

Atisha Primary School, Kathmandu, Nepal



The Atisha Primary School at Samdupling Tibetan Refugee Camp dates back to mid 1960's. It is located near to Samdupling Tibetan settlement, Jawalakhel / Kathmandu, Nepal. It was primarily established with the sole aim of educating the children of this particular camp. The school was known as Primary School of Tibetan Settlement. In the year 1974, His Majesty's Government of Nepal under its New Education Policy, nationalised all private schools. It was during that time that many smaller schools nearby got merged with the school and taken over by the Government. The school was then named Mahendra Brikuti School with increased enrolment of local children and staff. Tibetan language is not taught during the school hours. Special arrangement had to be made to teach Tibetan language in the mornings and evenings apart from the daily school routine.

Atisha Primary School was formally established on 5th March 1984 to cater the educational needs of the children of Tibetans living in and around Jawalakhel in Kathmandu. The school was built on the land leased by Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre. The main purpose of establishing the school was to provide modern education along with preservation and promotion of Tibetan cultural heritage and language.

Initially, the classes were conducted in a rented house. Gradually, a six-room school building was constructed with the financial help from Late Mrs. Margot Busak, Chairman, German Nepalese Help Association (GNHA) and Misserrior. Another project for six room latrines, drinking water facilities and fencing of the school was also completed with generous contribution from the Tibetan community.

In 1986, the German Nepalese Help Association sanctioned DM 10000/- to Jawalakhel Handicraft Centre for the construction of school office, library cum staff room and one classroom. In 1991, a multi-purpose hall was built on top of the existing original school building with 85% funding assistance from GNHA and the rest by the school. In 1994, an additional five-room building was built attached to the original school building with funds provided by the Tibet Libre, France.

Since the children of this school come from the poorest of the poor families, a sponsorship programme was created as early as in 1985 to relieve the parents from paying school fees. The sponsorship programme has links with the organisations like Solhimal France, Tara Dhatu Charity Trust Foundation/ USA, Tibetan Family Help Nepal/ Switzerland, Angela Migliorati/ Italy and many other individuals from various countries. At

present about 90% of the school children are getting their education free of cost and their sponsorship continues till they finish further studies. The students mostly after completing primary level join Namgyal Higher Secondary School.

The school organises various co-curricular activities for the proper all round development of a child. Quizzes, paper reading, public speaking, spelling contests, art and crafts, music & dance and games & sports are being organised as part of the annual school curriculum. The computer education was introduced for Classes IV & V class since 2001. The school has presently 18 computers.

The students academic performance has considerably improved to 90% pass percentage every year now. It is a considerable achievement given the level of under-resourcing of the school over the last three decades. The school was started with 132 students, 9 teaching and 2 non teaching staff. It was upgraded to class V in 1988. Presently, there are classes from Lower Kindergarten to Class V with a total enrolment of 77 students with 8 teaching staff and 4 non teaching staff. Mr. Buche is the current Headmaster since 2008 who took charge from Mr. Tsering Dhondup, the former headmaster.