

Schooling unlocks great potential

Education opens opportunities to youths to attend university and build impressive careers. **Yuan Shenggao** reports

For many young Tibetans, education is the key to turn around their lives.

Tsering Samdrup born in the rural area of Lhasa, capital of the Tibet autonomous region, said his childhood memories have never escaped him.

"Besides routine farm work, my mum occasionally made handicrafts to increase the family's revenue. Dad, as a driver, was often hired to drive on business trips to earn a living," he recalled.

Tsering Samdrup said he never worried about whether he could go to school, as his tuition spanning from primary school to high school was exempt from fees.

In 2012, he was admitted to Tibet University, where he was voted chairman of the school's student union.

Due to his outstanding performance in school work and leadership, he earned himself a brilliant business career outside Tibet.

While the outside world is alluring, Tsering Samdrup said what he cherishes more is his home plateau where he was raised up. But his parents' health is his biggest concern, he added.

As a result, taking what he had learned from outside Tibet, Tsering Samdrup returned to Lhasa and got a good job. He invited his parent to live with him in the urban area of Lhasa.

"I live a happy life as my family enjoys my company. We spend time together chatting, cooking and celebrating traditional festivals," he said. "My family gives me a motivation to work harder."

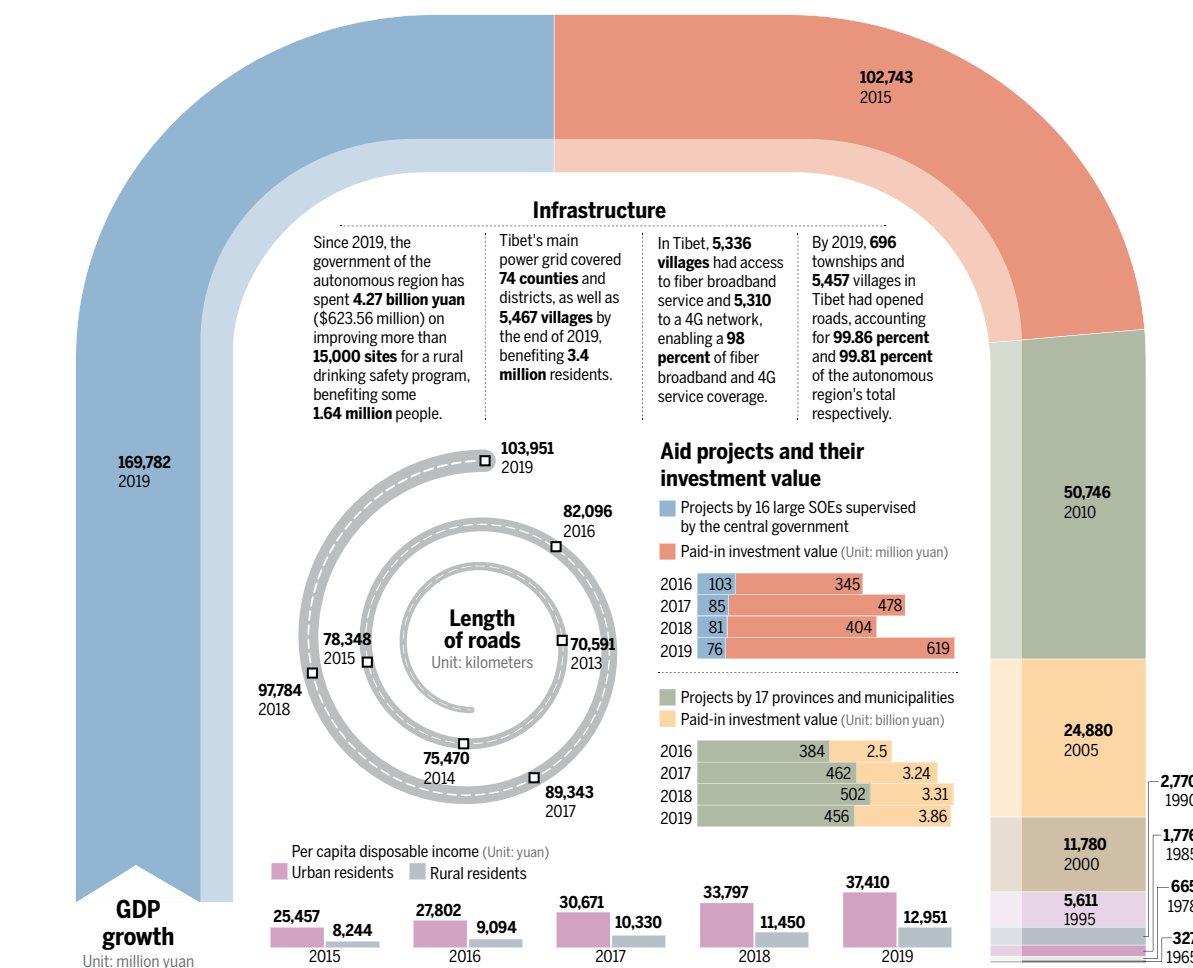
Rigzin Khdro, a startup business owner, has never forgotten the hardship of his childhood at a village in Nagchu, Tibet.

"In the past, my family and I lived in a mud hut with shabby home furniture and daily items," he recalled. "After strong winds, the house was always covered with dust."

His parents had been toiling away on a piece of land, aided by four cows, to support the entire family and afford him and his elder sister higher education, Renzeng Kazhu said.

"My childhood dream was to leave the village and see what the outside world would look like," he said.

Such dark memories started to brighten when the family moved to



92 per cent

of schools in Tibet had access to broadband internet by the end of 2019

prompted Rigzin Khdro to found his own company.

It launched a series of beauty products, including shampoo, hand cream and facial masks, generating 5 million yuan in annual business revenue, according to Rigzin Khdro.

"No matter how exhausted I was after work, when I returned home and had a cup of butter tea made by my mother, all the stress and strain of the job and life vanished," he said.

Rigzin Khdro said he is grateful for the supportive policies and encouraging environment that have helped him live a different life from his parents.

Official data show that Tibet is home to nearly 3,000 schools, ranging from preschool to higher education, vocational to special education. Their combined enrollment of some 841,500 students, includes 88,530 who came from outside the autonomous region.

Kalsang Dekyi is deputy head of a primary school in Metog county. As a delegate to the 2020 National People's Congress in May, he told media that with the progress in Tibet's education a growing number of students have left mountainous regions and won opportunities to change their lives.

The veteran educator was a college graduate who decided to return to his hometown and work as a teacher, helping more local children realize their dreams.

"Nowadays, a growing number of local residents have come to realize the significance of education," he said.

In recent years, online education has become increasingly popular in Tibet because it helps teachers and students in remote regions access educational resources at a lower cost.

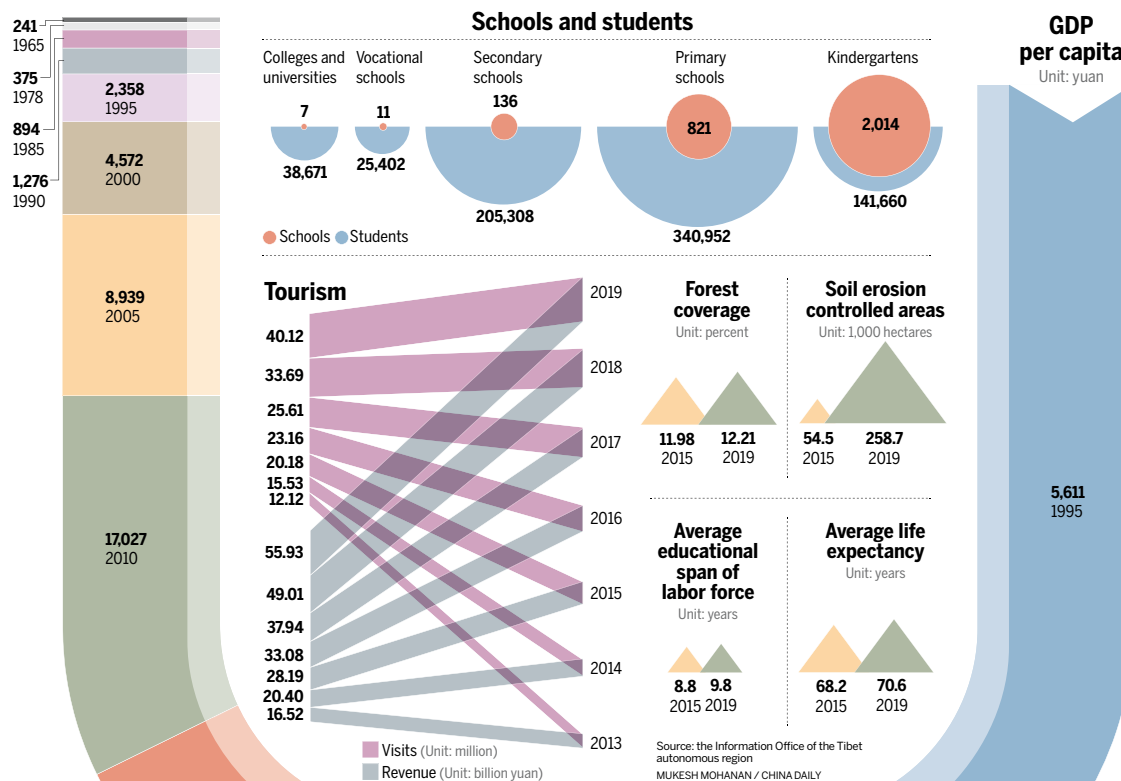
An online platform launched by the autonomous region's education department provides more than 120,000 textbooks, class videos and related resources for free. It has attracted nearly 600,000 registered users.

Behind the boom in online education is the widespread use of computers and rapid expansion of digital infrastructure.

By the end of 2019, more than 9,480 multimedia classrooms and nearly 790 computer-equipped classrooms had been established at primary and secondary schools in Tibet.

And 92 per cent of the schools in the region had access to broadband. By the end of this year, online educational services are planned to cover all of Tibet's primary and secondary schools, according to local authorities.

DRAMATIC CHANGES



a new house in 2017. Their neighborhood benefited from a housing program initiated by the local government.

In addition to improved living conditions, Rigzin Khdro said his family has since found a way to increase

their income, making a foray into tourism-related services.

He earned more than 40,000 yuan (\$8,030) selling barbecued food and Tibetan tea to visitors attracted to Nagchu Horse Racing Festival, a major traditional summer

event in northern Tibet. "That was the first fortune I had made. It was used to pay schooling fees for me and my younger brother," he said.

After his graduation from college in June 2018, local incentive policies to encourage startup businesses