

**Education for All 2004-09**  
**Formative Research Project**

**Synthesis Report**  
**of the Case Studies Conducted in 2006**

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## Acronyms

AC	=	Assessment Centre
CBECD	=	Community Based Early Childhood Development
CDC	=	Curriculum Development Centre
CERID	=	Research Center for Educational Innovation and Development
CLMs	=	Children's Learning Materials
DACAW	=	Decentralized Action for Children and Women
DEOs	=	District Education Offices
DOE	=	Department of Education
ECD	=	Early Childhood Development
FRAG	=	Formative Research Advisory Group
FRP	=	Formative Research Project
HIV/AIDS	=	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunity Deficiency Syndrome
HTs	=	Head teachers
IDP	=	Internally Displaced People
IE	=	Inclusive Education
INGO	=	International Non-Governmental Organization
IPC	=	Internally Displaced Children
MCs	=	Management Committee
MOER	=	Ministry of Education and Research
MOES	=	Ministry of Education and Sports
NCED	=	National Center for Educational Development
NGO	=	Non-Governmental Organization
PTAs	=	Parent Teacher Associations
SBECD	=	School Based Early Childhood Development
SC/N	=	Save the Children Norway
SC/US	=	Save the Children US
SIPs	=	School Improvement Plans
SMCs	=	School Management Committees
SNE	=	Special Needs Education
SOP	=	School Out-reach Program
UNICEF	=	United Nations Children's Fund
VDC	=	Village Development Committee
WHO	=	World Health Organization

## Preface

Tribhuvan University, Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development (CERID) is undertaking a Formative Research Project (FRP) for the Education for All (EFA) Program of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES)/ Nepal under the assistance of the Royal Norwegian Government. In the year 2005-06 seven case studies on different components of the EFA program were completed.

The studies included: (1) Life Skills Education: Nature of the Issues and their Linkage to System Provisions, (2) Effectiveness of School/Community Based Monitoring System, (3) Gender Equality and Gender Friendly Environment in Primary Schools, (4) A Comparative Study of the Effectiveness of School-based and Community-based ECD Program and the Role of INGOs/NGOs in the Implementation of ECD Program, (5) Situation of Inclusive Classroom in Nepal, (6) Linking the Madrasa with the Mainstream Education in Nepal, and (7) Education of Internally Displaced Children. This report presents a synthesis of the major findings and recommendations of all these studies. It also includes a critical reflection of the major findings and recommendations made by the studies. At the end a conclusion and synthesis of the major recommendations are presented.

This report is believed to be useful for the program implementing officials and units at the MOES/DOE as well as for district and local level offices and officials responsible for the implementation of EFA program activities. It is expected to be mainly useful for those who have no time to go through all the case study reports.

I would like to express my appreciation to all the researchers, experts, research associates and research assistants as well as all those who have contributed in completing the case studies in time. I would also like to thank Mr. Veda Nath Regmi for language editing of this report. Thanks are also due to Mr. Gautam Manandhar for cover design and page lay out, and Mr. Bishnu Bikram Giri for typing and Mr. Bhakta Bahadur Sherstha for printing the report.

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## **Chapter 1 Introduction**

This is the third year of the implementation of Nepal's EFA program 2004-09 supported by many friendly countries and donors. The government of Norway has been one of the main supporters. Formative Research Programme (FRP) comes under the Technical Assistance of the Government of Norway to the Government of Nepal for the effective implementation of the EFA programme. The Ministry of Education and Research, Norway has been supporting the Ministry of Education and Sports, Nepal to undertake formative research. The Ministry of Education and Sports Nepal has entrusted CERID to undertake FRP.

The overall purpose of the Formative Research is to provide technical support to the reform implementer, Ministry of Education and Sports, by bringing forward strategic research-based information on the process of implementation of educational reform and by assisting its capacity building initiatives for utilizing available knowledge and skills.

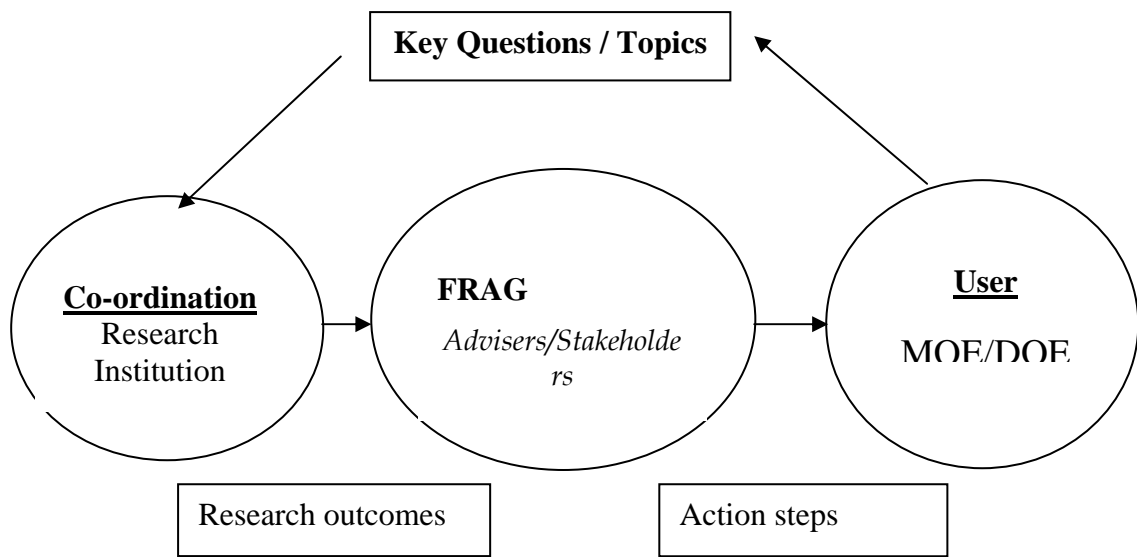
The major objectives of FRP are as follows:

1. To generate research-based information and critical understanding of the process of implementation of the EFA program.
2. To assist capacity building of MOES for utilization of formative research as an instrument for program monitoring and adjustment.
3. To assist a process-based institutional development of MOES and underlying agencies based on working experience and available knowledge and skills.

### ***Formative Research Approach***

Three distinct groups are involved in the Formative Research process, MOES (reform implementer), CERID (professional research institution), and Formative Research Advisory Group (FRAG). MOES has the overall ownership as well as the responsibility for all the activities associated with the reform program. The administrative and technical responsibility of the research has been entrusted to CERID for execution. This arrangement has been made to provide an institutional basis for research-based reform in the implementation of EFA. The main FR information including the research report and the recommendations are presented to the implementer (MOES) through FRAG. This is to ensure that the stakeholders are aware of the progress of the reform as well as the critical aspects regarding the implementation. The Advisory Group is a stakeholders' committee composed of policy makers, educationists including specialists in the areas of gender, ethnicity and pedagogy, District Education Officers, head teachers, and senior researchers. The working relation of these three groups is presented conceptually in Figure 1 that follows.

**Figure 1: FRP Concept**



Core topics and key questions for formative research are formulated by MOES and DOE and forwarded to CERID. CERID organises research and related activities with the help of individual researchers contracted, on the basis of competition, to undertake the case studies. The research outcomes are presented to FRAG. This group discusses the research findings and suggests action steps to the government for necessary reform in the policies, programs and the implementation processes. This cycle is an annual phenomenon.

## Chapter 2 Overview of the Studies

The FRP activities undertaken in the year 2006 included 7 case studies plus a longitudinal study on system indicators.

Case studies:

1. Effectiveness of Community-Based and School-Based ECD's Program
2. Effectiveness of School/Community-based monitoring System
3. Gender Parity and Gender Friendly Environment in Primary Schools
4. Situation of Inclusive Classroom
5. Life Skill Education: Nature of Issues and their Linkages to System Provision
6. Muslim Children's Access to Formal Education
7. Education of Internally Displaced Children: Provision and Challenges.

Longitudinal study:

The quantitative longitudinal study on system indicators aimed at identifying progress over the years based on 43 indicators. An apparent cohort analysis of the students has been one of the main aspects of the system-indicator-based study.

The following is a brief description of the studies undertaken.

### *1. Effectiveness of School-based and Community-based ECD Programmes: Roles of NGOs/INGOs*

ECD is relatively a new area of development in Nepal. In the early 1990s the government introduced preschool classes in the primary schools to address the increasing number of pre-school age children brought to schools for enrolment. Some ECD centres, particularly those attached to private schools, were run by the private sector in the form of Nursery and Kindergarten. Later, the government came to lay emphasis on the community-based ECD centres and supported the development and operation of community-based ECD centres. Meeting the EFA ECD goal is, however, still a big challenge for Nepal. The challenge relates to the need for rapidly expanding provisions to ensure access of ECD services to all the children of the corresponding age group and ensuring at the same time that the ECD provisions address the overall development of children. In view of the various forms of development taking place and the need for rapid expansion, the government has adopted a flexible policy for the development of ECD centres. However, the government advocated and supported the school-based and the community-based ECD provisions. These two categories of provisions have good aspects as well as issues and limitations. Since there is still a need and scope for the rapid expansion of ECD centres, the question arises – Whether the emphasis should be on school-based or community-based centres? This study has been undertaken with this question in view. The study mainly intended to identify comparative positions of ECD centres run by schools and by communities and to outline modes of NGO-INGO partnership for effect in the implementation of ECD programs.

Specifically the study aimed to

1. find out the ways of forming management committees in CBECD centres and SBECD centres and defining their nature.
2. assess mutual relationships between community, parents and ECD centres.
3. compare the ECD environments in CBECD centres and SBECD centres.
4. identify and assess the activities being carried out in CBECD centres and SBECD centres.
5. examine the effectiveness of NGO-INGO partnership in the ECD program.

A number of School-based ECD centres and Community-based ECD centres were selected purposively for case study.

## **Major Findings**

### *Management committees in CBECD centres and SBECD centres;*

- CBECD centres and SBECD centres supported by the government commenced with community gatherings in which MCs were formed, facilitators selected, sites for the centres identified, and lists of 3 to 5 year old children prepared. In the case of INGO-supported centres situation analyses/PRA were conducted for the purpose of community mobilization. INGOs also arranged for the observation visits of selected community leaders to model the CBECD centres of other districts as pre-establishment activities.
- All the sample CBECD centres had MCs whereas only 6 SBECD centres out of 14 had MCs. MCs were formed in all the CBECD centres and SBECD centres in community gatherings. In one SBECD centre, however, the MC was formed in the meeting of the staff of the concerned school. The numbers of members in the MC varied from 5 to more than 10. The number of members in MC was 5 in the SBECD centres supported by the government; 7 in the CBECD centres supported by the government and SC/N; 9 in the CBECD centres supported by SC/US and supported by Plan Nepal; and 10<sup>+</sup> in the CBECD centres supported by UNICEF Nepal.
- The MCs of both CBECD centres and SBECD centres should have 3 types of portfolios—chairperson, members and member-secretary as per the government guidelines and INGO guidelines. However in some CBECD and SBECD centres additional portfolios such as vice-chairperson, treasurer, joint-secretary, patron and advisor had been created. Moreover, according to the guidelines, the guardians should be selected for chairpersons in the MCs. But this was not practised in 33% of the sample CBECD centres and 66% of the sample SBECD centres.

### *Community, parents and ECD centres*

- In most of the CBECD centres, the relationship between the community, parents and the CBECD centres was found satisfactory in terms of: attendance of community people in the meetings/gatherings, donation of land, labour and materials for physical infrastructure development; request to parents to send their children to the ECD centres; and collection and mobilization of funds. Parents cooperated with the CBECD centres by setting up Children's Saving Funds and by paying tuition fees. The CBECD centres MCs played a major



role in developing better relationships. But, as most of the SBECD centres did not have MCs, they could not establish close relationship with the community and parents. Hence, the financial and non-financial supports they received were less.

#### *ECD environments in CBECD centres and SBECD centres*

- The external physical environment of the SBECD centres was better than that of the CBECD centres in terms of fencing, playground, toilet and drinking water facility. The physical and learning environment inside the classrooms of most of the CBECD centres was better than that of the SBECD centres in terms of seating arrangements, availability of children's learning materials, management of learning corners, space for rest for children and conduct of activities.

#### *Activities carried out in CBECD centres and SBECD centres*

- The facilitators of most of the CBECD centres and the SBECD centres conducted activities by following the daily schedule. Although the ECD centres need to conduct activities 4 hours a day as mentioned in the ECD Programme Operation Directory the duration of activity time ranged from 3 to 6:15 hours in the CBECD centres and 3:30 to 5:40 hours in the SBECD centres.
- In all the CBECD centres activities were based on the play-way method and child-centred method whereas in a majority of the SBECD centres, activities were primarily subject-teaching-based as in the primary grade. Hence, ECD activities in the CBECD centres were more joyful to the children than those in the SBECD centres. In the SBECD centres, there was more emphasis on the teaching of the 3R's.

#### *NGO-INGO partnership in ECD program*

- The key components of ECD programme in which NGOs/INGOs had partnership were: infrastructure development, financial support for the matching fund, remuneration and daily expenses, training, management of CLMs and play materials, monitoring, and supplementary food. INGO-wise, SC/US and Plan Nepal had partnership in all these key components except supplementary food. Similarly, the partnerships of SC/N and UNICEF Nepal centred on infrastructure development, financial support for remuneration, management of CLMs and play materials, and training. UNICEF Nepal also supported the ECD fund through a basket funding. However, ETC partnership was limited to the management of CLMs and play materials, training, and monitoring.
- The NGOs/INGOs partnership was found effective in infrastructure development because this partnership helped to receive community support for the acquisition of land and construction materials, and for labour contribution and cash donation. The CLMs and play materials distributed by INGOs helped the facilitators conduct ECD activities in an effective way. The NGO/INGO partnership in the monitoring of ECD activities was found effective, as ECD activities were being carried out in accordance with the ECD principles by

using CLMs. Similarly, INGO's partnership in the training component was found satisfactory even though the duration of the training was short.

- The NGO/INGO partnership was not effective in the creation and mobilization of the ECD fund because it could not serve the purpose for which it was created. The ECD centres did not get the matching fund (treble) as stipulated. The fund itself would not be enough to make the centres sustainable.

This study has identified several important things for better operation of the ECD centres. Formation of an inclusive management committee, looking after the entire program implementation, and arrangement of logistics, constituted a major need. Another important need, which the study revealed, was parental awareness combined with knowledge about ECD which would be meaningful for parental involvement in the development of the ECD programs and processes. There is a need for trained facilitators. Unless the facilitators are trained to run the program towards fully achieving the expected results, deficiency in the quality of the program will hang on. Similarly, ECD-friendly leadership among the head teachers is important for attaining quality outcome in ECD. A well-designed monitoring scheme and its effective application are no less important.

## *2. Effectiveness of School/Community-based Monitoring*

The essence of the school-based management within a decentralized framework is to operate the school by involving and empowering the parents and the community and by utilizing human and material resources available at the local level. The present reform programs have, therefore, assigned monitoring roles to the community (e.g., parents, SMC members) as well as to the school system actors (e.g., teachers, head teachers, resource persons, supervisors, and central level authorities). However, in the current situation school monitoring is still a problem. It is often presumed that community-based monitoring is working better than the DEO-based monitoring. Meanwhile, community-based monitoring has many limitations.

This study on community-school-based monitoring was carried out mainly with the objective of finding out to what extent this approach to monitoring has been working. The research focused on the following research questions:

- How effective is the community/school-based monitoring system? (How feasible is the concept of self-assessment system?)
- What are the features of successful cases?
- What are the reasons for success?

## **Major Findings**

### *Effectiveness of community/school-based monitoring system and concept of self-assessment*

The Education Act and Regulations have stated that monitoring is one of the responsibilities of HTs, SMCs, and PTAs. But the Act and Regulations have neither elaborated conceptual and operational frameworks of community-school-based monitoring nor stipulated the minimum standards or parameters of monitoring school activities. From the central to the grassroots level the incumbents perceive monitoring in different ways. The head of the Monitoring Unit at DOE views

monitoring as a process to see if the programs are being run in accordance with the stipulated Act, Regulations and Rules. DEOs perceive monitoring as an act to assess the implementation status of various programs, mainly in terms of achievements and weaknesses. Monitoring in the view of PEU at the DEO Office is a method to generate information about the school and take remedial measures for improvement.

Community-school-based monitoring, as viewed by these incumbents, is the involvement of HTs, SMCs and PTAs in observing the physical, administrative and financial affairs of the school. In other words, lack of clarity about the indicators of monitoring and also about the process of using these indicators shows diverse understanding about monitoring among the incumbents.

From this broader understanding of monitoring by the incumbents it becomes clear that MOES focuses on macro-level monitoring but does not provide any detail regarding what constitutes macro-level monitoring. The Monitoring Unit at DOE conducts micro-level monitoring (Here also no detail is available). At the district level DEO focuses only on input monitoring — for example, to see if the schools have received grants and how and where grants are being used. In reality, this does not seem to have happened since the schools do not seem to have received information in time. Even DEOs are confused regarding incentive programs and the operation of block grants modality. These are only a few examples.

Training on monitoring does not seem to be comprehensive and exhaustive because the monitoring component in training programs such as school management for HT and SMC and SIP training for concerned stakeholders does not have adequate space. Only scanty ideas about monitoring are provided during the training activities. No provision for conducting extensive training on monitoring is in place.

Despite the absence of a detailed conceptual framework and operational modality regarding community/school-based monitoring, some self-initiated mechanisms have been put into effect, specifically in the study schools of Syangja and Chitwan. In Syangja, the school catchments areas, consensually defined by the school stakeholders, have been divided into clusters, and the stakeholders of each cluster are assigned responsibilities of executing school-based plans and programs including monitoring. The stakeholders are also involved in mobilizing the NGOs for resource generation, launching the welcome-to-school program, creating awareness among Dalits of the importance of education for their children etc. The head teacher has engaged himself in monitoring teachers' professional duties and subsequently in providing pertinent inputs/suggestions for their better performances. SMCs, parents and PTAs frequently take note of student discipline, physical status of the school and its surrounding environment, adequacy of learning and instructional materials, and performance of the students. They provide suggestions based on the conclusions they derive from an analysis their notes.

The case of Chitwan is more or less similar to that of Syangja. For instance, the local community, HTs and SMCs are actively engaged in appraising school's academic roles and administrative and financial affairs. The school system has developed a portfolio of every single student of each grade and evaluates every one of the students in the presence of his/her parents. In order to see if a student has done his/her homework and whether he/she studies at home or not the school has developed an innovative method. Each student is provided with a notebook that has a table on the back side where the parent has to put tick mark every day. This is an example of the school's self-initiative, levelling of their understanding about the meaning of

monitoring and its application in a proper manner, institutionalizing the process of monitoring, and keeping records of the school activities.

The study schools in Parsa and Illam offer an indifferent scenario. Here the community people do not seem even diminutively concerned about the school and its performance. In Parsa prevalence of such a situation might be attributed to the low literacy level of the community people. In Illam the community people point to the instable political situation as the major constraint on the community participation in the school.

### *Successful school monitoring: reasons of success*

Regarding the features of success relating to community/school-based monitoring (based on a proper understanding of the concept and its application) it is difficult to sort out a strong example. However, a look at the Syangja and Chitwan cases presents some encouraging instances. The literacy status of the community people in both the study cases is encouraging. This can be attributed to their increased motivation towards toning up the efficiency and effectiveness of the school in a holistic manner. Second, one can notice a gradual formation of synergy between the school and the community. This is evident from the fact that both the school and the community people have fairly perceived their respective role performances. Third, there is a good understanding between the school and the community, which has made it possible to respect each other's ideas for the progress of the school. Fourth, self-initiative to move forward to what they thought was important notwithstanding their partial knowledge and skill of monitoring. Lastly, the teachers and head teachers, leaving aside their differences, vented a professional commitment.

### *3. Gender Equality and Gender-friendly Environment in Primary Schools*

The study on gender equality and gender-friendly environment in primary schools was undertaken to understand the critical aspects relating to the provisions made to ensure access of girls to quality schooling. This included a study of the policies and provisions related to scholarships as well as incentives to girls and their parents/families; improvement of the school environment by, for example, recruitment of female teachers. The study also intended to delineate important factors (determinants) to ensure gender-friendly environment in schools from girl students' perspectives as well as female teachers' perspectives. An effort was also made to assess the impact of female teachers in the schools and the communities.

## **Major Findings**

### *Scholarships and incentives: strategy for enrolment*

Incentive for the girl students:

The government has made provisions for motivating/supporting girls to join school and continue with a satisfactory level of regularity. This includes an annual incentive of Rs. 250 for girl students for 50% of all the girl students on merit and school regularity basis, and Rs. 250 for all the Dalit girls. (This provision is there also for the Dalit boys.)

Different INGOs and NGOs are providing support in the form of food, school dress, stationery and as motivation for co-curricular and extra curricular activities. Day food

is provided in some districts under the school nutrition program of the World Food Program. Similarly, Namaste Nepal, an NGO, is providing school dress and stationery support in three districts.

Incentive for schools:

The government has also made a provision of an incentive of Rs.100 for each girl admitted to the school.

Incentive for the parents:

The government provides Rs. 500 per girl child to the family that has never enrolled a child in the school.

In some districts the World Food Program provides packets of edible oil to the parents (mothers) so that they could send their daughters to the school, regularly. NGOs provide support to Mothers Groups in an integrated package form for income generation, self-confidence/assurance building through group work and information sharing. Sensitizing and awareness activities regarding girls education and school monitoring constitute the major focus of Mothers Group in many districts.

Most of the local people including the parents and the children have found such support programs effective. But these programs are, neither well accounted and nor recorded. Therefore, the extents of such efforts are not known at the national scale.

*Provision of female teachers: gender-specific strategy*

At least one female teacher per school:

Since the early 1990s the government has taken the policy of providing at least one female teacher to each school as well as a female teacher quota. Currently it ensures the presence of female teachers in this ratio: at least 1 female teacher in the school with 3 teachers; at least 2 female teachers in the school with 4-5 teachers, and at least 3 female teachers in the school with 7 or more teachers.

Authorizing SMC to recruit teachers:

The spirit of the recent educational reforms has been to encourage and empower the local community to participate in the reform process and to get their proactive support in ensuring the national policy implementation. The Education Act and Regulations authorize SMCs to recruit teachers on temporary basis. SMCs can, therefore, recruit female teachers as well.

Special authority to recruit more female teachers:

The government has also authorized the schools to recruit more female teachers for encouraging the enrolment of girl children.

Motivating potential female teachers:

There is also a provision of feeder hostels for girls studying at secondary and higher secondary levels. Special incentive in the form of scholarship is provided to SLC-pass girls to motivate them to become school teachers.

*Impact of female teachers on the school and the community*

The impact assessment is based on the opinions of DEOs, SMCs, head teachers and VDC members and on the findings of field study observations. The following are the impacts felt in the schools and in the communities:

Impact on schools:

- Recruitment of female teachers has helped to increase the enrolment of girls.
- The presence of female teachers has helped to make parents and daughters feel more secure and comfortable. It has increased participation of girls in curricular and extra curricular activities.
- Female teachers have contributed to improving school tidiness and sanitation habits of students.
- They have improved the school environment by introducing affectionate interaction between students and teachers.
- They have made curricular and co-curricular activities joyful.
- They have become role models for girl students. They have motivated school girls to become teachers.

Impact on community:

- Female teachers have helped undertake door-to-door programs for raising awareness regarding the need to enrol girls in the school. They have been found more effective in encouraging Muslim families to send their girls to schools.
- They have made school girls feel at home and confident to take part in school activities, thus helping them to complete their primary course cycle.
- They have helped made students, teachers and the community aware of the gender bias and other discriminatory practices in the school, community, public place and home.
- They have motivated the females of the community to take part in the programs organized by schools, community organizations and NGOs.
- They have inspired females in the communities (both married and unmarried) to work as teachers in the formal school as well as in the non-formal program.

#### *Extent of policy implementation*

Timing and adequacy of the scholarships/incentives for students, parents and schools are still not effectively managed. Besides, the amount of the incentives has been too small to bring the anticipated impact.

The special fund provision for the schools with 50% or more female teachers has not yet come into practice. The study shows that the policy of female teacher recruitment has not been strictly followed. There are female teachers in the schools in district headquarters and urban areas. Many of them had more female teachers. But the schools of remote village area schools have none.

There were three reasons for all this. Firstly, DEOs sent and transferred teachers to and from the schools without prior consultation with the SMCs or under official or political pressure. Secondly, lack of a gender-friendly environment in the remote areas was almost a challenge for the females teachers from outside the village. Lack of transport was another problem. Finally, in the past, insurgency added immense risk for the female teachers.

*Factors (determinants) of gender equality from female teacher and student perspectives*

Toilet/rest room:

Female teachers and the students need rest rooms/toilets during school hours. Many schools have toilets but they are non operational. They do not have doors, and so no locks. Most school toilets are not in good condition. They are not clean and have no water supply.

Enclosed/walled school compound:

Female teachers and the students both feel that the school compound should be walled/ fenced for security and to engage undisturbed in teaching and learning. They also feel the need of enclosed classrooms. This they need to avoid unnecessary gaze/interference/disturbance from outside.

Sensitivity of the boys and teachers:

Girl students and female teachers feel that good attitude/behaviour of the male teachers and students are essential. Bad attitude/behaviour of even a few male teachers or boy students can create trouble.

Gender equality in the community:

The overarching issue of gender inequality goes beyond the school to the family and the community. The preferential treatment to boys suppresses the aspiration and confidence of girls at home. The hostile attitude of males in the community similarly makes the girls feel insecure in the community and public places.

*4. Situation of Inclusive Classroom*

In Nepal, the concept of bringing all types of children including those with disabilities into the same educational environment led to the genesis of inclusive education. The focus of the study rests mainly on inclusive education in the classroom. Inclusive classroom connotes a common classroom for all. Therefore, the intent of the study was to identify practices that led to the inclusion of students from various cultures, ethnicities, language backgrounds, disabilities and other differing characteristics and traits.

The study was carried out in three districts – Bara, Rasuwa and Kavre – which represent the three ecological zones of the country. For the purpose of the study Musahars from Dalits and Tamangs and Danuwars from the indigenous groups were selected.

The study had the following objectives:

1. To structure a system and mechanisms for identifying the needs of children with differing disabilities
2. To assess teachers' awareness and sensitivity towards special needs children
3. To evaluate teachers' capacity in meeting the learning needs of special needs children
4. To find out effectiveness of the welcome-to-school program related to inclusive classroom and retention of children in the school.

## **Major Findings**

### *The system and mechanism*

Forty-seven districts had been selected for the implementation of the IE and SNE programs. Assessment Centres were established in these districts for identifying children with diverse disabilities and to determine which of them to enrol in the resource class and which in the IE class. But, in practice, the ACs' task seemed to concentrate only in identifying children who are suitable for Special Needs Education (SNE). The AC coordinator's position is equivalent to that of a primary school teacher. So his/her qualification did not seem to be adequate for the identification of children with varying disabilities. This identification is indeed a task of specialists. DEO who assumes the position of AC chairperson has not been able to perform substantially because of time constraint. Resource persons and supervisors have not been assigned responsibilities to look after the AC affairs. No mechanism is in place to empower IE teachers to deal with the problem of identifying children with various forms and degrees of disabilities. As a result, it has been difficult to identify children with differing forms and magnitudes of disabilities. Lack of coordination between AC, IE class and RC has hindered the functional operation of the IE programs.

### *Teachers' capacity*

Teachers do not seem to be capable to conduct the IE class properly because they lack knowledge and skills that are needed for the effective operation of such a class. Even if they got some exposure to IE from a 6-day training, the actual contribution of this training seems to be disappointing because the knowledge and skill inputs they got in the training do not seem to have been rightly transferred to the IE class. The conventional method of teaching continues in the classroom. Actually, for the operation of such an important program a 6-day long training is only scanty. Another distressing story is that most of the teachers nominated for the training did not get information on time because of communication problems and, consequently, they missed the full course of the training. The training package also was lopsided because the theoretical portion was heavier than the practical focus. As a matter of fact, the government had conducted a pilot IE before, which generated some interesting results but, unfortunately, the good experiences of the pilot were not included in the training package. On account of this deficit in the training package the required degree of focus on the IE contents and corresponding pedagogy were overlooked, as a result of which, preparing teachers for the IE class fell short.

### *Welcome-to-school program, inclusive classroom and retention of children*

Initially, the government had provided some funds for the development of IE infrastructure, but in the second year it was discontinued because a new policy was introduced, which stipulated that funds for IE infrastructure and management would be provided based on the provision made in SIP. Interestingly, there were instances of SIPs which, because of ignorance or carelessness, did not include the IE component. Consequently, such SIPs got delisted from getting the funds. On the other hand, with the launch of the welcome-to-school program even children with special needs took their way to school, and with the increase in their number it



became necessary to give them space. Since the school lacked required physical facilities and resources, accommodation of the children became difficult.

#### *5. Life Skill Education: Nature of the issues and their linkage to system provision*

This study intended to examine the nature of the issues related to life skill education and their linkage to system provision in the light of the goal of Education for All. The study aimed to find answers to the questions regarding the understanding and expectations of the community people regarding life skill education and its provisions including school education. It also aimed to explore ways of adjusting classroom activities in line with the needs of life skill education. The intention was to generate answers to questions pertaining to readjustments in the curriculum and teacher preparation through orientation/training.

The Ministry of Education and Sports is committed to achieving the goals of EFA. In this context, Curriculum Development Centre has incorporated life skills education components into the Health and Population Education courses.

The study is based on a review of documents, classroom observation outputs and interactions with stakeholders. The study schools included CDC pilot schools and UNICEF, DACAW district schools, where the life skill education curriculum has been trialled, as well as the schools which were not covered by these two programs.

### **Major Findings**

Understanding and expectations of community people:

#### *Life skill education*

- The understanding and the expectations of the community people and parents regarding life skill education were wide. They included the need to provide skills for addressing social skills, interpersonal skills, work (technical/vocational) skills, information skills etc. The emphasis was on bringing explicit changes in the skill capacity and behaviour of the children.
- Discrepancy was found in the concept of life skills in the main documents, viz 'Thematic Report' of EFA, 'Curriculum' of CDC and the proposed 'National Curriculum Framework for School Education'.
- In the context of agencies life skill education varies with their respective areas of work. For example, in the context of WHO and UNICEF and INGOs it relates to HIV Aids, health hazards, peace education etc. and with the government to poverty reduction. CDC concern includes basic knowledge regarding health and literacy at the primary level, specialized learning at the secondary level and professional courses for tertiary education.

#### *Provisions of life skill education*

- Life skill components are incorporated in the revised national curriculum of Health Education and Population Education. There is however a lacuna in the curriculum implementation aspect. There is, for instance, no provision to ensure capacitation of teachers to implement the new curriculum and no provision of support materials for the effective implementation.

- UNICEF Nepal has collaborated with CDC/NCED to develop a life skill education package and piloted it in some districts. However these efforts lacked conceptual clarity regarding how to address the different aspects/priorities regarding life skill education. The package included current concerns such as HIV/AIDS in the existing curriculum.
- The curriculum was piloted, some teachers were trained and some schools were provided support materials. But there was no monitoring or feedback necessary for the holistic improvement in the curriculum implementation at the national level.

#### *Curriculum Provision*

- Despite the teacher training, curriculum revision, textbook remodelling, and development of instructional materials, emphasis on rote learning and teacher domination are still common in the classroom. There is no strategy or focus on transformation of classroom practices. Besides, there is no adaptation of life skill education in the curriculum planning. An overall revision of the curriculum is necessary in view of the goals of life skill education.
- Preparation/orientation for the curriculum developers and teachers is still a need.

#### *Teacher Preparation*

- To prepare teachers to be sensitive towards the feelings of the children in most important. In many cases, teachers were in want of appropriate ways to deal with the children. For example, in some observed Health Education classes teachers made comparisons of good and bad habits by setting one child as a good example and the other as a bad one. This practice harassed the child set as the bad example, discouraging him/her from participation in the school activities.
- Most of the classroom activities were neither child-centred nor child-friendly. Teachers had no knowledge and skill of planning classroom activities as required by the curriculum objectives. They were inclined to follow the traditional way of teaching through text recitation leading to rote memory.

#### *6. Linking Madrasas with Mainstream Education*

Madrasas are the learning centres which the Muslim children in particular attend to get an education entirely framed on Islamic religion and culture. In fact, Madrasas, which are spread over the middle sector of the Terai belts, show a potentiality to prosper provided the Islamic education they offer is judiciously blended with the national education. This study is basically a follow-up to the two previous studies which mainly focused on soliciting Muslim stakeholders' perceptions with regard to linking Madrasas and the national system. The main purpose of this was to help work out a linkage between the two learning approaches.

The specific objectives of this study are:

- To analyze the structures of the public school primary curricula and the primary level Madarasa curricula.
- To solicit ideas of the concerned stakeholders and community leaders regarding the possibilities of integrating the mainstream and Madrasa courses of study.

- To suggest a curricular framework that focuses on the integration of the major subjects of primary education into the Madrasa system.

## **Major Findings**

### *Structure of public primary school curriculum and Madrasa curriculum*

Madrasas have no written curricula. Instruction is based on textbooks selected mainly by Muslim intellectuals who are known as Ulemas. Since there is no written curriculum, the objectives of Madrasa education are also unwritten. However, the commonly understood objectives are: to develop literacy and numeracy in the Muslim children, to conserve Islamic culture and religion, to propagate faith in Islam, to provide moral training based on Islamic faith, and to build a base for Islamic education of higher order.

The public school primary curricula and the Madrasa primary courses differ widely. The public school curriculum includes subjects such as Nepali, Mathematics, Social Studies, English whereas the Madrasas curriculum includes mainly Urdu, Arabic, Kalema and reading of the Quran. However, some Madrasas under study teach subjects like Nepali, Mathematics, Social Studies and English as well.

Madrasa teachers have neither knowledge of nor orientation required for teaching the mainstream subjects, and teachers to teach these subjects are not available even in the Madrasas running under SOP.

In Madrasas physical facilities and instructional materials are not adequate. For Islamic religion and culture courses teachers use textbooks published in India. Muslim children in Madrasas speak local languages which are different from Urdu whereas the language of instruction is Urdu. It is, however, interesting to note that Madrasa students have to study five languages: Urdu, Arabic, Persian, English and Nepali. Some Madrasas which teach the SOP courses teach the mainstream subjects with UNICEF support. Interestingly, Madrasas mostly use grade teaching, and in lack of teachers they also practice multi-grade teaching. The mismatch between Madrasa and the public school system is quite obvious. There is no Islamic education friendly environment in the public schools. So Muslim parents do not feel sending their children to such schools comfortable. The medium of instruction is almost alien. There is no Parda system in place. The economic condition of the parents is poor.

### *Solicitation of opinions on integration*

It is evident from the responses of the stakeholders that linking public education and Madrasas education is important. If it is obligatory for every Muslim child to read the Quran and Hadith, it is almost as obligatory for him/her to get the benefit of modern education. As there is no provision of religious and cultural learning in the public schools? It is natural for them to ignore the mainstream schools. Nevertheless, the Muslim children will suffer a big loss if they are denied modern education. They will miss knowledge and skills which are required to cope with the challenges of the modern competitive society. It is interesting to note that, although some Madrasas took the initiative to teach subjects taught in the public schools, their pedagogic process still skewed towards teaching religion and culture. Muslim stakeholders do not rule out the possibilities of inter-linking the Madrasa and the public school. They strongly presume that only religious education would not enable the Muslim children to competently stand alongside the achievers of modern education. However, they

harbour the apprehension that once they accept to run the mainstream education courses the government will take control of the Madrasa. Another important concern is that if the government rules out waiving Madrasas from all kinds of financial obligations as stipulated in Education Act, Rules and Regulations regarding the integration of public school courses, Madrasas will be nowhere. It will be necessary to help Madrasas with financial and material support.

There are three important things to do to intensify the possibility of integrating the public school courses. They are: administrative reform, curricular adjustment and financial provision. On the administrative side, it is important to reorganize Madarsa management committees with the participation of Islamic intellectuals and modern education scholars. The potentials of Madrasas would stay passive if they are kept alienated from the national education system. Therefore, there is an increasing demand for due recognition of the Madrasas. It is not reasonable to think of transferring the management of public schools to the Madrasas simply in the pretext of drawing Madrasas towards the mainstream education. Moreover, as far as the operational and management aspects are concerned there is a strong plea for guaranteeing freedom for Madrasas.

On the curricular side, the Muslim stakeholders are positive about the inclusion of public school courses into the Madrasas. The possibility of introducing Islamic education into the public schools is unassuming because it will only be formidable to create an Islamic environment in the public schools. An integrated curricular framework incorporating both Islamic education and general education courses has been considered more conceivable. Further, providing teachers to Madrasas for general education is in all ways essential. The study has shown the possibility of accommodating Islamic education as an elective subject with 20% credence into the public school courses. This provision is likely to motivate Muslim parents to send their children to public schools.

On the financial side, once Madrasas include public school courses they will need financial support from the government. The government should mainly provide salary for the teachers who teach the mainstream courses in Madrasas. Moreover, government's assistance will be needed for the management of physical facilities and teaching-learning materials.

It is indicated that a central level Madrasa Board should be constituted to look after the policy concerns and management of Madrasas. At the grassroots level a management committee composed of representatives of Madrasa stakeholders should be formed. This body should have freedom to make decisions concerning the smooth operation of the Madrasas. It is important that this body maintain functional coordination with the central level Board.

#### *Curricular framework for integration*

Muslim stakeholders seem to agree that Madrasas be reckoned as institutions also teaching public school courses. Two types of curricular framework will be needed in this regard. The Madrasa curriculum should include mainstream subjects such as Nepali, English, Mathematics, Social Studies and Health and Environmental Education apart from Islamic courses. The public school curriculum, on the other hand, should incorporate the Islamic learning component as an elective Islamic course of 20% credence. The public school courses to be taught in Madrasas should radiate Islamic values, for which textbooks need to be recast in Urdu and other necessary

changes be made in the subject matter. Equally important is the fact that at the initial stage of the implementation of the integrated curricula only a few capable Madrasas should be selected.

### *7. Education of Internally Displaced Children: Provisions and Challenges*

Recently, Nepal experienced an emerging and also burgeoning problem of displacement of people from their home villages and towns to urban and more secure areas. There are various reported reasons behind the displacement. Armed conflict is the major reason. Some children were displaced because their parents and themselves were the direct targets of the conflicting parties. Other children were displaced because they happened to be in the conflict-affected areas. Another displacement was the result of the extreme hardships and hazards in the rural areas caused by blockages to transportation, constraints on economic activities etc. This seriously hampered the education of children. Questions arise: Do the displaced children get access to education in the new places? What kind of educational provision do they have access to? What about their relation with other children and their need of educational essentials such as stationery, dress, food and drinking water? What are their socio-psychological conditions? What could be the impacts of the displacement on the new schools they have joined? Are the schools crowded and suffer from scarcity of books and other learning materials? What supports are made available to address the situation by various concerned agencies? Are these supports adequate and effective?

The study has specified the following objectives:

- To identify the educational status of internally displaced children (IDCs)
- To assess the programs of the government and of the NGOs and INGOs to meet the needs of IDCs
- To assess the effectiveness of the programs and their coverage
- To recommend remedial measures to address the existing needs of IDCs.

### **Major Findings**

Access to school was a challenge for the displaced children. Nevertheless, they somehow got adjusted. But the quality of learning got affected due to the influx of new children into the schools. The following lists up the major findings of the study.

#### *Educational status of IDCs*

- The major learning problems of IDCs included lack of materials like pen, pencil, book, school bag and school uniform.
- Performance of the students was found better in the schools of destination owing to the better quality of education. The attributes to which being less strike, better facilities, more teachers, atmosphere of security, no compulsion to be involved in road construction.
- The guardians/parents had to borrow money to buy children's learning materials like copy and school dress. In one case, the school administration was found to deny admission due to over-pressure of students.

- Inadequacy of the number of teachers, insufficient room space and lesser physical facilities were the major problems faced by the IDCs in the schools surveyed.
- The level of student' learning and their performance was, found satisfactory in most cases.
- A majority of the IDCs were getting time to study at the place of residence.
- A majority of children received study support from their parents at home.
- In some cases children from the mountain regions had little difficulty in understanding the local language. Similarly, some IDCs were facing problems in Mathematics, English and Environmental Science subjects.
- In some cases, the IDCs were humiliated and dominated by their friends in their new schools. The local people and friends used to call them 'displaced' and *Jumli* (one who had no food to eat).
- The number of students in the sample schools was found to have almost doubled in the recent years due to the influx of IDCs. The schools were not in a position to accommodate the increasing number of students because of shortage of teachers, classroom space, furniture, drinking water and toilet.
- Children from the areas of armed conflict were having psychological problems. Their studies were affected by the memory of the painful events they had been exposed to. Some of the major events were loss of neighbours, friends, parents, relatives, and looting and destruction of property during insurgency.

#### *Government and INGOs programs*

- The roles of the government and other organizations/institutions as well as groups of people could not be identified. Such a situation created problems in supporting internally displaced peoples (IDPs) and their children.
- Whatever support was available was neither regular nor sufficient for IDCs. The books provided by DEO fell short of the number of students in each class. This created a conflict between school teachers and students/parents. More importantly, unavailability of books in time was counted as a major obstacle.

#### *Effectiveness of programs and their coverage.*

- Children of conflict-hit areas have some psychological problems. The major issues in these areas are breakdown of social and cultural assets, loss of property, confusion in daily life and show of power and violence. (shooting, explosion and torture.)
- Lack of physical facilities and teachers and of regular check-up of homework were the major deficiencies of education of the IDCs in the schools surveyed. These factors were also affecting the academic environment of the schools and thereby the overall performance of the children.

The study revealed that the children faced space problems, lacked stationery, books, school bags and school uniforms. Similarly, government and NGO - INGO supports were inadequate. So was the number of teachers. Since these

children were in deplorable psychological condition, they had difficulty in learning. Definitely, the cumulative effect of all these factors was found militating against quality enhancement in primary schools with IDC children.

### **Chapter 3 Critical reflection**

The issues and the research questions in the studies undertaken were generated on the experiences of MOES and DOE in course of the implementation of the national EFA programs. They are therefore directly linked to the societal and systemic milieu. Many of them relate to system operation and contextual realities including the social and economic circumstances of students, parents and the community. The focus is on the aspects that relate to both. The following is a reflection on the issues.

#### *Community-Based and School-Based ECD Program*

ECD is a relatively new area of development in Nepal. What to expect from ECD? What should the ECD provisions actually be? How should ECD be operated? Many stakeholders including parents, communities and even ECD providers are not clear about answers to these questions. Nepal is committed to the World Declaration on EFA – to achieve the EFA targets of providing ECD services to all the children. Development is already taking place in this area. Some private schools are running programs like nursery, kindergarten and Montessori; some NGOs are running community-based child care/ ECD centres. Since the 1990s the government has been running pre-primary classes for pre-school-age children. The need for rapid expansion to meet the EFA goal has made the government take a multiple-mode strategy. DOE has been expanding ECD centres, rapidly. It has been supporting both school-based and community-based ECD centres. Questions have been raised as to whether school-based ECD centres are running in a way conducive to the holistic development of children and to whether the community-based ECD centres are operating at all in the communities that lack the required institutional infrastructure.

The findings show that community-based ECD centres are running as expected –with the active role of SMCs ensuring community participation. They are, no doubt, flexible, child-friendly and family-oriented, but they lack an institutional approach in terms of space, environment and time, whereas school-based ECD centres are mostly running like a class following a subject-specific routine, like a primary class. There is, therefore, a need for introducing a formal curriculum, guideline and scheme for training the resource persons and a provision of materials for the community-based ECD centres. School-based ECD centres, on the other hand, need monitoring and professional facilitation to ensure the participation of the community to make the centres actively child-friendly, more flexible, and holistic-development-oriented. There are, thus, clear roles for different stakeholders – community mobilization and resource support for the NGOs; curriculum, instructional materials, and curriculum take-care for the government; and facilitation of children’s development at home and in the school for parents.

#### *School- based and community-based monitoring*

This study shows that there is a provision of hierarchical monitoring, from the central level to the school level aimed at promoting school effectiveness for better performance of the students. However, operationalization of this mechanism seemed to have many problems. One main problem is obviously the lack of consistency and uniformity in the monitoring caused by diversity in the conceptual understanding of monitoring latent in different stakeholders of different levels. The central level seems to focus on outcomes monitoring, while the district level focuses more on inputs



monitoring. Schools, on the other hand, emphasize process monitoring. This has fragmented monitoring, creating conceptual confusion, lack of seriousness in the implementation practice and disinclination to feed back production.

Institutional and individual monitoring capacities constitute another important aspect of the monitoring issues. There are some provisions of capacity building training for the concerned stakeholders. Monitoring has been included as one of the components in the NCED teacher training package in the management training for the head teachers, and in the SIP training for the head teachers and SMC members. However, the types of training designed do not much address the monitoring issues.

There is, therefore, a need for defining the aspects and procedure of monitoring -- who should monitor what to monitor and how to monitor, in a coherent way. Totality in monitoring and linking various aspects of monitoring in a convergent way to specify the issues and produce the feedback are necessary. This should include appropriate space for the local community to address contextual diversity and local needs in a flexible way.

#### *Gender Equality and Gender-friendly Environment in Primary Schools*

Gender inequality has been a challenge. It has been difficult to achieve gender equality in the student intake for primary and secondary levels and in the recruitment of female teachers. The challenge prevails at home and at the work place including the school. Consequently, in the current set-up the provisions of gender equality in policies and programs have not worked as expected. Thus, even in a school where the number of female teachers is good the environment remains contrary to the gender needs. Similarly, despite the policy of ensuring the appointment of female teachers for all primary schools, there are many schools which do not have female teachers at all. There is even a lack of awareness about the government provisions of teacher incentives for the schools that provide female-friendly environments. There is a need to reorient the set up. Awareness raising and sensitization are one of the important aspects. Setting up an information system that ensures communication between various levels of system could be one constructive step. Recruitment of female teachers is another step. There is also a need of basic indicators related to the gender environment and of an easy checklist for school visits/observations focussing on gender. There is also a need for a system of tracking -- keeping records and reviewing the school profiles in terms of gender.

#### *Situation of Inclusive Classroom in Nepal*

Identifying disabilities of the children for the purpose of addressing their educational needs is a very new issue for the educational system. The study indicates that the system has made an attempt to pilot the provisions in this regard. But there is still no clear understanding about how to make such provisions effective. For example, there is a provision for the local assessment centre, but there is only one such centre in a district – at the district headquarters. If there is no local assessment base, how can the needs of the school be met? Should the person responsible for the assessment only pay a routine visit to the school? Or, should the students be brought to the centre? In either case, there had to be a matching provision but the study found none.

Besides, centrally defined criteria do not reflect the local contexts with regard to time or to the situation. Locally defined flexible operational strategies are needed to work on behalf of inclusive education.

District level profiles are no less important. In the absence of information about the needs pertaining to different disabilities how can a district plan, as required? Actually, information on criteria regarding Dalits/special needs students etc. should be publicized, also through the website, so that resources and requirements could be balanced on compatibility terms. Also people's services or NGO participation could be called in as and when necessary.

The problem links with the awareness and sensitivity of the different stakeholders including teachers, SMC members, community people and educational administrators. There is also a need to assess, and enhance, teachers' capacities to meet the learning needs of special needs children.

Some of the issues of the inclusive classroom relate to lack of community mobilization to utilize the school provision and of school preparedness, capacity and sensitivity to address the needs of the children who have come to school. In this regard an inquiry was made to assess the impact of the welcome-to-school program launched by the government to make the parents of out-of-school children aware and motivate them to participate in the program by sending their children to school. The study indicates parental readiness as well as the need for restructuring the scholarship award criteria. The criteria should be restructured in tune with the local contexts. To day schools can provide incentives only to those who have come to school and to those who are already in school. As there is a need for targeted scholarships/incentives, local level scholarship/support is more important than the blanket policy that is now in force.

#### *Life Skill Education: Nature of Issues and their Linkages to System Provision,*

Life skill education has been one of goals of EFA and one of the essential aspects of education in general and of school education in particular. It is also an area where there is still a need for a clear understanding of how it is generally understood and of its provisions and main issues. The study proposes to understand the expectations of people regarding life skill education and the provisions including those made for school education, and how classroom activities could be effectualized to meet the needs of life skill education.

One of the crucial issues regarding life skill education relates to the confusion about what actually constitutes life skill education. There are discrepancies regarding the concept of life skills education in various documents including the EFA National Plan of Action and the Curriculum. There are different views -- facilitating force for employment and earning, livelihood skills, and range of content areas.

Generic life skills components are found incorporated in the Health Education subject. However, adequate and proper transfer of curricular contents was found falling short because teachers lacked pedagogic knowledge and skills and a comprehensive understanding of the contents. In order to ward off this practical program monitoring and follow-up would be highly pertinent.

As discussed above, better quality attainment in life skill education seems to have been affected largely by the confusion in its conceptual premise. Other impediments include under-performance of the teachers which is due to their incompatible capacity and to the lack of constant follow-up and monitoring. Similarly, non-attention to the importance of child-centred methods, want of focus on needs-based teaching and learning, and oversight of the students' milieu are other barriers to quality in life skill

education. Nevertheless, focus on the concern for promoting life skill education with the commission of basic initiatives, modest as they appear in the present initial stage of the program, does seem imperative.

### *Muslim Children's Access to Formal Education*

The government had listed Muslims as a disadvantaged group in terms of education and implemented a special incentive scheme in the national level Basic and Primary Education Program for educating Muslim children on a trial basis in three VDCs of Rupandehi district. The FRP first phase study (2003) conducted in that district had reported that the BPEP special incentive scheme was unable to properly attract Muslim children towards the mainstream education. The second phase study pointed out the need for linking the Madrasa and the mainstream education.

The main purpose of the study 'Linking Madrasas with Mainstream Education in Nepal' was to identify viable strategies to link Madrasa education and the national education system. The study intends to identify the curricular, administrative and financial measures for this linkage. The study is based on the information collected from ten Madrasas, five each from Kapilvastu and Rautahat districts.

Madrasa is an important feature of the Muslim community providing basic education in the Quran and training in Muslim culture and customs. The number of Madrasas is significantly high in the Terai belt where there is a bulk of Muslim settlements. Madrasas have long been operating isolated from the national education system. Today concerned stakeholders seem to be in favour of reorganizing Madrasas as learning centres teaching both Islamic religion and culture and the modern curriculum subjects.

The study indicates that the stakeholders are found having positive attitudes towards integrating the national primary education curriculum in the Madrasa system. This integration needs government provisions of employing trained teachers and of ensuring physical and instructional facilities. They have however, showed the concern that such a move should in no way affect the autonomy of Madrasas as it prevails now. In other words, they have emphasized that the government should not interfere with the autonomy of Madrasas.

The study has identified three interesting propositions for taking steps for Madrasa reform: curricular integration, administrative management and financial provision. As regards curricular integration, the Muslim stakeholders were found motivated to include English, Science, Social Studies and Health in the Madrasa curriculum. They vote for administrative restructure i.e. reorganization of Madrasa management committees ensuring participation Islamic scholars and teachers of modern subjects both. However, Muslim stakeholders seem to like that the government should only monitor the management aspect of Madrasas. However, they have felt the need for the formation of an autonomous Madrasa Board at the central level, which should take the responsibility of leading Madrasas as effective constituents of the national education system through judicious policies and guidelines.

The existing practice of Madrasas is to collect donations from the Muslim communities for their operation. But the fund thus collected is, in most cases, not enough to mitigate the financial constraint.

In sum, this study points out the need of a congenial policy decisions to establish functional linkages between Madrasas and the national education system, of the

recognition of Madrasas as viable structures to accommodate the left-out children, and of curricular, administrative and financial management. Further, it indicates the necessity of a participatory approach as opposed to the centrally imposed prescription which might offend the cultural and religious beliefs and values of the Muslims.

### *Education of Internally Displaced Children: Provision and Challenges*

In the past decade, Nepal underwent a situation of conflict in which parents and children were compelled to leave their home places and move elsewhere for asylum. Concerns were raised from many quarters about the fate of the children who were to be in school. There have been some efforts to address the educational needs of the children of displaced people. However concerned stakeholders including the government has little information or awareness about the situation. This study was conducted to have a grasp of the situation regarding the education of internally displaced children and their conditions and challenges to the mitigation of their problems.

This study was conducted in the locations where there were concentrations of migrant children. The study came across some important cases. One of the obvious reasons for the migration was the intimidating situations in their home locations occasioned by the insurgency. The children had to leave home with impaired schooling. The new places where the children and their families have moved did provide schooling opportunities. Their access to the schools of their destinations (new places) was, of course, something significant. However, the qualities of teaching-learning in the new schools were affected by crowds of the new arrivals. The children faced space constraint and stood in want of stationery, book, school bag and uniform. Government and NGO-INGO supports were inadequate and so did the numbers of teachers in the schools. The displaced children were in deplorable psychological conditions.

One noted positive aspect of the schooling in the new place was the regularity in students' attendance. The teachers stated that the displaced children were regular and tended to respond well in the classroom. Although the cumulative effect of many adverse factors militate against assuring quality in primary schools with such children. However, there is hope for a better schooling, provided the children are given good environment and care.

### *System Indicator Based Longitudinal study*

The objective of the study on System Indicators is to make a continuous assessment of the changes that have occurred in the school over a long span of time. For this purpose 62 sample schools representing regional and topographical diversities of the country had been selected.

Quantitative indicators show that there has been progress in aspects such as number of ECD centres, student enrolment, gender parity, textbooks distribution, scholarships, construction of classrooms etc. However, the progress is not overall consistent. The inconsistencies could be related to factors such as the conflict situation and political change and their implications on daily life including schooling. The case studies explicitly show this.

The other important finding from the system indicator based study is that the enrolment patterns of different social groups vary significantly. Indeed, the incentive

program has attracted Dalit and girls children to school. Earlier, in the Basic and Primary Education Program incentives were made available to disadvantaged ethnic groups as well. However, the enrolment of the children of disadvantaged ethnic and other social groups including the Muslims has not been that encouraging. School attendance, regularity and retention of children from the disadvantaged groups have still remained major issues.

Quality aspects of the progress are other areas of concern. For example, involvement of the community in the running of the ECD centres does not seem to have been as encouraging as was anticipated by the EFA program. Similar findings were noted in the case of inclusive education and school/community-based monitoring. The studies show that, despite the identification of community's roles in nursing inclusive education and effectualizing school monitoring aimed at fostering quality education, the reality seemed far from satisfactory. Case studies indicate that this situation relates to the lack of conceptual clarity in the concerned stakeholders regarding the programs in operation and of corresponding programs to enhance the capacity to undertake the tasks. The problem seems to exist at all levels including the central level where neither a strong mechanism of dissemination of information about of the nature and characteristics of each specific program nor a rigorous use of a well-designed communication system does exist.

Quality assurance is definitely a function of many factors. Quality in education would not be possible without a firm commitment to taking capacitating initiatives. The case studies and system indicators have demonstrated several important factors. The government has, indeed, made efforts to promote quality. However, as the studies have shown, the problems have prevailed with little or no decrease in their intensity. The main reason, which can be deduced from the studies, is that only incomplete and partial efforts seem to have been in field. Consistent and comprehensive continuous efforts are still needful. This should call increased emphasis on clear, uniform and continuous communication, from the centre to the field, on enforcement of sound, practical and composite monitoring and follow programs and, not the least, on the operation of needs-based capacity building activities for all the related stakeholders.

## **Chapter 4 Conclusion and Recommendations**

There is need for policy rethinking to ensure that each program initiative come up with a complete package that includes a communication strategy and personal as well as institutional capacity building. Communication and feedback structuring should be in place and this should tie up with the capacity building scheme. FRP has directly addressed this need of enhancing communication by initiating communication as the core area of institutional and personal capacity building.

Functional autonomy and need-based resource mobilization are other important areas to consider in terms of policy rethinking as well as program strategy. Autonomy for the districts to prioritize for resource allocation in an affirmative intervention is necessary to guarantee resources for all the schools, particularly those which have no resources.

Autonomy for schools is needed to empower them to operate suitably as per their local contexts. For example, autonomy for the schools in the Muslim communities could help the community members work in conjunction with the Madrasas so that a Muslim child need not go to Madrasa and school separately as two different entities. Currently, the presence of such a situation has been stressful to the children.

School autonomy would also facilitate better monitoring and quality control as the government system can focus more on these and similar activities and technical backstopping than engage in school functioning.

Proactive local effort is pivotal to ensuring the success of the autonomy model with inbuilt responsibility and control mechanism. For this, it is needful to build a model based on actual settlement units such as hamlets rather than the arbitrarily constructed political units such as VDCs. This is important for integral approach and coherence. Also, there is a need for perceptual change regarding the responsibility of the state being more democratic and more important in terms of mobilization and utilization of time and resources. A state in a democratic premise is an integration of all the units in the country. The state can provide and local bodies can generate.

Locally proactive autonomy is necessary to ensure that local needs are fulfilled and that unnecessary mobilization or spending are not made. For example, all Dalit children may not need any support whereas some non-Dalit children may be in dire need of support. Similarly, along with the autonomy clearly defined responsibilities should emerge to ensure that the authorities are not misused and decisions are not made without clear and proven rationales.

Case studies indicate that leading members of SMC are often the ones who take initiatives to start and develop the school. Such members are keen on monitoring the regularity, up keeping the premise and infrastructure, and undertaking development tasks. They are however not confident of the monitoring or supervision of what goes inside the classroom. Village Development Committees are not involved in opening schools. They do not conduct the monitoring and supervision of school operation. They are only involved in supporting school development, that too upon the request of the school community, particularly SMC. The case studies also indicate that the role of the District Education Office is central to the proper and effective implementation of education program activities. This shows that there is a need for a thorough review of the roles and responsibilities of different actors of the education system, which should include:

- Defining the roles of MOES, RED and DOE in terms of decentralization, utilization of the available provisions, and collaboration with other providers
- Understanding the scope and limitations of the role relations (status, scope and extent). Monitoring by a third party support – independent performance review at central and various levels, using standard indicators. (This is important in view of the tendencies of some central level officers to go to the districts and to dole out things in the fashion of traditional rulers).
- Identifying potential service providers and partners to contract them for service for the implementation of the programs. (e.g. contracting an institution like Seto Gurans for providing ECD training). MOES needs to play the supporting role.
- Limiting the role of the centre to only providing the framework, empowering districts to arrange for the contract at the district level (Districts should be provided resources and other provisions. They should have autonomy empowering them to decide on service procurement within the central framework). The private sector should be encouraged to work.
- Making SMCs more representative of the parents and the community for the development and up-keep of the school and effective school operation. This should be in harmony with the roles and responsibilities of the head teachers. Earlier studies have indicated that the leadership role of the head teacher is crucial in the development and better operation of the school. SMCs would be most important in resource mobilization and in deciding the school function *vis a vis* the community interests. Their presence helps to maintain efficiency and decorum in the school premise. The head teacher has an important role in this and as well as in ensuring a better learning environment in the classrooms.

There are yet other critical issues to address at the local level – for example, non-acceptance of Mushahars in the school by other communities. Children from disadvantaged situations are often teased, and even abused, by other children, verbally as well as physically. That is why Mushahars do not want to join the schools where there are other people. Such an issue on the one hand validates the need to open a Mushahar-only school and on the other challenges the concept of an egalitarian environment in schools with social inclusion and democratic ways. There is a need for an effective social sensitization program for teachers, students and parents.

The other issue relates to the concern of Teacher Associations, particularly regarding teacher management. The associations are apprehensive of the school autonomy and of community management of the schools. The apprehension relates to their recruitment and placement being subject to the decisions of SMC and the local community rather than being a part of the centralized government system whereby the teachers have the freedom of being centrally placed and transferred. They feel that the SMCs and the local communities do not have the professional capacity to make such decisions and fear that they are very often locally biased.

How to make school education relevant to the children and the community remains a difficult challenge. For many communities school education is new and therefore difficult to define except as preparation for job in the traditional workplace. Education does not come as a natural choice for many rural communities. This is augmented by the emerging trend of students not being in line with their family tradition and vocation. It seemed to many that education was causing problem rather

than support. Many people with incomplete schooling are shy of the tradition as well as the educated domain. There is a need for making school education more reality-based and practical – not an abstract academic endeavour. Most importantly, schooling should take account of the diversities and be responsive to a question like, 'Whose needs and problems to serve?' In this line there is both a scope and a need for thumb rule for defining life skill education in the school and extending education to the nonformal education sector, and to the activities of NGO to make teaching and learning a simple part of life or tradition.

The FRP case studies and the longitudinal system indicator study have not only identified the issues and the needs to address them but also generated recommendations which were prioritized and developed in the form of action steps. The actions steps have been prepared jointly by the concerned stakeholders including the MOES and DOE personnel and the researchers with the advisory support of FRAG. The details of the action steps are listed separately and are available for official circulation in the concerned organizations. The reports of the case studies and the system indicator are published for general distribution to all the stakeholders. They are put on the CERID website ([www.cerid.org](http://www.cerid.org)) for general access.