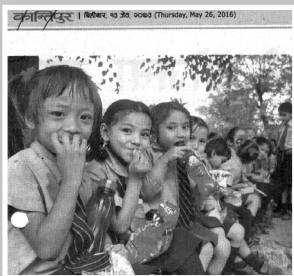




# Education in Nepal's Print Media 2016





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**Teeka Bhattarai  
Shail Shrestha**

**Centre for Educational Policies and Practices**

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## Abbreviations

CEPP	:	Center for Educational Policies and Practices
HSEB	:	Higher Secondary Education Board
HW	:	Himal Weekly
KD	:	Kantipur Daily
PABSON	:	Private and Boarding Schools' Organization Nepal
SLC	:	School Leaving Certificate
SM	:	Shikshak (Teacher) Monthly
SMC	:	School Management Committee
THTD	:	The Himalayan Times Daily
TLC	:	Temporary Learning Center

# 1. Introduction

In democracy where people's elect have the future of the nation in hand, being informed becomes the most important purpose of the citizen, not only for election, but for everyday life decision. While education and media are the largest institutions for the purpose of knowledge dissemination and creation, it relies in the directives of general public through media which drive the workings of the academic institutions and the government policies. Thus, for the purpose of understanding how society looks into education as a sector, it is very important to gain a perspective on how media is disseminating the issues relating to education sector, for it largely determines and frames the general understanding of the public. It should also help in identifying gaps and formulating strategies to effectively create needed discourses in different spheres of the society, and social institutions.

With this understanding, CEPP has been investing in enumerating and analyzing media trends on educational sector since 2011. For two years, the reports were also produced in Nepali financial year (roughly starting in mid-July) so that it can also be aligned with annual government budget. It will be done based on the need and usefulness of such a document in future. This report covers selected dailies and magazines for 2016. All articles on education have been scanned; enumerated and quantitative as well as qualitative observations have been made.

## 1.1. Objectives

The purpose of this report is:

- a. To document the events in the field of education as perceived by the media.
- b. To identify the trends on approaches the media takes in the coverage of issues relating to public education.
- c. To identify gaps and highlight concerns identified by the media in covering educational sector.
- d. To create a base to conduct discourses among concerned stakeholders, such as media and the policy makers based on the issues and patterns identified.

## 1.2. Methodology

The media selection has been done with intent to capture a level of diversity of the media: media house, frequency and type and language. Two dailies one each of Nepali and English medium has been identified. One general weekly magazine and one monthly educational magazine have also been observed. The dailies and magazines are collectively analyzed for comparison with previous reports. Content of dailies and magazines are also comparatively analyzed. All articles related to education has been identified and categorized pertaining to the focus of CEPP's work. Table 1 below gives details of the media chosen for analysis.



**Table 1: The media chosen for analysis**

S. No.	Title	Language	Frequency	Issue	Quantity
1.	Kantipur Daily	Nepali	Daily	General	363 issues
2.	The Himalayan Times	English	Daily	General	363 issues
3.	Himal Weekly	Nepali	Weekly	General	49 issues
4.	Shikshak (Teacher) Monthly	Nepali	Monthly	Education	12 issues
<b>Total</b>		<b>787 issues</b>			

KD, and THTD are the dailies with highest circulation in respective languages, and belong to different media house as well. HW is also chosen among the general magazines for its higher circulation. The SM has been observed in a separate section as the magazine is education specific and could not fit in on the observation of general media. The difference in priority by these dailies would also give a reflection of different segment of audience targeted by these publications.

The articles were categorized on monthly basis, issues identified, tone of the news noted (Positive or negative), region of coverage (urban or rural), inclusion of pictures, typology of the story carried (news, opinion, editorial), position and space covered by these stories.

### 1.3. Scope and Limitations

The observation is more helpful for annual comparative observation in sifting coverage trend of media and between different media publication. With limited publications, single publication of a category,

the observations may not be representative enough for overall media for the given year.

In order to gauge relative space education has occupied in the media, average number of articles in the dailies have been counted in 11 randomly selected issues.

For SM, news that made it in its front cover has only been analyzed. It should be considered that the counts of stories of SM of topics other than that on teachers were taken from SM for a balance in the report in 2015. This is discontinued this year with the understanding that the news ratio of education focused media should not be evaluated under general media category. This might have its impact in the annual media coverage comparison between 2015 and 2016.

For more comprehensive observations and in-depth analysis more human is required. The coverage ratio of articles in education has been determined based on articles count. Comparison of space on coverage could give more accurate volume of importance given to education. This report presents a proportion dedicated to education, but not compared it with other sectors. A comparative view of how much media space is shared among different sectors such as politics, arts and sports would give a valuable insight.

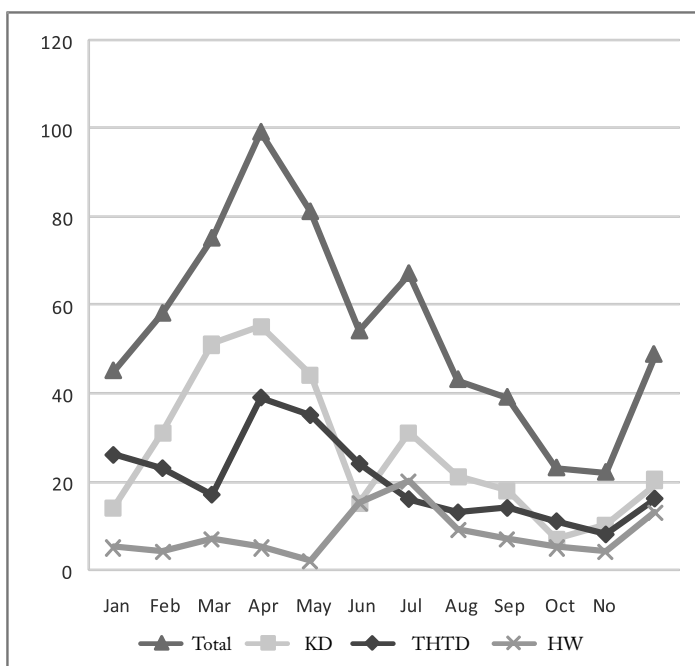
Number of online media dedicated to education has been increasing. They're fast and seem to carry stories informally. One or two online news channels on education may need to be included from next year on. Number of programs in the television is also felt increasing. Monitoring them is an inviting challenge for the people in this business.

## 2. Results

### 2.1. General Trends

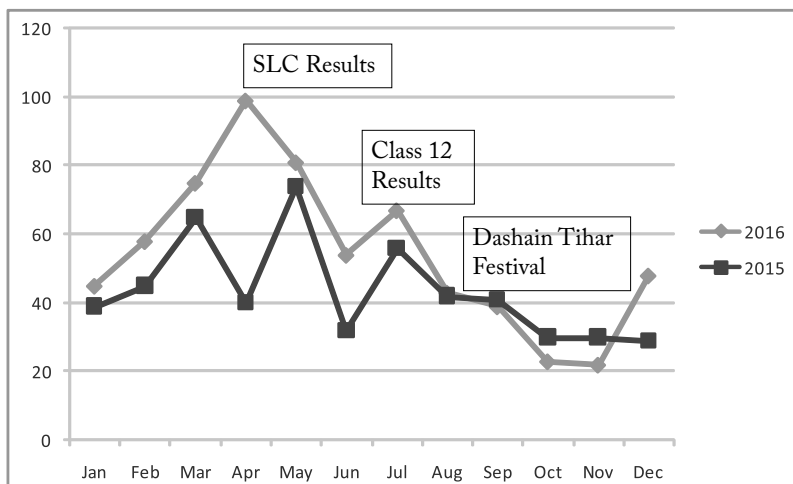
#### 2.1.1. Monthly Distribution

There is a considerable increment in the articles on education covered by the media this year. Last year, the total news stories in these publications were 523, while this year it is 654 which is 25% more than the last year. It averages 54.4 articles a month, which is 1.81 a day, this year while it was 43.6 per month, which is 1.45 a day the last year.



**Figure 1:** Monthly distribution of the stories in the chosen media

Figure 1 represents the volume of articles in different publications and its distribution in different months of the year. There is a rise in articles along exam periods. For dailies the rise in coverage coincides with SLC exam, while for magazine the rise coincides with class 12 enrollment period.



**Figure 2:** Comparative monthly graph of media coverage 2016 and 2015

Initial month based observation confirms to previous observation that the highest coverage of educational news are on exams, results and admission. The month with highest media coverage coincides with SLC examination, and the lowest point of coverage is at the festive season, which is a continuous trend of observation as seen from the last years graph as well. It is matter of concern that media covers exam as the most important aspect of educational process as presented in the graph above. This is a good illustration of how Nepali society takes education as its focus.

### 2.1.2. Coverage of Education

Average numbers of articles published per day in the dailies were 95 in THTD, and 80 in KD. In the year 2016, there were 242 articles related to education in THTD, which is only 0.7% of the entire coverage. Similarly, there were 316 education related articles in KD which is 1.08% of the entire article. KD had 74 more articles published on education than THTD. Educational news made it to the front page in KD 5 times while only once in THTD. It was also in the front page of HW 5 times which is 10% of the magazine that year.

**Table 2: Ratio of education in media in 2016 in percentage (%) and per issue**

Publication	Average no. of articles per issue	Total no. of articles in 2016	Total articles on Education in 2016	% of media articles in 2016	Average per issue
THT English daily	95	34,675	242	0.7%	0.67
KD Nepali daily	80	29,000	316	1.08%	0.87
Daily average				0.89%	0.77
HW weekly		1,246	96	7.7%	1.96
Media average				3.16%	1.17

KD had 5 full page articles while THTD only had 1 full page article on education. KD has printed three different special education sections for education in 2016 (Table 3).

It can be assumed that this coverage is because the Nepali language paper readers are more likely to have their children in public schools and thus a potential reader of news on national education. On average dailies have 0.89% of its articles about education. For HW the total count of articles was possible. Of 1,246 total articles, 96 were

about education, making 7.7% of its coverage on education. This may be because the total number of articles in the dailies is much higher and diverse than in the weekly.

**Table 3: News demography of daily 2016**

	Kantipur Daily	Himalayan Times
Front Page	8	0
News	289	236
Opinion	20	4
Investigative/Followed	40	
Editorial	1	1
Full	5	1
Half	17	1
Education special	3	
Pictures	56	19

Based on this accounting, the average percent of space that education occupied in these selected publications is 3.16%.

### 2.1.3. Issues Taken UP

The comparative graph (Figure 3) on frequency of issues covered in media in 2016 and 2015 shows that there is a high decline in earthquake related articles that is obvious. There is also decline in higher education related topics, while growth in teacher-based news. There is a decline in issues related to politics and education, and quality in education, while rise in the topic of exams, materials and text books, policy issues, infrastructure, private education, parents and SMC, fearless environment, vocational education and multilingual issues.

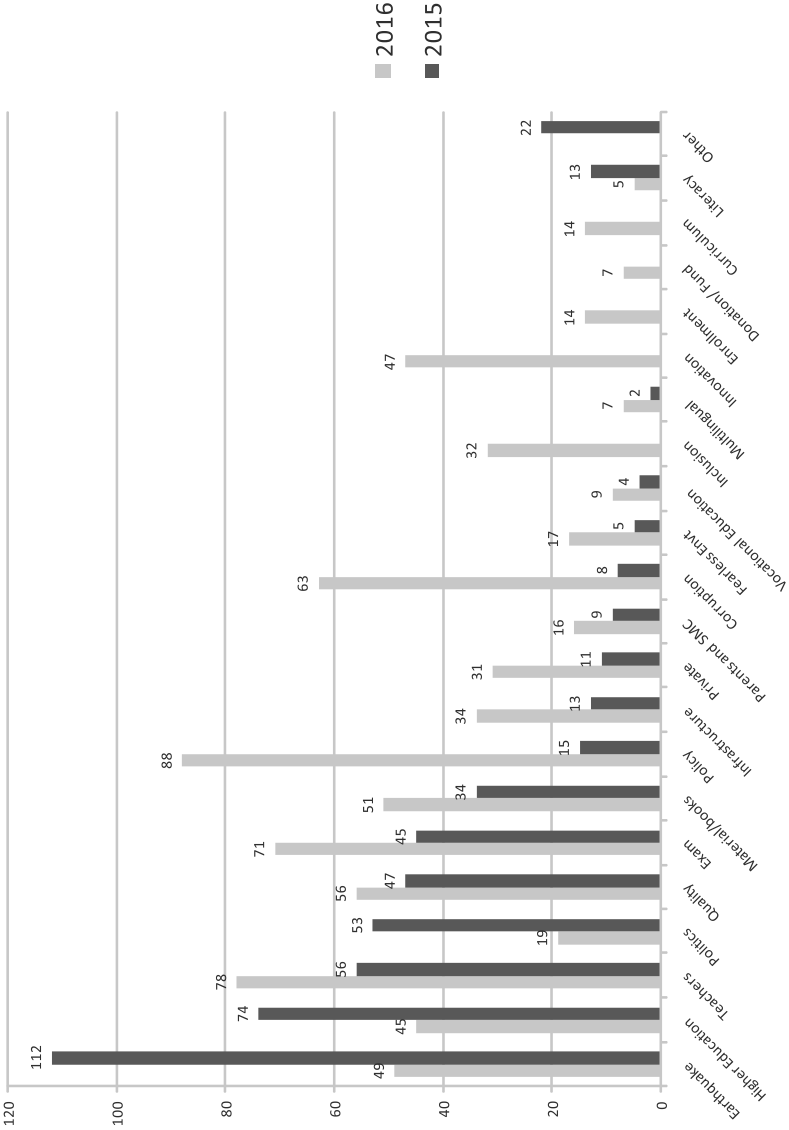


Figure 3: Comparative graph on frequency of issues covered in the media in 2016 and 2015

It should be considered that the percentage raise in coverage of SMC in media is 78%. It indicates the raise in activities conducted by SMCs and the focus of media in SMC's role in school development. There is reduction in the news about literacy. The new topics identified were on different kinds of innovative approaches in public school development, on donations and funds, and curriculum.

As can be seen in Figure 4, comparison of the coverage of issues among different publications, showed significantly high coverage of corruption in education and higher education related news in HW. THT and KD both has 10% of education news in corruption, while HW has 35% of its educational news about corruption. The topics least covered in HW were on materials, SMC and parents, vocational education, enrollment, donations and curriculum. KD had most of its news on policy, exam, teachers, and earthquake. THTD covered the most of its news on policy, exam, teachers and earthquake while it did not have any news on multilingual education.



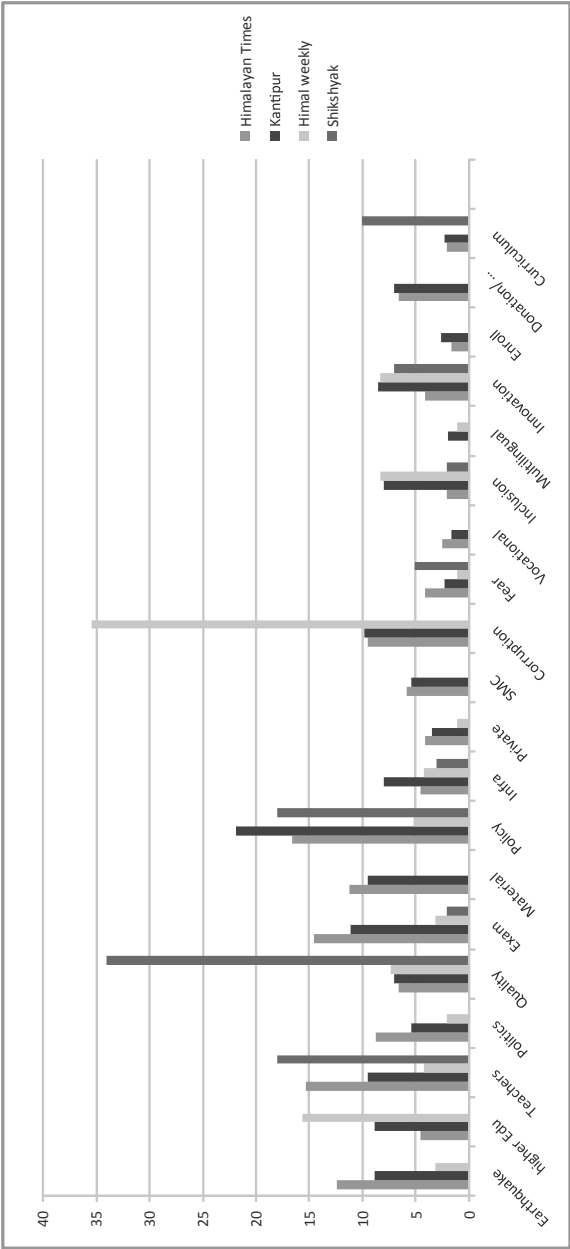
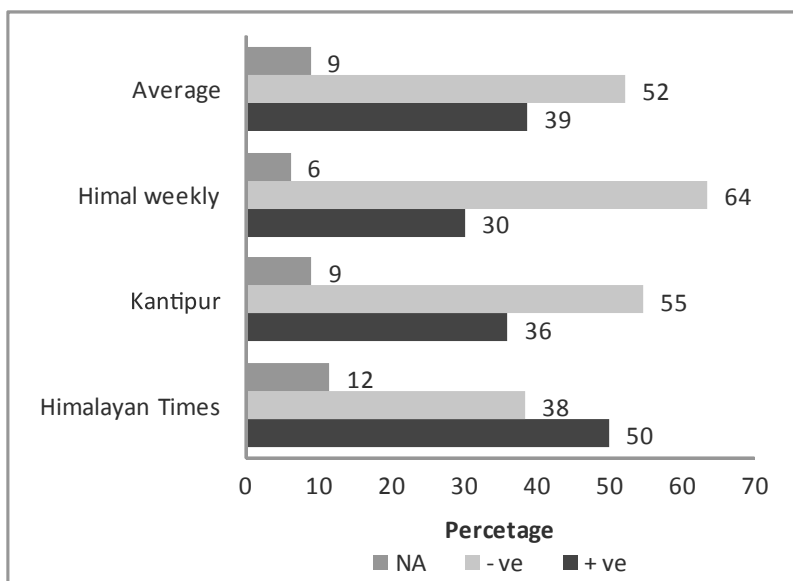


Figure 4: Comparative graph on preference of issues in % among publications

### 2.1.4. Portrayal of Players

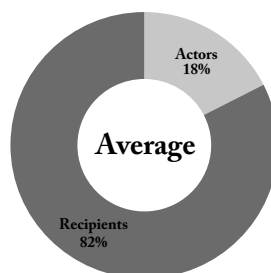
Observing the tone of news and articles, it was found that THTD had more positive news than other publications. On an average there were 52% news that was negative in tone, 39% positive and 9% of the news more neutral as can be seen in Figure 5.



**Figure 5:** The ratio between negative and positive news in different media

Although students are the very targets of everybody's educational efforts, they are featured little in the media except there is an agitation by one of students' unions. From observation on how the students were observed or perceived in the media, (see Figure 6) it was found that 82% of the news perceived students as passive receivers and remaining portion of the news and articles discussed about the active role of students. This observation is also important to understand how the society in general and personals involved in the

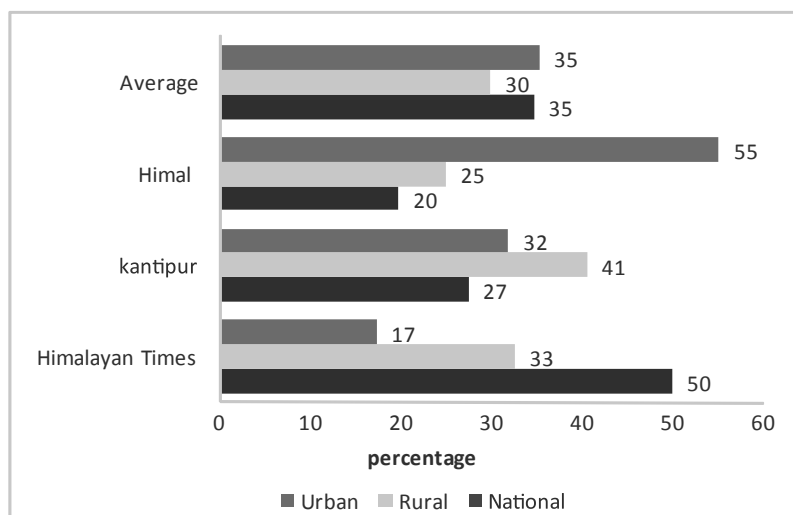
education system perceive students. Not surprisingly, all the publications had similar ratios in portraying students passive. News of corruption was also followed by students taking action, covering most of the news of student as actors here. Other cases where students are regarded as actors include corruption in medical education sector, student union's active role in private school fee investigations, and other calls for action activities. Stories of students and alumni as active stakeholders in school improvement efforts have also made it here.



**Figure 6:** Ratio of coverage of students as actors and recipients

### 2.1.5. Urban Rural Ratio

The urban rural ration observation of articles about education identifies that HW was more focused on urban issues, Kantipur on rural



**Figure 7:** Ratio of news coverage among urban, rural and national context

issues and THTD focused on national issues. The average has a balance among, national, urban and rural issues with 5% less coverage in urban while 35% in both national and rural issues.

## **2.2. Topical trends**

Based on particular topics covered most, below is the brief of the stories covered and discussed in media.

### **2.2.1. Education Policy**

Policy around education was the most discussed issue in 2016, as the government was working to adapt education policy relevant to the changing structure of governance. Among the first articles this year was an opinion on the need for discourse on how federal structure can be applied in the educational system. News about 'School Sector development program' the flagship program of the Ministry failing to address the present need was frequent. Many stories covered about the lack of proper dissemination about new policies creating uncertainties at all levels.

Issue of permission to schools affiliated to foreign establishments was raised. The government had cancelled their permission after protests.

New policy that restricted school to be registered as private company, and directed to open private schools as cooperatives only, was a positive change in making Nepal government's stand clear on privatization of schools.

There was frequent news about the policy to regulate the fee structure of private schools as PABSON - the association of private schools refused to comply with the provisions brought in without their participation. Some news also covered 'the merger' of schools

that had few children. While, the coverage of merger of such schools was frequent, the aspect of access to such merged primary school in rural settings was not found to be covered in any articles. .

Tribhuvan University, Nepal's first, formulated its affiliation policy after 42 years of its establishment. There are thousand and eighty four colleges affiliated to TU. Previously in the lack of policy, affiliation was given based on financial exchange and links, informed an insider. The policy also guides to stop giving affiliation to campus in Kathmandu valley for the next ten years. The call for a broader higher education board was discussed in the media and later formed as well.

Need for a better policy and government support to include students of orphanage and such minorities beyond SLC for higher education opportunities was also discussed in the HW. The discourse around the new education bill (8<sup>th</sup> Amendment of Education Act 1971) and the aspect of the temporary teachers were frequently covered as the temporary teachers staged protest for a long time. The need for the policy to attract young generation in teaching profession was highlighted in an opinion articles. A policy to restrict teacher's involvement in management level in political parties was formulated. An article mentioned about the need for policies to invest more on research and development in the education sector. Policy was formed to restrict school teachers to apply for PR or DV and would have to quit if they possessed any of it. Local authority of Kothang, made it compulsion for teacher of government schools to admit their children in government schools. The new budget focused on teacher's salary but failed to support other aspect of improvement of the system.

Opinion articles highlighted on the need for policy level intervention in TU to prevent it from academic failure, as important positions are appointed through political appointments. The need for

self-governing authority, to TU board was discussed. A discourse was created in media through series of articles about the legitimacy of the 'honorary certificate' awarded by the mid-western university.

An opinion article mentioned the cause of wrong policies in the past such as one language policy that caused reduction of school enrolment in the plains. An investigative news in KD mentioned on discriminating policy on teachers with disabilities.

Text book policy was reformed to ensure access of books to all. Open University of Nepal and the need for education in distance medium was discussed as a timely solution.

With the establishment of new educational policy, the SMC was suddenly dismissed. It was not law-full. The Supreme Court issued a stay order for same to the government and dismissed it. There were challenges filed in some district courts who gave verdict in favor of the allegedly dismissed SMCs to be re-instated. It was never taken up by the law community or the media. A senior advocate and the member of parliament said 'Yes, it remained a legal mockery'.

Significant number of stories covered the newly introduced letter grading system in the SLC and how this change will have a broader impact in the schooling system and the psychology of students. The new system doesn't regard students as pass and fail, thus reducing immense social pressure to students unable to graduate through SLC. It also has addressed the sense of extreme and unhealthy competition that percentage based result system has created in Nepal. SLC at class 10 was scrapped as secondary school system was extended 2 more years while the National Board of Examinations was reconstituted adapting to this change.

The need for policy intervention to support low grade SLC students made it to the editorial of KD.

### **2.2.2. Examination and Result**

Exam was the second most covered story this year. Incidents in and around the exams, its management and examinees were covered in a considerable amount. In addition, the new policy of letter grading system made it to the news with considerable follow up news and opinion articles. Confining in the scoring system, the media, however has failed to address the need for exam reforms. There is a dire need to change questions that demand thoughts of examinees' over reproduction. The aspect of SLC and final exam being a memory test than the test of cognitive skill was raised in an opinion article.

SLC exam center and preparation in a Temporary Learning Center - TLC or a makeshift shelter became a highly covered story mostly in the pictorial form. A news to consider was the provision to give SLC in Bhot language from this year, thus making SLC exam accessible to students studding Buddhism in monasteries as well. A mal-practice in private school to punish students unable to submit fees came in media this year as well. Edukhabar.com, a website dedicated to education, and Nepal center for education development launched a mobile application targeting SLC students.

### **2.2.3. Corruption**

Corruption became the third most covered issue in media this year. A news stating that the issues relating to education topped the complaints at CIAA also clarified that there is serious public concern over the issue. A large portion of it was in HW, and particularly on corruption about granting media education affiliation to private hospitals and the public revolt against it. Out of 69 stories that covered corruption this year, 34 were covered by HW media alone. And of 96 total stories in HW, 37 were linked with corruption and 33 had to do with medical education. It included letters to the editor on the

issue, and opinion articles with ironic title as 'why not open doctor's certificate publication center instead of teaching hospitals'.

Dr. Gobinda KC's issue was very well covered in media. He is a medical professor and an orthopedic doctor at IOM, the largest teaching hospital, who has become a well know activist against corruption in the field of medical education. He continued his hunger strike this year as well, and became the most highlighted issue about corruption in education this year. Media, and in particular HW, was also a strong tool to disseminate corruption in this regard. Detailed investigated story on how privatization in medical education has been backed by politicians and policy makers was frequent news. Corruption in medical education made it to the front page of the magazine more than once. It was also a topic of editorial twice in HW. The operation of a fake colleges and school also was covered among which some were about government taking action against such institutes while some mentioned the involvement of personals in the ministry in such irregularities. The irregularities in text book publication and sales were also a well followed story this year.

Most of the news on corruption was followed up by students calling for action against such irregularities. Stories of misuse of fund for scholarship by school administration and teachers also made it into media regularly.

The issue about Private schools unethically raising the tax amount from students also made it in the news. Fraud by invigilators and students in exams also made it this year as well. The corruption by book publishers, who marked the price against law, also was a regularly covered story, as the publishers check their price and also returned the money to customers who had purchased the textbooks already.



### 2.2.4. Teachers

Number of issues covered about teachers has slightly increased. News relating to policies and conflict between teachers and the government agencies has been covered the most this year. Teacher's service commission made it to the news for its activities from calling for vacancies and policy discourses. It called in for a separate act for Teachers service commission, while planning to upgrade permanent teacher's exam. Permanent teachers refer to teachers who have passed qualification exam and gained official permanent position to be a teacher. While, temporary teachers refer to teachers who have received permit to teach based on urgent teacher requirements but haven't passed the teaching permit exam. It was reported that there are a hundred thousand permanent<sup>1</sup> teachers in 35 thousand community schools at the ratio of 2.8 permanent teachers per school. The activities of teachers union or association, such as annual events, and protest programs also made it to news.

The initiative of the ministry to give ID cards to retired teachers was appreciated. Opinions about the health of school teachers and need for change in teaching practices also made the news. Involvement of teachers in politics and policy intervention to ban teachers from political positions also was a well followed story. The attempt of the government to manage temporary teachers through different policy approach also was a followed story. News from different parts of Nepal about community crowd-funding teachers also made it in the news. Action against teacher's involvement in physical punishment was covered this year as well.

Examples of teachers as motivators in some rural school's improvement were also covered. A positive story about teacher's initiation to make curriculum in mother tongue was also covered this year.

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<sup>1</sup> Open ended appointment until their retirement.

Considerable number of opinion article about the teaching practice of teachers in community schools also made it in the news. Stories of schools with more teachers than students and the fraud documentations by teachers about the no. of students made it in the news this year as well. Exemplary efforts to create practical education from teachers also made it in media. Personal stories of teachers that made a difference in the school and community were also covered in HW. A drama performance about teachers and state of education also made it in this section. A story about 'Teach for Nepal' an NGO, and the innovative approach of voluntary 2 year teacher program received positive feedbacks from readers. However, issues of teachers' accountability were not explicitly raised in the media.

### **2.2.5. Textbooks and Teaching Materials**

Compared to last year, coverage about textbooks and teaching materials has increased this year. Some of the followed story was about corruption in print and distribution by Janak Education Materials Center, the authorized publisher for textbooks and delay in text book publication, distribution and shortage of books. Ministry to provide reference books for open schooling through National center for educational Development was also covered. News about donation of different educational material and personal support to schools has also been included in this section. News about PABSON publishing text books without approval from the ministry also was covered this year. The issue of heavy bags for school students made it in the media again.

News about launch of 'CDC Nepal', a mobile app launched by Curriculum Development Center, Nepal to distribute text book materials and curriculum details through mobile was one of the innovative approach government took. The app though is basic in its structure, with uploads of text materials, and does not content any interactive

materials that the mobile technology offers. Another innovative approach by establishing an e-library by Adarsha Bal High School of sundarbazar, lamjung also made it in the news this year. Under the assistance of Nepal Library foundation and student alumni society's initiative 10 computers in the school will have the e-library facility. The government fixed the price of text books with strict regulation. It was a well followed story this year, and was able to make an impact in the ground, as price came down, and money was returned to parents who had bought the books in higher prices.

A story about computer class only through text book was covered this year as well. The shortage of text book made it to the front and editorial in KD this year. There was no news about materials in HW.

No media appeared to go a bit deeper that classes can be run without textbooks. Textbooks are made as an excuse by the teachers for their absence or not teaching. Except in the years when the contents of the textbooks are changed, old textbooks can be taught until the arrival of new ones. Even more important question is about the necessity to keep on giving new books and use so much paper and money? These kind of stories re-enforces book focus on education i.e. reproduction than learning.

#### **2.2.6. Earthquake**

Coverage on news relating to earthquake of 2015 and its impact on school reduced to half from last year. Still it was the most covered issue in pictures this year as well. Most of the news reported the delay in reconstruction of schools, and the status of students in such situation. Some news about donations in earthquake affected schools also made it in this section. Unicef's financial support of 1 million Euro to restore schools also made it in the news this year. Delay in school building completion by SMC and government action to stop funds of such schools was also covered.

It is still far-fetched idea for the media to discuss about the appropriateness of school building and its design. An opportunity to discuss the issue has almost gone. Earthquake safety has overtaken everything else!

### **2.2.7. Higher Education**

There is a decrease in coverage in higher education this year. Stories covered in this section include politics of different level in Universities from student union election, policy discussion and decisions, to corruption in affiliation to private colleges, Buddhist University and far-western University, fake academic institutes, issues and events about going abroad for higher education.

Discussion of Open University was also covered this year. Large portion of news on higher medical education has been dealt under the corruption category. The policy of the government to grant loan for higher education was also covered. The fragile state of TU central library was an intensely covered story this year.

A rare positive news on higher education was about the commendable status of Law Education in Nepal. Higher education made it to front page of HW twice this year. Though not the highest in frequency, higher education can be considered the best followed story by the media this year.

While talking about higher education, media's attention is yet to get into Faculties/Departments of Education of relevant colleges and the universities. Quality of teachers will not be improved unless their foundational knowledge on education is improved.

### **2.2.8. Innovation**

Innovation is a new category created this year, as a lot of news about creative approaches for school improvement was coming up, mostly positive examples. Some of the stories included in this section were about the campaign to educate children of brick kiln workers, a jailer teaching English in prison to prisoners' children to increase their scope of employment, veg-garden in the school growing organic vegetables, government awards exemplary schools like every year to motivate better practices, e-library established in a school with 10 computers received in donation by an NGO.

Muslim community breaking barriers to send girls to school, SLC curriculum based app launched by edukhabar.com, distance medium schooling from home, higher secondary education festival, bank provide loan to students by holding certificates, temple donations to run 2 campus and 3 schools, Lumbini Buddha University to lunch courses in museology and archeology, students testing self-build devices, involvement of x-academicians in educational improvement, 36 tole(Community) learning groups in Manang lead by community groups, lessons to learn from Nepali schools running in japan, parenting children from other village to save the school from shutting down in Manang, free agri-consultation by student of +2 school and school running farms and considered the base for community development are stories worth mentioning here.

### **2.2.9. Infrastructure**

Most of the stories in infrastructure were related to earthquake and reconstruction, funds and government regulation. Some news mentioned about positive examples of child friendly infrastructure of public school attracting students from private schools. Stories of inappropriate infrastructure and incidents in school because of unsafe

infrastructure were also covered. A school building built in the land of a *falcha* (a traditional public structure) by the community, hostel in school as a factor of change in the community in a village are consideration worthy news. News about lack of proper toilet infrastructures in rural schools still the top most reason in higher absentee rates of girl students continued to get media attention this year as well. Students using boat to cross school every day for the lack of a bridge, community lead school in the village for access to children, were also covered. The news about school build inside a temple land in Bhaktapur was also covered.

#### **2.2.10. Privatization**

The largest portion of the news about private academic institutes was about medical education. It has been discussed under corruption and policy sections. Other news about privatization was mostly about the conflict between PABSON, the national association of private schools and the government for fee and text book price regulation. The protest by students in these issues also was a well followed story this year. Private schools raising fees against the order of the Supreme Court also made it in the news.

Nonetheless the debate on the issue of privatization of education except in the case of medical education has subsided. More and more influence of private educational entrepreneurs in policy making misses to gain needed coverage in media. Representation of private schools in an apex advisory in the Ministry of Education was not covered as an issue as it should have been the case. The structure of fees of private schools has overshadowed the attention of the core issue: how much and how far education should be privatized, if at all?

Activities by students of private school were also covered here. Higher secondary admission season Special section covering a lot of

private school were featured this year as well at the time of admission season of +2 classes. HW presented its own list of best schools based on the marks obtained by the students of respective schools.

Attraction of A level colleges and international awards received by some of these schools came in the media this year. Grading system of evaluation from primary level being practiced in private schools was covered.

An issue of pre-schools claiming assurance of admission to reputed private schools as a mal-practice made it in the news this year. The guide books for classes as low as class four also made it in the news as a negative practice in the society. Such practices also indicate how the parents are exam focused and that the society is yet to have a discourse about the broader purpose of schooling and education.

#### **2.2.11. Inclusion and Access**

Inclusion and access is a new topic for this year. It is to be considered that the stories in this issue may be present last year as well, but was not considered in a different category. The issue of schools merging for reduction for cost was one of the most noted stories in this category. With government policy to merger schools with less than 10 students, degrading access would be an issue in rural area. This aspect of the issue wasn't raised in media and should be an issue of consideration. Some stories about distance being a cause to attend school were also considered here.

Global disability inclusion day was celebrated in Kathmandu. A story mentioned 20,706 children with disability are out of school in lack of hostels. Children of 'Dom', 'Kussadiya' communities joining school for the first time were also covered in the news. An exemplary school for disable students from Lalitpur was covered with a picture of students performing musical in the school.

Stories of elderlies attending SLC were also covered in school. A story about government policy to support children with HIV till class 8 only and till SLC for orphanage was also covered here. The story of language as a barrier in inclusion, in a historic contest particularly in the plains of Nepal was a topic of an opinion article. Corruption and misuse of scholarships for students from marginalized communities was a negative story. A story about rich section of a rural community sending children to private schools that put the government school in the verge of shut down was also covered in the news. An interview on Open University as a medium of inclusion was also included here. Tole (neighborhood) based learning groups run by community for access to young children was also included here. Community lead support to host children from different village made it in this section too.

#### **2.2.12. Quality**

Attraction in government schools due to improvement in quality was a frequently covered story this year. Different event coverage about focus on quality of education was also included here. Teacher's role in quality of schools was a topic of an opinion article.

Ninety percent of the students in primary level did not know basic writing skills in a rural school. Story about class 9 students unable to write their name is also included in this section. Discussion of exam policy focusing in memorizing skill only was also mentioned here. A story about youths from the community contributing in school quality was been included here as well.

Best school awards and community schools receiving such recognition is included here. Degraded quality of technical schools for the lack of funds was also included here. Opinion article about English not the mark of quality education was also included here. Book re-



view about 'Failed School'<sup>2</sup> that discussion about quality in schooling was also covered by HW this year. Score based on reproduction continues to be the norm for assessing quality quite for some time.

### **2.2.13. Politics**

A drastic decrease in articles related to politic as observed as a lot of relevant stories here were included in corruption and policy as well. Most of the stories in this category were about protest and strike by students and teachers on different issue are included here. Blast in schools by party member to pressure for funds were also included here. Uncoordinated decisions of educational minister also made it in this section. Political strikes in the plains, tarai agitation caused school to shutdown effecting education for a lot of students for a very long time, causing students to migrate or join schools elsewhere, even in India in some cases.

An incident about gun shots in SMC election also made it in the news. Elections are heavily contested along party lines. Politics causing delay in teacher selection in Jajarkot was also reported. Government decision to not allow teachers to be involved in political positions was a well followed story this year. A well investigated report in HW states that lack of local election almost for two decades has made SMCs of government school the only platform for local politicians. Prime Minister's direct interference to provide affiliation for medical education to a private college for personal interest was covered well in media. Media also exposed that a lot of law makers had invested in the medical colleges and thus were backing up the establishment of private medical college over public. It also exposed the political backing of wrong practices in giving affiliation to private hospitals.

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<sup>2</sup> Asaphal School in Nepali.

### **2.2.14. SMC, Parents and the Community**

Stories about SMC's contribution and irregularities both made a big part of this section. Many stories about SMC's active role in fund raising, for different purpose from adding new teachers, checking teacher irregularities, innovative programs for student enrollment were among positive stories. From last year, there was a 78% rise in the news coverage about SMC, parents and community this year. News about SMC working with parents to raise chickens, fund raiser through fines for alcohol consumption, temple funds to support school is a story to be mentioned here. Increase in coverage of stories about crowd funded teachers and school infrastructures in rural area should be considered as a positive indicator as well as a positive catalyst for community ownership of schools. Government declaration of sudden disintegration of SMCs all over Nepal because of new policy should be considered to evaluate the level of self-governance schools and SMC has achieved.

Though covered in politics section, the stories about an incident of gun shots in SMC election by political parties should be mentioned here as well.

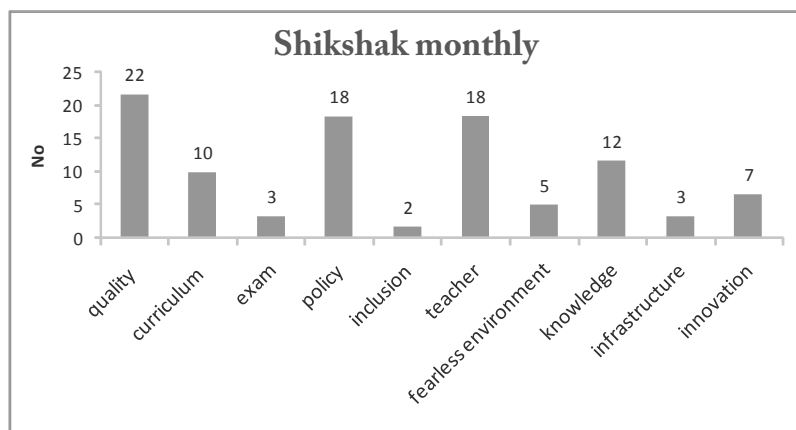
### **2.3. Shikshak Monthly**

A Separate analysis was realized for SM, as it was an education specific magazine, with particular focus on teachers. With the difference in the subject domain of this magazine, it was not possible to evaluate or mix the data obtained from contains with the publications of general subject domain. Due to limitation in time and resources, only front cover content has been analyzed of the 12 issues of this magazine, evaluating the title, picture content and the highlighted stories in the front page. There were 60 articles covered in the front page including the main story. 22% of the stories were about the

quality of education. The other topics following them gradually were policy, teacher, curriculum, knowledge.

The title story and front page picture observation identify that quality was the most frequently covered content with stories on out-dated English teaching methods, legitimacy of Indian curriculum in Nepal, tips on improving hand writing skills. Other title stories included the gap between skills and school education, practical relevance of school curriculum, SLC in grading system, call for justice to teachers with disabilities, exemplary method of a teacher to teach English, overly teacher biased amendment of educational act, making of a good teacher, identification of a good principal, 'guess papers' for class 4 and the risk of porn pollution to today's children.

Some of the articles worthy of special consideration to the analysts were: the need for encouraging students to make mistakes, English not being replacement synonym to quality, an innovative exemplary practice of 'tiffin festival' for student attraction in a rural area school.



**Figure 8:** Categorical frequency of front page contents of Shikshak monthly in 2016

An article that discussed the “unproductive speeches in different programs in schools” is a topic that was never discussed before. It is among few contents that have sought to perceive an issue from the perspective of a student. It is to be considered that not a single article from or about SMC was covered or highlighted in the cover of this magazine. It's a bit ironic given the wide coverage of the contents.

In annex 1. is the list of all the front pages of 'Shikshak' Monthly of 2016, with main stories.

## **2.4. Out of the Trend**

Some of the topics that couldn't make it as a separate heading under topical trends are explained here in a descending order corresponding to its frequency. News on enrollment and admission had 14 stories and was a new topic for consideration. It contained stories about the successful enrolment campaign by public schools, introducing English medium supporting enrollment campaign, Kaski public schools losing students to migration and private schools. Fearless environment had more than twice the coverage this year to 12 articles from last year. It includes health hazards and infrastructure incidents in schools, Opinion articles on risk of exposure to sexual activities to young children and the impact of school environment in learning. Vocational education also saw a rise to 9 articles this year from only 4 articles last year. Articles about government's need to focus and invest more on vocational education, news of investment for it and a rise in number of schools to provide vocational education were mentioned here. Multilingual Education had 7 articles this year from only 2 articles last year. Articles about failure of multilingual education and recommendations for its success were included here. Another new topic considered this year was Donation and Funds with 7 articles. There was a decrease in article on literacy which only had 5 stories this year from 13 articles last year.

Stories worth special mention in Shikshak magazine are already mentioned above. Analytical articles that discussed about the broader relation of school, education and social construction was not found enough. A particular news about students involved in seasonal economic activities to contribute to family needs by bunking last class was covered with a negative tone to remark that it would spoil the academic performance of student. A story about trend of junk food consumption in the cities in comparisons to healthier food available almost at no cost in the rural areas was quite considerable. It addressed broader welfare of students beyond academics. Education is a self-perpetuating means to human advancement not an end itself. Another article about the need for an SMC like independent governing structure for national universities justifies the growing acceptance of the SMC structure. It also ensured that the SMC structure has scope to expand and gain more authority in the future. Other news to be considered here are the decision to increase technical schools and ban of private company model for school operation.

### 3. Conclusion

Relative comparison shows that there is considerable increase in news about education in the media, though it is still a very small section of overall media space. It is apparent that the focus on exams and admission is considerably high in daily papers. There is increased coverage on policy, exams, corruption, innovation, private schools and materials than the last year.

Considerable follow up stories in education were identified in 2016, with some identifiable impacts in the education sector making some policy interventions. There was some positive news about the education sector. The ratio of areas covered in the news between urban and rural was also found balanced.

Increased quantity and quality of report about corruption in education sector with proper follow up can be considered an indicator that perhaps can indicate that public education is becoming an issue of public interest with gradual shift from politics after relative political stability. Increased political discourse in education policy and its followed media coverage could also be a positive indicator. Trend to cover positive and exemplary innovative stories and efforts by SMCs, teachers and the community should be considered an appreciable effort of the media.

An analysis about how students are perceived in media showed that most of the news state student as passive participant in educational process unless they take into protest. Though some stories of students as active stakeholder in improving a school or educational sector, particularly medical education, was covered, the broader aspect of it has not been found recognized enough in the articles. Media's evaluation mechanism about school and education was found not much different from government's internal analysis and evaluation. The issue of access in merger approach of the government should be

considered as a matter of discussion. Interdisciplinary approaches to analyze education's relations with broader social welfare and development pattern appeared absent in the articles published. Interdisciplinary approach to include education or academic system in news stories of different domain or connecting broader agendas such as political commitment, and development goals would be a recommended field of exploration to bring into discourse.

# Annexes

## Annex 1: Front covers (and mail stories) of SM in 2016



How to find  
a good Head  
Teacher



Killing  
creativity



How to write  
beautiful letters



Porn  
Pollution



Affiliation with  
Indian educa-  
tional institutions



Without joint  
letters Nepali will  
be ruined



Eighth amend-  
ment (of Educa-  
tion Act): (Feast)  
For Teachers (not  
for education)



Good teachers  
are made, not  
born (100th  
Issue)



The mythological  
way of teaching  
English



Justice wanted:  
the case of dis-  
abled teachers



School Leaving  
Exam in Letter  
Grading System



(Widening) Gap  
of between Skills  
and Schools



Annex 2: Monthly news count of different media in 2016 and total of 2015

Monthly news count 2016 and 2015													
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	All year
THTD	26	23	17	39	35	24	16	13	14	11	8	16	242
KD	14	31	51	55	44	15	31	21	18	7	10	19	316
Daily total 2016	40	54	68	94	79	39	47	34	32	18	18	35	558
HW	5	4	7	5	2	15	20	9	7	5	4	13	96
2016	31	27	24	44	37	39	36	22	21	16	12	29	338
2015	39	45	65	40	74	32	56	42	41	30	30	29	523

### **Annex 3: Comparative table of topic based articles in the media of 2016 and 2015**

<b>Topics</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>
Earthquake	112	58
Higher Education	74	39
Teachers	67	56
Politics	53	38
Quality	47	38
Examination and Result	45	70
Textbooks/Teaching Material	34	57
Policy	15	109
Infrastructure	13	36
Privatization	11	21
SMC, Parents/Community	9	31
Corruption	8	54
Fearless Environment	5	17
Vocational Education	4	11
Inclusion and Access		30
Multilingual Education	2	6
Innovation		37
Enrollment		12
Donation/ Fund		38
Curriculum		12
Literacy	13	
Other	22	

**Annex 4: Topical frequency of articles in different media in 2016**

<b>Topics</b>	<b>THT</b>	<b>KD</b>	<b>HW</b>	<b>Total</b>
Earthquake	22	24	3	49
Higher Education	8	22	15	45
Teachers	33	23	4	78
Politics	12	5	2	19
Quality	5	10	7	56
Examination and Result	33	33	3	71
Textbooks/Teaching Material	23	28	0	51
Policy	27	38	5	88
Infrastructure	11	16	4	34
Privatization	14	16	1	31
SMC, Parents/Community	5	11	0	16
Corruption	11	18	34	63
Fearless Environment	6	5	1	17
Vocational Education	5	4	0	9
Inclusion and Access	4	19	7	32
Multilingual Education	0	6	1	7
Innovation	10	22	8	47
Enrollment	7	7	0	14
Donation/ Fund	2	5	0	7
Curriculum	2	2	0	14
Literacy	2	2	1	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>242</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>96</b>	<b>753</b>

### Annex 5: Ratio of positive and negative tone of news coverage in different media in 2016

	Positive, Negative Ratio					
	In frequency			In percentage		
	+ ve	- ve	NA	+ ve	- ve	NA
THT	121	93	28	50	38.43	11.57
KD	114	173	29	36.08	54.75	9.18
HW	29	61	6	30.21	63.54	6.25
Average	88	109	21	38.76	52.24	9

NA: Not Applicable, neutral

### Annex 6: Ratio of 'Coverage about students in media' as Actors vs Recipients

Ratio of Coverage about students as Actors vs Recipients			
Media	Students coverage		
	As actors	As recipients	NA
THT	11	46	43
KD	18	86	04
HW	5	28	67
Average	11.33	53.33	35.34

NA: Not Applicable, neutral

### **Annex 7: The urban rural ratio observation of articles about education in media in 2016**

<b>Urban Rural ratio of educational content of different media in 2016</b>			
	<b>Urban</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>National</b>
Himalayan Times	42	79	121
Kantipur	100	127	86
Himal	53	24	19
Average	195	230	226

### **Annex 8: Categorical frequency of front page contents of Shikshak Monthly in 2016**

<b>Contents of front page articles</b>	
<b>Contents</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Quality	13
Curriculum	6
Exam	2
Policy	11
Inclusion	1
Teacher	11
Fearless environment	3
Knowledge	7
Infrastructure	2
Innovation	4





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