Gurung families whose sons are employed elsewhere, and they are artisans whose skilled workmanship ought to belie their low, untouchable status. There are as well Ghartis who, though slaves before 1926, are technically "clean" and may enter the homes of Gurungs for whom they work as servants and field workers. There are Brahmans, for the most part poor, and few Magars, Tamangs and Chetris make up the rest of the population.

There seems to be a great economic cleavage between Gurungs and others living in the Panchayat. Some idea of this may be had by comparing the percentage of the total population of each group to the percentage of productive land held by each<sup>3</sup>:

	<u>Population</u>	<u>Land Owned</u>
Gurung	63%	85%
Kami	18%	4%
Damai	8%	5%
Brahman	7%	4%
Sarki	2%	1%
Gharti	1%	.2%
Chetri	.5%	.04%
Magar	.5%	.2%
Tamang	.3%	-

'If the quality of the land were taken into account, the Gurungs, who own the rich ricelands near the rivers, would seem to be even wealthier in comparison to the others. If one considers army pensions, gold owned, loans let out, and investments in business and--as will be seen--in education, the Gurungs seem very wealthy indeed. This is not to say their wealth is legendary, but the average Gurung might well be called "a yeoman of some substance". (Ministry of Defence. p. 49).

### Education

Many traditional Gurung institutions functioned to keep wealth circulating through their community (c.f. Macfarlane. Chapter 18). One of these was the Rodighar, a kind of youth club for which the Gurungs have become well known. In a recent article Ellen Andors very neatly brought out a kind of distinction between this traditional institution and modern education. She summarized a meeting attended by headmen of several villages in Lamjung in 1951:

Young people, instead of attending school or paying attention to other serious matters, were spending their time in the rodi house and wasting money and resources in feasts and celebrations, rather than investing them into more profitable channels. At this time, ...the headman made it compulsory for all children to attend school and for adults to attend night school (Andors. pp. 19-20).

Education as a kind of "investment" is different then from the Rodighar which, though perhaps an important and valuable means of socialization in an essentially egalitarian society, tended to be "wasteful". In the Village Panchayat I am describing, though not in Lamjung, the Rodighar has for many years been defunct as an organized institution. The two primary schools built in 1956 and 1957 have, on the contrary, become an established part of life.

Their registration books for the last ten years show the names of virtually all the Gurung boys and half the Gurung girls, though actual attendance was rather less than this. Three years ago a middle school was built, which makes it now possible to study locally through the seventh grade. Thetar (Andors: p. 17) has replaced Rodighar for entertainment. Also called "Drama", it provides a show for others who then pay for their enjoyment. Fittingly, the rehearsals are often held in the schools<sup>4</sup>.

Based on my census, the following tables describe school attendance for different "generations". In the census only five individuals before dropping out attended school for less than the three years presently required for primary education. Overall, relatively few left school with less than the five years formerly required. What is described here is "solid" attendance which should have, by present definition, led to basic literacy. I include children presently attending in the lower grades, because the national census apparently includes them in its published literacy figures (Nepal, 1974. Table 7). Also, judging from past attendance, most of them will complete three grades<sup>5</sup>.

ATTENDED/ATTENDING SCHOOL<sup>6</sup>

6-19 Years

	Male			Female		
	Total	Schooled	Percent	Total	Schooled	Percent
Gurungs	198	139	70%	184	53	29%
Non-Gurungs	116	42	36%	121	1	1%
(Kami)	(46)	(12)	(26%)	(51)	(-)	(-)
(Damai)	(29)	(13)	(45%)	(35)	(1)	(3%)
(Brahman)	(27)	(13)	(48%)	(22)	(-)	(-)
(Gharti)	(6)	(2)	(33%)	(4)	(-)	(-)
(Sarki)	(4)	(1)	(25%)	(5)	(-)	(-)
(Magar)	(1)	(1)	(100%)	(2)	(-)	(-)
(Others)	(3)	(-)	(-)	(2)	(-)	(-)
Total	314	181	58%	305	54	17%

ATTENDED/ATTENDING SCHOOL<sup>6</sup>

29-30 Years

	Male			Female		
	Total	Schooled	Percent	Total	Schooled	Percent
Gurungs	195	105	54%	180	22	12%
Non-Gurungs	105	1	1%	102	-	-
(Brahman)	(19)	(1)	(5%)	(21)	(-)	(-)
(Others)	(86)	(-)	(-)	(81)	(-)	(-)
Total	300	106	35%	282	22	8%

## 40 Years Plus

	Male			Female		
	Total	Schooled	Percent	Total	Schooled	Percent
Gurungs	184	1	.5%	181	-	-
Non-Gurungs	68	-	-	78	-	-
Total	252	1	.4%	259	-	-

Summarizing the above, half of the Gurung children have attended school. About a third of the young adults have, and only one man over forty has.

Eighteen percent of the non-Gurung children (6-19 years) had formal education, and only one young man (20-39 years) has been to school.

For the Village Panchayat as a whole, formal education is virtually unknown for those over forty. Twenty-two percent of all younger adults and thirty-eight percent of the six to nineteen year olds have been to school.

Only Gurungs have educated their daughters, almost thirty percent of the youngest generation (6-19 years) and twelve percent of the next oldest (20-39 years). The lone exception among non-Gurungs is a Damai girl who recently transferred to the third grade of one of the village primary schools. She had attended school in India where her father was serving in the military.

The group with the highest percentage of its members having education is Gurung males six to nineteen. Fully seventy percent are in school now or have had three years or more schooling. Next highest, with fifty percent, are young adult Gurung males (20-39 years).

If education figures were expressed as land holding has been, Gurungs, who are sixty-three percent of the total population, are ninety percent of the schooled population. This still holds true if one looks at only the youngest generation (6-19 years); despite the many more non-Gurungs attending school nowadays, Gurungs are eighty-two percent of the schooled though only sixty-two percent of the age cohort.

As I am only trying to separate the component of basic literacy, which is directly attributable to formal education, I have not here separated numbers of children currently attending school from the total cohort. These statistics are at the end of this article in brief appendices. Nor have I discussed the levels of education obtained by villagers. But it is worth noting that there is as yet no one from the Panchayat with a Bachelor's degree.

There are six IA degrees equivalent to two years of college, all belonging to members of the Lama family mentioned earlier.

There are thirteen high school degrees, SLCs<sup>8</sup>. Almost all of these are male Gurungs in their twenties and thirties. Only a few are Gurung women, of the same age group. Many more Gurungs have studied through secondary school without obtaining degrees. All have had to go outside the Village Panchayat for higher secondary education, some eleven percent of the youngest generation having attended schools in Pokhara, India or, in a few cases, Kathmandu. Two Brahmans have studied as far as the secondary level without obtaining degrees, and none of the lower castes have gone beyond five years of primary education.

### Literacy

The following tables illustrate the relationship between basic literacy achieved through formal education, through military education, and through other means. Here too I have broken the information into different "generations":

#### BASIC LITERACY

##### 6-19 Years

	Male			Female		
	Total	Literate	Percent	Total	Literate	Percent
<u>Gurung</u>						
Schooled		(139)			(53)	
Other		(4)			(-)	
Total	198	143	72%	184	53	29%
<u>Non-Gurung</u>						
Schooled		(42)			(1)	
Other		(1)			(-)	
Total	116	43	18%	121	1	1%
TOTAL	314	186	59%	305	54	17%

##### 20-39 Years

	Male			Female		
	Total	Literate	Percent	Total	Literate	Percent
<u>Gurung</u>						
Schooled		(105)			(22)	
Army		(45)			(-)	
Other		(15)			(9)	
Total	195	165	85%	180	31	17%
<u>Non-Gurung</u>						
Schooled		(1)			(-)	(-)
Army		(7)			(-)	(-)
Other		(7)			(-)	(-)
Total	105	15	14%	102	-	-
TOTAL	300	180	60%	282	31	11%

## 40 Years Plus

	Male			Female		
	Total	Literate	Percent	Total	Literate	Percent
<u>Gurung</u>						
Schooled		(1)			(-)	
Army		(60)			(-)	
Other		(37)			(3)	
Total	184	98	52%	181	3	2%
<u>Non-Gurung</u>						
Schooled		(-)			(-)	
Army		(1)			(-)	
Other		(4)			(-)	
Total	68	5	7%	78	-	-
TOTAL	252	100	40%	259	3	1%

## Summary

	Male			Female		
	Total	Literate	Percent	Total	Literate	Percent
Gurung	577	403	70%	545	87	16%
Non-Gurung	289	64	22%	301	1	.3%
<u>Total</u>	866	466	54%	846	88	10%

From figures given so far it can be deduced that whereas only twenty-one percent of all villagers over six years of age have had formal education, thirty-two percent are literate<sup>9</sup>. And though eleven percent of non-Gurungs are literate, only seven percent have schooling. Among Gurungs themselves the comparable figures are twenty-nine percent with schooling and forty-four percent literate. That is to say, fifteen percent of all Gurungs over six have learned to read and write without attending school.

Closer examination shows that military service is responsible for most of the literacy not attributable to schools. Altogether one hundred and five Gurung men and seven non-Gurung men appear to have become literate due to service in the military. The educational slack which the army takes up is great enough so that while more Gurung children are attending school than ever before, the literacy rate for the middle generation of Gurung men (age 20-39) is actually greater, a total of eighty-five percent.

In the Village Panchayat about half of all Gurung men over twenty have at some time or other entered the military. Obligatory for all these men would have been approximately three months of class-work termed "Third Class" military education. This is supposed to lead to basic literacy in Roman script in the British army and in the Indian and Nepalese armies to literacy in the Nagary script as well<sup>10</sup>. Simple math, some geography and history, and a bit of preliminary English or Hindi make up the rest the coursework.

Perhaps half of the men repeat these subjects at a higher level, taking the "Second Class" education required for Lance-Naiks; and a third might reach the "First Class" level qualifying them for advancement to a junior commission, though only a few of those educated this far would achieve this rank.

Not all men who have served in the army retain literacy; or so it would appear from the census. Thirty-five men were listed as illiterate despite military service. This may be due to oversight when collecting the data, and further questioning may determine if and why this is so.

Fifty men entered upon military life after receiving schooling, and according to informants education is becoming a much greater factor in recruitment<sup>11</sup>. Just how recent such a development may be is seen in the following chart, which shows how many Gurungs of different ten year age cohorts have entered into an army career with or without prior formal education:

EDUCATION UPON ENTERING MILITARY

	Without Education	With Education
20-29 Years	18	40
30-39 Years	42	9
40-49 Years	42	1
50-59 Years	26	-
60 + Years	22	-
<u>Total</u>	140	50

Men now in their fifties were the honest and cheerful but "thick" Gorkhas popularized by John Masters, a former British officer who served during the Second World War with a battalion of Magars and Gurungs and later wrote about his experiences. Stories abound about the backwards hill peasant, "slow at book-learning", complaining about a headache after being kicked in the head by a mule which went lame afterwards, or about the soldier who was able to escape through the Burma jungles using a map of London as his guide, because "He does not think, cogitate--he will tell you shyly that he is not clever enough for that--but he bends facts, arguments, and logic to fit what he somehow knows is right" (Masters. pp. 71-75).

As Masters admits, such large generalizations were "vague and patronizing", but the humor in them did reflect a real situation in that Nepali recruits were virtually without education, and from a country which had for some time been cut off from main events of the outside world. In fact it was the hope and intention of the Rana government that Gorkhas serving abroad would remain without broader sophistication or learning, for they feared that "the veterans might bring modern ideas into their villages" (Joshi and Rose. p. 52). Meeting veterans today one may doubt whether they



were ever really so "simple", but after talking with young men who have qualified for Sandhurst or have studied in colleges in Nepal or India before entering the military one cannot but feel that such stereotypes were fundamentally unfair then and totally untrue now.

Aside from formal schooling or military education there were in the Village Panchayat diverse roads to literacy. Fifty-three Gurung men and twelve women are listed as literate without any apparent formal training.

Among the non-Gurung population, twelve adult men achieved literacy by means other than schooling or the military. Half of these are Brahmans and probably received their education at a pathshala<sup>12</sup>. None of the women are literate.

Two Gurung men studied in Buddhist gompas (monasteries) in Thak Khola, passing exams there which qualified them to combat witches and demons or to guide the spirit of a dead person through the illusions and snares which first meet him in the afterworld<sup>13</sup>. Although their studies were conducted in Tibetan, both men learned to read and write Nepali as well.

One middle aged Gurung woman who married into the dominant Lama family told me that she learned when she was a girl through paying attention to classes given her brothers by a Brahman brought from Kusma. One village headman attended a pathshala in a nearby village sometime during the first decade of this century. There, "The Brahmans learned raksas and Gurungs learned tamsuk", which is to say that the Brahman children were trained to eventually read the ancient Vedas in Sanskrit while Gurung youth learned the practical knowledge they would need to write such things as IOUs.

In the 1940's a pathshala was organized on the site of one of the present primary schools, and a Newar teacher was brought from Pokhara to teach during the winter months. Classes were in a rickety hut, and when the roof blew off the middle school recently one of the villagers was heard joking, "Now we've got our pathshala back".

The school was not really a pathshala. It would better be described as a "vernacular school". Such schools taught not in Sanskrit but wholly in Nepali and concentrated on quite basic learning. The locally organized vernacular schools were not counted in the data collected in 1954 by the National Education Planning Commission, because the nature of their program was "nebulous and varied" (Wood. p. 31). But by 1959 they probably still accounted for thirty percent of the primary schools in Nepal, and it has been suggested that they sowed the seeds for "a type of school that provided general literacy and common learning" (Ibid). The present Secretary of the Village Panchayat Committee, a man who also taught in the primary school, is a product of the vernacular school.

In the early fifties five families cooperated to bring a young Sherpa from Nainital in India to teach their children. The Gurung headmaster of one of the primary schools attended classes given by a middle aged Newar from Darjeeling. These were in his mother's village (her Maita) and were similarly sponsored by several families there<sup>14</sup>. It must have been difficult to tell much difference between this tutoring on a class basis and the vernacular school, but my impression is that such private tutors were for the relatively well off only, whereas this was not the case with the school organized by the community. At any rate, those who had private tuition in their homes invariably were able to afford formal education outside the village as well. Probably none, therefore, show up in my data as having gained their literacy without benefit of modern schooling.

As Pignede suggested, some learned to read and write through very casual contacts with returned veterans or other literate people. I know of one instance when not long ago a wealthy young Gurung who had his own education with one of the private tutors mentioned, and then at St. Xavier's in Kathmandu, spent long monsoon evenings teaching the boy who keeps his water buffalo. The boy, a non-Gurung who was then spending his days in field work, requested this so that he might better supplement his family's income by searching for work in India. The young Gurung's own father had had, when he was alive, a reputation for teaching as a kind of social obligation. Villagers remember several others who were also generous with their time and knowledge but never charged fees.

Lastly, in the early sixties and in 1971 campaigns were organized against adult illiteracy in the Panchayat. The earlier was under the local branch of the Nepal Woman's Organization and may have been a result of initial enthusiasm for the new panchayat system. The recent one received its impetus from the initiation of the New Education Plan, when the local schools were given slates, chalk, a lantern, adult literacy books, and one hundred rupees to conduct the campaign.

Three teachers divided the Village Panchayat among themselves in 1971 and conducted classes for three to four months at separate locations. The "night schools" were attended almost entirely by Gurung women, perhaps some ninety to one hundred in all. The official books were more civics texts than tools for achieving basic literacy, and one of the teachers found it more effective to teach simple math and Nepali from the inexpensive texts used in pre-school shishu class (see Appendix A and footnote No. 12).

Many who participated in these campaigns are not included in my data, because they are women who are married out of the Village Panchayat and thus were not included in the census (even when they spent much time at their maitas). It may also be that others were simply overlooked by the Gurung men who were responsible for obtaining and verifying the census information. More follow-up on the

results of the literacy campaigns may turn up more than the few Gurung women I have been able to account for. It is certain that throughout Kaski District their response to the campaign was strong, and in many villages the organization of these temporary schools was facilitated by being based on Rodhighars already in existence.

Reasons given by male informants for women wanting to become literate were varied: so that women would not have to share private matters written to them by their husbands serving abroad; so that different denominations of the new currency notes-- so similar looking--could be distinguished and ignorant women would no longer be cheated by shopkeepers.

In a Gurung village elsewhere in the district I observed several non-Gurung children who worked in Gurung households attending night class; but I am fairly certain that in this Village Panchayat no adult non-Gurungs attended any of the literacy classes, though they were mostly illiterate and their women were entirely illiterate.

Here it might be good to review some results of a study done a few years ago in a village panchayat in Kathmandu Valley. The authors found that whereas only twelve percent of the school age children were attending that panchayat's two primary schools, thirty-five percent of the adult population was literate. Among males the rate was sixty percent. It was found that about two-thirds of the literate men and over one-third of the literate women had had no formal schooling at all. They had "simply learned 'to read a letter and write a reply' as they grew up" (Shrestha and Choudhari. p. 30). I hope the above has explained some of the ways this might have happened.

From a sample population of over twelve hundred Gurungs living in one Village Panchayat I have found what would seem for Nepal a rather high rate of literacy, seventy percent among men over six years of age and sixteen percent among women. While the literacy rate is high, one could not say that the population is highly educated in the sense that they have many graduates. The very first generation to receive formal education at all is in its mid twenties and early thirties. The very first man to earn a high school diploma is thirty-nine, the second is thirty-five.

Village Panchayat Gurungs who have studied at the secondary level besides entering the military, have sought work outside the villages. A recent study in Pokhara, for instance, found that the latest wave of immigrants to that town is largely made up of highly literate Gurungs<sup>15</sup>. Some educated youth have advanced to middle level positions in the police, others teach in urban high schools, a few have found jobs in the civil service or gone into various business. Their fathers, or mother's fathers, are often retired military officers who built town houses in Pokhara and began to

invest in business there. The overall pattern seems to be merely a diversification of labor emmigration from the villages that once went solely to the military. While in the past ex-servicemen generally returned to live in the villages, new economic possibilities in rapidly growing Pokhara (due to better transportation and a successful malaria irradiation campaign) are attracting many of these men and their educated sons and daughters.

Although the Village Panchayat's high literacy might be explained by its relative closeness to Pokhara, there are reasons why one might speculate that similar rates are found throughout the community. For one thing, although they are a widely scattered agricultural and pastoral people, Gurungs tend to live in close-knit, nuclear villages. This on the one hand would make it easier for their children to attend near by schools. On the other, it would have likely made them exceptions to the kind of monopoly by neighboring "Hindus" which has been described (Hitchcock. Lionel Caplan) as part of the experience of Magars and Limbus, "tribes" whose housing patterns are spread-out<sup>16</sup>.

Pignède noted that Gurung villages, perched high on ridges, were most certainly wealthier than those of Brahmans, Chetris, and Newars lower down. He attributed this to their financial hard headedness, to their quickness in recalling loans and in paying debts (Pignède. p. 139). Certainly their internal closeness must have helped them in dealing with outsiders and in better consolidating the wealth they earned abroad, into land for instance and into "investment" in education.

It is noteworthy what the village Pignède studied in 1958 was more remote than the Village Panchayat which I have represented here--both in terms of time from the present and in distance from any urban center. But the rate of literacy there was actually higher among Gurung men (although not among women) than it is presently in the Village Panchayat I am studying. The British army tended to be particular about areas from which it took recruits, and it seems that men from the more remote and highland regions were especially preferred--Poons among Magars and inhabitants of places like Gandrung among Gurungs (Ministry of Defence. pp. 137-140). It would not perhaps be very surprising if my findings about literacy among Gurungs could be matched several days walk from Pokhara, and even farther afield. A worthwhile subject for research may well be the social and cultural effects such widespread literacy has had on the more than one hundred and fifty thousand Gurungs who live in Nepal.

FOOTNOTES

1. The Nepal Army began providing similar "military education" only in the 1950's after the Ranas were overthrown. Gurungs serve mostly in the Kali Bahadur battalion and, to a lesser extent, in the Purano Gorakh, which is mostly Magar (Ministry of Defense. Appendix C).
2. Prosperous Gurungs live in two or three storied white-washed homes with ornately carved wooded windows and grey slate roofs. From a distance Gurung villages are easily distinguishable from those of other castes, whose houses are usually an earthy reddish orange or brown. Lower caste homes often cluster very close to Gurung villages but are distinct from even very far.
3. The land ownership percentages are based on a survey done in 1961, found in the Land Reform Office in Pokhara.
4. This is a generalization which in fact does not apply to the Village Panchayat as a whole. The primary schools are close to the two largest of the nuclear villages, and only their young people find it feasible to attend the rehearsals, which are held at night. Houses in the remote parts of the Panchayat are from half an hour to forty-five minutes walk along sometimes difficult paths. The middle school, by far the largest building in the Panchayat, is located towards the geographical center, but is close to none of the larger settlements.
5. Gunnar Myrdal has correctly pointed out that enrollment in primary schools in South Asia is different from actual attendance: "A large number of the children registered as enrolled, do not attend school regularly; even if they never achieve more than a modicum of literacy and are destined to lapse into total or almost total illiteracy" (Myrdal. p. 1724). My prediction that those presently attending the lower grades will finish three years is based not on enrollment registers but on quite a number of years of daily attendance records which I have collected.
6. All percentages given, above one percent, are rounded off upwards.
7. Women married outside the Village Panchayat were not included in the census I conducted. While school records will supplement information obtained in the census, I have not yet examined them with regard to women educated in the Village Panchayat but officially residing elsewhere. Education and literacy figures for women over eighteen are complicated by the fact that half or more of the literate women listed in the census have married into the Village Panchayat.

8. My impression is that in terms of overall literacy, Brahmans and Newars may rank close to Gurungs in Pokhara (See Shrestha and Gurung. p. 48). But these two groups appear to have directed their energies into formal education for a longer time. In a village panchayat closer to Pokhara than the one I am studying there are a dozen or more graduates--some with masters degrees--and many more intermediates and School Leaving Certificates among its large Brahman population. Newars are traditionally urban and duplicate this. Substantial numbers of Gurungs pursuing higher education appears to be a quite recent phenomenon.
9. My definition of literacy was simply the ability to read a letter and write a reply. To be more precise was difficult as actual testing was not feasible. This approximates definitions given by Gurung informants who helped conduct the village census, and my own informal observations of six months gave me no reason to doubt the census results. If anything, some women or non-Gurung literates may have been overlooked. Literacy figures for Batulechaur Village Panchayat, also in Kaski District, (H.B. Gurung) approximate my own: Total 33%, Male 55%, Female 9.8%.
10. Of all Village Panchayat Gurungs with military experience, sixty-eight percent were or are in the Indian Army, twenty-seven percent in the British and five percent in the Nepal Army.
11. My findings tend to contradict those of Macfarlane, who studied a Gurung village not far from the site of my research. He states: "Western-style education gives no advantage in village cultivation or recruitment to the army" (Macfarlane. p. 367). Even as regards village cultivation, the statement is not necessarily accurate; it was one of the first generation to be educated "Western-style" who provided facilities for the lengthy stay of the agricultural extension worker (JTA), and it was he who was first in line for trying new techniques or seeds in his own fields.
12. These largely brahmanical schools received government support in Kaski from the beginning of this century. They are described thusly: "The curriculum emphasizes the Sanskrit language. Most of the time is devoted to reading and memorizing early religious manuscripts. Nepali and some arithmetic are taught, and recently some history has been introduced. The classes are not rigidly graded; the pupil is expected to progress through the Sanskrit secondary school and college if he is able" (Upraity. p. 22). Gurungs when they attended these same schools were not expected to progress beyond Nepali and simple math. Until October 1951 lower castes were not allowed to attend them at all (Joshi and Rose. p. 160) An inexpensive booklet (Thulo Varnamala published in Benares; and copies by, among others, Ratna Pustak Bhandar in Kathmandu)

was used for many years in the pathshalas and is still taught in village pre-school shishu classes. It gives simple spelling and math and provides models for business letters and IOUs (tamsuk). An English section was usually skipped over but short prayers in Sanskrit to Ganesh and Saraswati were memorized by all students. A special section of mathematics was provided for those Brahman boys who would one day write horoscopes as a profession.

13. Gunnar Myrdal wrote, "Buddhism...represented the only large-scale attempt in ancient South Asia to organize popular education, both for adults, through the teachings of the wandering monks, and, more particularly, for male children in the monastery para-schools", but he continues, "Buddhism lost almost all of its reformist zeal when it adjusted to stagnant peasant societies. In its more popular forms it even came to encompass a large amount of animis and superstition" (Myrdal. p. 1629). It must be admitted that Buddhism's effect on education of Gurungs in the Village Panchayat has been slight. This is despite the stay for five years of a Rimpoche, a Tibetan monk of high status whose visitors came regularly from as far away as Kathmandu. At a time when he was unsuccessfully soliciting funds to build a gompa in the Village Panchayat the villagers were raising twenty thousand rupees to build a middle school. Part of the reason for Buddhism's lack of impact in formal education may lie in the Gurung's extensive military service which seems to have had a mixed "sanskritization" and "modernization" effect. Still, one Gurung told me, "We may be Hindus during our lives, but at death we are Buddhists". By this he meant that although many Hindu customs have penetrated the community (observing Dasain among the most important) the Arghun ceremony which guides the deceased through Bardo, the immediate afterworld, derives from Tibetan Buddhism (heavily influenced by local shamanism). It is conceivable that Buddhism could revive and once again exert an educational influence in the community.
14. There is a high occurrence among Gurungs of children attending school at their mother's parents' village. This is especially true if a middle school or some other educational advantage is there. Many who attend school in Pokhara stay in homes of close relatives, most often of their mother's father.
15. Literacy figures for sample populations of some of Pokhara's caste/ethnic groups are given in Shrestha and Gurung (p. 48):

	Total	Male	Female
Brahman	45.1%	81.6%	12.8%
Chetri	51.3%	78.0%	18.9%
Newar	46.8%	76.9%	23.9%
Gurung	49.3%	80.2%	20.9%
Damai	24.8%	42.6%	10.4%
Sarki	10.3%	22.6%	-

These figures are for those over sixteen years of age; comparable figures for the Village Panchayat are:

	Total	Male	Female
Gurung	40%	70%	9%
Non-Gurung	5%	10%	-

16. Hitchcock (p. 105): "As a result of their religious, educational, and political advantages, Brahmans, in contrast to Magars, have been able to secure more and choicer land".

Caplan, Lionel (p.10): "The Hindus are now economically, politically and educationally the tribesmen's superiors. In the south Asian context the tribes are regarded as anonymous with the backward, the exploited and the dispossessed; the Hindus are those who exploit and dispossess them".

Both Hitchcock and Caplan describe ways in which Magars and Limbus have used education to improve their position, the former author going so far as to call education "the major activity" of Magar advance (Hitchcock, p. 109). Actually these "tribes", or ethnic groups of Tibeto-Burman antecedents, are probably in a much better position vis-a-vis "Hindus" than the invisible minority of low caste artisans who are subsumed under "Nepali Speakers" in the national census. In the Village Panchayat the latter number five hundred, and according to Macfarlane's findings in a nearby village, these people--if population pressures on the land continue to mount as they have in the past--could easily become a "landless proletariat". Already they are forced to buy food, as old Jajmani relationships are rapidly being replaced by the cash-nexus, and they are caught between having too little land of their own and growing inflation. Not long ago an official explained to me that one reason no village metal workers (kamis) were in a program for training mistri (mechanics, craftsmen) for local small scale government projects was, "They are illiterate and wouldn't understand our written instruction". Yet such a training program might have been designed to impart literacy as well as tap a reservoir of skilled manpower a developing country such as Nepal ought not ignore (see Myrdal, Chapter 32, for a discussion of widespread literacy as necessary precondition for balanced development). The kind of sophistication that could have been displayed is that which has village "witch doctors" being trained to raise the level of health in rural areas that could not possibly be served by the country's three hundred or so doctors (see The Rising Nepal, June 27, 1974, p. 3). A. Patricia Caplan's study of Brahmans and low caste artisans in western Nepal ended with a recommendation that, "...the wider society has to provide...mechanisms which give members of lower castes some opportunity for mobility outside the village" (A. Caplan, p. 96).



APPENDIX A

In the Village Panchayat many children spend a first year in school in the "Shishu" class learning the alphabet and how to count. This class is not recognized in the new Education Plan, which assumes that the first year of school will be in the first grade. I have included the shishu class in the table below, because in the school rools it is not distinguished from class one. Also many parents wait until their children are "old enough" to make the walk to school over paths which are slippery and dangerous when wet. For these and perhaps other reasons children attending any particular class tend to be older than the official age for the class. In the table given here, asterisks marks the official age a student should be in each class, and "I" indicates the age of each student presently attending school at the level.

AGES AND CLASS LEVEL OF CHILDREN PRESENTLY ATTENDING

THE VILLAGE PANCHAYAT'S SCHOOLS

Primary Level Classes 1-3

Middle Level Classes 4-7

Students

Age	Class 1	Class 2	Class 3	Class 4	Class 5	Class 6	Class 7
5	IIII	I					
6	*IIIIIIII	I	I				
7	IIIIII	*II					
8	IIIIIIIIII	III	*	I	I		
9	IIII	IIIIIIII		*III			
10	IIII	IIIIIIII	IIIIIIII	I	*		
11	I	I	IIIIII	IIIIII		*	
12	II	IIII	IIIIII	IIIIIIII	IIIIIIIIII	I	*
13		I	II	I	IIII	I	II
14			I	I		II	II
15				II	II	I	I
16				I		I	II
17		I			I	I	I

APPENDIX B

The following table shows the number of Village Panchayat children of official school going age (6-15 years) who are attending school (Classes 1-10). I have given only those who are of official school going age for the sake of comparison with statistics available for Pokhara (Shrestha and Gurung, p. 61). The latter is in the second table below. Actually there are eight children over fifteen years of age presently attending school in the Village Panchayat and sixteen more attending school outside, mostly in Pokhara. All twenty-four are Gurung.

NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES BY CASTE ETHNIC GROUP  
OF THOSE PRESENTLY ATTENDING SCHOOL. AGES 6-15 YEARS

	<u>Male</u>			<u>Female</u>		
	Number	At School	Percent	Number	At School	Percent
Gurungs*	147	82	56%	139	45	32%
Non-Gurungs	92	17	19%	102	1	1%
Kami	51	8	22%	44	-	-
Damai	24	3	12%	30	1	3%
Brahman	22	5	23%	18	-	-
Gharti	4	1	25%	4	-	-
Sarki	3	-	-	3	-	-
Chetri	1	-	-	1	-	-
Magar	1	-	-	1	-	-
Tamang	-	-	-	-	-	-
Total	239	99	42%	241	46	19%

\* Seven Gurung boys and six girls attend school outside the Village Panchayat.

PERCENT OF SCHOOL AGE (6-15 YEARS) CHILDREN ATTENDING  
SCHOOL IN VILLAGE PANCHAYAT AND IN POKHARA  
(SELECTED CASTE/ETHNIC GROUPS)

	<u>Total</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
<u>Gurung</u>			
(Village Panchayat)	48%	56%	32%
(Pokhara)	71%	80%	63%
<u>Brahman</u>			
(Village Panchayat)	13%	23%	-
(Pokhara)	53%	78%	27%
<u>Damai</u>			
(Village Panchayat)	6%	12%	-
(Pokhara)	25%	30%	17%

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