Acknowledgement

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Acronyms

BPEP   Basic and Primary Education Project/Programme

CBO   Community Based Organisation

CDC   Curriculum Development Centre

CEP   Compulsory Primary Education

DFID   Department for International Development

DANIDA   Danish International Development Assistance

DOE   Department of Education

DOE   District Education Office/Officer

ECD   Early Childhood Development

EFA   Education For All

ERD   Education for Rural Development

FGD   Focus Group Discussion

FRC   Formative Research Committe

HT   Head Teacher

INGO   International Non-Governmental Organisation

MOE   Ministry of Education

MOES   Ministry of Education and Sports

NGO   Non-Governmental Organisation

OSP   Out-of-School Programmes

PEP   Primary Education Project

RC   Resource Centre

RCHT   Resource Centre School's Head Teacher

RCMC   Resource Centre Management Committee

RP   Resource Person

SEDU   Secondary Education Development Unit

SIP   School Improvement Plan/Programme

SMC   School Managing Committee

SS   Bachelor of Education

TG   Teachers' Guide

TRC   Teachers' Resource Centre

UNDP   United Nations Development Programmes

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

UNICEF   United Nations International Children Emergency Fund

VDC   Village Development Committee

VEC   Village Education Committee

Executive Summary

In Nepal the concept of RC system has been experienced and practised for more than two decades. Nepal has practised different models of RCs (ERD model RC, PEP model and BPEP model RC) for the improvement of primary education and literacy of the people. BPEP has continued the concept of RC so as to make the project successful providing professional support to the teachers of primary schools. Now the roles of RC are being changed in the context of EFA and more responsibilities will have to be undertaken in future. In this background a study of reconceptualization of the RC in the context of EFA framework of action and decentralization was conducted. The objectives of the study were: to explore the guiding principle of RC in Nepal; review the similar institutions of teacher support in the world; review the structure, responsibilities, and activities of RC programmemes; and find out the issues and make suggestion on the structure, responsibilities, and sustainability of the RC system.

The study was qualitative in nature and case study design was used. Four districts Lalitpur, Dhankuta, Humla and Kailali were selected as sample districts for the case study. The criteria of selection of the sample districts was to make sure the representation of different models of RC (ERD Seti model, PEP model and BPEP model) practised districts, topographical variations mountain, hill, and terai, and the district with rewarded RC. Those selected four districts have met the criteria. From the four districts nine RCs were studied. The respondents of the study were DEOs, Primary Education Section Chiefs in DEO offices, RPs, HTs, RCMC members, teachers, NGOs/CBOs members, and the community members. Observation and in-depth interview were the basic methods of data collection. From the analysis of the collected information the following findings have been drawn:

a) From the review of the different practices of RC in the world, the guiding principle of the establishment of RC is of professional development, access to resources and in-service training of the teachers. The same concept is found in introducing the RC in Nepal. The modality of RC changing from Teacher Resource Centre to school advisor/advisory group according to the changes in the education system.

b) The basic features of RC practiced in the world are basically in three modalities: i) organised and managed by the teachers themselves with the grant provided by the government, ii) a coordinator from outside the teachers and all the tutors/mentors from the teachers and the budget is provided by other agencies, and iii) organised and managed by the teachers but funding in sharing modality with teachers' levy, contribution of NGOs/CBOs, local government/state.

c) In the practices of RC in the world, the sustainability, ownership and effectiveness of the RC concept not answered adequately yet so some study has suggested some alternatives to the RC concept: i) Development of a model school and it is to be taken as RC in the local level. ii) Dropping out the idea of supporting teachers for the individual development, and support the children for learning and iii) priority on managing learning and teaching materials for the students and teachers.

d) Regarding the practice of the present RC modality, all teachers, Headteachers, and other community members accepted the RC strategy as the most important strategy for providing support to the primary teachers to improve the quality in education. The most positive impact of RC system in schools were regularity of teachers in the schools, training to the teachers, uniform examination and information dissemination.

e) Awareness was created among the school community in the need and use of educational and instructional planning through the RC.

f) The inter school competitions on extracurricular activities and the selection of best school among the clustered schools have brought a competitive feeling and this feeling has brought some positive changes in the teaching learning conditions.

g) RC has become one of the liaison agency to deliver the information from DEO to the schools and the education data to DEO and has become an agent of providing services and exercising some sort of control to some extent.

h) Monitoring and supervision function of RC was the weakest aspect in RC functions. Due to this condition there was question over the utility of the RC. Technical supervision services to the schools/teachers were rarely practised through RC.

i) From the story of the successful RCs, RP's potentiality, experiences, qualification and dedication is the most important factor for making the RC programmes effective in schools. And the RPs from the teacher or with teaching experience were found comparatively better in providing professional services to the teachers.

j) Resource centre is not a resource centre in reality to provide resources to the schools and sharing the resources among the schools. Almost nothing of this service was found in the sampled RCs.

k) There is a big problem and issue in the ownership, accountability and sustainability of the RC system. Schools and community have not owned RC as their own institution, they have a feeling that it is the government institution and government should provide every thing to the RC. Other important element lacking is the accountability of RPs in their works. The ownership and accountability problem inherent in the RC system is also creating a problem of sustainability.

l) Even the small amount of resources provided to RC, there were cases of misutilization and under utilisation of the resources.

m) Number of schools attached in the cluster of the sampled RPs were found comparatively greater in number with respect to the responsibilities and function given to the RP. Similarly the distance between school and RC was found considerably greater in remote and hill areas.

n) The present RC system has a uniform policy and programmes through out the country. The diversity of the country is not receptive for the uniform policy and programmes.

o) There is a conflict among RPs, and between DEO and RC in undertaking the duties due to power relation.

p) Due to close monitoring, supervision, and comparatively more financial resources provided to RC, ERD Seti model, and PEP model of RC were effective in the perception of the recipients.

q) The present RC system has not included the private school.

r) The RCMC in the beginning was constituted in some sampled districts, whereas in other places till now RCMC is not constituted. In those districts where the RCMC was constituted, it was not functioning effectively except with some exception.

s) There were set criteria for the selection of the best RCs in the district, regional and national level, however, the questions were raised on the transparency and competitiveness of the set criteria.

t) In the sampled districts, some of the RPs were found less capable in undertaking the roles and responsibilities of the present RC programmes. So there is a need to review the selection criteria and the process too.

On the basis of the findings of this study, recommendations are made into two categories namely short-term and long-term actions. In the short term action is targeting the improvement in the present structure and in the long term there are suggestions on dropping out the present RC modality and adopting alternatives for the accountability and sustainability.

Suggestions for Short-term actions

1. RCMC should be functional to make management and implementation of the RC programmes effective. At present RCMC is not constituted or if constituted not functional. So at first RCMC should be constituted in each RC, and roles, responsibilities, right and duties should be defined legally and execution of the assignments should be obligatory. In the centrally designated programmes of RC, RCMC should have the right to readjust the programmes according to local needs. The rules and regulation should spell out that RP should be accountable to RCMC and DEO.

2. If there are more than 10 schools in one RC, there should be sub-clusters associating 5 - 7 schools in each sub-cluster. The RP of the RC should coordinate the sub-clusters. Each lead school of the sub-cluster should take the responsibility of supervision and monitoring to assist teachers of the clustered schools. For this there should be the incentives and resources facility available to the lead school in the sub-clusters.

3. At present RPs are seen more involved in so called supervision but it is the weakest part of the RC. The responsibility of supervision should go to the group of RC trainers and lead school in the sub-clustered area. Where there is no sub-cluster within the RC, this responsibility should go to the lead school and other secondary schools in the RC. RP should coordinate and follow up the practices. An operation calendar should be developed for the supervision programmes and follow up programmes.

4. RPs should also be made responsible for EFA programmes. RP should coordinate with VEC/VDC, RCMC and other NGOs/CBOs for in-school as well as out of school programmes for those who are liable to be out from the main stream of formal schooling. There should be the role of RP to orient all the VEC/VDC, RCMC and NGOs/CBOs members about the RC programmes and its involvement in the promotion of literacy and increasing access to primary education. Technical aspects of monitoring and management of the out of school programmes should be coordinated by RP.

5. At present, there are RPs working effectively but there are others who are not working well. There should be provision of replacing the ineffective RPs from the position with a set criteria. Similarly there should be a set criteria and process to appoint the new RPs. From this study it is seen that the experienced, dedicated and qualified persons from teaching profession are functioning relatively better. There should be a regular provision to train and refresh the employed RPs.

6. Many of the DEOs are (working as acting) from the school supervisors, so that there is a conflicting situation. The provision of Second Class DEO should be strictly implemented.

7. The RPs in the districts should be from the same base otherwise there arises a status conflict.

8. The same data are demanded from different offices of the MOES, which has given quite a lot of pressure on RPs and schools. The educational data solicitation form should be readjusted and should be collected from one point and the others should shared from it.

9. Training should be school based and the RP has to employ the locally available and qualified resource persons in the training instead of involving the RPs themselves to make the training more effective.

Suggestions for Long-term actions

1. Until now there is no study of the effectiveness of the present RC model in term of school management, supervision, teaching learning in the classroom, evaluation and testing and social mobilisation. A continuous evaluation of the implemented programmes is necessary for its effectiveness. With the recommendation of the study further modification or readjustment should be made in the programmes for functioning well.

2. Based on the review of the practised models aboard and in Neal and the empirical study of the present RC model of Nepal, the following alternative models are suggested:

   i. *Mobile RP for remote/mountain district*. This is not the concept of a single RP but of RPs. A team of experts of primary education should be constituted in the district. The experts may be from the schoolteachers or other locally available education practitioners. The individual by turn visits the school with a schedule prepared based on the local needs of the school. The RPs should have link to the DEO and the schools. They should be made fully accountable to the schools. Government should provide all the necessary financial support and other resources. This model can correct the present lacking of supervision, monitoring and training of the teachers in the remote and mountain districts. This model adopts 'on school training' instead of 'out of school training' and decreases the burden of teachers' absenteeism and training becomes life like. This model is very useful in the school where there are one or two teachers.

   ii. *School Base Model*: This is an integrated institutional model of RC fully organised and controlled by the teachers of the schools. This model is suggested for the hill and terai where there are more schools in the existing RC. At present there are 10 to 26 schools in a RC in the present study sample. It is quite impossible to take care by one RP. So a cluster of 5 – 7 schools is to be made and among the schools one

secondary or lower secondary should be selected as lead school. And this school should be developed as a resource school. The responsibility of training the teachers and supervision is of the lead school. There should be some additional tenure of the teachers so that there could not be hindrance in regular function of the school. The existing RC can coordinate some 2 –3 clusters and takes the responsibility of providing training to develop the trainer for the clusters. The present functions of training and supervision of the schools will be lifted out and the role of coordinating all the stakeholders and organizations for the EFA plans of actions and decentralization should be given to the present RP. In other words the present RC would be a unit of DEO working for administrative and coordinating functions (may be Assistant District Education Officer) but the supervision and training responsibility should be given to the lead school. For financial resources, there should be a sharing modality. The government, the local body, community organisations, and even teachers and schools have to contribute. The sharing modality should be stated explicitly in the rules and regulations.

This model can provide adequate supervision and training support to the teachers and schools. Form the financial point of view, this could be more sustainable because of much sharing from different sectors. This investment from the local level brings concern to the local people to see its effectiveness and certainly the accountability increases.

iii. *Advisory model*: Schools according to their convenience constitute a cluster. This cluster will constitute a group of advisors. The advisors will be taken from the ex-teachers and/or from other locally available freelance education experts or practitioners. The group of advisor will select one member as co-ordinator. This group would be accountable to the schools. The responsibility of fund collecting and spending goes to the schools but a small budget be allocated to each school from the government for teacher development. This could make the schools obliged to manage the advisory model and DEO can circulate the directives for constituting advisory group. Individual school pays for the service. This is a concept base purely professional model.

This model is targeted for the school in urban areas where still schools are practising their own organisation for the development of their teachers. In some urban areas the schools are rich and they could manage their quality standard themselves. The DEO should make provision of motivating the schools to such model of teacher centre. There should be a provision for the teacher's promotion or grade allowance on the basis of the participation in the professional development activities.

This model can provide the need based training and both the service provider and service recipients become accountable for the activities. It can bring the proper utilisation of the resources (budget), local participation increases and the RC concept sustains.

iv. *Decentralized model:* The Decentralisation Act has kept the provision that the management of schools should be handed over to the local community especially local government body. According to the spirit of the Act, now schools are handed over to the community and they are running under the management of the school management community. So it is reasonable to hand over the teacher support system to the local level. Local government bodies like VEC can manage the resource centre. The national budget should allocate the budget for this provision to local government, and there should be a provision by law that the local government should allocate the budget to resource centre. The local government can replicate the present model of RC under its management with sub-clustering the RC with no more than 5 – 7 schools in one cluster. The present RP work as technical advisor of the local management committee but the tutors are from the teachers themselves

This model provides need base service, makes people accountable themselves, close supervision and monitoring and the concept of resource centre will be owned by the stakeholders.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Basic education is the right and a necessity for every citizen of a country. The government of Nepal has also accorded high priority to basic education to all citizens. Different initiatives and attempts have been taken to increase access, participation and quality in primary education. A pilot project, Education for Rural Development (ERD project) in Seti Zone was initiated in 1982. Two years later, Primary Education Project (PEP 1984 – 1992) was implemented in six selected districts. Both programmes aimed to increase quality in primary education. Similarly, Nepal endorsed Jomtien Declaration (1990) on ' Education for All'. Among the set goals of EFA, one goal is quality primary education. To achieve the goals, the government has implemented – Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP 1992 – 1997), and Primary Education Development Project (PEDP 1992 - 1997). All these programmes aimed to provide easy access to primary education for all, and quality improvement in primary education in Nepal. Management improvement is one of the needs to bring reform and improvement in primary education was one of the strategies of these projects. So BPEP-II (1998-2003) aimed to strengthen district-level management and planning of primary education. From ERD Seti Project to the BPEP- II, Resource Centres in different structures have been involving in the whole process of managing reform in primary schools. The motto and programmes of resource centre in the previous two projects ERD Seti project and PEP were to provide help to the teachers in their respective field of teaching. The resource centre in those days equipped the teachers with skills in preparing teaching materials and use them in classroom teaching, different strategies of teaching, and evaluation techniques for both formative and summative purposes. With the same targets, but adding some additional administrative works, present Resource Centres are working for providing training to the teachers, supervising schools and collecting educational data for the planning of better management. Administratively, RCs are linked to the BPEP and DEO in the district.

BPEP-I, and BPEP-II have targets of enhancement of the quality of teaching/learning situation in primary schools, quality of teaching learning materials including textbooks, teacher development and building of support system for the teachers. Each one is the supplementary programme to the other for increasing access and retention of primary age children in primary schools. Resource Centre and provision of school management committee were adopted in education policy as a tier of educational management (EFA 2000). At present, there are 1296 RPs working in Resource Centres all over the country to support teachers and school improvement. Teacher training provision is expanded through recurrent cluster-based teacher training; long-term in-service teacher training (2.5 months × 4) and short-term recurrent teacher training. All the primary-level teachers are expected to participate to a minimum of 10 days classroom-based training in a year. This training is perceived as one of the elements for the quality of primary education. Government has taken the training of the teachers as one obligation to insure quality in primary education in the formal schooling. The present RC is undertaking this obligation.

At present the government has emphasised on implementing the policy of decentralised management in schools for ensuring quality in primary education. Under this policy, community can manage school forming a Management Committee under the rule and regulation of the Education Act. Government will provide the grant as usual. The aims of this sort of management transfer to the community is to make the public schools as community property and make people accountable for the best functioning. After this transfer of management to the local community, there is a need to decentralise professional support management to the local level. In the context of decentralisation, it is necessary to reconceptualize the roles and functions of the RC/RP.

With various efforts to bring primary age children in school, there is still about 19% illiterate primary school age children (DOE, 2003). Different alternate schooling programs have been implemented targeting these children. The Education for All Plan of Action (2001 – 2015) has set several programmes to address the people who are deprived from the primary education and to enhance quality in the primary education. The EFA Plan of Action has accorded roles and responsibilities to RC to fulfil the programs to

work as main actor in some programmes and as a co-operating actor in others (EFA Plan of Action 2001 – 2015).

Similarly, a study was conducted on Resource Centre structure (CERES, 1995). This study has given some interesting findings that stakeholders had positive attitude to the institution but negative attitude to the day to day management, inadequacy of human resource and unavailability of the RPs in the centres. The other findings are lack of supervision and monitoring, lower representation of the local people in RCMC, personal quality of the RPs in conducting their activities. These findings indicate that there are some weaknesses in effective functioning of the RCs. So, it is necessary to find out the issues that are playing a significant roles in effective implementation of the programmes that are given to the responsibility of the RC

The perceived concept of resource centre now is as a vital agency for teacher support for quality primary education. However, it is not so in reality according to the recipients. On the other hand the Resource Persons have their own complaints of inadequacies and limitations. Previous study showed a question over the effective functioning of the RC on one hand, and on the other hand there is a context of decentralisation and EFA that has expected significant roles in quality promotion in primary school education. In order to make the RC best function as an agency of teacher support for the promotion of the existing status of the primary education on one hand, and on the other hand a co-ordinating and supporting agency to the EFA programmes, this study will try to answer the questions related to the reconceptualization of the RC's in the context of decentralisation in education.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the guiding concepts / principles of RC in Nepal;

2. To review the models of RC and similar institutions that are in practice in some countries;

3. To review the structure, responsibilities and activities of RC programmes;

4. To identify issues regarding functions and programmes of RC;

5. To suggest

(i) Suitable RC structure;

(ii) Strategies/measures for sustainability of RC; and

(iii) Strategies for proactive roles and responsibilities of RC in the context of decentralisation and EFA.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the guiding principles behind the strategy of resource centre for the improvement of school education in other countries and Nepal?

2. What are the different models of RC practised in some countries?

3. What functions/ activities are RCs undertaking at present?

4. What are the current issues affecting the desired functioning of the RCs?

5. What roles and responsibilities would RPs have to undertake for the effective functioning of RC through participation and mobilisation of stakeholders?

6. What measures can be taken to make RC as an institution that the stakeholders themselves have to support for its sustainability and development and carry out proactive roles in the context of EFA?

7. What should be the workable RC structure in the context of EFA and decentralised management?

CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1 Development of Resource Centre Concept and Practice

The concept of resource centre is not new in education management. It has been in operation in many countries in the world since 1950s. Many terms such as nucleus, zones, complexes, school learning cells, clusters or satellite schools are used to describe the phenomena (Wheeler et al., 1986, p. 42, in Khaniya, 1997, p. 17). These terms can have different realities in meaning and practices. However, they generally clustered 10 to 20 schools within a region and pooling resources together in order to develop and use learning materials more intensely to strengthen teachers' skills and performance and thus to improve the educational attainment of pupils (Kumarak et al., 1986, p 5, in Khaniya, 1997, p 17).

In the 1960s 'Teacher Resource Centre (TRC)' concept and practice was begun in the name of Teachers' Centre in Britain. The purpose of these Teachers' Centre was to support teachers' professional development, provide access to resources and in-service training facilities to teachers. Since 1970, this model was promoted in various developed as well as developing countries. Nepalese practice of Resource Centre (RC), which was started in 1981 in Education for Rural Development (ERD)Seti Project, can also be described as the replication of the international concepts of Teachers' Resources Centre as a strategy for quality improvement in primary education, literacy and social awareness programme.

In Britain during late 1960s to early 1980s Teachers' Centres were working as the centre for curriculum development and dissemination, and in-service teacher training. As a centre for curriculum development, the Teachers' Centres organised local groups (including advisors from local level) for curriculum development at school level and curriculum materials for classroom use. As the centre for dissemination and training, TRCs disseminated developed curricula and materials and conducted in-service training for teachers (Knamiller. 1999). The warden was responsible for the management of Teachers' Centre's activities. The centre got some fund from Local Education Authority

(LEA). There were lack of well-defined functions and responsibilities of Warden. Therefore, 'Centres were only as good as Wardens' (Knamiller, 1999). The role of Warden seemed confusing as it was neither an advisory, nor as a senior teacher or a local education authority officer and s/he had to be a little of all these things and more besides. The broader roles of Warden (Weindling et al, 1983, in Knamiller 1999) identified were as follows:

1. Managing of centre and day to day running,

2. Encouraging curriculum development,

3. Organising in-service training for teachers,

4. Responding to teachers needs,

5. Working with the centre committee,

6. Liaisoning and co-operating with the advisory team.

Different roles expected by the Warden demanded that s/he had to be worked as 'a Jack of all trades' (Weindling et al, 1983 in Knamiller, 1999).

Morant (1987, in Knamiller, 1999) remarked that teacher centres were not receiving additional resources on the scale as needed to be a fully effective in-service education and training providers and as a change agent for curriculum development. He further raised question of stability of the resource centre on the very circumstances (Knamiller, 1999, 203). Provision of national curriculum by 1988 in Britain and the introduction of new assessment system influenced the funding modality of Teachers' Centres. These changes influenced the functions of Teachers' Centres and relevancy of Teachers' Centres began to decline (Knamiller, 1999). The declining status of the Teacher Centre was the development of other best alternative strategies for teacher development according to the changing needs of the teachers according as the changes in curriculum policy. Thus, the funding modality had also been changed. Now in Britain many Teachers' Centres have been closed and some Local Education Authorities have established training centres that are not limited to teacher training. Similarly, some Local Education Authorities have started appointing teacher advisors in schools.

The concept of teacher resource centre has been practised in different form and organisation in developing countries. Teacher Resource Centre strategy has been practised in developing countries mostly as donor aided programme. Some examples from Asian and African countries have been discussed here. In Andra Pradesh of India, the Teachers' Resource centre is a meeting place for teachers of a cluster of 7-13 schools. Teachers have to attend six mandatory meetings each year in their resource centres. Some schools have separate meeting halls, others used a class room for their meetings. The resource school principal works as the secretary of TRC but the assistance secretary is elected from the teachers of the cluster schools. Generally, presentation of lessons prepared by the teachers and discussions on them are the routine activities of the TRC meeting. A very small amount of money was given to the Resource Centre by the government. Two projects – 'District Primary Education Project (DPEP)' and 'The Andra Pradesh Primary Education Project (APPEP)' have been working in this modality of teacher support (Knamiller, 1999).

In Zambia, 16 provincial resource centres were run by subject co-ordinators (in three subjects mathematics, science and English) Two projects 'Action to Improve English Maths and Science (AIEMS)' and 'Self-help Action Plan for Education (SHAPE)' were run as the DFID funded projects. Each district had a co-ordinator and three subject trainers. The co-ordinator is an experienced primary teacher. These Resource Centres had roles to manage a cascade system of in-service training and as resource centre.

In Kenya, TRCs ideas, in the beginning, were started in 1971. It had followed the British model and was working as the centres for English teachers in secondary schools (MS- DANIDA, 1996, P 35). There are 25 TRCs in Kenya. These TRCS have been working to provide reading materials for the English readers and reference books for the teachers. Some occasional small in-service teacher training programmes, based on local needs, are conducted. Similarly, Teacher Advisory Centres (TACs) are working for primary teachers. These centres have been working as the teacher support system through organizing workshops, providing references and other materials and follow up supervision. There are districts as well as zonal TACs. Tutors of TACs visit teachers of 10-15 primary schools. Tutors are full-time advisers who work with the zonal inspector and facilitate workshops. Workshops are either zonal or school based. After each

workshop the TAC tutor provided follow-up visits to the teachers. Under the School Improvement Programme (SIP), there are a TAC tutor and a Programme Officer (PO), who work with about 12 primary schools within 3-5kms. Each TAC has storage for materials and a meeting room for workshops. POs and Tutors of TAC organised need-based workshops and support for follow up supervision. This model was regarded as one of the successful model and shared in other developing countries. However, there is doubt expressed that whether a model successful in one demand and context could be used as strategy for improving education elsewhere (Gough, 1989, Hawas 1971, Hopper, 1996; in Knamiller, 1999).

A regional workshop on Teachers Resource Centre was organised in Arusha, Tanzania in 1996. The workshop provided an opportunity to share experiences of Teachers Resource Centres of the countries Eritrea, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The workshop report shows that Teachers Resource Centres have been functioning in all of these countries, although the working modality varies. For example, in Eritrea, Teachers Resource Centres have been working in national, provincial and school level in the name of Pedagogical Centres (PCs). These Pedagogical Centres have been working as a teacher support- system in conducting training and doing action researches on teaching learning.

In Kenya, Teacher Resource Centres have been working in two forms. For primary school 'Teacher Advisory Centres (TACs)' can be taken as Teachers Resource Centres and for secondary school 'Teacher Resource Centres' have been working. In South Africa, the National Department supports Teacher Resource Centres, but TRC policies are formulated by respective provincial department.

So from the above discussion on the RCs models in Africa, there are differences in functioning, funding, organisation and management of TRCs. However, the main function of these TRCs was in-service teacher education and the centre was organised by the teachers themselves.

Teachers' Resource Centres of many of these countries heavily depended on external donor supports. However, some countries have regularised with the system. For example, in Lesotho, the funding of Teachers Resource Centres fully depended on

government budget. Similarly, some countries have the provision of funding from local institutions and membership subscription. For example, in Kenya, besides the funding from District Development Committee and District Education Board, there was a provision of membership and supports from other organisations – service clubs (Lions, Rotary etc), local industries and businesses, religious institutions and foundations, publishers, donors etc (MS - DANIDA, 1996, p 38). Kenyan model can be considered as probably sustainable TRC strategy because of its supporters from different organisations in local community level, a matter of ownership and accountability for sustainable development of the TRC.

Although activities of Teachers' Resource Centres of above-mentioned countries presented in the Arusha workshop show that they have been working as a teacher support system, the questions about ownership, sustainability and the effectiveness of Teachers' Resource Centres are not being fully answered in different cases. Similarly, there is also some confusion on either Teachers Resource Centres as the extended hands of Ministry of Education or a technical institution for local education consultancy and support for the schools as well as teachers and other personnel involved in education development. Interestingly all the Teachers Resource Centres from above-mentioned countries have externally supported roots of development. TRCs of most of these countries began with the assistance of ODA/DFID and DANIDA. However, each country has been trying to develop its own working modality.

Although the TRCs model was promoted in many developing countries from Britain, it had never been comprehensively assessed either in Britain or abroad on the effectiveness of RCs in students learning and quality enhancement of education in primary education (Knamiller, 1999). Moreover, the effectiveness of TRCs has to be assessed in relation to student learning and quality of education, which is not studied comprehensively yet.

2.2 Effectiveness of RC Strategy in Quality of Education

In 1999 the University of Leeds School of Education with the assistance of DFID/ODA conducted a study on "The Effectiveness of Teacher Resource Centre Strategy' including cases from Andhra Pradesh of India, Kenya, Zambia and Nepal. The

study was conducted during 1997-1998 for DFID. The purpose of this study was to assess effectiveness of Teachers' Resource Centre as part of the strategy in helping to improve the quality of education in schools in developing countries. The report states that although the effectiveness of Teachers' Resource Centre on schools improvement and pupils learning in Britain was not done comprehensively, the model was applied in different countries. However, the Teachers' Resource Centre (TRC) was regarded as a successful strategy for supporting teachers' professional development in Britain. Since the end of 1980s the teacher centre strategy has got less preference in Britain due to introduction of national curriculum and the focus was shifted to school improvement plans as a whole instead of individual teacher development.

Despite the variety of approaches used and services provided, the Resource Centres appeared to make very little contribution to improved teaching and learning in schools (Knamiller, 1999). In this connection, the study identified number of problems related to the function of TRCs. Some of the problems of TRCs stated in the report are as follows:

- Isolated from schools so that there is lack of impact on students' learning,

- Most training are not relevant to the classroom situation,

- There is a problem of sustainability in both sense, financially and professionally,

- There is a problem of teacher absenteeism in schools when they participate in RC's activities.

For the effective TRCs functioning, they need to move away from being a training and advisory centre for teachers to acting primarily as resource providers for children (Knamiller, 1999). Although the study report suggested an alternative use of Teachers' Resource Centre as the resource centre to students and teachers, it has also given four different options for Teachers' Resource Centre. The study found that the Aga Khan Education Service (AKES) Model in Kenya was the best model among the model they studied. In this model, the Programme Officer worked for 3 to 4 schools for a whole year with Teacher Advisory Centre tutor. After completing the workshop POs and TAC tutors go to the schools for follow up supervision. The strengths of this model are minimal teachers' absenteeism, the teachers get the advisory services at hand. Presence and work

of tutors and POs in the school encourages better functioning of classroom activities with better attendance of teachers. The study has taken this model as one of the options of present practices of TRCs. Another option suggested by the study is development of model school as the resource centre in a cluster of optimum size and location of schools. The third option is to drop the idea of the TRC as an advisory, in-service centre in favour of it being a resource centre. The fourth option will be given more priority for textbooks and associated learning materials and learning environment management than a focus on the training of teachers as an individual development.

2.3 Development and Practices of Resource Centre in Nepal

In Nepal, the concept of resource centre in the form of clustering schools and supervising could be seen as far back as 1953, when Development Blocks were established in some districts to take care of schools' development tasks. The main idea behind this concept was to develop a local secondary school (called leader school) as the nucleus of local educational organisation, and the other schools in the periphery (called feeders) as the cells (Khaniya, 1997, p. 21). A piloting of the resource centre like strategy was initiated in 1980 in Jhapa and Chitwan district. In this system, Head Teacher of secondary or lower secondary school was responsible for supervising primary schools within the cluster. This system could not work longer and the system was dropped out without completing the piloting phase. Actual practice of Resource Centre began with the implementation of ERD (Education for Rural Development) project in Seti zone with the assistance of UNESCO/UNDP and UNICEF. The project was started in 1982 and worked for 10 years. The basic philosophy of the project was to promote the role of education for transformation of rural community into a conscious and productive community. Within this framework of this philosophy, the project took initiatives for quality primary education including adult literacy programme. This was a pilot project designed to raise the quality of instruction in primary education through improved supervisory system and increased in-service teacher training by clustering 6 to 10 schools in one cluster and taking one secondary or lower secondary school as resource centre. There is no any provision of RP in the RC but the RC school was provided with the salary of an extra teacher and some extra allowances for RC school's head teacher (Shrestha and Maskey,

1987). Functions of RC school under the ERD Seti project was as follows (Shrestha and Maskey, 1987):

1. Supervision of teaching in regular schools, adult classes, Chelibeti classes, Village Reading Centres at least once in a month,

2. Conduct a meeting of satellite school (SS) teachers on project issues once in a month (a Friday),

3. Organise co-curricular activities for all SSs,

4. Arrange to collect the project's supplies to the schools from the airport or the road ahead,

5. Make accommodation and food available to all participants during a training/ workshop session in its premises,

6. Act as a point to administer or deliver any programmeme package of the project,

7. Act as a demonstration school carrying out innovative ideas and practices for all SSs for improving education within the cluster.

The above-mentioned functions of RC in ERD Seti project showed that RCs were not only teacher support agency but also a local venue for project supplies and activities. Crowley (1990) notes that the objectives of the Seti Resource Centre was to function as a training centre, a channel for the supply of materials and to provide supervisory support to literacy programmes and clusters of satellite schools. The resource centre was established with three main functional roles: *as training centre, supervision centre and supply centre.* RC system and its training programmes, material construction, supervision system and community development activities have received wide appreciation (CERID, 1986). However, increased workload of RC school effected teaching-learning situations of the RC school.

The structure of the RC in ERD Seti Project was not administrative in nature. It was not kept under any higher authority but there was a multiple monitoring mechanism. The project people in different tires monitored the activities of the RC. It was institutional model fully professional in nature. All the persons involved in the RC works were the teachers, the professionals working for the professional development. The main resources

the RC school could get the salary of a secondary teacher. The cause of success was the dedication of the teachers who involved in the RC works, the monitoring system and the quality of the RPs that the project had the provision of quality development of the RPs. That was a new innovation in the country and due to this novelty effect, every one was positive and functioned effectively.

When the Seti Project was in operation, a new project Primary Education Project (PEP), a donor funded project, started in 1984 in six districts of Nepal. This PEP project also continued the strategy of RC but the model of PEP was basically different than that of ERD. The main difference was shift from the institutional model to an individual model RC. The project people were responsible for the RC activities. The PEP also implemented school-clustering system with a centrally located secondary or lower secondary school as RC school within the cluster schools. However, RC activities were not the responsibility of RC school and RC school's Head Teacher, it was the responsibility of a project staff - Resource Person (RP) with the assistance of Field Co-ordinator (FC). There was a Field Co-ordinator (FC) for six RCs, responsible for planing, supervising and monitoring the project activities. It became a separate administrative unit. Ultimately, it could be seen in the form of administrative cum professional individual base model.

The role of Resource Centre has been perceived positively to improve quality of teaching of teachers through regular supervision and teacher training (CERID, 1986; CERID, 1989; CERES, 1995) and BPEP I and BPEP II have continued the strategy of Resource Centre. BPEP I, introduced in 1992, implemented PEP model of RC but the provision of one Programme Co-ordinator (PC) in each project district was introduced with dropping the provision of FC. Planning, co-ordinating and monitoring the BPEP activities within the district were the main functions of PC. In the BPEP II the same model has been applied with some modifications. In BPEP II, the provision of PC has been dropped out and the responsibility of co-ordinating the activities of Basic and Primary Education Programmes has been given to one of the section officers of DEO (District Education Office) and the RCs are under the control of DEO. The functions of the RC are more administrative. The present BPEP RC model is institutionalized bureaucratic administrative with professional in nature. It is more administrative in nature

than professional on the basis of its present structure. Presently RCs are functioning with RPs through out the county. RPs hold Bachelor Degree in Education in general. The position of RPs are three types – a RP who came to job on contract basis and not permanent in tenure, the second type is a school teacher as RP, and the other is School Supervisor (SS) looking after a resource centre. Even more categories can be traced out. The RPs, except School Supervisors as RP, are of two categories viz, one is directly appointed in personal judgement and the other is appointed from the competition of the commission. Because of the different types of RPs in the present model, there could be no harmony in the working pattern.

The activities of RC are supported by Basic and Primary Education Project with financial assistance of different donor agencies. The main activities now expected to be performed by RPs are as follows (DOE, 2059; BPEP, 2050):

1. Management of RC including preparations of annual and monthly plans of the RC,

2. Conduction and follow up of training/workshop/seminars,

3. Friday meeting with teachers,

4. Head teacher meetings,

5. RCMC meetings,

6. General inspection of schools,

7. Classroom observation and discussion with teachers,

8. Model lesson presentation,

9. RC profile preparation,

10. Educational data collection and demonstration,

11. Organisation of extra curricular activities,

12. Community mobilisation,

13. Management of RC level examinations,

14. Instructional material preparation/management,

15. Curriculum implementation,

16. Selection of model school,

17. Participation on district level meetings,

18. Co-ordination with different activities and agencies,

19. Report preparation,

20. Innovative works,

21. Others

These functions of RC/RP show that RC has to perform instructional as well as number of administrative works including social leadership role for the promotion of education in primary school. Moreover, the administrative work may dominate the instructional functions, because it will be lustre to perform the administrative duty and exercise administrative power. It can be said that more works is no work. Besides, the RCs are practised through out the country in a large scale. It is not a newer concept at present because it has been practising for more than two decades.

In the development of Resource Centre strategy for the quality primary education, it is seen that the roles and functions of RCs are increasing and being holistic in nature for the improvement of education. From the beginning to the evolved form of RC at present its guiding principle was support provider to the school education at the lowest level of education structure. The services are of both human resources and material resources.

Critically examining the practices of the three models in Nepal, the development proceeded from professional management model to administrative unit of DEO/government. In the beginning the RC was considered as a concept rather than a separate wings in the administrative structure. Teachers themselves managed and supported each other. For instance in ERD model, school had taken the responsibility. Only the teachers were involved in providing support to the teachers, but due to project base programme, there was a supervision of and support to the RC personnel. When the next model PEP implemented, it took administrative flavour. There was a provision of Field Co-ordinator and RPs. RPs had to work under the guidance of FC. There was division of power and hierarchy. Some time there could be seen the conflicts between the two personnel. So this model tended to be more administrative and individual base. Now the present model has become more administrative and less professional, because it is

working as a separate institution among the school, a mid-layer of the educational administration. Different types of RPs are working and they have different value system and power relation. There maintains different hierarchy among the RPs, nevertheless they are working for the same purpose.

2.4 Issues and options in the RC Strategy

Effectiveness study of TRC by Leeds University raises serious doubts about the effectiveness of TRC strategy to have an impact on the quality of teaching and learning in schools and classrooms (Knamiller, 1999). The study found that there was lack of linkage and correlation between training provided by resource centres and the need of school. This shows that TRC based training has not been transferred to school management and learning management in the classroom. The problem is the inability of TRC strategy to penetrate into schools to the degree necessary to improve the learning environment and the classroom performance of teachers (Knamiller,1999). The situation suggests that there is a need of school based teacher development strategy. For this the study is in the favour of the options other than the use of TRC as a training centre and advisory centre. TRCs are generally perceived as the strategies to provide professional services to teachers to enable them to perform effectively in their classroom (MS- DANIDA, 1996). However, the study conducted by Leeds University (1999) has given a ground to question about this perception on TRCs and encouraged thinking about an alternative use of resource centres in the context of particular problem in a country rather than borrowing exactly the same model as practised in foreign land.

The review of literatures on TRC/RC raised a number of issues on present RC system of Nepal. Some of the issues from literatures are described here. The TRCs are generally perceived as a strategy to provide professional services to teachers to enable them to perform effectively in their classroom (MS- DANIDA, 1996). In Nepal there is a lack of comprehensive study on effectiveness of RC and its impact on students' learning. The study report conducted by Leeds University found that there is extremely little observable evidence of the transfer of pedagogical message or resources from SEDUs to the schools, classroom's lessons and students' exercise book. One of the causes of failure of RC to improve student learning is cultural gap between pedagogical training conducted in RCs and school practices, teachers, students and parents culture (Knamiller, 1999).

There is a conceptual confusion about the objectives and functions of RCs. On the one hand, heavy involvement of RP is seen in administrative matters at present and on the other hand, official statement shows that RC as an agency working for the professional support of the teachers, and support for school management. In this situation the questions, 'should the RCs be developed as an instrument of educational improvement or as an instrument of teacher control?' has yet to be answered.

There is a growing issue on institutionalisation of RC structure in line with educational decentralisation framework. Presently, the RC is not seen as an institutionalised system, rather the functions of RC seem to be RP's individual business. BPEP Master plan (MOE, 1997) argued that if the RC structure is to function as an instrument of decentralisation of education, many questions still remain to be answered, for instance, can RCs be taken as the structure to support school for administrative as well as educational matter? How do RCs work for supervision, control, planing and reporting? Who are the authorities and who is RP accountable to?

Although there is a provision of RCMC, most of RCMC has not been effective in discharging its roles and responsibilities (CERES, 1995). Similarly, some study reports have claimed that RC in Nepal have not been able 'to open the school door' (Knamiller, 1999). For example, RCs are situated outside the school and they generally work outside the school and classrooms, RC is the venue for most of the training, workshops, seminars and discussion sessions, which is generally remote for most schools and thus teacher absenteeism on classroom has negatively effected students' learning. Lack of school based training/ workshops and follow up programmes may be one of the causes of failure of RC to support teaching and learning.

There is a doubt about the qualification and skills of RPs for the instructional support to the teachers. Among the RPs some have no teaching experiences and others have teaching experiences in secondary schools but not in primary schools. The RP training seems not sufficient for instructional and professional support to the teachers. These are the great questions for effectiveness of RC strategy for school improvement and raise quality in teaching and learning in primary schools. Therefore, it is necessary to search out the answer of these questions for restructuring the present RC model in the concept of decentralisation and education for all.

The question of ownership and optimum use of RC hall is also an issue related to the present RC system. The RC buildings are constructed within school premise, and thus the RC school and the RC raise the question of ownership of the RC building. At the same time, use of RC hall only for meeting, training, workshop and so on shows that it is not utilised at optimum level. The RC does not seem to have been fully utilised for social, educational and cultural purposes of the local community (CERID, 1986).

The question of sustainability of present RC system is a big issue for academic as well as professional field. From the beginning, RCs have been functioning with the donor funds, without donor support the system is financially hard to survive. Similarly, without altering the present functions and management system of RC it will be difficult to sustain long time because of dynamism in innovation as per the changing context of education in the country. Presently RC is serving only for the public schools, thus the inclusion of private schools within the RC system is a challenging issue for an appropriate structure and function of RCs.

Regarding issues of RC functioning, Khaniya (1997, pp. 47 -55) has given some critical issues on the headings: recruitment and career development of resource persons, training and monitoring of resource persons, workload of resource persons, use and equipment of resource centres, relationship with communities and compatibility with the secondary level.

The issues discussed above demands some urgent alternative approach to present RC system. A comprehensive study may be helpful to identify additional issues and alternative approaches of present practices of RCs. However, without school based teacher support system with 'reflexive practice' (Schon, 1983) of teachers, present individual input based teacher support system may not be able to contribute sufficiently to quality learning of students. At the same time, it is necessary to find out the way out for the RC system to promote decentralisation of educational services.

EFA National Plan of Action (2001 – 2015) has specified RC has a role of main actor or co-operating actor in implementation of the policy and programmes set in the plan. To undertake the additional but indispensable responsibility of EFA, it is necessary to rethink on the existing structure and sustainability policy in future.

Summary

In a nutshell, from the above discussion of the review of the literatures and the previous studies related to RC, the following lessons to be learned regarding the RC system:

- In the practices of the RC in the world, the concept of RC was initiated in the context of decentralized education practice in which the schools had to design curriculum and teachers should have been prepared in developing and implementing the education programmes in the schools. In such a context RC supported teachers from curriculum designing to classroom teaching-learning and assessment.

- Among the different modalities of the RCs – donor funded, teachers self managed and government and the teachers shared modality, teacher managed was found successful and sustainable. So it seems better to involve teachers more in the RC management and functioning for effective functioning of the RCs.

- The greater difference in the modality of the RC in Nepal and other countries, is that RC in Nepal is both administrative as well as professional supporting government agency, whereas in the other countries it was only for the professional support.

- From the National experience of the successful RC of Seti Project, it was not much continued in the same modality. So it is necessary to think before changing the modality of RC judging the effectiveness of the practised ones with its strength, limitation and pervasiveness in the context of wider application. Change after change may bring no motion in the education quality. So change should be done in rational and critical base.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Design of the Study

The design of the study was perfectly qualitative. The study was conducted as case study selecting RCs as case. Interview and observation were the methods adopted for the collection of data. Besides, different documents analysis was done for searching out the best practices regarding RC management and functioning to incorporate in the Nepalese context. Different policy and programmes documents related to primary education and Education for All were reviewed to link them to RC's reconceptualized dimensions.

3.2 Sample and Sampling

Three models of RCs were practiced in Nepal. Education for the Rural Development RC model (ERD RC model) was piloted in four districts Doti, Bajhang, Bajura and Achham in the first phase in 1980. And in the later phase this model was practiced in Kailali. Similarly, Primary Education Project model RC (PEP model RC) was practiced in the six districts –Jhapa, Dhanakuta, Tanahu, Kaski, Dang, and Surkhet in 1985. So these districts have longer experiences of RCs practice. The latest one BPEP model RC, is being practiced now in Nepal. Representation of the districts that have longer experiences in the RC practice and the districts with recent experiece in the sample for the study is necessary. Besides, representations of the districts from different ecological zones are necessary. Therefore, the principles for the selection of districts for the sample of the study were ecological belt, longer and varieties of experiences of RCs, and the district with best RCs. With this principle, four districts were selected –

- Kailali representing both ERD model in the past as well as Terai,
- Dhanakuta was selected for PEP model RC in the past and the hill representative,
- Humla representing remote Himali mountainous district, and
- Lalitpur the urban district.

In the record of Department of Education, one RC in Lalitpur district had been rewarded as the best RC in the country. Similarly, there are RCs which were rewarded as the best in different regions. RC in Jhapa from Eastern Region, Nawalparasi from Western, Nepalgung from Mid-western, Kailali from Far-western were the rewarded RCs. So this phenomena was represented in the selected sample districts.

From each district two RCs and two cluster schools (secondary, lower secondary and primary) of each RCs were selected. RPs of the selected RCs, Headmasters and two teachers from each selected school were the respondents for the study. Besides, DEO, and other community based organizations/ NGOs, school management committee members, RCMC members, parents/guardians of the school children, and non-formal education participants were the respondents in this study. The sample size of the respondents are given in the following Table:

Sample Summary Table

Districts ➤ Respondents	Lalitpur	DhanaKuta	Humla	Kailali	Total
Schools	6	6	6	6	24
RCs	2	2	2	2	8
RPs	2	2	2	2	8
DEOs	1	1	1	1	4
Teachers	12	12	12	12	48
HMs	6	6	6	6	24
RCMC	2	2	2	2	8
Community Members	5 -10	5 –10	5– 10	5 - 10	35 to70
NGO/CBO	1		1		

3.3 Instruments

Survey form, questionnaire, and FGD guidelines were the instrument in this study. Survey Form was used to get information related to the present status of RCs and RPs. Questionnaire was used for DEO, SS/RP, RCMC members, HM, Primary Education Section Chief in the DEO and teachers. In all interview schedules, meaning and sense making of RC, present status of the RC, functioning, responsibility of the RPs, issues in RC system and alternative suggestions from the respondents were focused. Discussion guidelines were used for group discussion with NGOs/CBOs and parents in the RC issues and prospects.

3.4 Data Collection

Researcher, Research Associates and Research Assistants administered all the research tools upon respective respondents. In the process of data collection, at first the team visited DEO and decided the RCs to be observed and the respondents. After this the team visited the RCs and filled up the survey form and individual member of the team took interview with individual respondent: RPs, RCMC members, HTs and teachers of the clustered schools in each RC. There was problem in visiting respondents in the schools because of Bandha. Visit was made possible on the basis of personal contact. Group discussion was conducted by two persons, one worked as facilitator and other as note taker.

3.5 Data Analysis

The collected information was mostly qualitative. For qualitative data analysis, the research team prepared field report on the basis of the information collected by each member of the team. While preparing the report, the team sat together and categorised the data at first. After this, coding was done for searching out the themes and perspectives. Themes and necessary facts on each theme were grouped in category. Finally, the writing phase started and critical judgement was used at the time of writing.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of the collected information into different headings. The discussion is proceeded on the sections – present status of RC, RC strategy: reflection and prospects, and issues on RC strategy functioning. The analysis was done with the assumptions of RC establishment and its functions to catch up the targets that were set and the issues inherent in the execution of the strategy for the successful implementation of the Basic Primary Education Programme in the country.

4.1 Present Status of RC

This section deals with present status of Resource Centre (RC) in relation to structure and function on the basis of field survey, interview and observation. The description of the present status also provides an opportunity to compare it with the intended structure and functions of RC. The aim of this heading is to overview the present RC structure and functions in relation to prescribed and perceived roles and functions, so that it will provide a ground for further discussion and analysis of RC strategies.

Establishment of RC

Among the nine RCs visited, two from Dhankuta were established during PEP period (1984 – 1992) as the strategy of delivering services through RC and providing technical support to the teachers. Another interest of PEP was to develop a local unit so that it could facilitate implementation of the project. Similarly, three RCs from Kailali were established during ERD-Seti project (1982 - 1990) for the purpose of co-ordinating project activities, supporting teachers and providing supervision services to the school/teachers. The visited RC of Humla was established in 2057 BS and the RCs of Lalitpur were established in 2059 BS. RCs from both the districts Humla and Lalitpur were established as the strategy of teachers' support and supervision through RC during BPEP-II. Now, RC is generally taken as a national strategy for teacher support and

supervision services to the school/ teachers. For this purpose about 1296 RCs have been functioning across the country.

Location of RC

RC is situated at one of the secondary or lower secondary school among the group of clustered schools. The number of clustered schools vary from place to place, for example one of the RCs from Lalitpur district has only nine cluster schools and the number of cluster schools to another RC of the same district is 16. One of the RCs from Kailali covers 28 schools.

The distances between cluster schools and RC also vary from place to place. The distance between RC and cluster school is relatively shorter in urban area in comparison to the rural area, mountain and hilly regions. For example, maximum distance between RC and cluster schools is not more than five km in one of the RCs of Lalitpur, whereas at Humla in some cases this distance is more than 2 days walking. In some case, location of RCs is not found appropriate in terms of distance as well as road access. For example, one RP shared his/her experiences about the location of RC and said that in some case even in the Terai the aerial distance seems very near, but actual distance through road is very long.

RC Building and Utilisation

Most of the RCs have their own buildings within the RC school complex. Generally, RC buildings are a separate block with one meeting hall of capacities 30-40 people, one office room and one small storeroom. There are also some variations found among RC buildings in terms of capacity and form. Generally, capacity of RC hall is seen appropriate to the present functions of RC. Some of the RC halls has been used by community and NGOs to conduct their programmes (for example, RC from Hile Dhankuta, Geta Kailali), so that they have been utilised at the optimum level, but most of the RCs have been under utilised. Such under-utilised RCs halls have been used only for the purpose of monthly head teachers' meetings, Friday meetings and occasional scheduled training programmes of RCs. Such RCs halls have been utilised for maximum 30 days in a year.

The RC buildings in some of the districts are under construction, for examples in Lalitpur RC building are under construction and a room of RC school is being used as the RC hall. Some of the districts, like Humla have no RC buildings. RCs are in the secondary schools.

Selection and Experiences of RPs

All the RPs are at least B. Ed. passed in qualification. Among them, some holds Master degree. All the RPs have attended job induction training, but none of them are trained on primary education. There are three categories of RPs according to their appointment type and previous experiences. One of the categories of RP are from the permanent School Supervisors. The next category is the RPs, who are from teachers. Most of the RPs coming from teaching profession are from secondary school teachers including secondary school head teachers and some of them are coming from lower secondary as well as primary school teacher with B. Ed. qualification. One of the RPs from nine visited RCs was from lower secondary school teacher. The third category of RP is appointed from fresh graduate (B. Ed.) on temporary (contract) basis. The types of RPs of all the above mentioned three categories were found in the nine RCs visited. There are different perceptions about the working nature and effectiveness of those categories of RPs, which is described further in this chapter.

RCMC

There is a provision of RCMC in each RC, but most of the RCs are running without RCMC. Among nine-visited RC, RCs in Kailali have RCMC. Though RCMC is actively functioning at Geta in Kailali, they have the feeling that there is a need to further clarify the roles and responsibilities of RCMC with appropriate legal connection. Interestingly, some of the RPs have never got an experience of RCMC. Some of the RCs have some experiences of formation of RCMC, but they did not have any experiences of RCMC meetings and functioning. Similar stories were found at Dhankuta and Humla. At Lalitpur RCMC was not formed.

The Practised and Intended Structure, and Contradictions

The Resource Centre Directives circulated by DOE for the management of RC shows that RC should be one of the co-ordinating institution at local level among

stakeholders, NGOs/CBOs and the government for enhancing quality education at primary level which is stated graphically in a network diagram below. The intended structure conceived as more social integrative in nature with all the local and government bodies working for the education. The implementers and the stakeholders have their own experiences regarding the functioning of RCs. However, the practiced structure according to implementers and stakeholders is vertical and top-down bureaucratic.

RCs were generally found as a government unit with absence of community attachment and ownership. People generally perceived it as an extended hand of government (DEO) and RP as a government representative. Even some DEOs had the same understanding that RC as the extended hands of DEO. In such understanding, lack of administrative power to the RPs was an issue of contradiction between DEO and RPs.

Most of the stakeholder perceived RC as the hierarchy between DEO and schools. Thus, in the understanding of the people, RC was not the part of their daily life. The detachment of RC from community may cause the lack of ownership from the stakeholder. The following chart shows the gap between practised and intended structures.

Practised Structure   Intended Structure
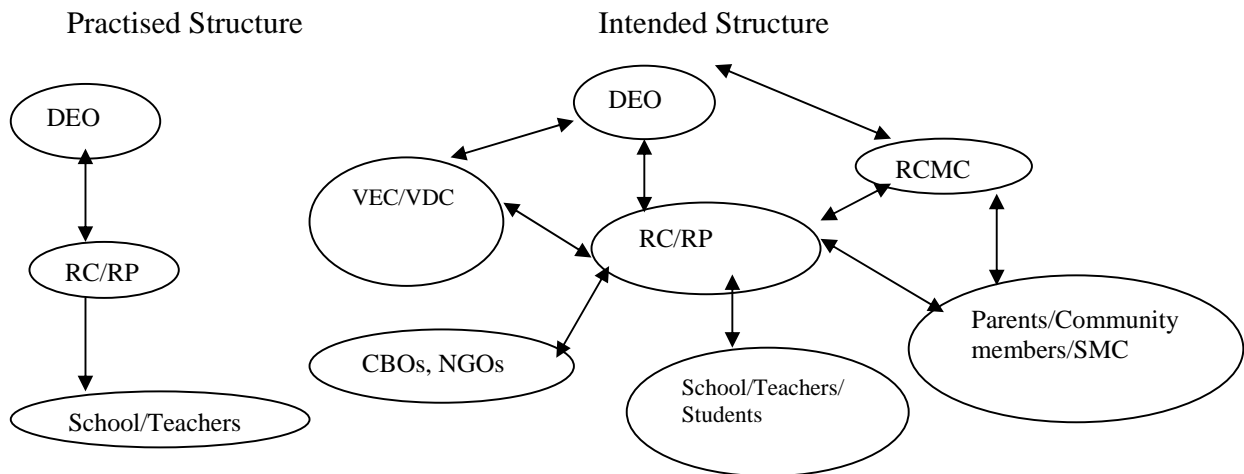
Another interesting contradiction among RP, school supervisor and DEO/section officer was found with the different roles expected from the different person of the same position. There is a general perception that RPs are inferior in position than other positions with in the DEO. One of the section officers of DEO (primary education section chief) explained this contradictions as " there are three different duties assigned for the

persons of the same position (school supervisor): DEO (school supervisor as acting DEO), section officer at office, school supervisor as RP, which generally gives contradicting situation." Even one of the DEO said " RPs, school supervisors and DEO have been working as the opposition parties." Another contradiction is found between RPs from teachers, fresh/temporary RPs and RPs from school supervisor in relation to power and status ego. For example, school supervisors feel superior to others, as they are recruited from Public Service Commission and they have the opportunity of future DEO and even higher officers. The other RPs are also equating themselves as the same rank, but school supervisors do not accept them as equals. This scenario was reflected in some districts (for example, at Lalitpur). There is no authority to the RPs other than school supervisor to evaluate teachers' performance for the purpose of teachers' promotion. There is also a contradiction and dissatisfaction found on those RPs, who themselves feel inferior to the head teachers of secondary schools.

Resources and other Facilities at RC

There was a nominal material, human and financial resources at the RCs. At a RC there is a hall, which is used for meeting and training of teachers. In some cases the material resource was limited to the facilities of RC hall and furniture only, i.e., there was not any material resources except the hall. Some RCs have a set of curriculum, some teachers' guides and some other materials developed by DOE, wall charts including students' data of cluster schools and list of annual programmes of RC. Very few RCs have managed some small library in their own initiation. One such RC initiated library is running at one of the RCs of Kailali district. This is a mobile library with a pack (box) of some students' reading books and teachers' support materials. There are 11 such packs. After using the mobile library for one month, the school has to exchange or rotate such mobile library to other schools. Some RCs halls are well decorated with different charts and quotations, programmes and different teacher support materials published by DOE, and CDC. However, there is an absence of demonstration and collection of different teaching-learning materials.

As the human resource RP is working as 'Jack of all Trades'. There is totally a lack of roster of human resources and most of the RPs do not try to use any teachers and other person as resource person. This further indicates that it is out of the concept of RC.

Teachers have the feeling that some training programmes are less effective due to the lack of an appropriate resource person. Some RPs accept such comments and they are self-critic about the issue. They do not like to loose the monetary incentives coming from such training. Even if they need some extra person, they share with another RP or staff of DEO.

Every RC gets Rs 3000 per year as the resource centre development fund from government. Most of the RCs have no other financial resources, but some RCs have generated local funds. Two visited RCs from Kailali have generated good amount of money to their RC development fund. One of the visited RC from Dhankuta has also generated some local fund by hiring their RC hall to other people and organisations. There is often comments heard about the RC being a resource centre without resources. Especially there is a lack of teachers and students support materials and demonstration of teaching-learning materials. In Humla there is no any display of materials, charts/graphs and annual programmes of RC at RC hall.

Programmes/Activities Conducted

In most of the cases, all the officially scheduled programmes had been conducted. Officially scheduled programmes are different types: training (refresher, whole school, multigrade teaching, grade teaching, material construction etc), Friday meetings, head teachers' meetings, community awareness programmes, collection of educational statistics and filing of different forms, and conduction of extracurricular competitions. Besides these programmes, some RCs have managed RC level examination, occasional supervision (inspection?) of schools. In these days some RPs do not go to RC, for example, in Humla majority of RPs do not go to their RC, in some cases of Kailali and The same situation was found in Dhankuta. In some cases RP had not gone to the RC, but there was a report at DEO that all targeted programmes were conducted and thus the budget was utilised. However, some of the RPs have been doing their work without any interruptions even in these critical situation.

The RPs visit RC and cluster schools when they have to work with some scheduled and prescribed programme. Otherwise they stay either in the district head quarter or at home. Some RPs have different stories that they generally do not go to the

RC because of the present political unrest. However, there are some RPs who generally stay and work in their RCs, for example, Geta in Kailali and Limi in Humla can be taken as the examples of such RPs.

All the teachers, RPs and DEOs have the perception that the main role of RP is to support the teachers technically. At the same time, they expect some managerial and administrative roles of RP. Present role of RP is something mixed with technical and managerial. However, in most cases neither technical nor managerial functions have been found to be effective.

One of the RP shared his feeling as " we have been working in our RC without attaching to the schools and community, our works seem machinery work to fulfil the targets, we don't care about the effects and use of targeted programmes". Teachers also could not give any concrete example that the services provided through RC is translated into the classroom practice, even though they appreciated the RC strategy.

Most of the programmes are centrally (from DOE) decided, so that in some cases there is the lack of relevancy to the local situation. For example, the street drama is not appropriate to all the urban and rural areas, it may be appropriate to some specific rural area for awareness campaign. Similarly, there are number of such examples of activities not being relevant to the local context.

One of the weakest parts of RC programme is supervision service provided by RP to the teachers. There is lack of planning for supervision and counselling services to the teachers. Most of the RPs inspects schools in the name of supervision. There is a rare case of model lesson demonstration by RP her/himself or by some experience teachers. Teachers commented that such school supervision helped them to be regular and attentive to the class, but the academic/technical supervision services were not found significantly helpful to them.

Ownership and Accountability

There is a lack of ownership and accountability on the programmes and activities of RCs. In most of the case teachers and community members do not feel RC and RC programmes as their own, rather they have the feeling that RC and RC programmes are government's programmes. On the other hand, RP has less attachment with schools and

community, which creates ownership crises. Only when the Headteachers and some other teachers think deeply, then they ultimately say the RC building and RC activities are conducted for them. They should have the feeling of ownership of the RC facilities and activities. However, they generally perceive RCs and their activities are government programmes.

RPs generally report their activities and programmes to DEO, however, it seems only formalities and administrative procedures. The weakest part of the present RC strategy is an absence of accountability of RPs. One of the RPs expressed the view that there is no any accountability of RP. He further explained that on the one hand, they do not have to answer to the community and schools about their work as he/she is a government person and on the other hand, accountability to DEO is only hierarchical and administrative, which is just like a formality.

One of the obvious and visible works of RC is information dissemination. The information disseminated through RC are not local information, it is the government policy and programmes and rules. Such information dissemination roles of RC itself also contributed to feel RC as the government agencies. Some of the teachers and head teachers see that one and only one effective work of RC is information about DEO's/government's policy, programmes and rules to the schools/head teachers.

4.2 Resource Centre Strategy: Reflections and Prospects

In this section, it is attempted to analyse what reflections there are in the concerned stakeholders and what further prospects can be seen in this strategy for the improvement of primary school education. The main aims of RC should be providing professional support to the teachers and strengthening supervision for the improvement of classroom teaching and learning. Professional support consists of resources and services provided through RC.

Structure of RC

The present Resource Centre is under the District Education Office (DEO). A Resource Centre is lead by a Resource Person (RP). RPs are under the direction of DEO in structural hierarchy. Each RC has the provision of a Resource Centre Management Committee (RCMC) to help in the management of the RC through mobilising the local

resources. There is one more unit in DEO, Basic Primary Education Section. This section co-ordinates all RCs. Each RC is set in a school, preferably in Secondary School, and this school is called RC school. Although, under the present structure RPs are to be accountable to the DEO, the accountability to DEO in practice is not making much sense in their function. Regarding the relation between RC and DEO office, a DEO said that the relation should have been a friendly and co-operative but the reality was different there was conflict in them. There is a power base relation, such relation is a conflicting relation. RPs feel apprehension from DEO. The DEO said that it was a centralised and decentralised dilemma. He said that many people talked about decentralisation but in practice no one wanted to release power to the lower structure. The same is true for the RPs too, they felt that they did not have power to control the teachers in the school. The meaning of power for them is to make feel the teachers some sort of fear when they are out of their code of conduct of a teacher. They have a feeling of an administrative agent of higher authority rather than a professional serving to the teachers and the schools.

RPs are stationed at RC and their working field is schools. They have to go to observe schools, supervise the classes, collect necessary educational data, and conduct several meetings and training in the centre. But no one is supervising RPs works. Whom should the RPs be accountable is not stated in any rules and regulation. The Basic Primary Education Programme Section in DEO was not found effective in monitoring RC works. This section was concerned more on collecting educational data from the RCs and sanctioning the budget of RC. They said RPs were not doing their jobs, even then they could not do anything. Teachers, Headteachers, and even RPs pointed out the problems seen in the present structure regarding monitoring of the RC works and system of accountability of RPs. The recipients of the past RC models (ERD model and PEP model) said that the monitoring of the whole RC strategy was good and effective in ERD and PEP model. They recommended the ERD Model (Seti Model) for effective monitoring. In the present structure of RC in BPEP model, who RPs should be accountable to is not stated clearly in any rules. There is RCMC but what are its roles, responsibilities, right and duties not mentioned by law. At present except one or two cases, the role of RCMC was not seen. In some cases, RCMC was not constituted. In one

case, the RP demanded meeting allowance to the members for their participation in the meeting. If it is so it is not necessary to have this committee.

In the interview, teachers, Headteachers and the Chief of Basic Primary Education Programme Section in DEO said that some RPs were not in the field in practice but in documents they had completed the whole assignments. It indicates that there are different institutions to which the RPs have to be accountable but the same institutions on the other hand are making comments. They said that it was due to the flaw in the present RC structure. In the ERD model RC, the project personnel monitored the works of the resource persons, if they found mistake they took action immediately. The project chief himself visited the schools, inquired the programmes or activities launched, observed the classes, presented model classes for the teachers. Now, the programmes and activities for supporting the teachers are similar, but the monitoring and feedback system is poor. They said that it was due the present structure of the RC.

The other interesting thing stated by the teachers, HTs, and RPs was that there was no layer in the structure for taking responsibility of building quality and efficiency of RPs. RPs said that they were not made well prepared to undertake the roles and responsibility of the RP as a professional friend to the schools and teachers. Except job induction training they had not received any training when they joined the job. On the other hand, there are three types of RPs working in the present structure and they have conflict among themselves. RPs and the DEO officials said that this sort of conflict was reducing the efficiency in the functioning of RCs. Different structures were suggested by the respondents regarding the structure of the RC. One suggested alternative to resolve the conflict was School Supervisor as the co-ordinator of some RCs, and RPs in hierarchy. This was the model of the structure to settle the conflict among the RPs and maintaining monitoring in the RC system. Another alternative was that RC should be linked to DEO because all schools are finally related to DEO and should be accountable to DEO and RCMC/ HT both. RCMC/HT should recommend works performed by RPs. RPs should be controlled by DEO but should be left autonomous in working. So teachers and headteachers were in support of semi- autonomous institution for the RC. Some suggested that RPs should be accountable to stakeholders. In this structure, RC should be

kept under VEC/VDC. All programmes should be made in VEC and RPs have to support in making plan as technicians and work for their implementation.

The job of RP is taken as a relaxing job without accountability or great responsibility. The structure should make some one responsible and accountable to run a system smoothly. One interesting statement was heard from an ex-resource person and Headteacher regarding RP selection. At the time of selecting RPs, the personnel in the DEO and the school persons both said to him, "Mr A involves himself much in social works, misses school for many days, students complain, so convince him to go to work as an RP. There is not much work in RC, so he can get time to work for social service". People do not see much work in the job of RPs, it is the message of the above statement. In a discussion with the groups of parents they said they were less aware about the RC and its programmes. One of the groups said, " we know our RP. He was the teacher in our school. Now he became RP and gone to DEO. It is good for him because he became a man of DEO. All the time he had to go to school and teach student. Now he is liberated from such teaching burden. It is good for him". This statement indicates that the post of RP is a powerful and privileged job. It is not the job of making association with the people in the community, schools and teachers for the improvement of quality in education. It is because there is no provision strong enough to be accountable to anyone for his/her actions. This has happened because of the present structure of RC.

Functions

Twenty-one functions have been set officially for the RC under BPEP programmes. The focused areas of the functions are teacher training, school management, educational data collections, sharing resources among the clustered schools for upgrading and maintaining uniformity in the primary education programmes and quality enhancement, supervision of the schools, community mobilisation for educational awareness, participation, and retention etc. Basically, the philosophy of the RC was to provide professional support to the school. But teachers were not considering RCs/ RPs as technical adviser for their profession. In the interview with the RPs, they said that they have not met a teacher in the Resource Centre coming to visit them for professional problems. They come and talk about administrative function, some talk to certify for transfer, some for promotion or for other necessary certification. The image of the RC in

the community of teachers was not seen as a technical support unit. In the interview, RPs had kept the same gorging over the job. They felt that they were powerless, they could not take action to the teachers when they were making mistakes. It indicates that RC as an administrative unit for controlling the people working under RC. Until now RC is not considered as technical support agency for the teachers at their immediate distance. RC, because of the nature of the works undertaken, was renamed in a denounced sense as 'data collection centre'. Teachers told that the main function of RC is to collect data from schools. In regards of the programmes and the functions undertaken at present by RC/RP, DEOs accepted that the technical functions of RC was weaker and effectiveness could not be seen apparently but realized that RPs should be specialized people able to provide technical support to the teachers and schools for the improvement of primary education. One of the great weaknesses in the present system is to consider one person as master of all things. There is one interesting story from one RP that in a training programme teachers brought a problem from mathematics for discussion. But the RP told them that it could not be answered immediately. This brought a great dissatisfaction and weakness on the part of the RP. Due to the inability of RPs in providing necessary support to the teachers, teachers do not consider RPs as their professional advisor. So now it is necessary to have a concept of RPs not a RP in one RC.

However, some of the RCs are successful. In the interview with the RPs and the documents they have in the RC, it could be seen that every functions designated by the higher authority or functions stated in the directives for conducting RC have been successfully completed. But it can not be claimed that the results have been transferred into the classroom for the improvement of teaching and learning situation. Cases were reported in the interview of the stakeholders and even the Primary Education Section Chief in the DEO that programmes such as ' street drama for education awareness', mothers meeting etc were done in papers only. In some cases, a group of unemployed youths was employed to act the drama giving a small amount of money but big amount was kept by the RPs. So teachers even RPs, HTs were suggesting that control is necessary over the financial aspect of RC. DEOs pointed out the problems in not functioning RC well were inadequate resources, lack of a good job description of the RCMC and RP and monitoring weakness. He further raised question on the present

decentralisation policy of education and expressed his doubt of success on giving all responsibility of education such as funding, planning, implementing, monitoring etc to the local government. Not all the local government bodies are conscious and dedicated to education. The present SMC is bringing several issues. The other important issue is what is the position of DEO in the structure.

Regarding school visits, class observation, model lesson demonstration, schoolteachers reported that in some centres RPs come to visit a school 8 to 10 times in a year. But many of them said 2 to 3 times in a year. The best RC's RP said that he spent 25 days in a year for class observation. In the researchers' visit to a school, the Headteacher showed visitors' book in which the RP had written some notes. In the book there were three notes in a year. The Headteacher further said that the RP came to school in other days and he considered such visit as informal and did not write note. The RPs who demonstrated model lessons in the class were very few in numbers. Many of them come to class, make comments, collect the forms and returned. During school visit the researchers had attempted to observe classes, if they asked the teachers to show concrete example that they have benefited from RC functions. The evidences were fine yearly lesson plans, operation-calendar, teaching materials, educational data, achievement score analysis and the uniform examination system within the cluster schools. But in some of the schools such evidences were not found. In the observation of the RCs, it was found that some RCs had displayed programmes, achievement, goals of primary education, schools data in the charts. Such things were not seen in some RCs. In the case of Humla, the RC at district headquarter, nothing was seen there. Even the HT could not show the shelf that was used by RC. It was so in urban district too. Effective functioning of RC depended upon the quality of the RPs, his/her devotion, honesty, and the leadership quality of social mobilisation. From the reported statements of the HTs and teachers supervision seemed less effective. The number of school visit expected by the teachers was at least two in a month. They said that only in this condition teachers could get feedback from the RP for the improvement in classroom teaching. They felt the need of visit for the teachers who participated in the training. The regular observation of the classes, immediate feedback can be more supportive for the teachers to develop themselves as a good teacher.

There were not the only examples of unsuccessful story of the present RC model, the best and rewarded RCs were also visited. One of the RCs visited in Kailali was the regional prize-winner. This RC had good looking in display, had library for the teachers and students. An innovative idea of mobile library was practised there. It was a tin-box library. RC has made 11 such boxes containing children's reading materials – children literature, teacher's reference books, TG, curriculum or whatever teachers demanded from the materials available in the library. These boxes were kept for one month in a school then handed over to the next school. However, the RC school Headteacher and teachers of the cluster schools said that whatever are displayed in the RC are not actually translated into the schools. The frequency of school visit of the RP was low because of the number of schools and the present political situation.

The other function is training. RC provides 10 days modular training for the primary teachers. Similarly, they conduct Friday meetings. The purpose of Friday meeting is to bring teachers' problems in the meeting and solve them together. Some time in some cases, teachers are asked to present a lesson and other participants observe his/her class. On the basis of the class, what improvement is seen in his/her teaching and what else is still necessary to improve is discussed. But the training was not transferred easily into the school. In the case of one of the visited schools of Kailali there were 168 students in a class. No space enough for teachers to walk inside the class. In such a condition how one can expect application of modern approach of teaching.

Whatever training provided to the teachers through RC are not used in the classroom in many cases. There are questions over the quality of training, one of the RPs said, " there is a matter of income, so we RPs together handle the classes". It indicates that every one is focusing on the money. Teachers in the interview said, " when we go to modular training, in the first day teachers do come late, from the next day they request the trainers to free them for their urgent works, on the last day the concluding day we start earlier and finish earlier too". What it meant that those teachers did not feel the importance of training for their professional development. There are some teachers who talked about the positive impact of training. They said, " we had only one approach of teaching but when we came to training we learnt several approaches and methods. This certainly helps us to modify our teaching. If we know the options, we use them whenever

possible". No one was saying confidently that the training they received from the RC had been employed in the classroom teaching. The causes of not using the skills they said are the school facilities, lack of educational materials, class size, and monitoring and feedback. But teachers do not share the weakness in their part for not using training in the classroom.

Regarding the maintenance of the roster of trainers and the locally available resource persons, the observed RCs had no such thing. But they reported that they use the secondary teachers for giving training to the primary teachers. Those who have neither taught at primary classes, nor made special study on it were the trainers. So in some cases teachers had expressed that the training they received was not good. In an interview both RPs and teachers said, " we are training for the sake of training. We can not say it has brought a significant change in the teaching. Similarly RC is conducting programmes for the sake of the programmes". So training came out to be a sort of ritual, a ceremony that a teacher has to observe because of being a teacher.

The other function RC has to undertake is workshops in constructing teaching aids. Teachers said that they constructed teaching aids in the training centre, but the researchers did not see teaching aids in the office and classroom of the schools visited. They did not find enough teaching aids in the RCs even in the best RCs too. The philosophy of Resource Centre was to manage sharing of resources among the cluster schools. However, there was no resources in the Centre and in the schools, how could it be expected that there is sharing among the cluster schools. So actions were found completed in the Resource Centre but very few were seen introduced into the classroom teaching.

There were several non-formal adult literacy and early childhood programmes in the sampled districts but RPs were not monitoring, supervising and suggesting in these programmes. It was learnt that RC has not contributed on the development of such non-formal classes. They said that they conducted street drama for creating awareness to education, education for both boys and girls, mother's meetings, documentary show, children rally etc. Such programmes create awareness in the community people and effects favourably on increasing children participation in schools and adult participation in adult education. But there is not evidence that increase in enrolment and participation

is due to the function of RC. Interesting story was said in Humla, RCs have not been functioning since the last three years in the remote villages because of political situation, but the Primary Education Programme Section Chief in DEO said that the number of school enrolment was increasing.

The other roles and function RPs have to undertake is that of a co-ordinator. The co-ordination has not been effective in most of the cases except in some of the best RCs. It was seen that RPs had not co-ordinated different CBOs and NGOs for the promotion of the primary education. The other co-ordinating responsibility was to make the RCMC best functioning. In most of the cases RCMC were constituted in the past and there has

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Case

A Resource Centre in Lalitpur was one of the rewarded RCs for its best performance. The RP who took care of the RC was Master's in Education in qualification and had attended several professional short –term training. This RC has not got its own building, the RC school had provided a room for its purpose. The room was partitioned into two chambers one was larger and the other was smaller. The smaller one was used as RP's office in the past but due to the problem of space in school, the school as store used the small room and the RC squeezed into one section. That section was a training hall, now it is turned into both office and training hall. All the chairs and table seen in the hall were given by the school. Pointing to the white board against the wall in front of the hall, the RP said, " there is Rs 3000 for the development of RC in the budget, I bought this board in RS 1500, what can I do with the rest of the money?" There was no space in the wall open, all covered with wall charts, graphs, diagrams of the programmes of the year, the achievement of students, the information of schools in the cluster. One can get all the data from the charts about the schools in the clusters and the programmes conducted and to be conducted in the RC. There was a school location map hung on the wall. There was no cupboard to put books. All the books published by BPEP and CDC, curriculum, teacher guides were hung along the rope. In course of discussion he said that there were not much materials useful and essential for the teachers to develop their professional skills. The teachers could get opportunity to take books and other materials from the center. He said," By its name and purpose, this should be really a resource centre but in practice it is not so, because there is no resources". As we continued discussion he showed some pieces of teaching materials form his table drawer. They were base-ten blocks, fraction kits, meter scale, compass all the materials useful in teaching primary mathematics. But all these materials were not manufactured but constructed by the RP himself. He said, "it is difficult to construct the materials, there are no tools for construction of materials, neither in the school nor in the centre". He said that one NGO – Educate the Children (ETC) has supported him to conduct training to the teachers, supported children.

After terminating the talk with him, I visited Head- teacher of a school within the cluster. In that visit and talk, the HM said, " the present RP is really a RP, a role model, has brought a drastic change in the schools of this area due to his regular visit, guidance, counciling and training to the teachers". The HM was very positive to him. In the past the RC was not known to the teachers and the people, now every one knows what is RC and give value to it. Next day when I visited the school, the RP was there in the HM's room and there were other teachers. HM and other teachers were taking information and advice in the administrative work. On that day the HM who was the most senior HM in the valley, said , " This RP is really a good personality. He knows all the rules, regulation, and a good consultant in educational administration as well as in pedagogy". On that day I went to visit a school far from the RC. I met HM and other two primary teachers. When I entered into the office of the HM, two lady teachers were working on mark file of the students. After a short introduction, we started to talk. In course of talking the HM said, " … this RP is giving much load to us, look what our teachers are doing there. They have to teach and have to do the work of analysing the achievement scores of the student and should given a report to RP in his stipulated time. But it does not mean that we are not pleased with him. We are so pleased, because he taught many things to us. These things we did not know in the past, now we learned from him, he has taught us many things about teaching and learning". The other teachers also said the same praise worthy word but demanded his frequent visit if possible. As I heard all the positive words to RP and his presence from the RC to the schools, I remembered the RP's word, " .. I do this much but some time I ask myself why to do all these? There is no certainty of the job."

The rewarded RC cases justified that successful functioning of the present RC model depended heavily upon the quality of the RPs. These RPs were good in teaching, management, social mobilisation leadership, honest and transparent in each activity, dedicated and all the Headteachers, and teachers of the clustered schools trusted them. These RPs said that they could undertake some more responsibilities for making EFA programme successful if they were provided one more supporting staff. All the concerned Primary Programme Section Chiefs in DEO said that RPs should be detached from administrative works. They had to be involved in collecting educational data. One of the Primary Education Section chiefs said that educational data collection work could be done by VDC secretary. But RPs were demanding an assistant at least in part-time basis.

Resources

Resource Centre observation and survey showed that the Resource Centre was not found as resourceful as it should be. In the rewarded RCs too, there were more DOE publications, textbooks, and teacher-guide books. There were no other teaching and learning aids. But in other Resource centres, there were not such materials either. Whatever few there were, they were dust-covered and unmanaged. There should be varieties of books for teachers and students. In some best RCs, there were children's literatures – story, poems, essays etc. The resource centre should have books for students too, so that schools can borrow these books and distribute to the children for study. They can do this in cycle. Similarly there should be enough teaching and learning aids, so that teachers can borrow from the RC and use them in their classroom teaching. Teachers felt the use of materials as helpful to both teachers and students for making better learning environment, they would copy it or reproduce it. This is one way of making teachers more professional in their teaching. The present RC can not be seen as resourceful.

Besides these material resources, there are human resources scattered in the cluster schools. The philosophy of RC is to co-ordinate all the best human resources and share among the schools for quality primary education. This is not met in the present RC strategy. In all the cases considered in this study, RPs are working themselves very often as resource persons. In some RCs, the RC school's teachers were prepared as specialists in primary education and they were utilise during training. No exchange of good teachers between schools can be seen. This type of exercise was not found in the RC. In most of

the cases, RPs said that teachers, students, community people have not owned RC as their institution. RCs are hardly generating resources at local level. But three were three RCs in our study have collected a fund for RC. They have collected the money from the cash prize, examination fees, giving the RC hall on hire and with some donation.

Resource sharing policy itself is critical in some condition. In the case of Himali district, the distance between schools and RC is too far and sharing of resources seemed quite impossible. The other thing is there was no materials even in the RC at district. So in such case each school should be developed with resources or sub-clustering is necessary. Three thousand rupees is given to each RC for its development. The same running cost for all over the country is not suitable. The remote districts are more expensive, but the same amount of budget is allocated to the remote district, which is not practical.

The RC has to conduct workshop in constructing teaching and learning aids. It needs a set of tools for the workshop. There were no such materials in the RC. Some of the RCs have duplicating machine and a typewriter. They are used for the purpose of examination in producing test paper. These things are not used in producing teacher-supporting materials.

In the best RCs, RPs have co-ordinated with NGOs for the workshop of material constructions. There were innovative examples of attempting to make RC resourceful. In one RC, mobile library was managed. The books were not of much variety for the teachers and students, but the attempt was appreciable. In the nine cases of RCs, only one RC has initiated circulation of books among the schools and there was one more that had generated library in the RC school but not started circulation. In the study of these many cases, it is not found that the Resource Centre is not what it implied. Because of the condition of the resources in the RC, teachers have renamed RC as information collecting government agency and see RP as an agent of administration. Due to resource constraints many of the functions have to be cut down or if conducted they would not be effective. In such a case there arose the question of sustainability.

Services from RC

RC was established with the philosophy of providing professional services like training to the teachers, supervision and guidance and follow up and other necessary supports to the primary teachers. To what extent the RCs have provided services and gaps seen in the expectations and the provided services is an important issue. At present RC is providing services to the teachers conducting the officially scheduled programmes of RC. The officially designated programmes were not conducted in some RCs. There is a question of the same programmes meeting the demand of the teachers of all regions and conditions. A case was reported by the RP in urban area that RC had to manage 'mothers' meeting', ' show documentary of special type', ' street drama but the participation as well as relevance of such programmes were not observed. Similarly, one of the RPs in an interview said that package based programmes were not suitable for local needs. He said that RC had to make a study to identify teachers' needs and categorise common and special needs of the teachers. Based on these needs RC has to design package of short-term refresher training. The present package and the teachers needs were different, and training tried to provide the package to the teachers and that was not the need of the teachers and not paying attention.

The most effective services of the RC were information dissemination to the schools, data collection, and uniformity of lesson progress and examination among the schools in the cluster, regularity of the teachers due to close monitoring, operation calendar, and yearly planing. One of the interesting information from the school was they learned to manage timetable. Before this they did not know how to assign periods. They provided equal hours to all the subjects, they did not care the meaning of weightage in the curriculum. Considering these facts, it can be said that RC, despite many other weaknesses, has created an atmosphere in the schools for a systematic planning of education activities. HTs of the best RC said that in the programmes of RC there are on school and off school programmes, RPs are qualified, generous, devoted, honest every thing but not getting the environment to utilise their full potential for the improvement of primary education quality. It is a humiliation to the qualified persons to keep them without resources. They said that all the time, whether it is EFA or BPEP, quality of education has become the matter of concern. 'Quality' is the synonym of ' good classroom practice'. Quality primary education is possible only when there are quality

teachers. Preparation of quality teacher is not possible without investment. At present, RC does not get resource as needed according to the potentiality of the RPs. However, in other case, HTs said that RC concept for providing services to the teachers was appreciable but the activities conducted by the RPs were not pertinent to the quality enhancement of the teachers. They just came to collect data. They never demanded the resources for the RC. The RPs from the teachers were effective in providing service but not all of them. If the qualified and the devoted teachers were selected without any bias, their services to the teachers would be effective and relevant. Teachers have demanded a seminar among the primary school teachers before starting a new session. This seminar has to inform about the changes in education in the world, best practices in the world for quality education and the position of Nepal in this regard. Such seminars could be one of the measures to change the attitude of the teachers. Such programmes were not conducted in any RCs associated in this study. So, RCs were found less effective in innovative services.

Potentiality of RPs

In the observation of the RCs, the rewarded RCs were led by RPs who were either from the teachers or had many years of experience in teaching. But it does not mean that all RPs from teacher background were effective ones. There is one interesting story about the RP who is a teacher. That RP passed Teacher Service Commission. Now it was obligatory to go to school to legitimise his appointment as a permanent teacher. In conversation with his colleague, he said that he could not face classroom teaching. He said, " For half the salary, I would choose RP". This example indicates that there is also inefficient RPs from teacher background. On the basis of the facts observed in the sampled RC, it was found that the RP from School Supervisor were efficient in administrative roles and functions compare to others.

In the interview with the HTs of the best RC, they said that RPs should be as qualified and expert as a secondary HT and if possible should be in the same rank as the HT.This condition decreases the conflict created due to hierarchy and expertise. Secondary teachers and HTs feel that they are better qualified than the RP and there arises a situation of disobeying the proposal of RP. Regarding the quality of his RP, he said that the present RP was a role model and had intuition and skills of synthesising the

experiences and consolidating them into a concrete form to use in the classroom purpose. Only theoretical oratory can do nothing in quality improvement in primary education. He further said that in spite of these qualities, RPs need refresher training. So there should be some institution for their continuous development. If RPs are better, then that quality can be transferred to the teachers and to the school management. RPs made similar remark regarding their quality development.

RC, EFA and Decentralisation

Two practices are found in the primary education in the world – centralized primary education and decentralized primary education. In the centralized primary education decisionmaking, monitoring, and management functions are concentrated to the hand of the Ministry of Education. Ministry of education regulates the whole sub-system of primary education such as teachers, students, funding and facilities and the school officials have limited power to decision making. They get only day-to-day administrative power to conduct schools. Whereas in decentralized system, substantial power of decision making is exercised at the local level but subjected to some limited control by the central government. Responsibility may be decentralized to region, district, metropolis or to village/town or to an individual school or group of schools. Under the decentralization phenomena, three concepts are found – 'deconcentration', 'decentralization or delegation of power', and ' devolution'. Under deconcentration much of the power of decision making are concentrated to the centre or Ministry, only a limited power is given to the local level. Those who exercise this power is considered as the agent of the ministry and whatever done in the local level is the responsibility of the central government. It can not be considered as real decentralization. The other two ' decentraliztion' and ' devolution', they are similar to some extent in taking the responsibility. The power to regulate the provision of basic education is given to local government or to other local bodies that are associated with the local government.

Decentralized education policy has some noteable issues. The big one is what responsibility should be centralized and what should be delegated to local level. There are cases that the decentralization policy of basic education has failed in the objectives set for the decentralization. The other issue is what purposes to decntralize the basic education for – is it to save the money for the central government or is it for efficiency and quality

of education?. or is it to collect money for the education from the stakeholders themselves. The other issue is what institution should be at the local level to which the power is delegated to and the degree of power to be handed over and the roles and responsibility. The other central issue is in practice only delegation of power to do something is delegated by the government but the power to generate the resources, funding etc not given. In this condition, the real decentralization is impossible and its effect shall not be positive.

With these principle and issues of decentralization, if the present RC is evaluated with the responsibility handed over to it, it can not be said that it is the decentralization of basic education in the present context of Nepal. RC in the document of EFA and BPEP is considered as government agency working close to the service users level. EFA plan of action has stated some of the works to be done by the RC. RC has to work in the curriculum revision, teacher training, planning education for the disadvantaged and has to supervise the non-formal education programmes organized for those who were/are deprived of from the opportunity of formal education. The matter of curriculum decision, now, is on central government. In this context, it is irrelevant to provide responsibility of curriculum revision to RC. Similarly the power of monitoring and supervision is delegated to the RC but they are not powerful to take decision on the matter found through supervision/monitoring. The other thing is RC does not have any power to manage resources/finance. In the decentralization of education, there should be stated in legal base all the responsibilities of the wings of the central government that can be exercised and to be coordinated. Such condition is not found in the present decentralization. The present practices of the RCs are discussed in the context of decentralization of education.

The present RC system is working with centrally (by DEO) planned programmes and budget without any accountability to the community and local authorities such as VDC/VEC, RCMC. Similarly, RPs are not accountable to the schools and stakeholder. RP is formally accountable to the DEO, it should be according to the definition of decentralization. RCs at present are implementing the centrally designed programmes in the resource centre. They are not developing the programmes locally. In the decentralization model of education, the power of making decision is to be given to the

local body. Here in the case of RCs, there is no power delegated but the programmes and activities are assigned to perform. RC can not make any decision at the local level regarding the teachers, students, and overall management of the funding for the activities. The situation shows that the present RC system is not functioning according to decentralised process of educational management, however, the present RC system, part and partially, is promoting centralised (generally DEO based) decision making process in education. The situation also creates the problems on ownership of RC as well as the programmes. Without ownership of the system and programmes, it will be difficult to assess effectiveness and usefulness of the programmes and activities conducted through RC. In such situation, an obvious question arises about the sustainability of the programmes and the system.

Now there is a policy of handing over the school management to the local body (committee) in the community. This is one practice of decentralization in education. There is another provision of 'School Improvement Plan' that every school has to make a plan and run the school accordingly. How these two policies and the RC should be related is not stated in legal base. Legal base of sharing of responsibility and accountability among or between the bodies that are obliged to do work on the basis of decentralization is necessary. In this context, there should be stated in Education Act or in some other documents how different agents that are taking the responsibility under decentralization have to work together.

DEOs, RPs, Headteachers of RC schools and most of the teachers commented that the present RC system is functioning without participation of local community and authority, so there is a problem of accountability and ownership. Participation of local community and the local authority to conduct RC activities may improve the functioning of RC. There are some skepticism about the awareness and capability of local community and local authority to manage RC locally. But the formation of an appropriate RCMC with technical and managerial assistance of RP and appropriate budgetary system can overcome such problems.

In the case of EFA, without decentralised planning and management by local authority (VDC/VEC, School) implementation of the targeted programmes seems difficult. EFA national plan of action identified number of duties of RC to achieve the

goals. Most of the assigned duties of RC in this connection have to be performed with close association with the local community and local authority. Under the EFA programmes, the functions of RC/RP will not be limited to schools, it covers the whole plan and programmes including formal and non-formal educational programmes. It clearly shows that EFA programmes demand active roles of RC/RP, which work within the decentralised planning and management system of education.

In Nepalese scenario of decentralization policy of education, two streams are prominently seen. The Local Self-governance Acts has given responsibility of planning and implementing educational programmes to Village Education Committee/ Municipality Education Committee. EFA plan of action has given the same indication to bring all to education. Where as in education act has provided provision of handing over the school management to local government body, management committee or institution and the government shall provide a specified block grant to the school. This provision shows that the schools in the long run will be handed to the community and the government is providing block grant as compensating money to run the school whenever the school/the community are not capable to run their schools themselves. The crux of these two acts is decentralization in education. The relation of the local body which take the responsibility of school management and the DEO is implied that the body has to run the school under the rules and regulation of DEO but there is freedom to the manager to address the local need and the context to run the school. But it is no where stated the position of RC clearly though it is said it should be under DEO. Both the local body that runs the school management and the RC are under the DEO, it is not clear whether they are parallel. There is RCMC that has to manage the RC. But it is not clearly stated how much the RC/RP shall be obliged to RCMC. In such a chaos position of RC under the decentraliazation and EFA, different stakeholders and the authority were interviewed regarding the issue of decentralization, EFA and RC management. Whatever perceptions made and practices are in existence are discussed in the following paragraphs.

Most of the informants have the similar view about educational decentralisation. However, there are some differences found on the structure and management of RC system. One of the DEOs said " now we (DEO office/ government) have failed to manage schools, so it seems impossible to manage and deliver different educational

services to the schools and community through district centre. Therefore, it is necessary to give all authority and responsibility to the local units/community. In this context RP has to work as the technical support agency for local community and schools to plan and execute the programmes." Some other options were also suggested from different informants. For example, one of the RPs and some HT viewed that the existing model with some modification can be workable in both contexts of EFA and decentralisation. The modifications will be a sub-clustering of schools within the RC and participation of local community and teachers through RCMC, effective functioning provision of RCMC and appointment of a capable and enthusiastic RP. In the case of mountain district Humla, due to the geographical difficulties and long distances schools/teachers are not getting services from RC as required and desired, so RPs and some teachers suggested a need of mobile RP/RC. Some RC schools' HTs suggested that they could manage RC better than present condition if they got responsibility and one assistant in the RC. They have an argument that the quality of teaching learning of feeder primary and lower secondary schools is a great concerns of RC schools, so they feel more responsible than the externally appointed RP. Some PRs also shared the same view that supervision and support to the teachers of the feeder schools will be better if the leader or RC secondary school is given the responsibility.

Though there are different views in relation to management of RC, every one is supportive to the local participation and decentralised management of RC. However, there are questions among the stakeholders on the process and authority to manage RC. Some said that RC should be managed by VDC/VEC and other said it should be managed under the leadership of RCMC. Another prominent view on the basis of the past experience of practised model suggests that the role of RC should be given to the leader secondary schools. Even there are some who do not like to say the present modality is not functioning. They opined that there should be a minor revision on the modality of working for monitoring and to increase the local participation in planning, management and functioning of RC.

4.4 Major Issues in RC Strategy

From the observation of the sample RCs, interview with RPs, RCHTs, HTs, teachers, and discussion with the parents and NGOs/CBOs members, the following issues have been identified regarding RC strategy in BPEP programme.

1. **Decision of RC numbers:** In the present strategy the number of RCs in a districts was decided from the higher authority. It should be done in the local base. The clustering of schools for RC affects on the successful implementation. In the case of Humla, two RCs were under care of one RP. According to the RP (Albang and Chaugunfaya RCs), the distance between school and Albang RC in the highest range was 2 days walks and average 1 day in one RC. In Chaugunfaya, the longest distance between school and RC was of 6 hours, and average of 3 hours. How could one RP for two RCs work effectively in such a distance. In other words, this is the issue of school mapping for RC strategy. Similar issue was raised in Kailali district. In Geta RC, the teachers in the municipality area said that the RC was not in comfortable distance and place for them. In this issue, they suggested sub-centres within the resource centre led by the sub-centred school but these sub-centres should be co-ordinated by the RP.

2. **Effectiveness of the Programmes:** In the study of the documents available in the RC, it can be seen that all the scheduled programmes have been completed successfully. Similarly, the RPs reported the same thing. The question of effectiveness of the programmes can be justified only when the impacts are visible in the classroom practices, school management and social mobilisation for education participation and development in primary education. The researcher could not get a rational basis to justify the effectiveness of the programmes.

3. **Co-ordination and co-operation with CBOs/NGOs and local people:** In the roles and functions of RC/RP, it is stated that RP has to work for social mobilisation to increase access, participation, and quality of primary education. In the sampled districts, RPs blamed DEOs for not introducing RC/RP to CBOs/NGOs that were working in the field of education. DEO directly made contact with them and gave permission to conduct programmes, For instance in Humla, when the researcher visited the district, there was a teacher training programme organised by Himalayan

Trust in Simkot, district headquarter, but the RPs were not informed about it. Similarly, RPs in urban areas of the district informed the researcher that DEO said it is not the work of the RPs to look after the affairs of private schools. But when there arose a problem the DEO said that it is the work of the RP to solve the problem. It indicates that there is some confusion and misunderstanding between RC and DEO. There were some RCs that had established relation to NGO to conduct the programmes. There could be seen good relation with the NGOs. So the RPs demanded that such issues have to be resolved defining the roles and functions spelled out in rules and regulations.

4. **Matching of Ideals and Actuality:** Even the rewarded RPs could not say that the services they provided to the teachers and schools for the improvement of primary education are practised in a significant degree. They said that the training they had provided to the teachers were not used in classroom teaching and learning. Every teaching strategy and learning management can function in a particular setting. However, the RPs said that there was a wider gap between what was taught to the teachers during training to use in classroom teaching and the actual context of the schools. For example the RP in Kailali questioned the researcher, "Can our training be used in a class of 168 students?" So there is a crucial issue of creation of receptive environment in the classroom for adopting the teaching learning strategies in the class. There were strategies in BPEP for this issue. School buildings have been constructed which is the greatest achievement of the Project, the recipients advocated. In spite of that there are insufficiency of the buildings and teachers in the Terai districts. Besides, there is feasible situation in terms of class size, and teachers but teachers are still not using the methods. The school HTs and RPs said that it was due to the lack of accountability of the teachers in providing quality instruction in the schools. The case of Himali district is different. The researcher had calculated the working days at most in the Himali districts, the actual class teaching days were 125 days at most. So how can a teacher complete the course designed for 192 days? So there should be an adjustment in the curriculum and the pedagogy provided through the training in such special cases.

5. **Innovation and RC:** One of the rewarded RCHT said that the RC should perform innovative works for the improvement of primary education in Nepal. We should not borrow models and examples of strategies from other countries. We have to develop our own teaching strategies best suitable for the Nepalese context. So there should be some small fund to conduct action research and some basic research in classroom regarding the classroom practice. RC provides training to the teachers but cannot say definitely when and how the training can be utilised in the classroom practice. If there was a small fund, RC could intervene with different management to test the effectiveness of teaching methods, assessment techniques etc for effective teaching and learning at primary level. All RCs were not going beyond the programmes designated by the higher authority. They had not developed their programmes. There is a tendency and attitude in the RPs and in teachers too, that they do not make their own programmes for the local needs. There are some RPs who can do some innovative works but they do not get resources. This was stated in the interview with the RCHTs and RPs. Side by side, there should be institution to train and refresh RPs for their quality development.

6. **Contradiction among RPs:** There is debate and contradiction among the three types of RPs. School Supervisors think that they have a chance to be a higher officer in future and they consider themselves as a first class citizen in the group of RP. They treat others as lower in rank. The other RPs do not have chance of promotion. In the case of fresh RPs, they say that there is no certainty of any job. This type of dispute related to power and status relation has hindered their workings. Among the supervisors, one supervisor is working as RP and other is working in the office. The RP and SS working in the office feel that they are the same but one is exercising power over the other.

7. **RC for Primary and SEDU for Secondary Level:** There is not relation between these two teacher support centres. The respondents said that it was natural not to have relation because the two have separate field of works. If two institutions have the same roles, functions and working fields, there should be a relation. In reality both primary and secondary classes are run in the same school. So one programme

may touch the other. Instead, there is another reason that these two institutions should have relation. Primary children are the inputs for the secondary education. How primary education is going on should be the concern of secondary education. Similarly what new changes secondary has brought and what more new will come in the future should be the concern of the primary. If there is no connection, there will be gap in the whole programme. In this regard, one RP raised an issue of participation of the HM in the meeting, and programmes of RC. Mostly in the city centre, RP complained that secondary school Headteacher did not participate in the RC meeting because they thought that it was for primary level. She said that it would be better to establish a single RC with adequate number of RPs. RC should be of all levels of school education. Primary classes attached in the secondary schools were found less cared by the HTs, was reported by the RPs of the urban areas. But this is not a generalised principle.

8. **Education, Poverty and RC:** At present RC is helping teachers for the development of quality. It is believed that quality education can be ensured when the teachers are qualified. RC strategy is working for individual teacher development. There were two extreme conditions in the schools – excessive class size and less participation in school. In both conditions, there was the reflection of poverty or lack of initiation. In Kailali the teacher student ratio was 1: 120 in one of the RC. But there were only 30 students in a primary school where teacher student ratio was 1:9. In the excessive case, there was lack of physical facilities and teachers and low participation was caused by school age children not going to school. In both cases, development of quality teachers can not fulfil the purpose of BPEP. Each school prepares School Improvement Plan (SIP). The focus of SIP is in the development of physical infrastructure but there is not evidence that the school improved as proposed in SIP. RPs of Humla said that ' School Food Programme' could be one of the measures to bring school age children to school in the community under poverty, but this programme was not targeted in the needy area.

9. **Circulation of Materials:** Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), Department of Education like government institutions have published children learning materials.

These learning materials as well as textbooks, teacher guide books, curriculum were not found in schools. The HTs, teachers and RPs said that these learning materials and teacher guides and curriculum do not come to school in time. In a case of Lalitpur, RP said that CDC produced learning materials were not available in her RC. In another school, the HT said, " We had to go to DEO to bring free distribution books for the students". He said, " It should be from the RC, DEO should send to RC and we could collect from RC".

10. **Community Mobilisation:** Under the decentralisation and EFA context, community has to take co-operating, sharing and governing roles on primary education, and literacy education. But there were complexities in some cases. The political segregation of the community, Mukhiya of the village replaced by the guardians in SMC chairperson and members and people's awareness to education were the factors affecting social mobilisation. So the person who has power and domination - a local power, brings obstruction when he is kept out from the main stream of school education. The other issue is the target group characteristics of the public education. In the present context of Nepal, there are two phenomena in school education private and public. Private is the sector of rich, affluent, and middle class people, whereas public is the sector of poor, illiterate/uneducated and underprivileged class of people. So HTs, teachers and RPs were questioning on the people's participation in education. If governing roles and responsibility are given to the less conscious people, it would be misgoverned. They said that differentiated practice has to be made in providing resources to schools and RC for best functioning.

11. **Attitude of DEO to RC:** RP and HT of a RC school said that DEO has no positive thinking towards RC. They said that sometime the officials in the DEO rejected the work of RC saying that it was not the work of their office, it was the work of RC. In the case of sanctioning the budget of RC development, DEO brings different barriers. In this matter some of HTs and teachers reminded the story of ERD Project. The RC of the project was very successful and effective but the Field Co-ordinator of the Seti Project did feel not comfortable in getting co-operation from

the DEO. At that time, it was said, " They are the people of project, and we are the people of government and it is not necessary to help them". One of the HT who had participated in national level programmes said that Project vs Government complexities has brought some hindrance in smooth functioning of the RC.

12. **Best RC selection criteria:** Best RC selection criteria are already set but RPs said that the criteria are not reliable and valid. So rethinking is necessary according to their views. One of the RP said that his RC was selected first in the district competition but certifying for the Regional Competition, other RC was recommended by DEO. He questioned over the criteria and process of selecting best RCs. One of the RP said that the RPs who made decorations in RC hall was rewarded. The perfect selection should be based upon how much contribution of RC has entered into the school, has it been only in the yard or into the classroom. This is not considered at present.

13. **Sustainability of RC system:** Life of RC until the life of the project or donors' support is a matter of sustainability. Many of the respondents said that different models of RC came and went due to support. As the project ended the RC strategy ended. Therefore, when one system is found positive in the development of education it should be brought into the main stream policy of the government is the suggestion from one group. However, some teachers who had experience of ERD project and the present one, said that there should be a provision of education tax from the side of local government and this collection should be utilised for the education of the children. From this fund, RC be supported but it does not mean that RC should survive independently. There should be a sharing modality in education defining how much the government has to contribute and how much from the people should be stated in the regulation. Otherwise, quality of education and sustainability of RC will not survive. One of the HT said that what to talk about the sustainability of RC, at present the schools themselves are in the crisis of sustainability.

14. **Selection of RPs:** In the study of the best RCs among the sampled ones in this study, it came out to be true that the success of the RC strategy depended on the

quality of the RPs. It is thought that experienced teachers are good for RP. There were RPs who were regarded as good teachers but not performing well in RP. Similarly, there were senior teachers who became RP and latter not being satisfied with the works and returned back to the job of teaching. These ex-RPs said that good RPs need to have expertise in primary education, children learning, pedagogy, knowledge of all the curriculum of primary levels with dynamism, dedication, honesty, hardworking and leadership quality. One who lacks these qualities cannot work well. Several issues had been raised in selection of RPs. The lazy teachers, and those senior in experience but not professionally sound to undertake the roles and responsibilities were selected so as to provide easy job, the teachers reported. Similarly, the other resourceful and powerful teachers became an RP for leisure. In both of the cases, the quality of works was not evident during observation in the field. Only the written test cannot make real justice in the selection of RPs, different profiles should be studied while selecting RPs.

15. **Most ineffective function and most effective function:** Different functions of RPs have been defined in the directives of the functions of the RC. In accordance with the observation, and judgement given by the respondents, it is proved that the most ineffective function of RC is supervision. On the other hand, information dissemination function is the most successful. So there arose a question, why to give the function of supervision which is not effective. If it should be given there should be some modification/reduction in overall roles and responsibilities accorded to RP at present. The RPs who claim that they have done well and can do better, said that they were not ready to say the present RCs functions are less effective. They took the example of training and said that the training itself is not bad and irrelevant. The matter that the training not entering into the classroom is the concern of the supervision and the feedback provided to the teachers. So they said concerned should be on the load of the RPs. The functions defined now are much in one hand and on the other hand the context of working in the school is not suitable to adopt the teaching skills provided through the training.

16. **Crises of ownership and accountability:** Who should own the RC and to whom the RC be accountable were the two burning issues. All the stakeholders took RC as government institution primarily. Only reluctantly accepted the works as also theirs. But they were not fully ready to own the RC as their institution and contribute a little to its movements. It was the case in Dhankuta, one RC had decided to collect a small amount of money as levy for the RC. The decision was accepted by all but, a single one did not do translation of the decision into action. Different versions were seen about the accountability of the RC. Some said that it should be accountable to DEO and RCMC. Some said that it should be accountable to the stakeholders. There is the question whether RCMC is necessary when the existing ones are not functioning. A rigorous exercise is necessary to address the accountability issue for making RC function.

17. **Decentralisation and RC:** DEO, RP, HT and teacher all are questioning on the principle and policy of decentralisation of education. Issues have been raised whether the local government has the expertise of leadership to handle the sensitive issue like education. When all the rights and duties of education such as funding, administering, planning, implementing and monitoring are given to the local government bodies, what will be the roles of the DEO? So it seems that there could be misunderstanding and debate on the roles and responsibilities between government bureaucracy and local government bodies. In such a condition the structural relation of RC should be changed.

From the above discussion the major issues related to the present RC system can be categorised into six main dichotomies.

(i) RP with power or RP with professional skills a great misunderstanding is prevailed.

(ii) RC a concept or an institution

(iii) RC as a professional or an administrative centre

(iv) RC as a system of a single RP or RPs in a RC

(v) RP a challenging or a relaxing job

(vi)   The job of RP is making an innovative work or just implementing the scheduled ones

CHAPTER V

FINDING AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Findings

This study was conducted as case study focusing in the four districts – Lalitpur, Dhankuta, Kailali and Humla. Altogether 9 RCs from all districts were the focused cases. RPs, RCMC members, HTs, primary teachers, Primary Education Section Chief in DEO, DEO, and members of NGOs/CBOs were the respondents in the study. In the previous chapter, discussion on the present status of the RC, its functions, services and issues have been made based on the information collected from the field. On the basis of the previous discussion, the following major findings have been consolidated:

The Guiding Principle of the RC

From the review of the literatures, the following guiding principle, modality and practices are found regarding RC.

a) From the review of the different practices of RC in the world, the guiding principle of the establishment of RC is of professional development, access to resources and in-service training of the teachers. The modality of RC changing from Teacher Resource Centre to school advisor/advisory group according to the changes in the education system.

b) The basic features of RC practised in the world are basically in three modalities: i) organised and managed by the teachers themselves with the grant provided by the government, ii) a coordinator from outside the teachers and all the tutors/mentors from the teachers and the budget is provided by other agencies, and iii) organised and managed by the teachers but funding in sharing modality with teachers' levy, contribution of NGOs/CBOs, local government/state.

c) In the practices of RC in the world, the sustainability, ownership and effectiveness of the RC concept not answered adequately through research, however some study has suggested some alternatives to the RC concept: i) Development of a model school and it is to be taken as RC in the local level. ii) Dropping out the idea of supporting teachers for the individual development, and support the children for learning and iii) priority on managing learning and teaching materials for the students and teachers.

Strong aspects of the present RC system

d) Regarding the practice of the present RC modality, all teachers, Headteachers, and other community members accepted the RC strategy as the most important strategy for providing support to the primary teachers to improve the quality in education – a positive attitude towards RC. The most positive impact of RC system in schools were regularity of teachers in the schools, training to the teachers, uniform examination and information dissemination. This impact was created through the administrative role of RC, not through the technical part.

e) Awareness was created among the school community in the need and use of educational and instructional planning through the RC.

f) The inter school competitions on extracurricular activities and the selection of best school among the clustered schools have brought a competitive feeling and this feeling has brought some positive changes in the teaching learning conditions.

g) RC has become one of the liaison agency to deliver the information from DEO to the schools and the education data to DEO and has become an agent of providing services and exercising some sort of control to some extent.

h) From the story of the successful RCs, RP's potentiality, experiences, qualification and dedication is the most important factor for making the RC programmes effective in schools. And the RPs from the teacher or with teaching experience was found comparatively better in providing professional services to the teachers.

Weaker Aspects of the present RC system

i) Monitoring is some how effective, whether it is distant or direct, that the school people feel someone is looking after their works and it pressed the people to be regular in schools. The most focused function of RC is supervision. This function of RC was the weakest aspect in RC functions. RPs did not visit the schools regularly according to their schedule in some case and in other cases they visited as formality, did not observe the classes and made conference to bring reform in the classroom

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teaching and learning situation. Due to this condition there was question over the utility of the RC to the professional development of the teachers. Technical supervision services to the schools/teachers were rarely practised through RC.

j) Resource centre is not a resource centre in reality to provide resources to the schools and sharing the resources among the schools. Almost nothing of this service was found in the sampled RCs.

k) There is a big problem and issue in the ownership, accountability and sustainability of the RC system. Schools and community have not owned RC as their own institution, they have a feeling that it is the government institution and government should provide every thing to the RC. Other important element lacking is the accountability of RPs in their works. The ownership and accountability problem inherent in the RC system is also creating a problem of sustainability. Speaking in a point, it is the problem of harnessing the RC along with the decentralization policy in education due to legal base of sharing responsibility.

l) Even the small amount of resources provided to RC, there were cases of misutilisation and under utilisation of the resources.

m) Number of schools attached in the cluster of the sampled RPs were found comparatively greater in number with respect to the responsibilities and function given to the RP. Similarly the distance between school and RC was found considerably greater in remote and hill areas.

n) The present RC system has a uniform policy and programmes throughout the country. The diversity of the country is not receptive for the uniform policy and programmes.

o) There is a conflict among RPs, and between DEO and RC in undertaking the duties due to power relation.

p) Due to close monitoring, supervision, and comparatively more financial resources provided to RC, ERD Seti model, and PEP model of RC were effective in the perception of the recipients.

q) The present RC system has not included the private school in its main stream.

r) The RCMC in the beginning was constituted in some sampled districts, whereas in other places till now RCMC is not constituted. In those districts where the RCMC was constituted, it was not functioning effectively except with some exception.

s) There were set criteria for the selection of the best RCs in the district, regional and national level, however, the questions were raised on the transparency and competitiveness of the set criteria.

t) In the sampled districts, some of the RPs were found less capable in undertaking the roles and responsibilities of the present RC programmes. So there is a need to review the selection criteria and the process too. Rethinking in qualification of RP is necessary.

5.2. Recommendations

On the basis of the findings of this study, recommendations are made into two categories namely short-term and long-term actions. In the short term action is targeting the improvement in the present structure and in the long term there are suggestions on dropping out the present RC modality and adopting alternatives for the accountability and sustainability.

Short-term

In the context of decentralization of education and Education for All policy, at first it is necessary to bring RC under the decentralization structure with legal provision of handing over the responsibility and power with funds or fund raising policy. A clear position of RC as government local agent which can work together with the service recipients should be defined according to the decentralization policy in education (with reference to 'Self-governance Act', and 'Education Act'). After giving the separate identity of the RC as central government agent in the local level, the following improvements are necessary in the present practices of the RCs:

1. RCMC should be functional to make management and implementation of the RC programmes effective. At present RCMC is not constituted or if constituted not functional. So at first RCMC should be constituted in each RC, and roles,

responsibilities, right and duties should be defined legally and execution of the assignments should be obligatory. In the centrally designated programmes of RC, RCMC should have the right to readjust the programmes according to local needs. The rules and regulation should spell out that RP should be accountable to RCMC and DEO.

2. If there are more than 10 schools in one RC, there should be sub-clusters associating 5 - 7 schools in each sub-cluster. The RP of the RC should co-ordinate the sub-clusters. Each lead school of the sub-cluster should take the responsibility of supervision and monitoring to assist teachers of the clustered schools. For this there should be the incentives and resources facility available to the lead school in the sub-clusters.

3. At present RPs are seen more involved in so called supervision but it is the weakest part of the RC. The responsibility of supervision should go to the group of RC trainers and lead school in the sub-clustered area. Where there is no sub-cluster within the RC, this responsibility should go to the lead school and other secondary schools in the RC. RP should co-ordinate and follow up the practices. An operation calendar should be developed for the supervision programmes and follow up programmes.

4. RPs should also be made responsible for EFA programmes. RP should co-ordinate with VEC/VDC, RCMC and other NGOs/CBOs for in school as well as out of school programmes for those who are liable to be out from the main stream of formal schooling. There should be the role of RP to orient all the VEC/VDC, RCMC and NGOs/CBOs members about the RC programmes and its involvement in the promotion of literacy and increasing access to primary education. Technical aspects of monitoring and management of the out of school programmes should be co-ordinated by RP.

5. At present, there are RPs working effectively but there are others who are not working well. There should be provision of replacing the ineffective RPs from the position with set criteria. Similarly there should be a set criteria and process to appoint the new RPs. From this study it is seen that the experienced, dedicated and

qualified persons from teaching profession are functioning relatively better. There should be a regular provision to train and refresh the employed RPs.

6. Many of the DEOs are from the school supervisors (as a acting DEO), so that there is a conflicting situation. The provision of Second Class DEO should be strictly implemented.

7. The RPs in the districts should be from the same base otherwise there arises a status conflict.

8. The same data are demanded from different offices of the MOES, which has given quite a lot of pressure on RPs and schools. The educational data solicitation form should be readjusted and should be collected from one point and the others should share from it.

9. Training should be school based and the RP has to employ the locally available and qualified resource persons in the training instead of involving the RPs themselves to make the training more effective.

Long - term

1. Until now there is no study of the effectiveness of the present RC model in term of school management, supervision, teaching learning in the classroom, evaluation and testing and social mobilisation. A continuous evaluation of the implemented programmes is necessary for its effectiveness. With the recommendation of the study further modification or readjustment should be made in the programmes for functioning well.

2. It is suggested to appoint a person with Master's in Education or Master's in other discipline but with education training, teaching experience, training on primary school children's teaching in future appointment of the RPs in order to reduce the conflict between the HM in secondary schools and the RPs working for the schools. Similarly the present RPs qualification should be upgraded gradually providing opportunity.

3. Based on the review of the practised models aboard and in Nepal and the empirical study of the present RC model of Nepal, the following alternative models are suggested:

a) **Mobile RP for remote/mountain district:** This is the model of not a single RP but model of RPs. A team of experts of primary education should be constituted in the district. The experts may be from the schoolteachers or other locally available education practitioners. The individual by turn visits the school with a schedule prepared based on the local needs of the school. The RPs should have link to the DEO and the schools. They should be made fully accountable to the schools. Government should provide all the necessary financial support and other resources. This model can correct the present lacking of supervision, monitoring and training of the teachers in the remote and mountain districts. This model adopts 'on school training' instead of 'out of school training' and decreases the burden of teachers' absenteeism and training becomes life like. This model is very useful in the school where there are one or two teachers.

b) **School Base Model:** This is an integrated institutional model of RC fully organised and controlled by the teachers of the schools. This model is suggested for the hill and terai where there are more schools in the existing RC. At present there are 10 to 26 schools in a RC in the present study sample. It is quite impossible to take care by one RP. So a cluster of 5 – 7 schools is to be made and among the schools one secondary or lower secondary should be selected as lead school. And this school should be developed as a resource school. The responsibility of training the teachers and supervision is of the lead school. There should be some additional tenure of the teachers so that there could not be hindrance in regular function of the school. The existing RC can co-ordinate some 2 –3 clusters and takes the responsibility of providing training to develop the trainer for the clusters. The present functions of training and supervision of the schools will be lifted out and the role of co-ordinating all the stakeholders and organisations for the EFA plans of actions and decentralisation should be given to the present RP. In other words the present RC would be a unit of DEO working for administrative and co-ordinating functions (may be Assistant District Education Officer) but the supervision and training responsibility

should be given to the lead school. For financial resources, there should be a sharing modality. The government, the local body, community organisations, and even teachers and schools have to contribute. The sharing modality should be stated explicitly in the rules and regulations.

This model can provide adequate supervision and training support to the teachers and schools. Form the financial point of view, this could be more sustainable because of much sharing from different sectors. This investment from the local level brings concern to the local people to see its effectiveness and certainly the accountability increases.

c) **Advisory model:** Schools according to their convenience constitute a cluster. This cluster will constitute a group of advisors. The advisors will be taken from the ex-teachers and/or from other locally available freelance education experts or practitioners. The group of advisor will select one member as co-ordinator. This group would be accountable to the schools. The responsibility of fund collecting and spending goes to the schools but a small budget be allocated to each school from the government for teacher development. This could make the schools obliged to manage the advisory model and DEO can circulate the directives for constituting advisory group. Individual school pays for the service. This is a concept base purely professional model.

This model is targeted for the school in urban areas where still schools are practising their own organisation for the development of their teachers. In some urban areas the schools are economically sound and they could manage their quality standard themselves. The DEO should make provision of motivating the schools to such model of teacher centre.

This model can provide the need based training and both the service provider and service recipients become accountable for the activities. It can bring the proper utilisation of the resources (budget), local participation increases and the RC concept sustains

d) **Decentralised model:** The Decentralisation Act has kept the provision that the management of schools should be handed over to the local community especially

local government body. According to the spirit of the Act, now some schools are handed over to the community and they are running under the management of the school management committee. So it is reasonable to hand over the teacher support system to the local level. Local government bodies like VEC can manage the resource centre. The national budget should allocate the budget for this provision to local government, and there should be a provision by law that the local government should allocate the budget to resource centre. The local government can replicate the present model of RC under its management with sub-clustering the RC with no more than 5 – 7 schools in one cluster. The present RP work as technical advisor of the local management committee but the tutors are from the teachers themselves

This model provides need base service, makes people accountable themselves, close supervision and monitoring and the concept of resource centre will be owned by the stakeholders.

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