



Reforming the Ministry to improve education

An institutional analysis of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) of Nepal

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Foreword to the series

The conferences on Education for All which brought together the world community in 1990 in Jomtien and in 2000 in Dakar have given a new impetus to the search to offer all children, without discrimination, access to basic education. Especially important has been the commitment made at Dakar that all countries who present viable plans for Education for All will receive the necessary resources to implement them. It must be recognized however that, while many countries have succeeded in drafting well thought-out EFA plans, their implementation has had only mixed success.

Programmes with the scope of EFA require strong management at central and at local levels. In many countries, this is absent for various reasons. Personnel often lack the necessary skills; the distribution of responsibilities between levels and actors is in many cases unclear; the degree of autonomy at local level is very limited, which constrains initiative-taking, while support from central level is absent; accountability mechanisms are poorly developed.

One of the IIEP's major goals is to strengthen skills and improve practices in educational management. Several research programmes examine different aspects of management, including financial and personnel issues. This series of publications however addresses a more specific question: What relationship, if any, exists between management reforms and Education for All? The focus, and that of the accompanying research programme, is on reforms which have an impact on the distribution of responsibilities and tasks between different levels and actors in the education system.

The core conviction which inspires this research, is that an effective management system needs a central ministry which strongly supports local initiatives and allows for autonomy at regional, local and school levels, within

a clear accountability framework. It therefore examines responses to fundamental questions such as:

- How are different ministries organized? What impact does this organization have on their effectiveness? How do they support and supervise regional and local education offices?
- How do various countries assign responsibilities to different levels and actors? How are these decentralization policies implemented: What structures are built up and what evaluation mechanisms exist?
- How do local education offices and schools function in a context of decentralization? What initiatives can they take and is their autonomy leading to higher access and quality, or is it rather a source of greater disparities?
- What management interventions have led to schools becoming particularly successful? How can these interventions be replicated throughout the system?

The series will therefore contain different types of publications, including ministry audits, diagnoses of decentralization policies, case studies on the implementation of decentralization and on the functioning of local offices and of schools; comparative analyses at regional level and monographs on specific innovations.

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List of abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADEO	Assistant DEO
AED	Academy for Educational Development
ARC	Administrative Reform Commission
ASIP	Annual Strategic Implementation Plan
BPEP I	Basic and Primary Education Programme (first phase)
BPEP II	Basic and Primary Education Programme (second phase)
CBO	Community-based organization
BPES	Basic and Primary Education Section
CDC	Curriculum Development Centre
CTVET	Centre for Technical Education and Vocational Training
DDC	District Development Committee
DEC	Distance Education Centre/District Education Committee
DEO	District Education Office/ Officer
DEP	District Education Plan
DOE	Department of Education
DUE	Danish University of Education
ECD	Early childhood development
EMIS	Educational Management Information System
FOE	Faculty of Education
HRD	Human resource development
HRDP	Human Resource Development Plan/ Planning

HSEB	Higher Secondary Education Board
HSEPP	Higher Secondary Education Perspective Plan
IA	Institutional analysis
INGO	International non-governmental organization
IT	Information technology
LRC	Lead Resource Centre
MDAC	Ministerial Development Action Committee
ME	Monitoring and evaluation
MOA	Ministry of Agriculture
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOGA	Ministry of General Administration
MP	Member of Parliament
NASC	Nepal Administrative Staff College
NCED	National Centre for Educational Development
NDAC	National Development Action Committee
NELTA	National English Language Teachers' Association
NESP	National Education System Plan
NFE	Non-formal education
NFEC	Non-formal education centre
NGO	Non-governmental organization
NPC	National Planning Commission
NTSC	National Teacher Service Commission
NTTCC	National Teacher Training Co-ordination Committee
OCE	Office of the Controller of Examinations

PA	Parent association
PC	Programme Co-ordinator
PEB	Programme Execution Board
PEP	Primary Education Project
PIP	Programme Implementation Plan
PIU	Project Implementation Unit
PSC	Public Service Commission
PTA	Parent-teacher association
PSFP	Primary School Feeding Programme
PTTC	Primary Teacher Training Centre
RC	Resource centre
RCED	Regional Centre for Educational Development
RCMC	Resource Centre Management Committee
RDSES	Royal Danish School of Educational Studies
RED	Regional Education Directorate/ Director
ROCE	Regional Office of the Controller of Examinations
RP	Resource person
SEDEC	Secondary Education Development Centre
SEDP	Secondary Education Development Project
SEDU	Secondary Education Development Unit
SIP	School improvement planning
SLC	School Leaving Certificate
SMC	School management committee
SMT	School management team
SME	Senior managers of education
TA	Technical assistance

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TMIS	Teacher Management Information System
TRO	Teacher Record Office
TSAG	Technical Support Advisory Group
TSS	Training and Supervision Section
UGC	University Grants Commission
VDC	Village Development Committee
VEC	Village Education Committee
WES	Women's Education Section

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Executive summary

Objectives of the study

The study has two main objectives: first, to assess the overall capacity of MOES, its staff and constituent bodies in relation to their mandates, roles and responsibilities; second, to guide the conceptualization and preparation of a human resource development plan (HRDP) for MOES to support the central goal of quality improvement under the Basic and Primary Education Programme (second phase) (BPEP II).

Guiding assumptions

A number of assumptions have guided the project.

Ultimately, human resource development initiatives must be assessed by their relationship to teaching and learning in schools. Human resource development, no matter how well designed and implemented will fail if it does not enhance the ability of teachers to work effectively and to improve learning in the classroom.

Human resource development goes beyond the technical skills and competencies necessary for each staff member to perform adequately, and must be connected to institutional development. Individual and institutional development exists in a dynamic relationship, supporting and facilitating each other. Individual staff training (whether of administrators or teachers) is a necessary but not sufficient condition for capacity building in MOES. Staff must gain comprehensive skills and knowledge development.

Human resource development, as conceived above, is a long-term undertaking. While there can and will be sets of short-, medium- and long-term activities, significant changes in teaching and learning in schools – to the extent that these can be attributed to teaching practices – are long-term in nature.

Professional learning is facilitated best in close relationship to the workplace and cannot be disconnected from this context. As such, capacity building will be achieved most effectively when MOES staff, including teachers, gain practical and job-related development opportunities that they are able to ground and utilize in relation to their daily work. Frequent staff transfer and rotation will tend to constrain human resource development.

Human resource development within MOES takes place within a broad context. It must take account of the needs of associated and related agencies and NGOs who share similar missions and aims to MOES. It must also relate to the broader context of public sector development and must take account of and respond to new directions and initiatives related to decentralization, accountability, transparency and good governance in general.

Methodology of the study

IA covers all of those agencies, units, activities and personnel involved in the implementation of capacity-building programmes devised and agreed within the BPEP II framework. In conceptual terms, IA has considered all of those factors related to the ‘quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the institutional environment in which teachers and schools operate’ (Sack and Saïdi, 1997: 22). This broad conceptualization has led to an analysis of the following aspects at the central, regional / district and local level: (a) the major strategic processes within, and cutting across individual institutions and organizational units; (b) operational processes within these individual units

and organizations (at least as they relate to the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the sector); and (c) sub-unit level activity such as the nature of school organization, local management and accountability, teacher and community relations.

Units relevant to the scope of IA were identified, as were certain key posts within these units. A number of domains for investigation were identified. The aim was to generate information of importance to all of the key units and areas of responsibility within MOES. Five domains were identified: (a) organizational structures, mandates and roles; (b) staffing and staff development; (c) information and communication; (d) planning; and (e) monitoring and evaluation.

During the course of the investigation, it became clear that many MOES staff were concerned about the quality of programme implementation in the ministry. As such, and for the chapter concerned with central-level institutions, an additional section has been added to address these concerns.

The study draws upon quantitative and qualitative methodology. A core of data was collected by questionnaire instruments which were administered widely within central MOES agencies, selected regional and district units, and local schools within the central and western regions. These quantitative data were complemented with extensive interviewing and group discussion across central, regional and local units. The aim of the interviews and focus groups was to assess and support the validity of the questionnaire data, as well as to gain more detailed and context-specific insights in relation to organizational practices, values and norms. Extensive analysis of relevant documentation was also carried out. The bulk of the data collection took place between March and July 2000.

Organization of the report

The *Final report* is presented in three parts. *Part I* (*Chapters 1 and 2*) introduces the study and places it within the broader context of public sector reform in Nepal. *Part II* (*Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6*), presents the data collected and analyzed at each of the three institutional levels – central institutions and agencies, regional and district offices and local schools and resource centres – as well as in terms of female participation in Nepalese education. *Part III* (*Chapters 7 and 8*) suggests a way forward. *Chapter 7* sets out an expanded vision for human resource development: one that integrates individual and institutional development and recognizes that human resource development must lead ultimately to quality teaching and learning in schools, as well as to social and political empowerment. Finally, *Chapter 8* outlines the critical issues to be considered by those involved in the preparation of the HRD plan, as well as a range of practical human resource development and capacity-building measures.

Key observations and findings

The following is a summary of the findings from *Chapters 3-6*.

The context of public sector administration in Nepal

Chapter 2 outlines issues affecting the quality of public sector administration in Nepal and concludes that technical change, however substantial, is insufficient in itself to affect meaningful reform. Rather, reform efforts must focus on both the structural as well as the cultural factors that influence public governance. While great emphasis must be given to training and human resource development in order to facilitate the implementation of the many reform programmes, such human resource development is of limited value if the context of public administration is not taken into account.

Even though Nepalese administration has benefited from an extensive array of external inputs, the problems facing public administration appear as intractable as ever: insufficient capacity, cumbersome procedures, inadequate regulatory processes, low motivation and morale and increasing political interference and corruption. Whilst high quality training and enhanced systems play an important role, they are not sufficient conditions for national development or capacity building. The message of this report is that human resource development and systemic reform must take place together. External agencies can take the lead in devising and providing training, ideally enhancing local capacity in the process. However, Nepalese political leaders and civil servants must take the lead in changing the aims and processes of public governance. Failure to do so will tend to ensure that staff training inputs will continue to disappoint the aspirations of development partners on all sides. The government and the partners supporting the development process in Nepal recognize the importance of good governance and a number of efforts have already been initiated towards that direction.

Institutional capacity at the central level

The data suggest that there are a number of technical deficiencies within MOES as well as substantial cultural barriers to institutional improvement. Whilst there are things worth celebrating – for instance, there is evidence that staff in MOES are better trained than in previous times – there appear to be fundamental impediments to capacity building and institutional development within MOES, with many of these emanating from the ‘centre’.

First, structures, mandates and responsibilities are far from clear. There are mismatches between organizational charts and activities actually performed. There is fragmentation of important activities that may be better served by being brought together. Sometimes contradictory and unrelated tasks and functions have been combined together. Uneven distribution of tasks and responsibilities, confusion about roles and functions, slow or absent

co-ordination, weak linkages between and/or among the sections (even within the same institution), conflicts between sections over control of programmes and resources, blurred lines of authority and responsibility, examples of hollow structures and orphaned functions have also been observed.

Second, staffing practices are poor. Induction is weak. Staff appraisal and transfer are described repeatedly as secretive and partial. Staff training and development appears to be valued for assisting the promotion prospects of favoured staff as much as for enhancing operational effectiveness. Staff serve before they are trained and then leave the job after receiving training. Training opportunities are not linked to performance, commitment or to the needs of the organization.

Third, information processes reflect and reinforce the steep organizational hierarchy within MOES and create a range of barriers to effective communication. Because of the importance of informal power networks, communication channels are vague and shifting. Technology and externally devised systems and procedures will not overcome such norms. Nevertheless, greater links and connections between central units must be achieved.

Finally, planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures are unclear, poorly co-ordinated and driven by central bodies at the expense of local ones. Data to inform planning and development is weak, as is the capacity to utilize them. Planning, monitoring and evaluation processes are disconnected both from programme implementation and improvement and pay little regard to local ownership.

Institutional capacity at the regional and district level

The data gathered from the study indicated that the Regional Education Directorate (RED) has had a very limited role in recent school reform initiatives, including the basic and primary education programme (second

phase) (BPEP II). Many of the functions assigned to RED are undertaken rarely due to a lack of effective authority, poor resources, inadequate expertise and a high degree of central interference. Evidence suggests that RED has been of limited use and service both to the centre and the districts. As such, there is a need to redefine the roles and functions of RED in the changed context. The view of the government on the role and existence of RED has not remained uniform and consistent and policy in this area needs to be clarified.

The report makes clear that the work of the district education office and officer is central to programme implementation and improvement in a decentralized education system. Notwithstanding this recognition, the data suggest that there has been relatively little decentralization in the Nepalese context. Rather, centrally devised and controlled strategies have been ‘de-concentrated’, with little sign that local officials or the communities that they serve feel true ownership for the process and direction of education in the districts. Much needs to happen to empower local educational administrators and elected officials to lead educational development in their districts and villages.

The unhealthy and negative environment in which district education officers work further complicates the relationship between central and local accountability and ownership. During the interviews, many provided graphic details of the ways in which they had been manipulated and undermined. In addition to weak leadership from the centre, District Education Officers (DEOs), like other MOES officials engaged in district administration, were poorly prepared for their work and inadequately supported. Frequent transfer and rotation – often driven by political considerations – as well as inadequate training and development, greatly limit the capacity of districts to fulfil their educational goals. In a decentralized system, much effort needs to be expended to strengthen the role of DEOs as well as the administrative apparatus at their disposal.

Institutional capacity at the cluster and school district level

Problems facing schools are many. While there are a number of schools that could be considered as 'effective' or 'successful', the vast majority suffer from a lack of resources, including qualified staff, materials and facilities. The arrangements for school leadership are also weak and must be strengthened if schools are to take responsibility for their own development. Perversely, inadequate resources and unclear leadership affect the Resource Centre (RC) system that, while founded on good intentions, has not yet shown itself to be an appropriate vehicle for teacher and school development. Like the movement towards decentralization in general, school development must be owned and driven by the school's community: parents, teachers, the head teacher and the students themselves. To this end, the problem of inadequate resources seems almost a second-order issue. Of much more importance is the need to establish local democracy, ownership and accountability in schools.

The role of women in educational management

Available data show that women in Nepal are seriously underrepresented in management and decision-making positions within the field of education. Forming a small minority (5 per cent), women are concentrated overwhelmingly in the lower levels of the hierarchy. Clearly, there is little correspondence between the relatively large number of women in teaching posts and their presence in management positions.

Statistics make clear that women play a marginal role in the management of MOES and, without substantial affirmative action over the next 10 to 15 years, are unlikely to increase their influence. Data confirmed that women's chances of entering into the civil service are fewer, as are their chances of obtaining leadership and decision-making roles. The study confirmed that men have markedly higher early advancement rates than women. The average time taken to obtain promotion from gazetted Class III to Class II level is

found to be 17 years for females as compared to 12 years for males. The promotion system gives credit for the number of years spent in remote and very remote districts; this most women lack due to their immobility. The study also showed that women have fewer chances of earning higher level academic degrees and of being selected for in-country and overseas training courses and study tours, both of which are important to promotion opportunities.

There is no significant constituency prepared to promote the view that women are as competent as their male colleagues are. Rather, women are viewed as lacking the qualities often associated with successful leadership. The unacceptable attitudes and practices of male managers are supported and reinforced by women managers themselves who undermine their own self-image. Rather than reflecting some perceptive insight into the deficiencies of women as educational leaders, such views are built on the foundation of widespread social prejudice and reinforced by the self-interest of the male elite. Such attitudes restrict greatly the chances of women obtaining positions of institutional power and influence.

A framework for human resource development

The approach to human resource development suggested in the report is based on three distinct types of activities: (a) individually focused activities; (b) institutionally focused activities; and (c) system strengthening activities. Each of these requires some elaboration.

At Level 1 (individually focused activities), human resource development activities must focus on providing individuals with the technical competencies to perform their organizational functions. For instance, teachers and resource persons may require appropriate initial training and well-structured and organized recurrent training in areas such as basic subject content knowledge,

curriculum knowledge, diagnostic skills and skills with which to perform community outreach work. School head teachers require skills in instructional leadership, school development and administrative management. Central MOES administrators, on the other hand, require a wide range of specific professional skills in areas such as human resource development, budgeting and finance, planning and programming, and curriculum design and implementation. In addition to such specific technical competencies, a range of general skills are required across the divisions and sections of MOES and the department of education (DOE). These include leadership and supervisory skills (recruitment, selection induction, staff development and appraisal, etc.), enhanced capacity in relation to office systems and procedures, information technology and, perhaps, upgraded language training. Of course, the delivery on a large scale of individual skills and expertise will undoubtedly have implications for the institutions in which these individuals work (thus strengthening them in various ways). But they are not sufficient. Such skills need to be nurtured and supported in open, collaborative and learning-oriented environments. For this, capacity must be developed at a second level.

At the second level (institutionally focused activities), the environments in which staff work must also be strengthened. New norms of practice need to be fostered in areas such as communication in and across work units. Collaboration and teamwork must be encouraged by the adoption of new processes and approaches that aim to interconnect the work of units and sections. Thus, rather than being dominated by formal courses and training programmes, human resource development at this level could take the form of immediate strategies for re-engineering inadequate processes, procedures, responsibilities and accountabilities. More substantially, it could include the development of ‘action learning’ networks aimed at bringing staff together in and across units to solve and learn jointly from persistent problems. Such activities would be aimed at enhancing the organizational climate in which staff work; encouraging them to work with and for the organization rather than against or in spite of it. However, just as there are limits to the

effectiveness of Level 1 human resource development activities, so too are there limitations at the level of institutions. As individuals are influenced by the organizational context in which they work, so too are institutions influenced by systemic factors related to the norms and practices of public administration, politics and civil society.

Ultimately, human resource development at the levels of the individual and institution must be supported by initiatives at a third level (system strengthening activities). In Nepal, there is now a strong body of research, reports and studies that point to the structural deficiencies in national governance and public administration. MOES is not immune either from the issues that limit the quality of governance and administration in Nepal, or from the solutions that must be implemented to overcome them. At this level, fundamental changes need to occur in the way staff are recruited and assigned to MOES, transferred and rotated within sections and units, and appraised and developed. Whilst it may be convenient, and to some extent necessary, to defer to the regulations laid down by the Public Service Commission, there is much that MOES itself can lead if it wishes seriously to maximize the effectiveness of staff development capacity building activities. Developing transparent promotion procedures, assigning new positions, developmental opportunities and resources to staff on the basis of merit and need, and developing procedures to create open and accountable administration, are all within the remit of MOES and in close parallel to public sector reform initiatives that are already under way across Nepal. There is no doubt that reform in these areas is needed and problematic. However, it must be recognized that human resource development activities at Levels 1 and 2 are dependent to a large extent on the creation of good systems of governance.

The framework outlined here provides an innovative way to approach human resource development in a large organization. Rather than focus on one aspect of human resource development, it is based on a multi-dimensional approach. Within this approach, the human resource development plan to be

informed by the study will include short-, medium- and long-term human resource development activities aimed at individual, institutional and systemic development. In this way, it is hoped that HRD initiatives will occur at different times and points as well as in a more comprehensive manner.

Major recommendations

Measures for capacity building at the central level

Rethinking the role of MOES

Generally, the burden of day-to-day management takes precedence over other crucial tasks within MOES such as strategic planning, regulation and monitoring and the setting of standards. In the present changing context, MOES should not be seen as the sole or main provider and manager of educational services. It should see itself more as a strategic planner, facilitator, catalyst and regulator.

Creation of a national education policy council

A national education policy council should be created in the form of a think-tank to discuss national educational issues, development challenges, and to assist MOES in formulating educational policies.

Focusing on core functions

MOES should separate policy management/enforcement from service delivery. There is a tendency to do everything in-house and that most activities across all levels of educational management are driven by service delivery. MOES should limit its role to core functions, such as setting policy, delivering funds to operational bodies based on defined criteria and procedures, creating and enabling a stable environment, and evaluating performance. MOES may

consider framing a definite policy regarding the outsourcing of services. It is recommended to draw up a plan for carrying out a phased and carefully managed contracting out of the secondary services/non-core functions of MOES.

Transfer of implementation responsibility to district education offices

Central institutions within MOES are often engaged in implementation functions. As a result, they have little or no time for important functions such as policy management, programme development, programme monitoring, norms setting, professional leadership, enforcement of norms and policies, supervision, policy and programme dissemination, technical assistance to districts, and quality control. The implementation of programmes in districts, schools and communities should rest with the district education offices.

Build strong partnerships with non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), civil society and local governments

The government must consider establishing strong partnerships with the private sector, civil society, NGOs and the private/voluntary sector. A clear policy on the involvement of and partnership with the private/voluntary sector and NGOs needs to be developed, and MOES should develop a proper mechanism of control, monitoring and feedback in order to delegate functions to such providers.

Reorganization within MOES

MOES should revisit the organizational structures, formal mandates, and their roles and responsibilities of different institutions/sections functions to correct organizational dysfunctions and inconsistencies.

Develop a capacity within MOES to carry out management auditing

Capacity needs to be developed within MOES to conduct auditing of structural functions, mandates, staffing and management practices.

Amalgamate independently operating teacher training institutions into the National Centre for Educational Development (NCED)

The Secondary Education Development Centre (SEDEC), NCED, Distance Education Centre (DEC) and the Teacher Training and Supervision Section within DOE should be amalgamated with NCED in order to avoid fragmentation, overlapping and waste of resources in teacher training. In the long run, NCED could be developed as an autonomous institution with its own governing council. The Primary Teacher Training Centres (PTTCs) should be converted into Regional Centres for Educational Development (RCEDs) with added responsibilities. Alternatively, a central institute of teacher education could be established by merging primary teacher training functions of NCED, DEC, DOE and SEDEC. NCED could then become a staff college for the training of educational personnel.

Merging non-formal primary education with DOE

Achieving UPE requires that institutions and strategies handling formal and non-formal education are better co-ordinated and brought into the single line of command. Therefore, school outreach, flexible schooling and out-of-school programmes currently under the Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC) should be transferred to DOE.

Changing business practices

The kind of organizational and management practices and processes that have developed over the years no longer work very well. Existing business

practices – that are characterized by low risk taking, excessive pre-occupation with procedures, self-serving, reactive and sluggish – must be replaced by more flexible, fast moving, performance-oriented forms of practices.

Alignment of authority, responsibility and resources needed

In order to avoid unnecessary delay in completing a task, activities could be distinguished in terms of policy or operational levels, allowing section chiefs to make operational-level decisions. In order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in programme implementation, it will be necessary to align responsibilities with authority and resources.

Adopt a task force approach for field implementation

Existing structures and processes do not allow structural integration. Activities get implemented in the most disconnected and fragmented manner. It is recommended to form interdisciplinary programme development and implementation teams in DOE, drawing members from different sections/units and institutions. Each team would be responsible for developing comprehensive educational programmes for the given area, and overseeing programmes in an integrated manner.

Formulate a national training policy

There is a need for a national training policy in human resources development. Without it human resource development will be haphazard, unsystematic and unco-ordinated. Unplanned and ad hoc human resource development activities can become costly. A systematic plan for human resource development is also needed to enhance MOES's ability to manage and develop the education system.

Create a separate cadre of educational planning, monitoring and evaluation

MOES should consider opening the door to statisticians, economists, policy analysts, sociologists, political scientists, gender analysts and information specialists by creating a separate service sub-group of educational planning and research. Many of the tasks relating to educational development such as educational planning, monitoring, evaluation, research and statistical analysis and information management require an interdisciplinary team of people. It is therefore recommended that MOES create a separate cadre of educational planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Maintain specialist positions up to Class II level

Specialist positions should be maintained up to Class II level. In this way, appropriately qualified staff will fill key technical posts. Obvious examples include teacher trainers and curriculum and textbook developers.

Link training opportunities to performance and organizational needs

Training opportunities in MOES should be linked to performance and organizational needs. For instance, given the interference and partiality of training and staff development decisions, it may be helpful to build better practices via the introduction of a 'training passport' which staff would carry with them throughout their careers and which would specify an entitlement to particular staff development and training opportunities at various key stages (e.g. pre-management levels, preparation for DEO roles, etc.).

Update and develop job specifications for key positions in MOES

MOES should prepare job specifications for every key position describing the minimum acceptable qualifications, knowledge, skills, judgement, physical skills, communication skills, experience, and abilities that the incumbent must

possess to perform the job successfully. A written job specification will help identify staff with appropriate qualifications.

Improve staff posting and transfer practices

Our study suggests that staff posting and transfer practices of MOES could be improved by: (a) consulting the related office head before making any transfer or placement; (b) using job specifications to ensure that the person has the required qualifications, training and experience; (c) linking posting/transfer with the interest and motivation of the concerned staff; (d) sticking to the existing minimum two-year rule; and (e) decentralizing personnel management functions.

Planned interchange and mobility of staff

Current practices of staffing can cause operational and morale problems as some staff never manage to be posted in central institutions or in institutions where external support is available. MOES should consider adopting a job rotation policy – employees are rotated to allow them to gain different kinds of experience: administrative, managerial, professional.

Improve performance appraisal system

Improvement of appraisal procedures will require more objective and reliable criteria, training of managers and institution heads in personnel administration and human resource management, and clear delineation of standards of performance and excellence.

Greater participation of women in leadership positions

Adequate provision should be made to ensure greater participation in professionally qualified women in the management structures at both central, district and school levels. Capacity development must target gender disparities and foster gender balance. The different needs of men and women must be

assessed and addressed. Obstacles to their participation in training courses must be addressed.

*Strengthen the capacity of the Faculty of Education (FOE)
of Tribhuvan University*

Given the central role played by the FOE, helping it to grow professionally and institutionally should be a part of comprehensive educational reform strategy for the country. The government must consider supporting the FOE to improve existing academic and training programmes, as well as to create new ones. Assistance should be provided to undertake curriculum reform and to develop the professional capacity of the faculty through academic upgrading programmes, exposure visits, faculty exchange and funded research different players in the education sector, including FOE.

Training in interpersonal skills for senior managers

Educational reform in Nepal has been an international undertaking. Senior managers need to negotiate with donor representatives, articulate the needs and priorities of the government, challenge the viewpoints, and prepare the reports and documents required by different agencies. Senior managers of MOE/DOE need adequate interpersonal skills for dealing with people of different nationalities.

*Teaching experience as a requirement for entry
into the education service*

It is desirable for MOES staff to understand the realities of classrooms and school life. Teaching experience should be a valued requirement for entry into MOES and preferential treatment should be considered for candidates with teaching experience. The quality of teacher trainers, specialists and textbook writers would be enhanced if they have had experience of teaching.

Mandatory job induction courses to newly recruited personnel

A job induction training programme should be developed for newly recruited Class III personnel to prepare them for the jobs that they have to perform, familiarize them with the work environment, and provide them with the fundamentals of public service management and administration. Training programmes for educational personnel must take account of their dual role as educational professionals and managers.

Introduction of tailor-made courses

MOES should develop and impart a number of short-term in-service training courses tailored to the specific skill requirements of the personnel undertaking specific work roles and responsibilities in different institutions of MOE. Such courses might include educational planning, curriculum and textbooks development, non-formal education, early childhood education, teacher training, school supervision, educational management information system, test and measurement.

Training of senior managers in modern management tools and techniques

Institutional heads and those in supervisory roles are heavily involved in functions relating to personnel/human resource management. Most senior managers perform these functions without any training in human resource management. Training courses should also be organized for senior managers in the application of modern management tools and techniques without delay.

Increased sharing of experiences and new knowledge

Staff members returning from overseas or in-country training courses, workshops, seminars or study tours should be required to share with others in the organization their newly acquired experience, knowledge and skills. Institutional arrangements should be put in place to support such activities.

Introduce compulsory annual training for all staff

Compulsory refresher training should be introduced for all staff. This should cover general developments relating to educational reform, public sector management, educational policy, etc.

Introduce a mandatory field stay programme

Central staff must be subjected to a mandatory field stay programme annually of at least one-week duration to familiarize themselves with the school and community conditions and gain first hand experience of programme implementation.

Need for a more focused approach to human resource development

A more focused approach to training and human resource development is needed: this is to be closely linked to the daily work of employees. Human resource development activities should be closely linked to the actual demands of the daily work environment. These activities should be delivered on a just-in-time basis and directly in the context of the job or task at hand. In this mode, the trainee is not taken away from the job, but receives assistance on the spot and during actual work activities. This opportunity allows the staff to acquire the knowledge and skills identified by himself/herself.

Link non-monetary incentives with performance

Data show that hard-working, committed and goal-oriented staff are often not rewarded, nor are the non-productive staff punished. Data confirm that non-merit considerations play a big part in the distribution of these non-monetary incentives, which often becomes a disincentive to the many that are excluded. The distribution of non-monetary incentives should be performance-based, equitable and directly linked to the work. Individual

institution heads or managers should have discretion in matters of rewarding their subordinates.

Increased co-ordination and utilization of technical assistance

Successful co-ordination and utilization of technical assistance will require able and competent government counterparts. External assistance will be better co-ordinated and utilized when the local counterparts are able to direct the experts. Technical assistance should be genuinely demand-driven and respond to national needs. There is a need for a radical change in the way in which technical assistance resources are co-ordinated and utilized. Managers should have access to resources under technical assistance. This will require a simple procedure of acquiring such resources.

Improve intra- and inter-institutional flow and exchange of information

It is recommended to increase the flow and exchange of information among the various units and institutions through prompt and efficient increased frequency of circulars, inter-unit/inter-institution meetings, and the publication of a newsletter.

Establish 'knowledge centres' within the institutions

Capacity development requires good access to information. A 'learning organization' is one in which people are engaged in continuous learning process. Towards this end, 'knowledge centres' should be established within the institutions, where staff can access the latest information on school reform, recent developments in the field of education, best practices, innovations, findings of national and global studies on education, etc., through the Internet and e-mail.

Increased use of information technology (IT) in day-to-day work

MOE should start using modern methods and technology within its institutions to increase efficiency and reduce paperwork. It should integrate information and technology in its day-to-day work. In the most immediate term, all Class III officials should be provided with computer training. In the long-term, however, MOE should promote the use of computer intelligence for effective planning, monitoring, controlling and decision-making. The induction training course suggested above should also provide basic skills in computer application, modern information system, and use of other machines and technologies.

Create an interdisciplinary team of planning officers

The planning sections of DOE/MOES should be strengthened in terms of their professional capacity to carry out sectoral assessments, formulate plans and programmes, allocate resources, set targets, and monitor and evaluate educational plans and programmes. These sections should have staff officials with relevant background and training in educational planning, statistics, economics, policy analysis, information science, and programme evaluation. An interdisciplinary team of planning officers should be created in these sections that can not only prepare sectoral and sub-sectoral plans and programmes but also provide technical assistance to other line agencies and districts to prepare the plans. These planning officers should belong to the educational planning, monitoring and evaluation cadre.

Provide short formal training in planning to all Class II and III officers

Each Class II and III official within MOES should receive short formal training in planning, programming and budgeting without delay.

Make a distinction between strategic and operational planning

A distinction between strategic and operational planning is needed so that those who are to plan and control the strategic issues do so without being involved in operational tasks and those who have operational responsibilities do so to operationalize the national visions and goals. The existing Programme Implementation Plan (PIP) and Annual Strategic Implementation Plan (ASIP) that guide BPEP II operations are mixed up and contain elements of both strategic and operational planning.

Establish a strategic planning team in the planning division of MOES

The planning division may establish a strategic planning team including representatives from different institutions in the sector. It should organize strategic planning workshops and other appropriate exercises and produce a policy paper, which provides the overall guidance to the sector as a whole. The role of the planning division should change from the collection and compilation of the planning inputs coming from the different institutions, into facilitating the different institutions and sections in preparing their own plans.

Establish an intersectional planning team in each institution within MOES

The sectoral institutions (e.g. DOE, Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), and NCED) would then undertake annual planning and programming activities to operationalize the national visions, goals and strategies. There would be an intersectional planning team in each sectoral institution headed by the respective institution heads. These teams would be responsible for technical aspects, consistency, and comprehensiveness of planning documents. The planning division should be closely involved and be part of the respective planning team in order to provide guidance to ensure consistency between annual programmes and overall national visions and strategies.

Conduct a review of past year's experiences

Planning should always be based on past experiences. Hence, prior to the detailed planning, an evaluation of the experiences made should be carried out. The lessons learned should subsequently form the basis for the planning of the next phase.

Start a process of assessing district education plans (DEPs)

While district education offices are being encouraged to prepare district plans through participatory processes, it will be necessary to establish a system of assessing the DEPs, allocating funds and evaluating the performance of the districts.

Improve the Educational Management Information System (EMIS)

There is a need to increase the availability of educational data particularly those relating to the distribution and use of teacher quota, student achievement, school performance, teacher performance, school supervision, availability and use of curriculum and instructional materials on the one hand and to improve the credibility and accuracy of the available data on the other.

Avoid duplication by creating a single system of data collection

Duplication in data collection should be eliminated and a single system of data collection should be instituted using common methods or formats at least for core data.

Monitoring and evaluation be made an essential part of educational management

Educational managers must be sensitized about the use of monitoring and evaluation as a management tool.

Develop a set of manageable and useful indicators

Create a set of manageable and useful indicators, which tell objectively about the nature and health of the education system. A monitoring and evaluation (ME) system is badly needed to track DOE's ability to track physical and financial progress of implementation, detect deviations from targets, identify implementation difficulties and issues, and take necessary corrective measures.

Wider dissemination of findings and results of studies and evaluations

The awareness of studies and evaluations among policy-makers, implementers, and administrators is very low. Dissemination should be an essential activity of all research activities, whether internal or external.

Increased documentation and use of research and evaluation findings

A proper mechanism of documenting the research studies in the field of education is urgently needed. The newly created Policy Analysis Section in MOES can begin to act as a documentation centre. Brief papers should be prepared based on the findings of the new studies for the consumption of senior policy-makers of the ministry. This will enhance policy-makers' access to new knowledge and research findings, which will eventually lead to increased use of information in policy-making.

Make monitoring a participatory process

Monitoring has primarily been a central activity. Stakeholders and beneficiaries of the educational system have little say in the monitoring process. Parents and community members who are normally kept away from educational affairs can contribute immensely in the monitoring process.

Set performance goals and standards

Performance goals should be set for the regions, districts and the schools and measured to find out how well they are meeting these goals.

Establish a reporting system

Institutions at all levels do not produce any reports to inform the public of their activities and accomplishments. A system of preparing performance reports should be established whereby each institution from the central level down to the school level produces a report describing its performance results and/or the levels of achievement on identified indicators. Performance reports should be transparent and readily available to the public. The ability of the institutions to publish and disseminate reports on their operations must be strengthened through training and other forms of support.

Establish a core group of monitoring experts in MOES/DOE

A monitoring system cannot function without a core group of trained professionals in the field. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation sections of MOES, DOE and other institutions should have people with specialized training in monitoring. Since monitoring is embedded in every activity, every official, both Class II and III, will benefit from some training in monitoring.

Measures for capacity building at the regional and district level

Redefine the structure and functions of the Regional Education Directorate

There is a need to redefine the structure and functions of RED. Three competing models of RED organization have been presented for consideration. In the first model, RED operates as a self-contained entity, while in the second model RED functions as an extension of DOE. In the third model, RED is

converted into regional office of the controller of examinations (ROCE) and has a mandate concerning administration of School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examinations. In the last case, RED would be abolished in its present form and with its present mandate.

Strengthen the District Education Office

The role of DEO office must shift from that of implementation of centrally prepared programmes to that of planning, monitoring and evaluation of district level educational development programmes. The district education office should be strengthened in such a way so that it can undertake district planning and programming, help schools prepare school improvement plans, oversee the administration and management of schools, supervise and support school management committees (SMCs) and head teachers in ensuring that schools are properly managed, supervise and guide schools and provide professional services and support, implement educational development programmes, carry out performance measurement/evaluation of schools and teachers, inform the public of the performance of schools, and provide educational leadership to the local school system as a whole. This shift in the role will require an appropriate organizational structure. The status of DEO should be raised to the Class I level.

Stop appointing District Education Officers on an acting basis

The District Education Officers are found to be appointed on an acting basis. This has distinct implications for the quality of educational leadership and management in the districts. Where possible, MOES must stop appointing District Education Officers on an acting basis. Seniority, leadership capacity, professional maturity, training, understanding of the situation of the district, etc., may be considered in identifying and appointing the District Education Officers.

Comprehensive package for decentralized planning

A comprehensive review of the BPEP programme in the light of the decentralization scheme. An immediate priority would be the need to provide the assistance at the district level to complete the preparation and update of the DEPs that has already been initiated. District offices must be continuously engaged in the planning process.

Appoint planning officers in District Education Offices

MOES should consider appointing planning officers in all District Education Offices who will take overall responsibility of preparing DEPs and also co-ordinate the preparation of school improvement planning (SIP) in schools. Of course, these planning officers will need an extensive training in educational planning, including others who are to work in planning teams.

Establishment of school districts

Each district could be divided into three to four educational zones (school districts). Each zone would be headed by an assistant DEO (ADEO) who would be responsible for school administration, teacher control and management, supervision and co-ordination of RCs, management and the implementation of educational development programmes and activities. Some of the authority currently residing with DEO could be delegated to the ADEO.

Redefine the role of the school supervisors

The roles and functions of the school supervisors should be examined in view of the developments and trends in both developing and developed countries with respect to school development. One such trend is that administrative supervision should be separated from professional development and support functions. Teacher support and supervision should be provided through resource persons/school management teams (RPs/SMTs) and mentor teachers

who are teachers themselves with demonstrated evidence of effective teaching, professional integrity and commitment. School supervision should be localized by making head teachers responsible for carrying out instructional supervision. Therefore, the functions of school supervisors should be devolved to the school head teachers. Other sources (e.g. parents, community members, local governments, parent-teacher associations (PTAs)) should also be mobilized to provide administrative and supervisory support to schools. The post of the school supervisor should turn into ADEO who should concentrate on administrative control, school evaluation, administration, enforcement of rules and regulations, etc.

Define clearly the relationship between the District Development Committee (DDC) and DEO

DEO staff must learn to work with these new actors. Therefore, DEO staff should be trained, re-trained and re-oriented to make them service local authorities as educational planning advisers and technical assistants. It is important that MOES recognizes the new professional roles of district level staff. They should not be seen as agents of MOES expected only to carry out central instructions.

Involvement of district staff in designing and implementing plans and programmes

Individuals and institutions can best learn when they have the opportunity to be fully involved in the design, implementation and accountability of the process. The top-down prescriptive nature of planning and programming, that offers district or local staff limited or no opportunity for participation, does not contribute to capacity development of both the individuals and the institutions. So long districts are kept away from being involved in the design and implementation programmes, their capacity will not increase.

Measures for capacity building at the cluster and school level

Change the focus of job descriptions of RPs

The roles and responsibilities of RPs must be clarified. Involvement in classroom-based teacher/school development should be the primary function of RP. The use of RPs as ‘stand-by field agents’ of the central institutions deflects them away from their primary function.

Strengthen the professional capacity of RPs

Teachers seem to have little faith and confidence in the professional capacity of RPs and in their ability to change classroom practices. It was claimed that many RPs have a weak professional base (e.g., subject and pedagogical expertise). RPs’ professional competence will have to be substantially improved so that they are able to provide necessary pedagogical support to the teachers. This requires drastic revision in the existing training provision and also in the selection process. Where necessary, MOES should consider removing incompetent and non-performing RPs.

Make school administration site-based

School administration should be school-based rather than district-based where decisions concerning school development and planning, school calendar, student admission, teacher discipline, teacher management, instruction, staff development, selection of curriculum materials, school financing, resource generation, student assessment, etc., are taken on-site.

Shift of focus from RPs to head teachers

Head teachers could and should play a pivotal role in supporting the work of RPs and of the teachers in their respective schools. School-based teacher development cannot be attempted effectively by someone who is

externally appointed. Greater reliance on RPs and supervisors in matters of school improvement can yield little. It should be acknowledged that head teachers are principally responsible for leading and supporting teachers and RPs should provide the head teachers with the support required to attain the goal of teacher development.

Redefine the relationship of RPs with the head teacher of the host school

RPs should report to the head teacher of the RC school, not DEO. Salaries of RPs should also be paid through the host school. The host school head teacher along with RP should be accountable for the improvement of satellite schools within the cluster.

Introduce school improvement planning

School Improvement Planning (SIP) must be introduced as an instrument of school development. SIP uses school-wide and comprehensive strategies for improvement. District Education Offices must provide technical assistance to the schools to develop a plan for improvement. School supervisors should be trained in such a way that they can assist schools in preparing the SIPs.

Introduce a school evaluation system

A standardized evaluation system would be required to monitor and evaluate school performance on a fair and objective basis. A team of supervisors/evaluators appointed by DEO should undertake periodic evaluations of the schools in the district covering from financial management to pedagogical practices. School performance information should feed into resource allocation decisions.

Hold schools and teachers accountable for performance

A school accountability scheme could be established under which schools would be required to perform satisfactorily on a number of carefully selected performance indicators in order to get school development or improvement grants. Other necessary administrative actions may also be taken against non-performing schools and teachers, while best performing teachers and schools can be rewarded. Performance profiles could be prepared for each school, which would be made public.

Output-based funding to schools

Since teachers are centrally paid, local oversight bodies have little power to discipline or reward them. In particular, they have little ability to penalize non-attendance by deducting absences from teachers' salaries, or dismissing chronically poor performers. Putting greater emphasis on performance as a criterion of receiving funds could transform budgets into an instrument for putting pressure on public providers to be efficient.

Develop a separate reform package to support chronically low-performing schools

MOES should encourage the districts to establish a process of intervening in chronically low-performing schools.

Establishment of a strong governance structure

A school board would be established in each school with strong participation from parents. Parents are the clients of the school's services and its teachers and have a direct stake in the performance of the school. Other board members could comprise teachers and respected community members. School staff would be accountable to the school board.

Strengthen the educational leadership role of the head teachers

Head teachers should be given formal power and responsibility to lead teacher and school development. They should be trained in school management and instructional leadership and should work closely with RPs to improve their schools. Fundamentally, school development must be driven and led by the head teacher and not the DEO or supervisor who is too removed from the school, its community and governance arrangements.

Head teacher selection through open competition, not by nomination

Head teachers should be selected through open competition, not by DEO nomination. This is essential if head teachers are to be respected guardians of their school communities. MOES may consider creating a separate cadre of head teacher within the teaching service.

Allow parents to form their own associations

Parents should be allowed to form their own associations so that they will have a say in how children's schools should be run.

Encourage teachers to form professional associations

A politically neutral teaching profession has become a delusion. While no immediate solutions can be foreseen towards the direction of an apolitical, neutral and non-partisan teaching profession, a few efforts could be initiated in order to professionalize teaching. One such option is to encourage teachers to form professional associations based on their subject area. Small financial grants could be provided to such associations for organizing professional upgrading activities.

Preface

This institutional analysis (IA) of the capacity of the Ministry of Education and Sports of Nepal (MOES) has many ambitious aims. Amongst these is the attempt to provide a comprehensive and methodologically rigorous analysis of the existing capacity and expertise of MOES and its agencies. This, it is hoped, will make possible a coherent and comprehensive framework for human resource development (HRD).

IA adopts a broad approach to human resource development; attempting to integrate individual and institutional development, and to link these explicitly to teaching and learning in schools. Ultimately, human resource development must empower administrators, technical staff, teachers in schools, those engaged in school management, and parents, to take control of the processes and practices that shape and govern their work.

The analytical framework to emerge from the study draws heavily on contemporary theory and research in areas such as human resource development, teacher development and organizational learning. This is not intended to reflect an abstract or solely ‘academic’ approach to institutional analysis and human resource development. Rather, and unlike other reports and studies of human resource development in the Nepalese education sector, the intention is to relate the data to what is known about HRD and to engage BPEP partners in a serious and detailed debate about *what* human resource development means and *how* best it can be facilitated.

Nevertheless, the model of human resource development outlined in this report provides a number of easily accessible entry points that will facilitate the preparation of immediate and straightforward programmes of staff training.

Courses, training programmes, study tours and collaborative research projects are all made possible in the short, medium and long term. However, the essence of this analysis, and the resultant HRD plan to be informed by it, will be seriously compromised if MOES fails to acknowledge the necessity for ongoing and substantial reform of its core management practices and procedures. Put another way, the provision of technical expertise and skills will have a limited effect if they are to be exercised in the context of the prevailing organizational climate within MOES.

It should be noted that MOES itself played an important role in the collection of data for IA. Many central, regional and district staff gave their time to complete questionnaires and to participate in interviews and focus groups. In addition to providing their own insights and knowledge, MOES staff assisted in the compilation of staff profiles, and in obtaining, organizing and explaining many important policy documents. The Planning Division and the Organization, Training and Development Section and the Personnel Administration Section within the General Administration Division of MOES were especially active. In the process, the project methodology and project design satisfied, partially at least, one of the aims of IA: to provide key MOES staff expertise and experience in project design, data collection, data management and institutional analysis. The study team extends its thanks to all of those within MOES and amongst donor and other agencies who have given their input to the study.

I would also like to express my deep gratitude to Johnny Baltzersen, Executive Director of the International Programme for Educational Development (IPED) without whose dedication and valuable feedback the study would have been incomplete. Thanks are also due to the members of the study team. Special thanks are due to Chuda Nath Aryal and Kedar Nath Shrestha for their consulting inputs. Last, but not least, I would like to express sincere thanks to Leela Mani Paudyal, Renu Thapa, Bharat Tripathi, Bhupendra Pant, Dhruwa Siwakoti, Narendra Fuinyal, Sugam Bajaracharya,

Geeta Pradhan and Samir Ranjit who assisted me in collecting, processing, and organizing the field data.

This report is an attempt to set an agenda for debate and discussion within MOES and amongst its partners. It is to be followed by a comprehensive HRD plan for the ministry that will build on the recommendations made here, and provide tangible strategies to enhance the capacity of the public education system to fulfil its functions.

Min Bahadur Bista
Team leader

Part I

The context of capacity building
within the MOES

Chapter 1

Introduction

Context of the study

The Basic and Primary Education Programme (BPEP I – first phase) had three overall aims: (a) enhanced educational access amongst those traditionally excluded from basic and primary education; (b) improved quality of primary education and (c) strengthened institutional management.

While some progress has been achieved, these three objectives are still to be fully satisfied and remain key targets within BPEP II – second phase. However, unlike its predecessor, the focus within BPEP II is much more on processes and results than technical and physical inputs. In this regard, there has been a growing realization of the critical role of institutions and organizations in the overall process of educational development. The Programme Implementation Plan (PIP), for instance, stated that enhanced educational access and improved learning achievement of children could not be achieved without strengthening the capacity of schools and their governing bodies.

Capacity building is necessary in a wide range of areas such as educational planning, educational administration, staff development, decision-making processes and communication systems, monitoring and evaluation. Ultimately, institutional capacity building is concerned with, and must lead directly to, improved teaching and learning in classrooms. This study is an attempt to highlight the institutional and staff development factors considered as essential for promoting quality development in the education system.

Objectives and scope of the study

The study has two main objectives. First, to assess the overall capacity of MOES, its staff and constituent bodies in relation to their mandates, roles and responsibilities. Second, to guide the conceptualization and preparation of a Human Resource Development Plan (HRDP) for MOES to support the central goal of quality improvement under BPEP II. In this regard IA has taken account of a recent study of organizational structure and human resource development in MOES (Academy for Educational Development, 1999a) as well as a study of civil service reform in general (Asian Development Bank, 1999).

The recommendations arising from IA, whilst intended to strengthen the ministry's skills and expertise base, should also support the government's broader aims for decentralization within the education sector, and for basic and primary education in general. As such, many of the recommendations outlined in this final report are heavily dependent on the existing programme of decentralization currently being directed by other projects and donor bodies.

IA is not restricted to an analysis of the capacity of central or administrative agencies and bodies. Indeed, particular attention has been given to the role and function of the district education office and the district education officer, resource centre system and a range of critical school management processes; especially as they relate to strengthening teaching and learning in the classroom.

IA covers all of those agencies, units, activities and personnel involved in the implementation of capacity building programmes devised and agreed within the BPEP II framework. In conceptual terms, IA has considered all of those factors related to the 'quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the institutional environment in which teachers and schools operate' (Sack and Saïdi, 1997: 22). This broad conceptualization has led to an analysis of the following aspects at the central, regional/district and local level:

- The major strategic processes within, and cutting across individual institutions and organizational units.
- Operational processes within these individual units and organizations (at least as they relate to the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of the sector).
- Sub-unit level activity such as the nature of school organization, local management and accountability, teacher and community relations.

Certain issues have been largely excluded from the analysis. The structure, provision and resources for initial and in-service teacher education have been examined recently by the Asian Development Bank (ADB TA-3217). Even though that report leaves many issues unresolved, it is nevertheless more focused and specific than IA study. Notwithstanding the different objectives of these two studies, the final report does take account of the findings and recommendations from the ADB work in so far as they impact on the institutional capacity of MOES to carry out its central and decentralized mandates in relation to supporting teachers and teaching. The financing of human resource development has been deferred for closer examination and costing as part of the HRDP to emerge from the IA study.

It is acknowledged that IA cannot hope to provide a panacea for the full range of structural, technical, social and political constraints that contribute to poor educational achievement in Nepalese schools. IA strongly supports one of the major findings from the AED study; that accountability and ownership are prerequisites to institutional capacity building (AED, 1999). Other major donor-driven development programmes are concerned with administrative and political reform, and IA only touches on the interconnections between them (e.g. in relation to decentralization policy or public sector reform and accountability). Nevertheless, IA does attempt to highlight and categorize both the technical/structural impediments to capacity building, as well as those that might be termed socio-political or cultural. Clearly there are interconnections between the two; however, IA is predicated on the view

that the former cannot hope to overcome the latter alone. The technical and structural ‘solutions’ arising from IA, and informing the subsequent HRDP, must be understood, shaped, owned and championed by key policy-makers and MOES officials within the overall context of social and political reform in Nepal.

Methodology of the study

This study draws upon quantitative and qualitative methodology. A core data set has been collected by questionnaire instruments that were administered widely within central MOES agencies, selected regional and district units, and local schools within the central and western regions. These quantitative data were complemented with extensive interviewing and group discussion across central, regional and local units. The aim of the interviews and focus groups was to assess and support the validity of the questionnaire data, as well as to gain more detailed and context-specific insights in relation to organizational practices, values and norms. Extensive analysis of relevant documentation was also carried out. The bulk of the data collection took place between March and July 2000. Details of the main data collection activities can be summarized as follows:

Questionnaires

There were seven questionnaire instruments administered both to key and representative MOES staff. Returns, equating to approximately 90 per cent, were received from Class I officers ($n = 12$), Class II officers ($n = 32$), Class III officers ($n = 115$), District Education Officers ($n = 50$), school supervisors ($n = 64$), resource persons ($n = 168$) and head teachers ($n = 190$). Throughout the report, data related to Class I and II officers have been considered together, and for ease, these officers are referred to as ‘SMEs’ (senior managers of education). The questionnaire instruments adopted a

range of strategies; respondents were presented with multiple-choice, open-ended and Likert scale questions, as well as propositions and statements for which responses were elicited.

Interviews

Once the questionnaire data had been received, entered and summarized, interviews were conducted with representatives of each of the above respondent groups. These were not taped but did generate extensive notes from which themes and issues were developed.

Focus groups

Group discussions were held with staff from the following institutions: Department of Education (DOE); National Centre for Educational Development (NCED); Curriculum Development Centre (CDC); Distance Education Centre (DEC); Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC); Office of the Controller of Examinations (OCE); Regional Education Directorates (REDs) and their directors; District Education Offices (DEOs) and select District Education Officers (DEOs); head teachers, teachers and parents.

Other opportunities emerged to collect data. For instance, REDs, DEOs, school supervisors, and resource persons (RPs) attending training courses in NCED were brought together for group discussions. Additionally, the final report of a workshop on issues related to Resource Centre (RC) development, held in Kathmandu in January 2000, were taken into account, especially as they related to the role of the RP, head teacher and DEO.

The research design consisted of three phases. Phase one comprised a macro analysis of MOES and its constituent bodies. The aim was to examine the structures, processes and communication at the system level of the sector, but mainly in terms of the interconnections between MOES, its regional and

district bodies, and other government departments and agencies. There were three main tasks:

- **Mapping the institutional environment:** consideration was given to the relationship of the educational sector to government priorities and objectives, and to the interconnections (if any) between MOES and other ministries and public bodies. Consideration was also given to the role and importance of donor bodies in shaping this environment, and the ways in which MOES co-ordinated donor activities.
- **Examining the mandate and formal statement of aims and purpose of MOES:** consideration was given to the extent to which the mandate and attributions of MOES were sufficient to implement the educational policies of His Majesty's Government of Nepal. IA also considered potential dysfunctionalities such as conflicting attributions between MOES and other ministries, or where MOES appeared to have limited influence over aspects of its work (e.g. financial delegation, recruitment numbers and procedures, etc).
- **Mapping the structure and function of MOES and relating this to its mandate and formal aims.**

This first phase of the study led to a clarification of the roles and purposes of MOES and the relationship of these to its existing structures and functions. The aim was not to probe for deficiencies but, rather, to ensure that the current structure was appropriate to the core functions of MOES. Data collection for this phase was based predominantly on document analysis and a limited amount of follow-up interviewing of key staff, particularly in terms of testing out possible conclusions and recommendations.

Phase two of the research involved a microanalysis *across* the basic and primary education field. Units relevant to the scope of IA were identified, as were certain key posts within these units. Finally, a number of domains for investigation were identified. The aim here was to generate information of

importance to all of the key units and areas of responsibility within MOES. Five domains were identified: (a) organizational structures, mandates, and roles; (b) staffing and staff development; (c) information and communication; (d) planning; and (e) monitoring and evaluation.

During the course of the investigation, it became clear that many MOES staff were concerned about the quality of implementation in the ministry. As such, an additional domain (i.e. implementation issues) was added in relation to the central agencies and departments of MOES. This is reported in *Chapter 3*.

The third phase involved a microanalysis *within* the basic and primary education field. Having collected primarily quantitative information *across* the units and sections, the aim in the third phase was to undertake qualitative data collection (i.e. interviews and document analysis) *within* each of these units in order to build up a more accurate picture of the strengths, weaknesses and requirements for capacity building within them. Thus, the earlier quantitative data were complemented with rich and detailed accounts from staff better able to express their views and relate their own experiences.

In summary, these three phases of data collection, highlighting five key domains related to capacity building in MOES (i.e. organizational structures, mandates, and roles; staffing/staff development; information/communication; planning; and monitoring/evaluation), provide both a macro (i.e. system-wide) and micro (i.e. unit-specific) perspective on institutional capacity within MOES. Notwithstanding this approach, the insights gained from the detailed and specific study of individual posts and units have been aggregated to provide a more coherent overall picture of MOES in terms of the four dimensions highlighted earlier.

Finally, a substantial and comprehensive programme of seminars and workshops was conducted in order to disseminate the findings of the study,

to validate its conclusions, and to further sharpen its recommendations. Workshops were held with approximately 160 of the following officials and development partners: (a) all Class I officers of MOES; (b) all Class II officers of MOES; (c) select Class III officers of MOES; and (d) donor representatives.

Regional seminars were conducted with approximately 120 of the following regional, district and school staff, as well as with select partners from the development community: (a) district education officers and school supervisors; (b) head teachers; (c) school teachers; (d) regional education directors; (e) representatives from NGOs; and (f) representatives from local bodies.

The result of considerable effort is an attempt to set an agenda for debate and discussion about HRD in MOES. The IA study is to be followed by a comprehensive HRD plan for the ministry that will build on the recommendations made here, and provide tangible strategies to enhance the capacity of the public education system to fulfil its functions. It is anticipated that this plan will recommend a variety of largely interdependent and complementary activities. For example, there may be short- and medium-term training through workshops, seminars and study tours, as well as long-term education programmes, training programmes rooted in Nepalese institutions, and research projects. The first phase of HRDP should be completed by late 2001.

Organization of the report

The report is presented in three parts:

- *Part I (Chapters 1 and 2)* introduces the study, and places it within the broader context of public sector reform in Nepal.

- *Part II (Chapters 3, 4, 5 and 6)*, presents the data collected and analyzed at each of the three institutional levels – central institutions and agencies, regional and district offices and local schools and resource centres – as well as in terms of female participation in Nepalese educational development.
- *Part III (Chapters 7 and 8)* suggest a way forward. *Chapter 7* sets out an expanded vision for human resource development; one that integrates individual and institutional development and recognizes that HRD must lead, ultimately, to quality teaching and learning in schools, as well as to social and political empowerment. Finally, *Chapter 8* outlines the critical issues to be considered by those involved in the preparation of HRDP, as well as a range of practical human resource development and capacity building measures.

Guiding assumptions

A number of assumptions have guided this project.

- Ultimately, human resource development initiatives must be assessed by their relationship to teaching and learning in schools. Human resource development, no matter how well designed and implemented, will fail if it does not enhance the ability of teachers to work effectively.
- Human resource development goes beyond the technical skills and competencies necessary for each staff member to perform adequately, and must be connected to institutional development. Individual and institutional development exist in a dynamic relationship, supporting and facilitating each other. Individual staff training (whether of administrators or teachers) is a necessary but not sufficient condition for capacity building in MOES.
- Human resource development, as conceived above, is a long-term undertaking. Whilst there can and will be sets of short-, medium- and

long-term activities, significant changes in teaching and learning in schools – to the extent that these can be attributed to teaching practices – are long-term in nature.

- Professional learning is facilitated best in close relationship to the workplace and cannot be disconnected from this context. As such, capacity building will be achieved most effectively when MOES staff, including teachers, gain practical and job-related development opportunities that they are able to ground and utilize in relation to their daily work. Frequent staff transfer and rotation will tend to constrain staff development.
- Human resource development within MOES takes place within a broad context. It must take account of the needs of associated and related agencies and NGOs who share similar missions and aims to MOES. It must also relate to the broader context of public sector development and must take account of, and respond to new directions and initiatives related to decentralization, accountability, and transparency and good governance in general.

Conclusion

The study is largely unique in Nepalese education for its desire to understand the institutional environment in which the key management functions of staffing/staff development, information/communication, planning, and monitoring/evaluation are undertaken. The methodology is intended to explore actual MOES practices and to uncover the major causes of inefficiency and incompetence. The aim is not to generate a substantiated critique of MOES with which to undermine its leadership or staff. Rather, the aim is to provide a firmer foundation of knowledge on which to understand past failings and to build lasting and sustainable human resource development processes.

Chapter 2

The context of public sector reform in Nepal

This chapter consists of two main sections. The first section ('Government and public administration in Nepal') reviews critical issues in Nepalese public administration. The second section ('Challenges confronting the civil service in Nepal') focuses on recent policy initiatives to improve the quality of public administration in Nepal.

Introduction

A well-managed civil service is a prerequisite to efficient government. Governance institutions are of primary importance in determining how society manages its affairs and addresses human development. There is an association between public institutions and the delivery of human development services such as education and health. An understanding of the 'big picture' of public administration is essential to understanding the ways in which educational institutions, and the people who work in them, are managed. As such, the purpose of this chapter is to consider the overall ecology of public administration in Nepal under which public institutions operate, and civil servants fulfil their roles and responsibilities.

Government and public administration in Nepal

The Constitution of Nepal of 1990 provides for a parliamentary democracy as well as for institutions and processes that are typically found in a democratic government. Three branches of the government (i.e. the

executive, the judiciary and the legislature) are constituted in accordance with the principle of separation of power within the state apparatus. The Constitution provides for two houses of parliament, the upper house and the lower house. The lower house comprises 205 representatives elected by secret ballot based on a national adult franchise. The party that has the majority in the lower house forms the government, with its leader taking the post of Prime Minister. There were numerous occasions in the recent past when coalition governments had to be formed due to the inability of either party to gain the majority required for forming a government. Such coalitions have tended to be short-lived, contributing to instability throughout the public sector.

The executive branch of the government consists of the Council of Ministers, which is headed by the Prime Minister. The Council of Ministers, consisting of ministers, makes executive decisions and formulates policy proposals. In order to limit government bureaucracy, the Government has reduced the size of its executive to 21 ministries (comprising 26 ministers inclusive of state ministers). The number of ministries and ministers continues to vary but the trend has been downward from a recent peak of 26 ministries and 47 ministers.

The Constitution provides for a Constitutional Council, headed by the Prime Minister and comprising the Chief Justice, the Speaker of the House of Representatives (lower house), the chairman of the National Assembly (upper house), and the leader of the main opposition party. This council nominates office bearers to various constitutional bodies. There is also a Judiciary Council responsible for appointments to the judiciary. Whilst the independence of the judiciary is enshrined in the Constitution, a recent study suggested that 55 per cent of Nepalese believed their judges to be corrupt (HDC, 1999).

A minister, who may be assisted by a state or an assistant minister, heads each ministry. The secretary, who is appointed by the cabinet from

among the Class I officials of the government, runs the day-to-day administration of the ministry. The minister is responsible for giving policy guidelines, programmes, targets and direction, while the secretary executes the government's policies and programmes, ensures compliance with the government laws, and provides feedback and professional support to the minister. The secretaries normally report to the concerned ministers, although at times they have been requested to report directly to the Prime Minister.

Organization of the civil service

Following the restoration of democracy in 1990, the country inherited an institutional bureaucracy that was highly centralized, hierarchical, elitist, inaccessible, overly preoccupied with process, and designed to serve the rulers rather than the people. It was therefore a considerable challenge during the 1990s to realign the civil service in ways that better meet the needs of the population and society.

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Nepal of 1990 provides for the civil service to undertake the day-to-day administration of the country. The civil service system has been constituted according to the Civil Service Act of 1993 and Civil Service Regulations of 1994. The present Act, despite several revisions and amendments, is believed to be the continuation of the Civil Service Act promulgated in 1956.

The civil service in Nepal is organized into 10 service categories, 74 service groups, and 35 service sub-groups. Education falls into one of the service categories, which is further divided into many groups and sub-groups. The service categories and groups/sub-groups have been established in terms of the nature of specialization. The main purpose of creating these services was to enhance specialization and professionalism in the various technical fields. One major drawback of this classification has been that it has caused too much fragmentation in the civil service and restricts vertical and horizontal movement between the services. As a result of this classification, certain

categories of employees can acquire much faster promotions than others. The 10 service categories are given below:

1. Nepal Administrative Service
2. Nepal Agriculture Service
3. Nepal Education Service
4. Nepal Engineering Service
5. Nepal Fiscal Planning and Statistics Service
6. Nepal Forestry Service
7. Nepal Health Service
8. Nepal Judicial Service
9. Nepal Miscellaneous Service
10. Nepal Parliament Service.

The Nepalese civil service system is rank-based with steep hierarchies. There are mainly two ranks: (a) gazetted and (b) non-gazetted. Normally, personnel belonging to the gazetted ranks enjoy the status of professionals/officials, whereas those in the non-gazetted rank form the non-officer and/or support and service group. Each rank is further divided into four classes. It is often argued that this hierarchical structure causes unnecessary delay in the decision-making process and makes the officials to some extent clerk-oriented. Peons, drivers, gardeners and the like are defined as a non-classified cadre of employees for whom there is no prospect of vertical upgrading (internal promotion) unless they compete openly within the classified cadre. The categories are outlined below.

Gazetted

Special Class	Secretary
Class I	Joint Secretary (Director General, Executive Director, Director)
Class II	Under Secretary (Deputy Director, District Education Officer)
Class III	Section Officer

Non-gazetted

Class I	<i>Nayab Subba</i> (assistants)
Class II	<i>Kharidar</i>
Class III	<i>Mukhiya</i>
Class IV	<i>Bahidar</i>
Non-classified	Drivers, peons, gardeners

Officer level positions in the Nepalese civil service are classified into two broad categories: (a) administrative; and (b) technical. Education, health, engineering, forestry and agriculture have been classified as technical fields, with the remainder being administrative positions. To be eligible for recruitment to technical positions, one has to have an academic degree in the respective field. For administrative positions, however, applications are accepted from graduates of any discipline (e.g. Sanskrit studies, education, humanities, management).

The Public Service Commission (PSC) – one of Nepal’s constitutional bodies – has a mandate to recruit and select people for all civil service vacancies. As such, government ministries and departments cannot make appointments without PSC approval. All types of contractual and temporary recruitment made by the ministries, departments or any other government offices are considered unlawful. This legal provision has been relaxed in the case of development projects, making it possible for line ministries, in consultation with the Ministry of General Administration (MOGA), to appoint temporary staff for development projects.

The PSC conducts recruitment by competitive examination. In comparison to other public institutions in the country, PSC has retained its credibility amongst the people. Competition to enter the gazetted III level post (e.g. Section Officer) is particularly intense, although more so for administrative positions than technical ones. Those applying for administrative positions must pass written tests in three areas (general knowledge, social studies and relevant subject area) followed by IQ tests, group discussions

and interviews. By contrast, those applying for technical positions take an objective test in the related field (with 50 multiple-choice questions); this is followed by an interview. Critics maintain that the selection procedure for technical positions is not as rigorous as for administrative positions, with greater scope for the selection of inappropriate (even incompetent) staff. The common perception appears to be that a one-hour test of multiple-choice items can test neither technical/professional ability, nor one's managerial capabilities. Many feel that this less rigorous screening procedure was introduced at a time when there was a serious shortage of manpower in technical fields (such as agriculture, education, health, engineering, etc.). Now that the availability of manpower in these fields has grown significantly, there is a feeling that more intense selection procedures should be applied for technical positions as well.

The PSC also determines the qualifications for the candidates to be recruited. Normally, the entry point, via open competitive examinations, is the gazetted III level position and a Bachelor's degree (B.A.) is the minimum academic qualification prescribed for this level. Gazetted I and II level positions are mostly filled through internal promotion within the established parameters. Of the total vacant posts at Class II and I, 10 per cent are expected to be filled through open and free competition. The provision of lateral entry has allowed young and highly intelligent persons to enter senior positions in the government service.

Once recruited through the PSC defined procedures, PSC makes a recommendation to MOGA for appointments. Initially, new recruits are kept under a one-year (six-month in the case of women) probation period during which time they are closely watched for their moral conduct, discipline and performance. Following the probationary period, candidates are declared confirmed. Notwithstanding this procedure, the so-called probationary period is viewed widely as little more than a ritual, and in reality staff serving the probationary period rarely lose their job as a result of bad conduct, ill-discipline

or poor performance. MOGA authorizes the respective line ministries to appoint and place staff.

The first amendment of the Civil Service Act (1998) provides elaborate criteria and procedures for employee postings and transfers. The main purpose of job transfer, as specified in the Act, is to ‘acquaint the civil servants with the experiences of different geographical conditions of the country’. One of the stipulations has been that civil servants should be posted or placed for a minimum period of one year and a maximum of 18 months in the districts classified as ‘A category of districts’ (i.e. very remote districts). Elsewhere, placements or transfers should last for a minimum period of two years and a maximum of three years. MOGA is to monitor whether or not the line ministries have followed these stipulations. Following the revision in the Act, anecdotal records suggest that the rate of frequent transfers has declined in a modest way. However, influential employees who have direct links with politicians can subvert this provision, manipulating the authority of high-level officials in order to transfer staff as a tool to reward or punish staff.

The existence of a proper promotion system is vital for attracting and retaining talented staff to the public services. Whilst a poor promotion system tends to deter ambitious and capable workers from entering the public service, a good one can help to motivate and inspire them. The promotion system in the Nepalese civil service is based on the principles of seniority and merit. Criteria used in promotion include: (a) years of work; (b) work experience in remote districts; (c) performance rating; (d) academic qualifications; and (e) participation in human resource development activities. The Civil Service Act attempts to maintain a balance between the seniority and merit principles of promotion. The merit principle posits that promotion should be made on the basis of the qualifications and achievements of the employee irrespective of length of service, while in the seniority principle the length of service determines the order of precedence in promotion. Of course, seniority is not always an accurate measure of competence. As such, the merit of an individual

is determined on the basis of efficiency or performance rating by the supervisor. No promotional examinations are held to determine the competence. Nevertheless, the personnel appraisal system is highly subjective and is susceptible to favouritism and extraneous considerations. It is often said that subjectivity, manipulation, political alliance, connections and personal relationships operate in judging the competence of employees. Sometimes, it is impossible for the heads of institutions to know the performance level of each individual employee. Making an objective judgement of their capacities is obviously problematic.

Challenges confronting the civil service in Nepal

Heavy bureaucracy

Table 2.1 illustrates the remarkable growth of Nepalese bureaucracy over the last five decades or so. Numbers have increased from 23,774 in 1957 to 103,179 in 1998: a fourfold increase. Much of this growth occurred during two particular periods: 1963-1971; and 1981-1991. Since the restoration of democracy, however, growth has been minimal.

Table 2.1 Growth of the civil service

<i>Year</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Change (%)</i>
1957	23,774	
1963	27,589	16.0
1971	44,278	60.5
1976	60,000	35.5
1981	70,080	16.8
1991	102,644	46.5
1998	103,179	0.5

A lean, thin and efficient bureaucracy has been the principal agenda of civil service reform in the last decade, with the Administrative Reforms Commission of 1991 suggesting a 25 per cent across-the-board downsizing. This recommendation meant that the number of civil servants had to be reduced to 77,000 from the 1991 high of 102,644. In 1994, the number of civil servants was reduced to 94,039, a reduction in the size of bureaucracy by 8.5 per cent as against the targeted reduction of 25 per cent. Interestingly, the number of civil servants rose to 103,179 in 1998. Serious gaps appear to exist between policy statements and actions.

Table 2.2 Size of the civil service

<i>Class/rank</i>	<i>1991</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1998</i>
Special Class	40	68	79
Gazetted Class I	645	585	634
Gazetted Class II	2,897	2,692	2,680
Gazetted Class III	6,633	6,878	7,586
<i>Total gazetted</i>	<i>10,215</i>	<i>10,223</i>	<i>10,979</i>
Non-gazetted Class I	17,823	17,489	18,432
Non-gazetted Class II	24,665	21,418	24,167
Non-gazetted Class III	12,512	10,458	11,355
Class IV	5,349	1,537	1,998
Typist/drivers	4,138	3,948	3,868
Peons	27,942	28,966	32,380
<i>Total non-gazetted</i>	<i>92,429</i>	<i>83,816</i>	<i>92,200</i>
Grand total	102,644	94,039	103,179

Importantly, there has been no proper analysis of the impact of downsizing on the overall employment picture in Nepal – especially as the government is the major employer in the country. For H. Panday (2000), the Nepalese civil

service faces the same overstaffing problem that has been experienced in the civil services of many other developing countries. Similarly, any large-scale retrenchment programme will have undoubted social and economic implications that need to be addressed. *Table 2.2* outlines the changing patterns of employment in the civil service.

Poor governance practices

A democratic system of government that can maintain law and order, undertake economic reforms, and constantly respond to the aspirations and demands of its people relies heavily on the expertise and motivation of its civil service. However, public administration in Nepal is not well regarded, with scepticism and the rising mistrust of authorities – both political and bureaucratic. Many reasons can be put forward to explain this declining public confidence in the bureaucracy. First, the government has presented the message itself. Numerous state publications admit to internal inefficiency, corruption, lack of accountability and transparency in public administration. The Ninth Plan (1997-2002) has pointed out clearly that the Nepalese public administration, apart from being burdensome and expensive, has failed to promote either transparency, or an orientation towards the needs of the people. The *Nepal Human Development Report 1998* stated that public administration in Nepal was plagued by systematic corruption, favouritism, nepotism, lack of professionalism, accountability, integrity, openness, objectivity and selflessness. Bureaucrats appear to have earned a reputation for low ethical standards, lethargy, partiality and an absence of the will needed to take hard policy decisions in a timely manner. Second, mistrust of the government bureaucracy runs high amongst its staff. A recent survey undertaken by a team of civil service reform consultants revealed that poor pay and benefits, high levels of corruption, nepotism and favouritism, political interference, bias in promotion practices and hurried leadership changes were the key problems confronting the Nepalese civil service (ADB, 1999). *Table 2.3* outlines the views of civil servants themselves. On a scale of five,

respondents were asked to rate the extent to which each of the following issues was an actual problem.

Table 2.3 Problems in the civil service as seen by civil servants themselves (N = 857)

<i>Problem</i>	<i>Mean score</i>
Poor pay and benefits	4.6
Corruption at high level	4.2
Nepotism and favouritism	4.2
Political interference	4.2
Bias in promotion practices	4.0
Quick leadership changes	3.9
Poor motivation	3.7
Lack of clear cut responsibility	3.6
Weak leadership at top	3.5
Poor working conditions	3.5
Corruption at middle level	3.4
Lack of skills of employees	3.3
Corruption at all levels	3.3
Overstaffing	2.6
Corruption at lower level	2.6

Note: The study used a five-point scale where 1 represented ‘no problem’, 2 represented ‘little problem’, 3 represented ‘problem’, 4 represented ‘big problem’, and 5 represented ‘very big problem’.

Politicization of bureaucracy

Political neutrality is one key hallmark of good public administration and is based on the principle of rigorous abstention by civil servants from public

identification with political opinions, and absolute independence from individual politicians (Paul, Ickis, and Levitsky, 1989). This means that civil servants shall not participate in any political activity, and thus must remain above the party political events of the day. It is expected that the civil service serves as a regulatory and balancing instrument detached from political goals and associations. Civil servants are not allowed to form unions or associations, or participate in political activities, demonstrations, strikes, etc.

In recent years, however, Nepal has seen a rapid deterioration in the standards and performance of its civil servants. Increasingly, the civil service is polarized along party lines, with the distinction between government business and party business blurred (NESAC, 1998). Today, it is difficult to think of a politically neutral bureaucracy because politics has crept into the service and 'corrupted' every aspect of public life. Most commonly, officials in the bureaucracy find themselves tempted to carry out the wishes of their political masters, knowing full well that rewards such as further appointments and consultancies will await them on retirement. It is indicative of the sickness in the bureaucracy that the post-career activities of retired civil servants are never scrutinized for the gross conflicts of interest that they represent. Pradhan (1999), himself a very senior bureaucrat, characterizes Nepalese bureaucracy as a pendulum which swings at the will of its political masters. For him, politics has invaded the domain of bureaucracy, and bureaucracy has lost its stamina to resist the arbitrary actions of politicians.

Scholars argue that the erosion of the civil service since the advent of democratic politics is due primarily to a failure of having established an open, accountable and transparent political system. In many cases political leaders have neither the vision nor capacity to guide the bureaucracy. The inexperience of political leaders in governmental affairs in general, and their inability to understand the concept and norms of a permanent bureaucracy, has led to rapid deterioration in the standards and performance of the civil service (NESAC, 1998). As such, a fragile, unresponsive and corrupt political

system has rendered the nation's civil service politicized, demoralized, inefficient and, in fact, largely irrelevant.

A study undertaken by Human Development Centre (HDC, 1999) reported that a large majority of the Nepalese people believe that their political leaders are corrupt. An overwhelming majority stated that the political leaders had become even more corrupt in the past five years. As explained in the study, the Nepalese people understand corruption in terms of the misuse of power and the misuse of public funds. Many now claim that high-level institutions like the Commission for the Investigation of Abuse of Authority (CIAA), the Special Police Department (SDP), the Auditor-General (AG) and a separate Parliamentary Committee dealing with abuses of authority, have failed to counter corruption. (Ofosu-amaah, Paati, Soopramanien, and Uprety, 1999).

Whilst it is increasingly common for informed commentators, donor agencies and social critics to advocate independence and transparency within the public sector, politics in Nepal appears to continue enmeshing itself in factional dispute, division and mistrust. Rather than serving the needs of those who have elected them, politicians in Nepal are increasingly characterized as having abrogated their responsibilities, lost their discipline and integrity, and become greatly inclined towards the generation of personal wealth and power (Pradhan, 1999). For many, a fragile, unresponsive and corrupt political system has politicized, demoralized, and de-professionalized the civil service (see *Box 1*).

**Box 1. The challenges of human resource management
in Nepal's civil service**

1. *Political polarization:* Employees in Nepal's civil service are politically divided. Non-gazetted employees belong to various employee unions that are supported by political parties. Since 1980, transfers and promotion of employees have been largely based on political considerations.
2. *Decreasing attraction:* The civil service has been unable to attract highly competent candidates. Low salaries and better prospects in the private sector, especially for technical staff, are mainly responsible for the decline in high quality recruitment. Promotion prospects are also limited.
3. *Ethnic dominance:* The civil service is dominated by Brahmin, Chhetri, and Newar ethnic groups. Accessibility to women and disadvantaged groups is poor.
4. *Feudocratic attitudes:* The Nepalese civil service lacks effective systems for decision-making and management. 'Feudocratic' traditions and attitudes have dominated its functioning. An orientation towards development is very much lacking. Employees generally avoid self-initiative and decision-making.
5. *Ill-discipline:* The Nepalese civil service is characterized by ill-discipline. A lack of accountability and the absence of job descriptions are two causes.
6. *Defective performance appraisal system:* The civil service performance appraisal system is generally based on political and personal considerations, rather than merit and performance. Transparency is lacking. The system has been changed too often to suit the interests of specific employees.
7. *Corruption:* Corruption is rampant and increasing. Employees seem concerned about 'making money' rather than 'serving the people'. Political corruption has encouraged corruption at all levels.

Source: Agrawal, 2000.

Weak institutions

The civil service is perhaps one of the oldest institutions in the country. Some scholars are of the view that the ethos of favouritism, nepotism and other loyalties that run deeper than one's professional obligations, have their roots in the feudal traditions of Nepalese society. During the Panchayat era (1961-1990), the maintenance of law and order and the allegiance of the civil servants to a monolithic political system, became the primary interests of the government. Despite the new wave of liberalization and modernization, Nepal still remains a largely informal society based on kinship and patronage. This has significant implications for the development of public institutions. As Haq (1997) has explained:

“Rules continue to be flouted in favour of discretion, and decisions are made on the basis of political connections. Such disregard for institutions has not only increased transaction costs and made social and economic interaction less predictable, it had further reinforced misgovernance.”

Democracy, economic development and nation building must be supported by stronger institutions, which are accessible, transparent, accountable, and that can set clear and universally acceptable rules. Haq argues that the countries in the SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation) region, including Nepal, have experienced a steady erosion of their institutions. He predicts that when institutions are weak, individuals become powerful, creating opportunities for rent-seeking and illegal extortion.

Lack of strong workforce

Public administration also suffers from a lack of a strong workforce which is both administratively competent and technically sound. The major reasons for the weakness of the workforce are: (a) the failure of the civil service to attract competent and qualified people; (b) the unsystematic

recruitment procedures of the government; (c) the lack of scientific manpower planning; (d) an absence of a proper performance system; and (e) completely inadequate monetary incentives. Serious problems facing the Nepalese civil service include a high degree of absenteeism, lack of discipline, apathy, low morale, lack of managerial and technical skills, and an absence of job descriptions and the leadership required to direct and support administrative activities.

Poor quality of service delivery

One major function of the bureaucracy in Nepal, as elsewhere, is to deliver services to its people. It has been reported frequently, however, that most of the services provided by government agencies are of poor quality, irregular and unresponsive to people's needs (Sharma, 1999). A number of reasons might explain this. First, it is generally agreed that civil servants lack the required motivation to carry out their work. Second, this work is governed by a monolithic and centrally controlled management structure that operates on the principle of 'command and control'. There is little possibility of modifying service delivery strategies. Third, there is a tendency to place most stress on disbursements rather than on obtaining greater value for the money that is spent. Fourth, there is a lack of pressure for improvement from the recipients of bureaucratic services, and they play a limited role in deciding on the kind, amount, nature and modality of services.

Frequent job rotation

Job rotation is an essential activity of public administration and has a number of objectives. These include: (a) to remove persons who are ill-suited to particular jobs; (b) to avoid retrenchment; (c) to give all-round training and exposure in the different aspects of departmental work; (d) to provide a change of working environment so as to refresh their minds and increase efficiency; and (e) to broaden employees' outlook. Unfortunately, postings

and transfers in Nepal occur in the most ad hoc and unplanned manner. Civil servants do not view postings and assignments either as experience-building exercises, or as strategies to develop new competences. Many believe that indiscriminate transfer from one office to another systematically de-skills staff. Further, anecdotal evidence suggests that frequent transfers have a demoralizing effect on civil servants, as they occur mostly for political reasons. Transfer is a strong resource that allows politicians to reward their loyalists and penalize those who oppose them. This has brought uncertainty, discontinuity and lack of stability to the national administration. Scholars have begun to question whether ministers – the root cause of the problem – should be allowed to be involved in matters of personnel management within their departments (NESAC, 1998).

Unproductive organizational culture

Organizational productivity and the quality of service delivery depends on a conducive organizational culture, a set of job-related behaviours, attitudes, norms, values and beliefs that are commonly shared by the organizational members. Limited studies on organizational culture suggest that individuals in Nepalese organizations are indifferent towards productivity and quality. A study conducted by Pant (2000) revealed that organizational members tend to have some sort of unwritten norms and rules about what they should do and what they should not do. He reported that people eventually end up developing a belief system about what makes them successful in their careers in the organization. In *Table 2.4*, Pant identified the following two sets of behaviours as acceptable and unacceptable in the Nepalese civil service.

**Table 2.4 Acceptable and unacceptable behaviour
in the Nepalese civil service**

<i>Acceptable</i>	<i>Unacceptable</i>
Look busy even when one is not	Disagree with bosses
Live for oneself and family	Share information with others
Follow established ways of doing things	Trust any one who seems sincere
Maintain formal relationships with others	Take risks
Rationalize your decision/action, even if it is not so	Make rules explicit
Maintain relationships with those in power despite immediate losses	Stop others from exercising morality or immorality

Pant's study (2000) suggested that to be successful in the Nepalese civil service one has to show more than what one does, undermine others' performance rather than improving one's own, turn authority into power, operate in the main stream of thought and action, and exploit whatever opportunities are available. The study demonstrates that the values, beliefs and norms that civil servants hold may be counterproductive to organizational productivity, innovation, creativity, risk-taking, professionalism, and efforts towards efficiency, excellence and quality improvement. Any human resource development programme must take account of the organizational culture and socio-political context of the workplace. In Nepal, this context is highly problematic, if not counterproductive to individual and organizational development.

Efforts towards improving the civil service

The need for civil service reform in Nepal has been highlighted by the inability of the public service to operate within a changing environment. The Government of Nepal recognizes that the nation's development and the delivery

of services and facilities by the public sector requires an administrative machinery that is capable, impartial, productive, economical, people-oriented, and accountable (NPC, 1998). These are the elements of what is commonly referred to as 'good governance'. However, it is important to recognize that much of the public administration reform agenda in Nepal has been driven by external support agencies. Donors and others believe strongly that management reform should be the priority if the benefits of development are to reach the needy. The extent to which politicians and public servants share such aspirations is unclear.

Most recently, the government has announced a number of measures aimed at improving the performance and morale of civil servants, as well as the functioning of the civil service itself. Initiatives have included: (a) a trimming of the bureaucracy and government institutions to an appropriate size; (b) closure and/or merger of institutions; (c) elimination of unproductive positions; and (d) freezing of vacant positions. Most important, based on the recommendations of Pay Commission of 1998, HMG has made significant increases to the salary structures of civil servants. The government believes that enhancing salaries will improve the morale, capability and performance of civil servants. However, a recent survey of civil service reform suggested that increased across-the-board salaries are unrealistic, and have played no part in improving employee motivation or cutting the scale of corruption among civil servants.

The government has also launched several efforts to push forward decentralization processes and practices; creating legal frameworks in which decision-making authority can be passed on to elected local bodies. Despite many efforts, it is unclear that the administrative culture or its capacity has improved. It appears that most measures undertaken to improve the civil service have focused on structural matters such as organizational arrangements, rules, regulations and the creation of new organizations. Measures to bring about attitudinal changes amongst civil servants are almost

non-existent (Suwal, 1995). Sharma (1999) concludes that these efforts have failed to improve performance within the bureaucracy.

Following the restoration of democracy in 1990, the first elected government constituted an Administrative Reform Commission (ARC) that, amongst other things, aimed to restructure and rationalize the civil service. Issues for consideration included: (a) the overall size of the service; (b) the need for administrative autonomy; (c) systems of reward and punishment; (d) delegation of authority; (e) simplification of administrative procedures; (f) controlling corruption; and (g) monitoring and evaluating work methods. The ARC report (2000) stressed that public administration must be capable and competent in relation to the principles of democratic governance. The eighth plan made efforts towards gradual implementation of the recommendations of ARC, and a new Civil Service Act and Rules specified the functions, duties and rights of employees, and overviewed the development of job descriptions. To some extent, at least, progress has been reached in enhancing career development opportunities within the civil service.

The ninth plan aims to make the public management more transparent, cost-effective, competitive, job-oriented, service-oriented and accountable. It emphasizes the concept of a legitimate system of governance and civil society. The Plan has adopted a number of policy and implementation strategies to achieve its goals for good governance and management. These include the following: (a) institutionalization of the monitoring and evaluation system; (b) installation of institutional arrangements for proper co-ordination of development works; (c) creation of a permanent administrative reform committee for regular supervision, monitoring and evaluation of the administrative reform work; (d) clear provision of authority and responsibility; (e) strengthening the capability of training institutions; (f) conduct of a regular administrative auditing programme to find out whether administrative activities are being operated in accordance with laws and procedures; (g) conduct of client survey to measure standard of services provided to the people and their effectiveness; (h) formulation of a high-level national human resource

development council in order to formulate human resource and organization development policy, etc.

A study on civil service reform has stated that increasing salaries is not the solution to the ills of the bureaucracy (ADB, 1999). The report stated that the impact of the government decision to give a pay rise of 300 rupees in the year of 1999/2000 had no impact at all in encouraging performance. A recent poll conducted by *Himal* magazine to a group of 25 Class II officials of different ministries and departments of the government concludes that a pay raise would not necessarily help cut the scale of corruption among civil servants; it may, however, contribute to improvement in several other areas. *Table 2.5* summarizes a number of improvement measures, and the perception of senior civil servants as to the effectiveness of such interventions (ADB, 1999).

Table 2.5 Effects of pay increases as perceived by senior officials

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Undecided</i>
Boosting of self-confidence	80	12	8
Capacity improvement	60	28	12
Upgrading of performance level	56	28	16
Improvement in work completion rate	56	24	20
Raise in the delivery of quality service	56	28	16
Cut in corruption	52	32	16

Note: Figures presented are percentages.

There is also a role for civil society and NGOs in the effective delivery of services. However, this is most possible when the government supports and promotes civil societies and NGOs, and illustrates a commitment to utilizing their services. In the recent past, the role of NGOs and civil societies in the economic and socio-cultural sectors has increased perceptibly, though these

institutions have yet to take the shape of a major force in the development process. As NGOs are expanding in scope and becoming more significant in their impact, the responsibility of the bureaucracy in providing them with adequate support is likely to increase. However, the experience so far has not been very reassuring. Not only have a number of NGOs evaded norms of accountability, but the bureaucracy has also been apathetic and occasionally resistant to sharing resources and power with them. For the future, the government has announced its intention to delegate sufficient functions to NGOs and civil society, and to provide them with proper mechanisms of control, monitoring and feedback.

In recent years, the government has also launched several efforts to push forward decentralization processes and practices by adopting legal provisions to give decision-making authority to popularly elected local bodies. The Constitution of Nepal views decentralization as a medium of delivering democratization as it involves people in the political system of the country. The ninth plan states that the main intention of decentralization is to make people in rural and urban areas more ‘powerful’ and ‘capable’ in the management of their own development. Further, the Local Self-Governance Act proposes to devolve a number of powers and functions to local bodies – including in relation to education.

Despite all of these efforts, it appears that improvements in administrative culture and capability have not occurred. It also appears that most measures to improve the civil service have focused on structural issues such as organizational mandates, rules and regulations. In some cases this focus has led to the creation of new organizations. By contrast, measures to bring about attitudinal changes among civil servants are almost non-existent (Suwal, 1995). Sharma (1999) concludes that these efforts have not resulted in increased collective performance within the bureaucracy. The ADB has argued that reform efforts have failed for three main reasons: (a) the absence of political commitment; (b) resistance from bureaucrats; and (c) a lack of serious

dialogue about reform with stakeholders external to the civil service (ADB, 1999).

Of course, public administration reform should go beyond simplistic structural change. Whilst greater emphasis must be given to training and human resource development to facilitate the implementation of reform activities, there is little doubt that technical solutions will never fully address the complex problems of public administration. As the problems of public administration are deeply rooted in the political culture of the country, technical solutions will not suffice to bring about reforms in public administration. Indeed, the findings of a recent survey – summarized at *Table 2.6* – confirm the need for total management reform (ADB, 1999).

Table 2.6 Measures for improving individual performance in the civil service (N = 857)

<i>Measure</i>	<i>Mean score</i>
Stronger rules and regulations	4.2
Stronger accountability	4.2
Better monitoring	4.2
Rewards for performance	4.2
Objective performance indicators	4.1
Delegating authority	3.9
Eliminating overlaps of functions	3.8
Publicizing service standards	3.8
Improving performance evaluation	3.8
Courageous managers	3.8
Minimum performance standards	3.6
Computerization	3.3

Note: The respondents rated each of the above statements on a five-point scale, where 1 stood for no improvement and 5 for good improvement.

Experience suggests that civil service reform cannot be attained merely by trimming the size of the existing bureaucracy or cutting down the numbers of ministries. Improving the civil service involves changing structures, institutions, roles and relationships, procedures, and ways of behaving in public organizations that are embedded in national and ethnic customs and values. It must necessarily take time. Whilst it appears that the civil service in Nepal is in terminal decline, there have been significant reform initiatives. Many proposals outlined above may begin to bear fruit, and there remains widespread interest among donors to support the country's public sector institutions and processes.

Conclusion

The lesson from recent public sector reform in Nepal is that technical change, however substantial, is insufficient to affect meaningful reform. Reform efforts must focus on both the structural as well as the cultural factors that influence public governance. Of course greater emphasis must be given to training and human resource development in order to facilitate the implementation of the many reform programmes. However, such human resource development is of limited value if the context of administration is not taken into account.

Nepal can now boast two generations of highly educated technical elite: indeed, the majority of civil service leaders and senior managers have acquired technical qualifications or other relevant expertise from developed nations. External agencies seem more willing than ever to the commitment of resources and expertise to enhancing human resource development in the public sector. Nevertheless, the problems facing public administration appear as intractable as ever: insufficient capacity, cumbersome procedures, inadequate regulatory processes, low motivation and morale and increasing political interference and corruption. If anything, the public service in Nepal has become less

concerned with the needs of the population, and less able to adjust itself in ways that might rectify its internal failings. While high quality training and enhanced systems play an important role, they are not sufficient conditions for national development or capacity building. The message of this report, like that from the ADB, is that human resource development and systemic reform must take place together. External agencies can take the lead in devising and providing training, ideally enhancing local capacity in the process. However, Nepalese political leaders and civil servants must take the lead in changing the aims and processes of public governance. Failure to do so will tend to ensure that staff training inputs will continue to disappoint the aspirations of development partners on all sides.

Part II

Analysis of institutional capacity
within the MOES

Chapter 3

Institutional capacity within the central agencies of MOES

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to examine the institutional framework and processes under which the education sector in Nepal is organized and managed at the central level. Whilst the bulk of the chapter deals with deficiencies and shortcomings in MOES, it should be noted and recognized that many positive conditions exist to promote institutional reform. These include the following:

- A strong institutional base with a network of functioning institutions.
- A clear division of responsibility between institutions at different levels.
- Written job descriptions for most staff within institutions.
- The existence of a policy that links education and training to career development.
- Some degree of enthusiasm and motivation for self-advancement among the staff.
- Low staff attrition and turnover.
- A strong commitment towards decentralized planning and management.
- The designation of the Ministry of Education and Sports as a technical ministry as a step towards improved professionalism.
- An operational system for training teachers and educational personnel.
- A growing awareness of school improvement issues.

- The adoption by MOES of a sector-wide strategy (the first ministry in the country to adopt this approach).
- Substantial experience of donor co-operation and co-ordination.
- Established systems for Educational Management Information (EMIS), as well as for monitoring and evaluation.
- Established committee structures at different levels of management.
- A wide process of consultation in policy making through the use of technical committees, commissions and task forces.
- The development of a cadre of educational professionals.
- An emphasis on innovation, testing, piloting, research and development.
- Increased opportunities for learning on-the-job as a consequence of multi-function positions.
- High levels of organizational loyalty among staff.
- Respect for authority.
- Engagement of the private sector and other providers in the delivery of educational services.
- Establishment of procedures, rules and regulations for many operations.

Whilst much more is needed for a professional and competent educational service, this list reflects the great progress made in Nepal to upgrade and extend the capacity of its staff and programmes to lead the provision of education across the country.

The institutional framework

Before considering the specific domains selected to examine the capacity of the educational service at the central level, it is first necessary to set the institutional context in which education is conducted. The administrative machinery to organize and manage the education sector is divided into several areas: central, regional, district, cluster and school. Each of these is now considered in turn.

Educational administration at the central level

The education sector is administered by the Ministry of Education and Sports; one of the 21 ministries of the Government of Nepal. Ministries are assigned functions by the Council of Ministers (which is also known as the cabinet). As stated in April 1999, the functions of the Ministry of Education and Sports were as follows:

- Formulation of policy, plans and programmes related to education, and their implementation.
- Tasks related to early childhood education, lower secondary, secondary, higher secondary, higher education, distance education, non-formal education, special education, population education, and nutritious food programme.
- Technical, vocational, moral and physical education.
- Policy formulation and implementation in areas such as teacher-training and manpower development.
- Tasks related to educational institutions.
- Universities.
- Tasks related to scholarships open to free competition, studies and research in foreign countries, approval of foreigners to study in Nepal and conduct research in Nepal.
- Tasks related to curriculum and textbooks.
- Tasks related to educational surveys, collection of statistics, and research related to education.
- Libraries and reading rooms.
- Tasks related to national and international seminars and conferences, co-ordination and relationship with national and international organizations.
- Bilateral and multinational agreements related to education.
- Tasks related to scouts.
- Janak Educational Materials Centre.

- Contact tasks related to UNESCO and ICIMOD.
- Tasks related to the formulation of policy, plans and programmes related to youths and sports and implementation.
- Studies, research, surveys, training, national and international conferences related to youth and sports.
- Keeping contact and relationships with national and international organizations related to youth and sports.
- Regular and periodic evaluation and appraisal of activities and programmes conducted by the government and NGOs in the field of youth and sports.
- Regular and periodic evaluation of the deployment of youth manpower.
- Other activities related to sports.
- Liaison with National Sports Council and other organizations related to sports.
- Tasks related to the Nepal Education Service: appointment, transfer, promotions; fixing minimum qualifications for initial appointment, fixing educational qualifications that can be counted for promotion, and department action in the process of punishment.

A minister is appointed to head the ministry; he/she is assisted by a minister of state. The minister is the political head of the ministry. The main responsibility of the minister is to direct government policy, and to serve as a link between the administration and the legislature. At the bureaucratic level, a secretary – the most senior civil servant – leads the ministry. This officer is appointed by the cabinet from amongst joint secretaries of any service cadre.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) is sometimes organized along the ‘unifunctional’ principle, meaning that it is responsible for education only. At various times, culture, women’s affairs, sports, etc., have been appended to the MOE, creating a ‘multi-functional’ ministry. Currently, the ministry also administers the sport portfolio, meaning that the attention of senior policy-

makers and executives is divided into two different sectors. Because the sport portfolio is relatively peripheral to this study, it is not dealt with here.

Table 3.1 Main functions of high-level bodies that formulate and co-ordinate educational policy

<i>Committee</i>	<i>Main responsibility</i>
Programme Execution Board (PEB)	Formulate policy guidelines and issue directives with regard to the implementation of BPEP II Co-ordinate between and/or among different ministries and institutions Monitor programme activities of BPEP II Trouble shooting
National Teacher Training Co-ordination Committee	Formulate teacher training policies Maintain co-ordination among various teacher training institutions
Special Education Council	Formulate policies for special education Maintain co-ordination among various institutions
National Curriculum Council	Formulate national curriculum policies Approve curricula, textbooks and other curriculum materials for adoption
National Non-Formal Education Council	Formulate policies for non-formal education Maintain co-ordination among various NFE institutions Monitor NFE programmes and activities

At the national level, there exist several committees with policy formulation and co-ordination responsibilities, all of which are authorized to make strategic/policy decisions. Chaired by the minister, these provide for the participation and involvement in educational policy-making of relevant national institutions. Previously, a single National Education Committee (NEC) existed at the national level to provide advice to MOE on policy matters, and ensure co-ordination among different institutions and educational development

efforts. However, this committee was disbanded following the recommendation of the National Education Commission in 1992. *Table 3.1* outlines the main functions of the various high-level bodies that formulate and co-ordinate educational policy in Nepal.

Organization of MOES

MOES directs the formulation of educational policies, plans, programmes and budgets. It runs its business through three main divisions, each headed by a joint secretary: (a) Administration Division; (b) Educational Administration Division; and (c) Planning Division. The roles and responsibilities of each division are shown in *Table 3.2*.

Table 3.2 Roles and responsibilities of MOES' three main divisions

<i>Division</i>	<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>
Administration Division	General and personnel administration, financial administration, legal aid and counselling, store and property management and organization, training and personnel development
Educational Administration Division	School administration, scholarship administration, higher and technical education administration
Planning Division	Programme development and budget, educational standards setting and policy analysis, educational statistics, foreign aid co-ordination, and monitoring and statistics

Department of Education (DOE)

The DOE – a self standing department within MOES – is responsible for the conduct and development of primary, lower secondary and secondary

schooling throughout the country. This mandate included the implementation of educational plans and programmes. The department has a direct line of command with the regional and district offices of education, and exercises full administrative and financial authority in matters of school administration and programme implementation. The department is headed by a director-general, who is supported by three divisional heads (i.e. directors). *Table 3.3* outlines the roles and responsibilities of each of the department's three divisions.

Table 3.3 Roles and responsibilities of divisions within DOE

<i>Division</i>	<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>
Administration, Planning and Physical Service Division	General and personnel administration, financial administration, educational materials distribution, planning and monitoring, physical services, research and development, and statistics
Primary Education Division	Early childhood education, basic and primary education, women's education and special education
Secondary and Higher Secondary Education Division	Administration of secondary and higher secondary education, private and boarding schools, training and supervision

Specialized institutions

There are five specialized institutions within MOES that are seen as the technical/professional arms of the Ministry of Education. These single-purpose institutions were created on the assumption that line and staff functions should be separated and that institutions having technical/professional responsibilities should be granted some degree of institutional autonomy. Each enjoys departmental status, and is headed by a Director-General/Executive Director. The roles and responsibilities of each of these institutions are summarized in *Table 3.4*.

Councils/autonomous institutions

There are a number of other councils/autonomous institutions working in the education sector but not necessarily reporting to MOES. Established by Acts of Parliament, these institutions have independent status. *Table 3.5* summarizes the roles and responsibilities of these institutions.

Teacher administration

The Ministry of Education and Sports employs some 130,650 teachers, combining all three levels of education (primary, lower secondary and secondary). Given the size of the teaching force, teacher administration has become a huge task. To relieve the ministry from the burden of teacher personnel administration (e.g. maintaining teacher records, administering teacher benefits such as pension, gratuity and other benefits), a separate office named *Sichhayak Kitabkhana* (Teacher Records Office) has been established.

A recent addition to the Ministry of Education is the National Teacher Service Commission (NTSC), a high level body established to handle matters related to recruitment, appointment, and promotion of teachers in public primary, lower secondary and secondary schools. The commission is authorized to determine the procedures and principles to be adopted in the establishment of teaching posts, advertise vacancies in teacher posts, examine the applicants, draw up the merit list and make recommendations for appointment.

Table 3.4 Roles and responsibilities of specialized institutions within MOES

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Roles and responsibilities</i>
CDC	Development of curriculum policy, curriculum planning and development; textbooks development and revision; development of teacher support materials; dissemination of curriculum materials to teachers and schools; monitoring of curriculum and textbooks implementation; administration of free textbooks provision for primary children; development of CRC copies for textbooks printing; approval of additional supplementary readers for adoption by schools; etc.
NCED	Formulation of teacher training plans and programmes; co-ordination of training institutions; development and management of in-service training courses; accreditation and recognition of training courses organized by different training institutions; development of training packages and materials; development and delivery of training courses for educational personnel; identification of professional needs of teachers; conduct of action research and evaluation studies; development of teacher management information system; support and supervision of PTTCs.
DEC	In-service training of primary teachers through distance mode; development of self-instructional materials for teacher training; broadcasting of useful non-formal education programmes to serve the educational needs of different communities; development and conduct of programmes so as to enhance access of higher and school level education to all and to expose them to the wider world; broadcasting of educational news and views to inform teachers, parents and students.
NFEC	Planning and programming for non-formal education and literacy programmes; alternative schooling programmes; women's education programmes; post-literacy and continuing education programmes; co-ordination and mobilization of GOs, NGOs, INGOs and other local bodies; development of NFE materials; implementation of programmes in partnership with local bodies and organizations; supervision and monitoring of NFE programmes; organization of literacy campaigns; etc.
SEDEC	Development and delivery of in-service training programmes for lower-secondary and secondary teachers; training of master trainers and trainers; development of training materials and teacher support materials; supervision, co-ordination and support to SEDUs; development and delivery of head teacher training courses.

OCE	Development of policies concerning SLC examinations; development and printing of test papers; administration of SLC examinations; publication and dissemination of SLC results; maintenance of examination records; certification; management of SLC related information; planning and implementing SLC reform activities; analysis of SLC results; and research studies on issues relating to examinations.
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Table 3.5 Roles and responsibilities of relevant councils and autonomous institutions

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Key tasks</i>
CTEVT	Development of policies concerning technical and vocational education; production of basic and middle level skilled human resources in different trades and vocations; granting affiliation to trade schools; co-ordination among the providers of skills training; testing of skills and certification; etc.
HSEB	Granting approval to open new higher secondary schools; developing and revising curricula and textbook materials for higher secondary grades; conducting examinations and awarding certificates; supervising and monitoring higher secondary schools; designing and implementing training courses for higher secondary teachers; developing and implementing plans and programmes for higher secondary education development; etc.
UGC	Advising the government on the establishment of new universities; formulating policies for allocating grants to universities/higher education institutions; allocating and disbursing grants obtained from the government and other sources; co-ordinating the various universities and higher education institutions; developing norms and standards for higher education.

Projects

There are currently three projects operating directly under the Ministry of Education and Sports: Secondary Education Development Project (SEDP); Population Education Project (PEP); and the Primary School Feeding Programme (PSFP). His Majesty's Government of Nepal has pursued a

policy of integrating independently operating projects into the mainstream of the ministry. Accordingly, BPEP II is placed within the government's basic and primary education sub-sector programme.

Educational administration at the regional level

The Regional Education Directorate (RED) constitutes the intermediate level of educational administration between the centre and the districts. There are five RED offices, one in each of the five development regions of the country. Each directorate is headed by a regional director, who is assisted two deputy directors. Key mandates of RED include: co-ordination of educational planning and programming; collection and analysis of educational statistics; approval of lower secondary and secondary schools; monitoring and supervision of higher secondary schools; administration of SLC examinations; and on-the-spot supervision and follow-up of formal and non-formal programmes, etc. RED also has departmental status, and reports directly to the secretary of MOES. Under the new arrangement, REDs are supposed to be operating under the direct line of command of DOE.

At the sub-regional level, there are nine Primary Teacher Training Centres (PTTCs) and 25 Secondary Education Development Units (SEDUs), reporting directly to NCED and SEDEC respectively. Their relationship with RED is not explicitly defined.

Educational administration at the district level

The district forms the basic territorial unit of administration in Nepal. Most line ministries have their extension offices at the district level for purpose of management and implementation of their programmes, including education. Accordingly, a District Education Office operates in each of the 75 districts. DEO offices have been traditionally charged with the responsibility of implementing central policies and programmes, and carrying out school administration in line with the instructions of the Ministry of Education. Recent

mandates of the DEO include preparation of district level education plans and programmes. Other roles of the DEO office include: school supervision; collection and compilation of school level statistics; distribution of grants to schools; conduct of district level terminal examinations at the end of primary and lower secondary level. Each DEO office is headed by a Class II level district education officer, who is assisted by section officers, supervisors and resource persons. The districts are divided into two categories on the basis of the number of schools. Districts with more than 300 schools are designated 'A' category districts. Those having less than 300 schools are designated 'B' category of districts. Districts falling into the 'A' category have a higher numbers of staff than the districts in the 'B' category.

Each district has a District Education Committee (DEC), comprising nine members and headed by the chairperson of the District Development Committee (DDC). The DEO is member-secretary. The DEC is charged with important functions relating mostly to the formulation of plans and programmes and the mobilization of resources for educational development.

Educational administration at the cluster level

Schools in each district are grouped into clusters. A resource centre (RC) is established in each cluster to provide professional support and supervision to the teachers, conduct recurrent/refresher training courses, collect and maintain school level statistics, and implement formal and non-formal programmes of education within the cluster area. A resource person is appointed to co-ordinate the RC activities. A resource centre management committee (RCMC) is formed to oversee and support cluster level activities.

Educational administration at the school level

At the school level, a school management committee (SMC) oversees the affairs of the school and has an additional responsibility for mobilizing

local resources. The education regulation authorizes SMCs to operate, supervise, control and manage the school, and empowers it to make periodic school inspections and temporary appointment of teachers.

The head teacher is responsible for the governance of the school. Head teachers are appointed, re-appointed or dismissed by DEOs. Head teachers' key responsibilities include: (a) maintaining co-ordination among the teachers, students and parents of the school; (b) preparing daily routines of the classes; (c) enrolling students; (d) making arrangements for conducting annual and other examinations; and (e) submitting reports to the DEO.

Structures and formal mandates in MOES

There is a consensus amongst MOES officials, donors and the general educational community that MOES should be performing as a 'technical' ministry. In policy terms, this designation is intended to ensure that the ministry restricts itself to core activities such as strategic leadership, pedagogy, curriculum, educational planning and policy. To this end, the policy is intended to ensure that staff are trained in the field of education. Nevertheless, some confusion exists as to what this designation actually implies. While this has ensured that the ministry is staffed by people with some understanding of the concepts and principles of education, data from the study tend to suggest that MOES is heavily occupied with administrative and routine activities. Indeed, there appeared to be a clear mismatch between the vision of MOES and its actual behaviour.

One implication of its designation as a technical ministry has been that the vast majority of MOES recruits are drawn from the Faculty of Education of Tribhuvan University, acknowledged by many in Nepal as being of relatively low academic quality. Second, it is increasingly accepted that educational development requires interdisciplinary skills and expertise

(e.g. education, social policy, economic analysis, management information, etc.). However, many of the functions of MOES are carried out by staff with limited understanding of these broader fields. Further, rather than enabling expertise in MOES to develop in ways that might facilitate interdisciplinary practices, the restriction to ‘education’ graduates encourages professional inbreeding which may restrict the capacity of MOES to achieve large-scale sector-wide reform.

There have been a few efforts to enhance the technical role of MOES. Under BPEP II, a technical support advisory group (TSAG) has been established with a view to providing technical back-stopping to MOES and DOE, and to help these two bodies focus on technical issues. However, TSAG has not been able to function in the way envisaged in the PIP. This has been due to a number of reasons: (a) faulty composition of members; (b) vaguely defined roles and responsibilities; (c) a tendency to emphasis administrative matters; and (d) an inability to distinguish between such administrative matters and the more important technical ones that demand attention.

In looking at the organizational structure of MOES and its central agencies, the first task was to see whether perceived roles and functions corresponded with formal mandates. The following observations were drawn from this mapping exercise of organizational structures, roles and functions:

- At an aggregate level, there was an encouragingly high degree of consistency between respondents’ interpretation of their roles and the actual roles mandated for them. Notwithstanding this match, a number of inconsistencies were noted. At the individual level, some respondents indicated a very low understanding of what it was they were employed to do, as well as the aims of their organization. In many cases, institutional roles and functions were either vaguely understood or not understood at all, suggesting that there was lack of consensus among staff about the roles and functions of their respective institutions.

- When the same issue was explored by institution, the level of concurrence varied markedly. Whilst some respondents seemed clear about the aims and purposes of their institution, others exhibited a very poor understanding. This was especially the case within DOE.
- In a number of cases, functions valued by respondents themselves as important and central to their work were actually going unattended. The tasks they did and the tasks they valued often failed to match.
- Line and staff functions appeared not to have been properly separated. Line agencies (e.g. DOE) were found to be doing staff functions, as were institutions such as CDC and NCED. Textbook distribution, which is a line / administrative function, is being undertaken by CDC, which is intended to focus on technical and professional matters.
- There were overlaps in the perceived roles and functions of MOES and DOE. Contrary to explicit MOES and government policy, DOE was widely perceived as a policy-making body. In a similar vein, there were several functions within MOES itself that were directly related to implementation. The role of DOE with respect to policy management, programme development, monitoring, and support and guidance to the districts was consistently under-emphasized.
- Similarly, there were clear overlaps between the work of NCED, SEDEC and DEC (e.g. planning and monitoring of training).
- There were also many examples in which similar functions appeared to have been separated from each other. Often, co-ordination and management were being undertaken by different institutions (e.g. girls' and women's education).
- There was fragmentation of important activities that may be better served by being brought together (e.g. universalization of primary education strategies, such as formal and non-formal education, were being attended to separately by DOE and NFEC respectively).
- There were a number of 'hollow' structures within MOES where functions appeared not to have been clearly defined or that seemed to have been poorly understood. The policy analysis section (MOES),

organization, training and development section (MOES), and the private and boarding school section (DOE) were clear examples.

- There were a number of ‘orphaned’ functions for which appropriate structures had not been established (e.g. district education planning and school improvement planning).
- There were many examples of often contradictory and unrelated tasks and functions that appeared to have been jumbled together for pragmatic reasons or for reasons of personal and self-interest. For instance, within the Planning and Monitoring Section of DOE, tasks as diverse as strategic planning, programme management and implementation have been grouped together with lower-order functions such as customs clearance and the issuing of visas for foreign nationals).
- There is no clear separation between programmatic, supportive and administrative/personnel/finance related functions in the structuring of DOE.
- DOE’s relationship with the central level technical institutions such as CDC, NCED, DEC, SEDEC, and NFEC is not clear. It is not clear whether these are technical wings of DOE or independently operating institutions with their own mandates and functions reporting to MOES.
- DOE operates largely like the ‘old project office’, an agency responsible for implementing different project components of BPEP II. It is still not clear whether DOE should be undertaking developmental/technical functions or administrative/supervisory functions, or both.

Taken together, there appears to be much incongruence between structures, functions and tasks, suggesting dysfunctionalities in the existing organizational structure of the ministry.

Even though MOES can be viewed as solely empowered to rectify many of these deficiencies, it is important to acknowledge that a number of other factors influence the possibilities for system-wide administrative reform, and that many of these lie beyond the scope of MOES. These include the

following: (a) government funding arrangements for the education sector; (b) civil service personnel management procedures and regulations; (c) civil service salaries and incentives; (d) staffing levels; (e) structures and processes of governance; and (f) government policies and progress towards decentralization.

Notwithstanding the recognition that these factors play an important role in influencing the culture and possibilities for administrative reform in MOES, respondents in the study felt that there was much that MOES could undertake if it was committed to significant change and reform. Discussion now turns to the preliminary findings from the questionnaires, interviews and focus groups.

Mandated tasks inadequately addressed

SMEs were asked to identify tasks that had been mandated for their institution but were not being undertaken. From their responses the following activities – outlined in *Table 3.6* – were charted.

Table 3.6 Tasks inadequately attended to by MOES institutions

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Tasks inadequately attended to</i>
MOES	Long-range planning of the education sector Analysis of the present educational policies and standards Human resource planning Organizational assessments Standards setting Providing monitoring and evaluation feedback to programme managers
DOE	Tasks relating to the administration of private and boarding schools Tasks relating to the recruitment and development of female teachers Tasks relating to school supervision Analysis of educational information Documentation and dissemination of research findings Tasks relating to higher secondary education
NCED	Updating teacher management information system (TMIS) Action research Teacher accreditation and recognition
CDC	Monitoring of curriculum and textbook implementation Studies and surveys on issues and problems related to the use of curriculum and textbooks
NFEC	Mass literacy campaigns Post literacy and continuing education programmes Mobilization and co-ordination of governmental organizations, NGOs, INGOs
DEC	Broadcast of materials to support classroom activities of teachers Conduct programmes to make higher and school level education accessible to all

Distribution of functions across different institutions

There are several institutions at the central level within MOES with responsibilities to undertake educational management and development functions. One obvious issue therefore was to consider the extent to which these functions were distributed appropriately. Almost half of SMEs involved in the study identified MOES functions that they felt to be misplaced or isolated from their parent institution(s). Their views are summarized in *Table 3.7*.

Table 3.7 Functions perceived by SMEs as being separated from their parent institutions

<i>Function</i>	<i>Present location</i>	<i>Relevant institution</i>
Personnel administration	MOE	DOE
Textbook distribution	CDC	DOE
EMIS	DOE	MOE
Administration of teacher training	NCED, SEDEC, DEC	DOE
Alternative schooling	NFEC	DOE
Community mobilization	BPES	WES
Work related to secondary education	SEDEC/SEDP	DOE
Training of head teachers and RPs	DOE	NCED
Administration of teacher quota	MOE	DOE
Planning and administration of SLC examinations	OCE	RED

Duplication of functions

In a few cases, respondents cited instances in which MOES functions were being attempted by several institutions simultaneously. These are summarized in *Table 3.8*.

Table 3.8 Functions located in more than one institution/section

<i>Function</i>	<i>Institutions with formal mandates</i>
Primary and secondary school administration	MOE, DOE, RED, DEO
Planning and administration of higher secondary schools	HSEB, DOE
EMIS	MOE, NCED, DOE, SEDEC, NFEC
TMIS	NCED, SEDEC, TRO, DEC
District planning	MOE, DOE, RED, DEO
Monitoring and evaluation	MOE, DOE, NCED
Research and development	MOE, DOE, TSAG, NCED
Lead RC development	R&D section, BPES
Monitoring and co-ordination of RCs	BPES, TSS
Teacher training	DOE, NCED, DEC, SEDEC
Co-ordination of teacher training institutions	TSS, NCED
Head teacher training	NCED, DOE, SEDEC
Visa arrangements for foreign expatriates	Various sections of MOE, DOE
Teacher records	MOE, DOE, TRO, NCED, SEDEC
Educational supervision	BPES, TSS
Staff transfer (non-gazetted)	RED, DOE, MOE
Teacher personnel administration	DOE, MOE, NTSC
Staff development	DOE, MOE, NCED
Policy analysis	MOE, NCED, DOE, CDC

Appropriateness of existing organizational structures

When asked to comment on the appropriateness of the existing organizational structures, respondents made a number of observations that

were summarized as follows: (a) organizational structures are inadequately defined; (b) lines of authority and responsibility are not clearly defined; (c) there is little congruence between organizational roles and operational practices; (d) organizational goals and roles are not understood in the same way by all SMEs; (e) relatively few key staff control resources and decisions; and (f) there is little understanding of what it means to work as a team.

The following extracts from the open-ended questionnaire data provided further insight into the perspectives of SMEs:

- There is plenty of confusion between the functions and roles what we should be doing and others [within the same organization] should be doing.
- Roles within the organization are not clearly defined. We attend to pressing matters and they are not necessarily those within the defined roles and functions.
- Responsibilities are unclear.
- Work distribution between individuals and sections/units is uneven.
- Assignments are often unclear.
- Channels of authority are ambiguous.
- Communication channels are unclear.
- I report to more than one supervisor.

Policy-making

There is an absence of an advisory body to advise MOES on overall policy matters. Policy decisions are often made without much consultation, debates, policy analysis and discussions. Policy changes are made rather frequently without adequately studying all implications. National consensus on several educational issues is lacking.

Respondents were asked to consider whether the current educational policies of MOES were adequate and effective. Many felt that policies were contradictory, confused and inappropriate; especially in areas such as finance, curriculum, textbook distribution, mother-tongue education, student assessment, teacher training, early childhood education and special education. Policies were claimed to be lacking in many critical areas such as the distribution of teacher guides and supplementary readers, recurrent training, teacher substitution, and the role of local bodies, NGOs, and civil society. Policies were also reported to be of poor quality (e.g. recruitment of teachers, uniform school calendar) and short-lived (e.g. formation of SMCs, free education, mandatory teacher training). Respondents also claimed that policies were used inconsistently (e.g. failure to adhere to the policy that schools must at least maintain a pass rate of 15 per cent in the SLC). Other policies were not being enforced (e.g. resistance of private schools to use government textbooks and the growing tendency of public schools to raise tuition fees).

In a number of cases, respondents cited the influence of party politics in policy development and analysis. Two issues were cited repeatedly: the distribution of the teacher quota without proper analysis of distribution of teachers, and the decision to convert untrained temporary teachers into a cadre of permanent teachers.

Many felt that the ministry was not strong enough to enforce its own policies. The absence of policy, weaknesses of certain policy areas and, in some cases, the non-adherence to policy, was felt to have undermined the role of MOES in directing the school system. When asked to comment about the adequacy of policy, the following responses were particularly frequent:

- Available documents do not act as a guide to making decisions or taking actions.
- We have yet to determine what policies need to be developed.
- There are many policies and I'm not sure which one I should stick to.

- In recent years policies have remained inconsistent, unstable and highly political. Our (MOES) image has been tarnished in the public due to such policies.
- We cannot predict what comes from above. Our ability to influence major policy must be strengthened.
- There is plenty of policy confusion and this has adverse effects on programme implementation.

Donor co-ordination and support

A separate issue to emerge was the extent to which MOES was able to meet the needs of donor agencies. In the past, Project Implementation Units (PIUs) directly managed and co-ordinated donor inputs, with little or no involvement from MOES. However, the 1999 restructuring of MOES led to the creation of a foreign aid co-ordination section headed by an under-secretary within the planning division, that itself is headed by a joint secretary. Amongst other things, this section deals with routine correspondence, maintains records, keeps track of requests from donor organizations and responds to donor queries. Many felt that there had been some improvement in donor co-ordination since the launching of BPEP II. The basket modality adopted by the government provides a common framework and approach for all involved stakeholders. Co-ordination occurs through: (a) regular meetings between MOES and the local donor group; (b) joint preparation of the Annual Strategic Implementation Plan (ASIP); (c) joint supervision missions; and (d) common reporting mechanisms.

Notwithstanding these encouraging developments, the demands of the donor organizations on MOES/DOE were viewed by many staff as being debilitating and overwhelming. It appears that some of the most efficient manpower is engaged most of the time in providing information to satisfy their own accounting and supervisory mechanisms. Respondents claimed frequently that important and routine matters were 'crowded out' as a consequence of the regular and complex demands of donor agencies.

Staffing and staff development

A fundamental problem confronting staff development initiatives in MOES is the basic confusion about the aims of education and training. Whilst one might expect institutions and individuals to engage in staff development opportunities in order to improve practice, there were few instances in which staff were motivated by anything other than their promotion prospects. More importantly, such views are actively promoted and encouraged by the prevailing training and promotion policies of MOES. For instance, an analysis of the participation in DEO training courses provided by NCED revealed that almost half of the participants were not serving as DEOs. At the same time, there were a number of serving DEOs (Class III officials designated as ‘acting’ DEOs) who are ineligible for such courses because of their lower rank. Externalities of this sort were widespread and accepted.

Staff profiles within the central units and agencies of MOES

Data related to the demographic characteristics of educational professionals serving in different capacities within MOES system were collected largely from secondary sources such as MOES records. These data have been displayed in *Table 3.9*.

Table 3.9 Demographic characteristics of MOE personnel

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>	
Gender	Male	868	95.0
	Female	46	5.0
Age	Mean age	40.31	
	Under age 40	506	55.4
	Ages 41-50	271	29.6
	Over age 51	137	15.0
Origin (1)	Mountain	68	7.4
	Hills	506	55.4
	Terai	256	28.0
	Valley	84	9.2
Origin (2)	Eastern	221	24.2
	Central	260	28.4
	Western	323	35.3
	Mid-western	57	6.2
	Far western	53	5.8
Years of service	1-10 years	536	61.3
	11-20 years	138	15.1
	20-30 years	193	22.1
	31+ years	8	0.9
	Mean years	11.3	
Academic qualification	Below Bachelor's	71	7.8
	Bachelor's	710	77.7
	Master's	130	14.2
	Ph.D.	3	0.3
Subject area	Nepalese	197	21.6
	English	150	16.4
	Science	35	3.8
	Mathematics	156	17.1
	Social science	376	41.1
	Passed division	First division	108
	Second	574	62.8
	Third division	232	25.4
Place of degree	In-country	874	95.6
	Abroad	40	4.4
Caste group	Brahmin	521	57.0
	Chhetri	181	19.8
	Newars	82	9.0
	Hilly groups	26	2.8

	Terai groups	93	10.2
	Dalits	8	0.9
	Others	3	0.3
Place of employment	Centre	173	18.9
	Region district	741	81.1

N = 914

A number of issues stand out from *Table 3.9*:

- As is the case across the entire civil service, females are seriously under-represented in professional positions within MOES.
- Brahmins form the largest majority, followed by Chettris. Certain caste groups are heavily underrepresented.
- Data on the origin of educational personnel show that most are from the hill districts. There are fewer people from the mountain districts and the valley. Likewise, the two regions in the west (mid-western region and far-western region) are under-represented.
- Almost 92 per cent of the total MOES personnel hold a Bachelor's degree or higher level academic qualifications. There are still some who have not completed a Bachelor's level education. A very small proportion of educated staff hold academic degrees from overseas.
- There is a heavy over-representation of people with backgrounds in the social studies. This has implications for the ministry's 'technical' capacity.
- In terms of deployment, over 80 per cent of the total MOES personnel for whom data are available are deployed at the regional and district level. This must be a focus for staff development capacity building.
- A large number of MOES personnel (55 per cent) are below 40 years of age. Another large group (30 per cent) are in the 4-50 years age range. As the official retirement age is 60, the majority of the existing educational personnel can be considered as being in the 'productive' age range. Further investment in their staff development is certainly

worth while. Nevertheless, as others have noted (e.g. AED, 1999), succession planning must also be considered.

Insights into the quality of MOES staff can also be gleaned from the performance in SLC examinations: only 12 per cent of officials reported having obtained a pass in the first division. This suggests that MOES is not the first destination for many academically gifted graduates. A similar picture emerges when looking at the university qualifications and grades of MOES staff.

Job descriptions and their relationship to job tasks

Job descriptions provide people with clear definitions of their duties and responsibilities. Job descriptions clarify lines of authority and communication, while at the same time indicating clearly the incumbent's position in the organizational structure, and to whom and for what they are accountable. In order to retain a usefulness, job descriptions must be updated and depict all agreed job functions. Job descriptions are relatively new to the Nepalese Civil Service and were first made mandatory following the recommendation of the Administrative Reforms Commission of 1992. Ordinarily, the Ministry of General Administration (MOGA) will not approve any new post unless it is accompanied by an approved job description.

The survey revealed that there were gaps between the personnel policy adopted by the Government and actual practice in institutions and departments. Less than half of the total respondents claimed to possess a written job description. Senior staff (54 per cent) were slightly more likely to have written job descriptions than their more junior colleagues (44 per cent). Approximately 62 per cent of Class II officers were working without written job descriptions.

Whilst it is difficult to infer much about staff expertise from the absence of job descriptions, the lack of such documentation explains much about the

tendency of MOES staff to work outside their specific remits, and to be unclear about their precise roles. Indeed, there was much uncertainty about occupational roles and responsibilities. DOE had the highest proportion of staff claiming to lack a high degree of clarity about their jobs. The CDC and NFEC were also characterized by high degrees of confusion about tasks and responsibilities.

The absence of job descriptions also explains much about the poor fit between training opportunities and occupational roles. If nothing else, the data make clear that MOES places little value on the formal practice of assigning explicit written tasks to particular post holders, or to evaluating staff on the explicit criteria laid down in job descriptions.

Qualitative data obtained from the interviews and focus group discussions added to this picture. More than anything else, the tasks performed by individual officers were, to a large extent, shaped by their immediate supervisors. It seemed that the norm when commencing a new post within MOES was for the staff member to receive a posting or transfer letter indicating the title of the position, and the service period of the post. It was rare for respondents to commence a new post with an updated and approved job description. The following comments were typical:

- I don't perform according to my job description.
- My job description does not reflect what I do on a day-to-day basis because it was written years ago.
- Job description is just a formality or a ritual. It is something never consulted: either by the provider or the receiver.

A content analysis of 22 available job descriptions was undertaken as part of the study. First, post-holders were asked to comment on their own job descriptions in terms of a number of specified criteria. The following observations were made:

- Most job descriptions were not clear to post holders.
- There was very little correspondence between what was stated in job descriptions and what incumbents did on a day-to-day basis.
- Most respondents did not know what knowledge, skills and abilities would be required to do the job they were about to undertake.
- Job descriptions did not state explicitly to whom the holders were to report.
- None of the job descriptions indicated a basis on which to judge the effectiveness of a staff member's performance.
- Most senior and middle level managers said that they had not received any training or orientation in preparing job descriptions.

Among the seven central level institutions, staff at OCE reported having too heavy a workload. MOES and DEC had the highest proportion of staff who claimed to have a light workload as compared to other central level institutions. In terms of the distribution of workloads across the different sections within the same institution, 68 per cent of respondents felt that there was an imbalance. Three main reasons were given: (a) an unequal division of work in the office (67 per cent); (b) unequal competency among staff (21 per cent); and (c) unfair treatment by senior officials (12 per cent). Such data only reinforce the need for training in the preparation and use of job descriptions.

While the methodology of the study set limits on attempts to gauge staff competence, over 50 per cent of the total respondents felt they themselves had inadequate knowledge, skills and experience for the demands of their present assignment. Whilst there were variations across institutions in the perceived degree of match between job requirements and staff qualifications (knowledge, skills and experience), the following generalizations were possible. In total, the majority of the section officers of NCED (87 per cent), NFEC (82 per cent), CDC (71 per cent), DOE (60 per cent), and MOES (58 per cent) considered themselves to be lacking the skills, qualifications and

experience necessary to perform satisfactorily. This is highly significant for any staff development strategy, and suggests that there will be a great willingness amongst staff to engage in further development opportunities and to utilize them in their *existing* jobs.

Other more specific observations included the following:

- Non-formal education appeared not to have been recognized within MOES as a specific technical field. At present, a B.Ed. degree is sufficient qualification for assignment in NFEC.
- Relatively few staff in CDC have training in areas such as curriculum development, curriculum evaluation and monitoring, textbook writing and editing, textbook publishing or student assessment.
- A higher proportion of OCE staff see themselves as possessing the necessary knowledge and skills as compared to their colleagues from other institutions. This may be because OCE operations are less technical and specialized in nature.
- On the whole, people in professional/technical roles with pedagogical responsibilities (such as teacher training, management training, research and evaluation, curriculum and evaluation, textbook writing, etc.) perceive themselves to be lacking the knowledge and skills to perform satisfactorily. Staff performing tasks relating to programme development, administration and implementation claimed to be more content.

Data from Class I and II respondents were similar to those gained from section officers.

Induction and staff development

Survey data suggested that no institution within MOES provided systematic or extensive job induction training to new staff, or to staff transferred from other units. While on-the-job training was provided in some

instances, this was usually brief, superficial and viewed as unhelpful by respondents. Unlike the Education Service, new entrants to the General Administration Service receive a rigorous three-month basic training course prior to their placement. Respondents felt that there was much merit in MOES producing and offering such a programme.

Staff development opportunities

The study also assessed the opportunities available to MOES personnel for academic upgrading. Whilst only 20 per cent of senior staff and section officers held a masters-level degree at the time of entry into MOES, some 49 per cent held such a qualification at the time of IA Study. Almost 60 per cent of the 110 section officer respondents were involved in academic courses, although nearly all of these (97 per cent) were self-financed. The bulk of these part-time students were based in Kathmandu, close to higher education institutions. Clearly, staff themselves felt that they had benefited, or were likely to benefit, from training and academic ‘upgrading’: itself an important prerequisite for engaging in staff development opportunities.

Notwithstanding this commitment to continuing professional development, it seemed that academic upgrading had not led to major improvements in organizational processes or competence. Much more was needed in terms of upgrading those with bachelor level qualifications; and improving the practical expertise of those already holding master’s degrees. Nevertheless, whilst formal qualifications were clearly important – and valued for promotion and progression – they appeared to be a poor indicator of personal or organizational capacity.

Another focus in the interviews was on understanding the ways in which people acquired job-related knowledge and skills. For section officers, the bulk of their learning was claimed to have emerged from their ‘on-the-job’ experiences rather than from formal education, training programmes,

workshops, seminars, short courses or study tours. However, factors such as peer support, guidance from supervisors, collaboration with international advisers and national consultants, or reference to work-related publications and manuals, were identified as having only a *minimal* effect on respondents' learning.

Indeed, the learning culture in MOES seemed to be one of rigid individualism: knowledge gained from courses, study tours and other educational opportunities was almost always internalized and hidden. There appeared to be no institutional process with which new insights, skills or learning could be made accessible to others.

Skills and training needs in MOES

This leads to a consideration of the areas in which skills were felt to be seriously inadequate. For SMEs, the desired skills and their connection to particular areas of MOES are outlined in *Table 3.10*.

Table 3.10 Skill areas in which professional staff claimed deficiencies

<i>Areas of skill deficiencies</i>	<i>Institutions affected</i>
Computer skills and programming	All central institutions
Administrative/managerial skills	All central institutions
Curriculum development, textbook writing, editing and publishing skills	CDC
Continuous assessment	CDC
Planning, programming and budgeting	All central institutions
Monitoring and evaluation skills	DOE, MOES, NCED, CDC, NFEC
Data analysis/statistical analysis	MOE, DOE, NCED
Expressive skills in English	All central institutions
Preparing distance based teacher training materials	DEC

Conceptual clarity about BPEP II	DOE, RED, DEO
Research management	DOE, NCED
Report writing	All central institutions
Post-literacy and continuing education	NFEC
Designing, implementing and evaluating teacher training and management training courses	NCED, DOE

The quality of staff development in the MOE

Respondents were asked to reflect on the quality of existing staff development opportunities and were given a number of statements with which to shape and order their opinions. The essence of their views is presented below:

- The professional expertise available within MOES is low.
- Staff development is unplanned.
- A transparent policy on staff development is lacking.
- There is an urgent need for MOES to come up with a short-term plan for staff development.
- Staff development efforts within MOES are not based on an assessment of needs.
- At present, the capacity of NCED as a national institution for HRD is underdeveloped, and much has to be achieved in terms of strengthening this institution.
- Entry into the Education Service occurs without systematic or agreed job induction. Job induction training should be started immediately for all new staff, as well as for those being transferred.
- A B.Ed. level academic requirement for entry into gazetted III posts in the Education Service is now too low and should be raised to M.Ed.
- Persons having no adequate academic preparation in major areas of education such as educational administration and supervision, pedagogy,

curriculum and evaluation are being promoted to Class II posts where it is assumed that they are able to give expert and specialist leadership. This assumption is poor, and MOES should now introduce a requirement that those seeking promotion to gazetted II level posts should have specialized training.

Whilst there were clearly very many training needs and requirements, the process for selecting personnel for training opportunities often lacked transparency and accountability. In most cases, staff development in MOES was driven by the needs of projects and programmes rather than the requirements of an overall staff development strategy.

Even though staff training opportunities were based to some degree on the perceived needs of staff and their jobs, 70 per cent of respondents felt that one's access to political power and influence was the most important determinant of access to training opportunities. Indeed, one of the main reasons cited for the high percentage of self-financed Master's studies (97 per cent) was the perceived difficulty, lack of transparency and favouritism that surrounded access to staff development.

Many staff felt that MOES needed to institute a fair and transparent system of staff selection before embarking on a large-scale staff development programme.

National infrastructure for staff development in education

Whilst Tribhuvan University and Kathmandu University (KU) have academic courses in the field of education leading to Bachelor's, Master's and Ph.D. degrees, NCED is the only national institution within MOES with the mandate to organize staff development activities for educational personnel. Since its establishment, NCED has served as a training institution for primary teachers, and provides in-service courses for PTTC trainers, DEOs, REDs, supervisors and RPs. Even though some provision exists for these groups,

there are very few training opportunities for people engaged in the following areas:

Continuous assessment	Non-formal education
Curriculum development	Physical planning
Decentralized planning	Planning and management of national examinations
Early childhood education	Policy analysis
Educational management	Post-literacy and continuing education
Educational media and resources	School development
Educational planning programming and budgeting	School mapping
EMIS	Teacher personnel administration
Girls' and women's education	Test and measurement
Micro-planning	Textbook publishing
Monitoring and evaluation	Textbook writing

Respondents stressed the need for networking and co-operation among training and research institutions in the country. Such co-operation could include: (a) exchange of information, expertise and training materials; (b) joint production of training courses and materials; (c) joint organization of training activities; (d) the exchange of teaching and research staff; (e) the division of labour among institutions through specialization, in particular training and research tasks; and (f) joint research activities.

Role of technical assistance (TA)

With the exception of NFEC, respondents from all of the central institutions reported having received technical assistance from international and national consultants in recent years. The major areas of technical assistance were: (a) teacher training (NCED); (b) project formulation and planning (MOE, DOE); (c) curriculum development, textbooks design and publishing and assessment (CDC); (d) examinations reform (OCE); and (e) primary education, physical planning and school construction and special education (DOE).

Three issues were explored with SMEs: (a) the areas of assistance received; (b) the role the SMEs had in the selection of the consultants; and (c) the benefits derived from the assistance programme. Whilst SMEs were involved in different ways and to varying degrees, it seemed significant that they themselves thought that they played a marginal role in the identification and selection of consultants and advisers. Just as interestingly, very few SMEs felt that technical assistance from donors and other international agencies had resulted in benefits at an individual or institutional level. Their views can be summarized as follows: (a) TA activities – as they are currently devised – are not geared towards meeting the long-term institutional development needs of MOES; (b) TA activities are usually identified by donor agencies rather than their MOES counterparts; and (c) there is a lack of structure within MOES to co-ordinate and manage TA. Confusion exists as regards the locus of authority concerning TA co-ordination and management (MOES versus DOE).

Following are some of the comments noted from the interviews:

“I don’t know why they [consultants] were hired. Most of them come to learn from us. I don’t remember picking up anything useful from them, although I’ve been seeing them around for some time.”

“Most consultants/advisers are in operational/implementing roles. There is no built-in system of knowledge transfer.”

“Consultants/advisers are often confused and don’t have specific assignments. Either there are no job descriptions or they are written too vaguely.”

“We don’t have any role in the selection of consultants or advisers, how many consultants are to be hired, when and for what purpose. All these things are discussed and agreed between the donors and senior officials.”

“Knowledge often does not get transferred due to the absence of strong counterparts.”

“The relationship between the consultants/advisers and the recipient institution is not clear. They [consultants/advisers] report to their respective donor institutions.”

Whilst this analysis is somewhat superficial, it was viewed as important by the study team that so many senior officials in MOES felt that they had been poorly served by national or international technical assistance inputs. Evidence suggests that available technical inputs have been grossly underutilized, if not lost. Notwithstanding these reflections, it is also important to note that respondents felt that they themselves had failed to utilize these technical inputs adequately.

Appraisal and evaluation

The existing Civil Service system for appraisal is based on three separate but interconnected processes. First, one’s immediate supervisor assesses employee performance on four dimensions: (a) quantity of jobs done; (b) cost of the jobs done; (c) time taken to perform the jobs; and (d) quality of the jobs done. At the second stage, a higher level officer, known as the reviewer, assigns his own values using the same format. Finally, a review committee considers the employees’ overall performance and provides a mark. Each level of the assessment process is allocated a particular weighting. The immediate supervisor is responsible for 62.5 per cent of the final grade, the rating of the secondary reviewer counts for 25 per cent and the final review committee grants 12.5 per cent.

There were few respondents willing to support this process. Officials with too little understanding of the work of subordinates had too important a role in performance evaluation. Further, few supervisors had the necessary

expertise, or formal training, to make performance appraisal a productive and useful activity. The vast majority criticized the existing system for being subjective, discriminatory and unduly influenced by existing power relations and imbalances. Appraisal was a summative exercise rather than a formative one from which both appraisee and appraiser might learn. The following comments provided insights into the perspective of MOES staff, especially section officers:

“There is no difference between a good employee and an exceptional employee.”

“You are basically living a life of servitude. You don’t question your boss or differ with him. You accept anything that comes from him.”

“Evaluators focus more on attitudes and behaviour rather than actual job performance.”

“There is no basis upon which to make decisions about the employee and the quality of job performance one delivers.”

“The current appraisal system really does not encourage people to improve.”

“Grades are influenced by individual and political relations.”

Promotion

Secondary data obtained from the ministry indicated that a large number of current MOES personnel (61 per cent) had not received any promotion during their careers. Whilst 38 per cent had been promoted once, less than 2 per cent had been promoted twice or more. All SMEs in the sample were recruited in the lower level (Class III) and proceeded to the higher posts (Class II and I) through promotions. The average time taken to obtain promotion was 13.3 years. Approximately 19 per cent of the total SMEs were promoted from Class III to Class II within five to 10 years of service, while 42 per cent of them obtained their promotion between 11 and 15 years

of service. About 40 per cent of the respondents had waited 16 years or more to get this promotion.

Such data indicate that the prospects of an individual moving from one level to the next higher level are rare and extremely slow, suggesting that promotion in MOES is based on seniority and personal relationships as much as expertise and competence.

The existing promotion system favours male staff. Men obtain promotion much earlier (12.6 years) than their female counterparts (17.2 years). The criteria used for promotion – work experience in remote districts, participation in training courses, additional academic qualifications and performance appraisal by supervisors – do not favour women who gain fewer opportunities to collect such experiences and qualifications. There appears to be no provision or arrangement to counter this inequality.

Job tenure, rotation and transfer

The study sought to examine the incidence of staff transfer in MOES. For this, secondary data were obtained from MOES that indicated the average number of transfers per employee.

For all staff, the average was 6.15 transfers up to and including the level of Class I officer. Approximately 48 per cent of MOES officials had been transferred up to five times and approximately 44 per cent had been transferred between six and 10 times. Nearly 8 per cent of all staff were highly mobile with at least 11 transfers in their career. Two officers had experienced more than 20 transfers! Many comments were made about the existing transfer system during the interviews and focus group discussions:

“We are always in a state of fear. We don’t know what will happen, or when. You may be removed from your present job at any moment and be placed in a place where you never wanted to be.”

“This is the reality of your life. I have learnt to go with how things are played in the Civil Service. You must empty the place for someone who has connections higher up. We know that does not last long. The moment I have been able to build a connection, I am back.”

“I really don’t know how long I’ll be staying in this job. How can I say what I need to learn when I know I must go elsewhere in no time. [MOES] trains people for a particular job, but by the time we are ready to get back and use our skill and knowledge, we must leave the job. There is no such thing as ‘my job’. Within a matter of one year, we’ll have had several jobs. I can only say I’m an employee of the Government, within the Ministry of Education.”

The mobility of staff – the total number of incoming and outgoing staff in a given year compared to the total number of approved posts for that particular institution – within the central institutions of MOES was also ascertained. In DOE and NFEC – new institutions created in 1999/2000 – the annual staff mobility rates were 25 and 20 per cent respectively. NCED had the highest staff mobility rate (58 per cent), followed by OCE and DEC (50 per cent each). MOES and CDC recorded annual mobility rates of 42 per cent and 44 per cent respectively. These rates are outlined in *Table 3.11*.

Table 3.11 Staff mobility rates within central MOES institutions

<i>Institution</i>	<i>Total approved posts</i>	<i>Average staff mobility rate (%)</i>
MOE	121	42
DOE	81	25
CDC	81	44
NCED	19	58
DEC	36	50
NFEC	25	20
OCE	50	50

Most respondents were frustrated and demoralized by the uncertainty, lack of transparency and self-interest that governed staff transfer. Based on the responses of staff, the following principles emerged as essential to guide a staff transfer and rotation policy within MOES: (a) the concerned office should be consulted before staff are transferred or posted; (b) staff posting should be based on the training and experience profile of staff; (c) staff transfer should not be more frequent than once every two years; (d) staff transfer and posting must be based on transparent criteria; and (e) staff transfer and posting should be linked to the interests and wishes of staff members, and be linked to some form of incentive. Motivation is critical.

The data suggested that decisions regarding staff posting and transfer were taken at the highest level and with a high degree of secrecy. Enormous changes were associated with the commencement of new governments; perhaps the clearest indicator that staff transfer in MOES, rather than being based on institutional need or staff development, is party-political. As such, it goes largely without saying that frequent transfer induces discontinuity, poor utilization of skills and knowledge, and reduced motivation. It sends a clear signal to staff about what is valued within the organization and how best to operate within it. Respondents were damning about MOES practice in this regard:

“The transfer of institutional heads and other key staff results in a complete halt to the whole programme. The institution can become directionless if the successors are not strong enough to lead and manage.”

“The instability at the management level disrupts everything. There is no historical perspective and each new person interprets things differently.”

“The children and parents are the ultimate losers in this drama.”

Reward and incentives structures

In an attempt to examine attitudes towards rewards in MOES, respondents were given a list of potential incentives and asked to state the extent to which these incentives were available to MOES personnel, and valued by them. Incentives viewed as important included: job security; opportunities for career advancement; possibilities for academic upgrading; and access to study tours. Factors such as salary or the financial benefits structure within MOES were viewed as providing very little incentive.

Most tellingly, the majority of SME respondents claimed that their work itself was little motivation for them. It seemed that staff were motivated more to retain their jobs and to gain higher status through various associated perks and benefits (e.g. allowances, study tours, etc.), rather than from improving the quality and usefulness of their work. Such characteristics pose major dilemmas for leaders attempting to inspire and motivate their staff, as well as for measures aimed at improving staff capacity through investments in HRD activities. The following comments give some insight into respondents' views about rewards and incentives in MOES:

“In many cases, reward is not related to performance. We must seek the favour of our bosses. If you are in the favourite book of your boss, you may easily get a handsome reward even without a good performance record.”

“Who would be inspired to do hard work when it does not pay you anything.”

“One invites risks by being active and accountable in the Civil Service. There is maximum risk in shouldering accountability. It is unclear that an ‘accountable’ person will ever be rewarded.”

Individual educational managers had little or no discretion in rewarding their subordinates, and their ability to enhance the most direct incentive –

salary – was very limited indeed. Non-monetary, and low-cost incentives do exist to some extent, but their use has not been very prudent. For instance, the government has instituted an annual ‘Education Day Award’ to reward the best performing teachers and educational administrators. However, the incentive value of the award has eroded in recent years, as recipients are often selected on political and personal grounds rather than on the basis of performance.

Information, communication and decision-making

The majority of SMEs and section officers stated that meetings in their section or unit were arranged on an irregular and ad hoc basis. While the level of interest in attending staff meetings was high among section officers, a number of factors meant that this enthusiasm was often lost. The agenda for meetings originated mostly from institutional heads. At least half of those SMEs and section officers who responded to the survey suggested that the outcomes of staff meetings were ‘mostly unproductive’. Section officers were most critical, suggesting that they had little role in identifying the agenda, and thus did not see much value in participating in the process. A major problem arising from the tendency of MOES supervisors to hold meetings on the basis of need was that the agenda and subsequent discussion was predetermined, lacking in spontaneity and controlled: a weak basis on which to generate mutual respect and collegiality. In any case, the hierarchical structure of MOES, and the importance attached to rank and seniority, meant that there was little or no professional debate between staff.

The data collection identified five different modes of communication across different parts of MOES. These were: (a) periodic meetings; (b) formal circulars; (c) informal discussion; (d) various external sources (e.g. national media); and (e) newsletters.

Of the five modes, respondents claimed that the most widely used media for communication between staff was through formal circulars detailing centrally devised strategies and decisions, and informal networks based on personal friendships and allegiances. A number of senior MOES staff claimed to have learnt about important decisions through external sources such as radio, television or newspapers. Internal newsletters appeared to be a rare feature of the communication system, with no institution publishing one on a regular basis. Indeed, very little information is communicated to the public in any systematic way.

Even though DOE has recently initiated a process of informing schools and the general public about its activities and programmes through a national daily newspaper, there was no coherent communication strategy within MOES. It seemed that very little efforts have been made to develop an effective and efficient communication system.

In relation to the communication of important decisions from institution to institution, the situation was similar. Circulars and informal contacts were used most, with inter-office meetings the next most-cited mode of communication. Nevertheless, there appeared to be few formal processes for institutions to work together to devise joint strategies and actions. In this regard, it seemed significant that the majority of respondents considered it 'difficult' to obtain information about other institutions and sections. Interpersonal relations, often based on political alliances and vested interests, seemed to be the most effective basis on which to obtain and utilize information in MOES.

Finally, SMEs were asked to describe the kinds of problems and difficulties they had faced while communicating with various institutions at different levels. The following are some of the key responses: (a) length of time taken to reach decisions (MOES level); (b) unclear lines of authority between MOES and DOE level; (c) non-reporting of requested data/

information (central level); (d) poor co-ordination of programmes and activities across institutions (mainly central level); and (e) institutional problems not addressed by leaders (MOES level).

Even though much of the above discussion relates to social practices and norms, it was clear that MOES lacked sufficient technology with which to run and organize a modern bureaucracy. Whilst computers were supplied, there was a lack of trained programmers with which to service the system. Even though photocopy machines were readily available, operational budgets were limited. In this regard MOES in particular appeared to be heavily constrained. Telephone connections were universal, although access to electronic mail was severely limited. Fax facilities were available in only three institutions.

Questionnaire data suggested that three factors exerted most influence on the decision-making process. These were: (a) political considerations; (b) recommendations from the education commission; and (c) stakeholders' interests.

The study suggests that the findings of other research, and the empirical data collected by MOES itself, are minor factors in determining the type and nature of educational decision-making. Examples abound: for instance, MOES's decision to give permanent tenure to thousands of teachers without an explicit selection process – an enormous step for an institution of this nature – is evidence of the role of political considerations and stakeholder interests in decision-making.¹

When questioned, respondents felt that there were a number of powerful actors, both within MOES and outside, who regularly exerted influence on the decision-making process. Political parties, teachers' unions, donors and key individuals – actors outside the system – were viewed as being more

1. This decision was subsequently challenged in the courts and deemed illegal.

powerful in relation to MOES decision-making than were senior MOES authorities.

Within the units of MOES the apparent disconnection between accountability and decision-making power seemed just as strong. A sizeable number of senior managers claimed to have never been consulted and advised about matters of importance related to their own staff (e.g. transfer, promotion, allocation of international training opportunities etc.). More generally, there was much evidence to suggest that substantial numbers of senior MOES staff were helpless to exert the formal powers allocated to them. Local allegiances, factional and political influences, and a general organizational climate characterized by secrecy and informality suggested that the formal structure, roles, obligations and powers made explicit within MOES were of little practical value.

Respondents were quite clear about the areas in which they felt more decision-making power needed to be vested in them. They wished to have more power in areas such as exercising discretion; acting on the basis of facts and evidence; delegating authority; and allocating budgets on the basis of the approved annual plan. In all of these areas, decision-making had been weakened by the informal modes of practice that prevailed across MOES, and the data reinforced the view of MOES as a hierarchical institution lacking the capacity to fully involve its staff in shaping and managing its processes and responsibilities. The comments of respondents were revealing:

“What is to be decided is already decided at upper level and we are asked to sign.”

“Do not even know what is decided because some one else prepares the minutes.”

“We offer suggestions but they go ignored.”

“Staff involvement in decisions is just for show. They are not involved at all.”

“Decisions are made open only at the last hour (prior to implementation of activities).”

“The chief’s decision is the last decision.”

“We don’t have much to contribute, because we are not asked to do anything.”

“The decision-making environment is not participatory and transparent.”

The centralization of decision-making appeared to be both a cause and well as a consequence of limited capacity in MOES. Whilst senior staff reserved the right to make decisions without consultation, prevailing norms in the bureaucracy of MOES only encouraged such behaviour. There was a reluctance to use formal authority and to act without gaining the approval of one’s superior, irrespective of the formal necessity to do so. The prevalence of committees to discuss and consider issues related to low-level matters, even though decisions would not necessarily emerge from such activities, meant that decisions would often take a very long time. Staff complained that they would be disconcerted by such processes, and what they implied about the allocation of power in the ministry.

Planning

Institutional arrangements for planning and programming

At the ministry level, the Planning Division within MOES is responsible for all matters concerned with overall planning of programmes and providing guidance for the development of sub-sector plans and programmes. During the preparation of annual plans and programmes, each institution undertakes in-house planning exercises so as to provide specific input contributions to the planning division. These specific contributions are then compiled into the sector-wide comprehensive annual work plan and budget, which are then

submitted to the National Planning Commission (NPC) and Ministry of Finance (MOF) for detailed discussion and final approval. Thus, basic planning and programming functions are carried out in several places.

Apart from the planning division of MOES, every educational institution – from those at the centre down to the district level – has a section, unit or focal person with planning and programming responsibilities. However, in most cases this work is managed without specialized training in educational planning.

Involvement in planning

Another issue explored through the questionnaires and interviews was the extent to which senior MOES staff were engaged in sector-level planning. Even though the majority of respondents claimed to have been involved in such exercises, the overwhelming number described this involvement as being restricted to responding to requests for information and data, attending planning workshops, and providing suggestions and comments on draft reports. Very few appeared to play a central role in committee membership, co-ordinating the work of consultants, or in the writing of major plans and reports. This was probably a consequence of low capacity, but also a contributor to it.

During the focus group discussions, questioning attempted to ascertain the extent to which the findings and recommendations of various planning exercises had been internalized by respondents. This was considered important because a common criticism of many externally driven planning exercises and studies is that their outcomes are often inaccessible to the stakeholders who need them either for policy formulation or programme planning and implementation. It was clear from the interviews and focus group discussions that senior educational managers involved in recent planning exercises had a low awareness of the aims and procedures of this work.

There was also interest in ascertaining whether or not long-term plans existed to guide institution-wide programmes and activities. Except for CDC, DEC and OCE, long-term plans were found to exist for all other central institutions. It seemed surprising that some MOES Class I officials did not know whether such plans existed within MOES.

SMEs were asked whether their institutions had sufficient staffing and funding for undertaking planning and programming functions. Unsurprisingly, perhaps, it seemed that such activities suffered more from a lack of trained and qualified staff than from a shortage of funds. In the words of one MOES official, the lack of professional staff trained in the techniques of educational planning had reduced the Planning and Budgeting Section to the status of a 'paper processing office'.

While respondents identified different kinds of data requirements, there was greater emphasis on data relating to the distribution and use of teacher quota, student achievement, school performance, teacher performance, schools, teachers, personnel, literacy and finance. Nevertheless, certain data appeared not to have been collected. For instance, there were very little data on teacher performance, student learning, school supervision, private schools and the availability and use of instructional materials, textbooks and particular curricula. Perhaps more surprisingly, many MOES officials expressed indifference or doubt about the credibility and accuracy of much of the available data. Information management systems in the districts appeared to be particularly poorly organized and managed; so much so that much of the information required was rarely readily available and usually of low quality. Further complicating the planning process, it seemed common for districts to send their reports and data to the centre well after explicit deadlines.

District education offices did not have baseline data on the school system, nor any system for maintaining longitudinal data with which to facilitate trends analysis. It seemed apparent that they were not well equipped to maintain and utilize EMIS data.

A number of factors were found to be hampering planning exercises in the Ministry. These included the following: (a) lack of accurate and reliable information (82 per cent); (b) lack of trained personnel (81 per cent); (c) failures of plans to capture the realities and needs of the operation level (77 per cent); (d) inadequate co-ordination among related institutions (77 per cent); (e) gaps between estimated resource needs to carry out planned activities and actual allocations (71 per cent); and (f) delayed release of funds (69 per cent).

Other aspects of the planning process considered during the questionnaire and interview phases of the data collection included the nature of annual work plans and budgeting and target setting. In most cases, SMEs were fully involved in the preparation of the annual plan, which is developed internally. There was one exception in which DOE utilized external consultants to prepare ASIP. Whilst the heads of central institutions and their staff participated in activities involving the preparation of the annual work plan and budget, a multitude of different approaches were described.

In relation to annual targets, no commonly accepted criteria or procedure appeared to exist, and the questionnaire data provided insights into the superficial nature of much of the planning process:

“There is little technical know-how required for target setting.”

“Target setting is basically adding 10 per cent extra from what used to be in the past year.”

“We normally show our targets and budget figures on the high side to avoid any serious loss due to possible slashing by the NPC and MOF.”

“Our efforts in MOES with respect of preparing the annual work plan and budget are meaningless because the actual allocation of funds is done at the NPC and MOF.”

The role of districts in annual planning and programming was also examined. The study made an attempt to find out what role(s) the districts were given in preparing annual plans and programmes. Evidently, there were few established procedures for incorporating the needs and demands of districts into the planning process. As a consequence of central target-setting, districts felt little ownership towards reaching such goals. The following comments were typical of those made by respondents at all levels:

“There is no systematic process of assessing district needs and demands.”

“Districts have a little or no role at all in annual programming and budgeting. We must do all the work for them.”

“There is limited consultation with the district officials in the annual work plan and budget preparation.”

“If you ask the districts to prepare some kind of plans for the next year, they will come up with long shopping lists. These shopping lists cannot be used as a basis for making budget allocations.”

“Due to the age old practice of a heavy hand from the centre in educational planning and programming, districts do not think for themselves. It is customary to expect what is going to come from above this year or the next year.”

Whatever the current practices may have been, respondents seem to agree that MOES must soon establish a participatory process of evolving plans and programmes at the local level. The following comment captured much about the need for decentralized planning and programming:

“Districts should be encouraged to develop long- and short-term planning. District plans developed through a participatory process should provide the framework for systematic action and chart the district’s future. The targets, priorities and allocations should not be handed down to the

districts. The district must identify the goals it wants to achieve, the action steps and time lines necessary to achieve these goals, and the evidence that the goals have been achieved.”

Dissemination of plans and programmes

Two approaches are commonly used in disseminating centrally formulated plans and programmes to the district level: workshops at the centre to inform district staff; and distribution of official circulars outlining approved programmes and budgets. Many complained about the inadequacy of the first strategy: workshops were ‘too infrequent’, ‘overcrowded’ and ‘confused’. In the words of one DEO:

“These workshops are only symbolic with little significance or meaning. They have never been effective forums to discuss implementation issues. We only have to hear what is being cooked up for us.”

The second strategy, direct forwarding of predetermined plans, was not highly regarded either, and there was a clearly expressed need for local capacity to develop and implement plans.

Monitoring and evaluation

An organizational structure has been established for monitoring and evaluation (ME) under which various committees have been created from the central to the local level.

At the central level, the National Development Action Committee (NDAC) operates under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister, meeting every four months to review the overall progress of implementation of development projects under different ministries. In order to facilitate the work of the NDAC, a Central Monitoring and Evaluation Division (CMED) was

set up in 1992 within the NPC secretariat. Each ministry has a Ministerial Development Action Committee (MDAC), which meets every two months to consider problems arising from projects, and to review the progress of implementation.

An ME division, section or unit exists in each ministry. There is a monitoring and evaluation section within the planning division of the Ministry of Education, which serves as a focal point for monitoring activities across the education service. The ME section in the ministry collects and compiles reports from each concerned institution and district, summarizes them for submission to the MDAC meeting and, finally, to the NDAC meeting.

Activities monitored and methods used in monitoring

In general, the relevant staff members in each institution monitor their own programmes and activities, although in some cases this work is delegated to RED or DEO. SMEs were asked to discuss the nature and effectiveness of the indicators used to guide their programmes. Four different approaches were noted: periodic reporting; on-site visits by officials; regular meetings; and a range of other ad hoc processes.

According to SMEs and their section officer colleagues, monitoring was done mostly through on-site visits. Periodic reporting and regular meetings were less common. Notwithstanding this range of processes, or the apparent preference for on-site visits, there was no agreed or standard policy or approach to monitoring within MOES institutions. A large majority of respondents described monitoring as taking place ‘from time to time’ where there was an absence of fixed schedules and activities. The following comments made by the respondents during the interview process point to the low priority attached to monitoring activities:

“We are so busy doing our own regular work that we hardly have any time left for monitoring or supervision.”

“The need for monitoring arises when we come to learn from the newspapers or from other sources that some disaster has occurred in the districts.”

“Monitoring has been an activity to be undertaken during leisurely time.”

The vast majority of staff – both senior officers and section heads – viewed existing approaches to monitoring as being wholly inadequate, even though they themselves seemed unconcerned to improve the monitoring processes within their own units and sections. A number of conclusions emerged: (a) there was a stress on the quantitative dimension of monitoring, rather than on qualitative indicators; (b) monitoring reports were greatly delayed, thus limiting their value; (c) there was little confidence within MOES that monitoring activities were of value to programmes; (d) programme monitoring was a low priority across MOES; and (e) monitoring activities were largely disconnected from reform or improvement activities.

Evaluation

Most institutions appeared to have in-house institutional arrangements for carrying out evaluations and these were combined with existing monitoring or planning activities. No institution had a separate unit responsible solely for evaluation. Nevertheless, there appeared to be a growing recognition of the value of programme monitoring and evaluation. DOE and NCED for instance, reported numerous evaluation studies being undertaken in the current fiscal year.

Since 1990, several important documents concerned with basic education and schooling had been produced. These included research reports, reports of the Education Commission, the BPEP I Master Plan Report, the BPEP II Master Plan Report, the Secondary Education Perspective Plan, the Higher Secondary Education Perspective Plan and the Programme Implementation Plan. As a major shareholder, MOES has been involved in all of these exercises,

although it seemed significant that several SMEs were not familiar with them. As many as 18 SMEs (out of 43) reported that their institutions did not hold copies of these documents. Further, only 50 per cent of section officers claimed to have seen such reports.

Respondents were critical of the tendency to engage in summative rather than formative evaluation, suggesting that evaluation activities would only become useful when staff were engaged in critiquing the findings and relating these to practice. Finally, respondents indicated that the multitude of research and evaluation studies conducted in Nepal within the education sector were having very little impact on improving education policy and programmes.

The lack of training in monitoring and evaluation, and the limited technical experiences in planning, organizing and carrying out evaluations, were all impediments to learning from such studies and processes. The following comments give some indication of the prevailing culture of monitoring and evaluation in MOES:

“Senior management accords very low priority to programme evaluation.”

“Monitoring and Evaluation Sections/Units have been kept as a showpiece. These Sections/Units are given neither authority to work in terms of developing work plans nor adequate resources.”

“There is not sufficient capacity to prepare good terms of reference for the evaluation studies that are being planned. We must rely on outside consultants to prepare TORs, and sometimes these externally prepared TORs do not meet our needs.”

“Evaluation has, for the most part, been an external activity. We have little or no role in the design, conduct and implementation of evaluation studies.”

“The evaluations that we’ve had have not been of much use in shaping our actions to improve the programme. Findings of research and/or evaluation studies do not inform policy and management action.”

Finally, the SMEs made a number of helpful suggestions for improving evaluation processes and outcomes. These suggestions were collated as a set of statements: (a) there should be a provision to make evaluation a regular activity for any programme; (b) guidelines for programme evaluation should be published and widely distributed; (c) staff responsible for programme evaluation should be appropriately trained; (d) relevant local-level staff must be involved in the evaluation of programmes being implemented at the district level; (e) greater importance must be assigned to programme monitoring, rather than the current reliance on programme evaluation; (f) programme evaluation needs to be open and participatory; (g) increased communication and interaction is needed between REDs, DEOs, DOE and MOE, and institutional heads need to develop a common approach to programme evaluation; and (h) the goal of programme evaluation should always be to provide productive feedback, rather than damaging criticism.

It seems that both monitoring and evaluation have been highly centralized within MOES and undertaken primarily to satisfy the information requirements of central level decision-makers. Beneficiaries and stakeholders have little or no opportunity to influence monitoring and evaluation procedures or processes. Staff capacity to undertake and manage monitoring and evaluation functions appears extremely limited. There are no in-built mechanisms for reviewing and using the findings from monitoring and evaluation activities. There are no systematic methods for data collection, processing and reporting. Evaluation findings tended not to shape or influence educational policy, strategy, programme or resource allocation decisions.

Implementation issues

Educational policies and programmes in Nepal are formulated at the centre and handed down to the regional, district and sub-district level authorities for implementation. The National Education System Plan (NESP) of 1971, which was the first organized government intervention to bring about reforms in public education, had initially introduced the practice of centralized formulation and decentralized implementation of policies and programmes. This practice continues to exist even after the political changes in 1990, despite government efforts to put in place several administrative and legal mechanisms for decentralized planning and management. A few studies have shown that much of the problem of school reform in Nepal lies in implementation rather than in planning. The Education Sector Study completed recently by the World Bank (2000) has clearly demonstrated that educational policies and programmes in Nepal are poorly implemented; creating serious gaps between plans and actual implementation.

With this context in mind, an attempt was made to examine the issues relating to policy and/or programme implementation in the education sector. Data on implementation issues were collected by questionnaire from a total of 268 MOES officials working at different levels of educational administration.

Overall effectiveness of implementation

The data from the study confirm earlier findings concerning the implementation of educational policies and programmes. When asked to assess the overall effectiveness of policy and programme implementation, a large majority of the respondents were negative, suggesting that implementation has been poor or very poor. *Table 3.12* outlines their responses.

Table 3.12 Views of MOES concerning the effectiveness of programme implementation

<i>Judgement</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>
Very effective	4	1.5
Effective	40	14.9
Poor	188	70.1
Very poor	36	13.4
Total	268	100.0

Gap between policy/planning and implementation

An attempt was made to measure the gap between policy/planning and implementation. Here, respondents were asked to assess the frequency with which plans and policies from the centre were actually implemented. Data give a very dismal picture. While a small proportion of respondents (12 per cent) responded in the positive, a large majority of them suggested that there were gaps between plans/programmes and their implementation. The majority of respondents felt that it is very seldom (29 per cent) or rarely (53 per cent) that the plans and policies are implemented as planned. Some even suggested that plans and programmes were never implemented as planned (6 per cent).

Central support to districts

Effective implementation of any educational policy or programme requires central support. This is more so since all educational policies and programmes originate in the centre and all the resources and authority are exercised from the centre. Central authorities can support the implementation process at least in nine different ways (see *Table 3.13*). On almost every count however, the amount of support made available to the districts was viewed as being inadequate. The data tend to confirm anecdotal evidence from district staff that effective implementation of programmes is a low priority in MOES.

Table 3.13 Quality of central support to districts

<i>Possible support measures</i>	<i>Almost always</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Seldom</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Total</i>
By being available to district officials for advice and consultation		1.5	56.7	41.8	100.0
By making budgetary resources available in time	3.0	45.9	49.6	1.5	100.0
By making required materials available in time	0.4	31.0	68.7		100.0
By providing implementation guidelines and norms	7.5	29.9	56.7	6.0	100.0
By taking personal interest in the progress of implementation	4.6	23.6	56.4	15.4	100.0
By making on-site visits to the districts	1.5	12.5	54.3	31.7	100.0
By giving moral support to the implementing officials	6.0	17.9	55.2	20.9	100.0
By recognizing the good work done	1.5	14.9	47.8	35.8	100.0
By helping cope with political interference	3.0	13.4	35.8	47.8	100.0

Reasons for poor implementation

A number of factors appeared to be responsible for the poor implementation of educational policies and programmes. These include: uncertain political conditions; political interference; frequent changes of staff; insufficient monitoring and evaluation; mismatches between local priorities and centrally prescribed programmes/policies; inadequate incentives for field level personnel; failures to supply required materials to the districts; lack of local ownership; and complicated administrative and accounting procedures. This issue is summarized in *Table 3.14*.

Table 3.14 Reasons for poor implementation

<i>Reason</i>	<i>Very large extent</i>	<i>Great extent</i>	<i>Some extent</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Total</i>
Lack of authority and power with implementing authorities	11.2	34.6	51.1	3.0	100.0
Poor communication between the centre and implementing agencies	18.0	36.0	43.1	3.0	100.0
Poor understanding of the policy/programme by the field level staff	10.9	42.9	41.7	4.5	100.0
Uncertain political conditions	33.3	51.5	15.2		100.0
Frequent change of staff	37.0	41.2	21.8		100.0
Poor staff motivation	25.7	39.2	33.6	1.5	100.0
Inadequate staff/personnel	8.3	24.5	46.6	20.6	100.0
Inadequate professional/technical capacity of staff	12.7	36.3	51.0		100.0
Untimely release of budget	18.1	47.2	31.2	3.0	100.0
Failure to deliver required materials	27.5	49.2	21.8	1.5	100.0
Poor/inadequate dissemination of norms, guidelines, and procedure	13.7	37.0	46.2	3.1	100.0
Lack of clear job descriptions	15.4	31.3	50.2	3.1	100.0
Too much political interference	50.4	34.4	15.3		100.0
Too much central interference	15.6	35.5	47.3	1.5	100.0
Poorly conceived policies	13.6	44.2	40.8	1.5	100.0
Flawed designing of programmes	15.2	50.8	34.1		100.0
Lack of local ownership	27.9	32.9	34.1	5.0	100.0
Complicated and cumbersome administrative and accounting procedure	24.2	39.0	33.7	3.0	100.0

Lack of monitoring and evaluation	34.8	42.4	21.2	1.5	100.0
Mismatch between local priorities and centrally prescribed programmes	23.9	48.5	27.7		100.0
Inadequate incentive for field level personnel	33.7	30.3	34.5	1.5	100.0

Conclusion

The data presented here make clear that there are a number of technical deficiencies within MOES as well as substantial cultural barriers to institutional improvement. Of course, there are things worth celebrating too. There is evidence that staff in MOES are better trained than previously. Technology has improved; nevertheless, there appear to be fundamental impediments to capacity building and institutional development within MOES and a great many of these emanate from the ‘centre’.

First, structures, mandates and responsibilities are far from clear. There are mismatches between organizational charts and activities actually performed. There is fragmentation of important activities that may be better served by being brought together. Sometimes contradictory and unrelated tasks and functions have been combined together. Uneven distribution of tasks and responsibilities, confusion about one’s roles and functions, slow or absent co-ordination, weak linkages between and/or among the sections even within the same institution, conflicts between sections over control of programmes and resources, blurred lines of authority and responsibility, examples of hollow structures and orphaned functions have also been observed.

Second, staffing practices are poor. Induction is weak. Staff appraisal and transfer are described repeatedly as secretive and partial. Staff training and development appears to be valued for assisting the promotion prospects of favoured staff as much as for enhancing operational effectiveness.

Third, communication and information processes reflect and reinforce the steep organizational hierarchy within MOES and create a range of barriers to communication. Because of the importance of informal power networks, communication channels are vague and shifting. Technology and externally devised systems and procedures will not overcome such norms. Nevertheless, greater links and connections between central units could be valuable.

Finally, planning, monitoring and evaluation procedures are unclear, poorly co-ordinated and driven by central bodies at the expense of local ones. Data are weak, as is the capacity to utilize them. Planning and ME processes are disconnected both from project implementation and improvement and pay little regard to local ownership.

Chapter 4

Institutional capacity within the Regional Education Directorates (REDs) and the District Education Offices (DEOs)

Introduction

This chapter deals mainly with the work of the district education offices (DEOs) and the Department of Education (DOE) but is prefaced with an overview of the role and functions of the regional education directorate (RED).

Recent developments in the RED system

Regional planning and administration was introduced in Nepal for four major reasons: (a) to reduce regional disparities; (b) to promote socio-economic unification; (c) to decentralize knowledge and skills; and (d) to create an effective development system.

In 1971 the Ministry pre-empted the Government's policy of regional planning and administration with its own system of regional administration (i.e. REDs). Three main factors influenced this initiative. First, the ministry needed an implementing office close to the sites (e.g. districts and schools) where the new system of education was to be introduced. Second, it was not possible for MOES to handle the enormous task of restructuring from the centre, and it needed institutions at the field level to implement key educational and administrative functions. Third, as districts were at different stages of educational development, there was a need for an entity close to the districts

to ensure that things happened in a uniform and co-ordinated manner. There was yet another rationale for establishing a service at the regional level: to support districts with subject specialists that, for financial reasons, could not be deployed in each district. The decision of the Government to introduce the notion of regional planning and administration provided further legitimacy to the concept and role of REDs.

The Education Act and Regulations of 1971 had envisaged important responsibilities for REDs. These included co-ordination of the implementation of educational plans and programmes within the region; professional upgrading of educational personnel through training, workshops, and seminars; monitoring and evaluation of DEOs; co-ordination of DEO activities within the region; and on-site visits and direct contact with DEOs, head teachers and others so as to find out how educational policies and programmes were being implemented and fed back to the policy-making and programme development process in the centre.

Despite the intention of the government to decentralize the implementation of educational policies to the regions, many important functions remain either fully centralized or carried out by the districts. Educational reform projects implemented over the last two decades did not assign any definitive roles to the regional directorates. During the Primary Education Project (PEP), activities such as the formation of clusters, establishment of resource centres, and the short-term training of teachers and school rehabilitation work were district-based. Neither BPEP I or II envisaged any meaningful role for RED.

Many reasons have been put forward to explain the marginalized role of RED in the Nepalese system of educational administration (MOE, 1991, 1997), including: (a) the traditional unwillingness of the central bureaucracy to share power and resources; (b) unclear lines of authority and responsibility between RED and the central agencies; (c) weak capacity amongst RED staff in relation to planning, implementation and the monitoring of educational

programmes; (d) the impact of the growing movement towards decentralizing powers and functions to district level authorities; and (e) improved communication networks in the country that have enabled central and district level authorities to communicate directly.

In addition to the marginalized role played by REDs, the regional offices of other line ministries – e.g. National Planning Commission (NPC), Ministry of Agriculture (MOA), Ministry of Local Development (MOLD) – are also under threat. The Administrative Reform Commission of 1992, when emphasizing the need to restructure and reduce the size of the Civil Service, proposed to abolish such offices and the Report of the Decentralization Commission of 1997 proposed to devolve powers and functions completely to a range of local bodies – e.g. DDC and the Village Development Committee (VDC). The BPEP Master Plan of 1997 also recommended that MOES abolish its REDs. Finally, the recent study conducted by AED (1999) for MOES characterized RED as a non-performing entity, concluding that they should be abolished. According to that study, almost all of the functions associated with RED had been incorporated into the newly created central operational body (DOE) and thus there seemed to be no logical reason to continue this intermediate layer between the national and the district level. Nevertheless, the AED report suggested that an assessment of the roles and responsibilities of RED be undertaken before any final decision was taken.

In contrast to the weight of these views, the 1999 restructuring of MOES recommended that both DOE and REDs had a role to play. Additionally, the Programme Implementation Plan (PIP) suggested that REDs would:

“... facilitate the preparation of district education plans, monitor the implementation of BPE programmes in the respective districts and provide feedback to DOE on the smooth implementation of the programmes.”

Irrespective of this position, the continued existence of REDs since the introduction of DOE appears to be wasteful duplication of resources, and a source of confusion regarding the formal mandates, powers and functions of DOE and DEOs. Nevertheless, the monitoring and evaluation role of REDs has been reiterated in the government's budget speech for 2000/2001.

The data gathered from the study indicated that RED has had a very limited role in recent school reform initiatives, including BPEP II. Many of the functions assigned to RED are almost never undertaken due to the lack of effective authority, central interference, resources and expertise. A dilemma exists. MOES would like to retain a regional apparatus to co-ordinate, support and monitor the operations of DEO. Many stress the need for continued existence of RED. However, there is reluctance and lack of willingness to transfer meaningful tasks and effective to RED. On the other hand, the government is committed to continued decentralization of the education system under which authority is to be vested close to the implementation level (e.g. DDC, VDC and SMC). At present, however, RED complicates and clouds the nature of decentralized educational management at the district and school level. Government policy in this area needs to be clarified. Many recommend that RED must be assigned tasks relating to the administration and management of SLC examinations, which cannot be centrally handled by OCE.

Structure and formal mandates within the DEO

Since the restoration of democracy, there have been substantial reforms aimed at instituting a governance structure at the district level. In order to promote greater local control and ownership of development, an ambitious decentralized programme is being implemented within the framework of the Local Self-Governance Act. MOES has also committed itself to implementing a large-scale educational reform programme within the framework of

decentralized planning and management wherein the district education offices are to assume a lead role in the planning, implementation and monitoring of the basic and primary education sub-sector.

Organizational structure of the District Education Office

The District Education Office is headed by a DEO, who is a gazetted Class II official of MOES. This is a technical post within the Nepal Education Service Group. The organizational structure of the District Education Office generally reflects closely the structures that exist at the central level. The internal organization and staffing is based on the category of the district, which is defined in terms of its number of schools. A district with 300 or more schools is referred to as Category ‘A’, while a district with less than 300 schools is classified as Category ‘B’. There are 17 districts in the former category, and 58 in the latter. The functions of the various sections and units are presented in *Table 4.1*.

Table 4.1 Functions within the District Education Office

<i>Section</i>	<i>Key areas of responsibility</i>
Technical Section	Textbooks Educational materials Examinations School supervision Teacher training (in the case of ‘B’ category district) Non-formal education (in the case of ‘B’ category district)
Planning and School Administration Section	Educational statistics Evaluation Planning School administration Records Teacher pension

Non-Formal Education and Teacher Training Section	Teacher training Training of NFE facilitators OSP Literacy programmes Women's education programmes
Administration Unit	General and personnel administration Logistics management Support services Internal administration
Financial Administration Unit	Accounting Procurement Financial administration

A number of observations can be made about the existing internal organization of the District Education Office.

- Most DEOs comprise approximately 25 office staff, nine to 14 supervisory staff, 10 to 25 resource persons, and a few hundred school head teachers. The range of responsibilities is extremely large and this compromises the effectiveness of DEO's supervisory role.
- The grouping of many of the functions of the district office is not coherent. For example, complex functions such as planning have been combined together with routine school administrative functions. The principle of separating line and staff functions suggests that activities such as school and teacher administration should be separated from functions such as planning, statistics and evaluation.
- Teacher training is separated from the other technical functions concerned with curriculum, textbooks, educational materials, supervision and examinations. This compromises the quality of recurrent training.
- The division of responsibilities across the component sections of DEO is not uniform. The school administration section, which also has planning responsibilities, is overburdened in relation to the other sections.
- Many key tasks of DEO office are handled by non-officers. For example, non-gazetted officials often handle professional tasks.

- Many essential functions are neglected in the organizational chart. There are no sections or staff at the officer level to co-ordinate components such as special education, early childhood education, secondary education, higher secondary education, non-formal education and teacher training (especially in 'B' category districts).
- There is no proper mechanism to co-ordinate, supervise, monitor and support the work of school supervisors and RPs.
- Educational operations are fragmented to a large extent because of the disparate locations of their various components.

Relationships with central and regional authorities

In principle, DEO reports to RED, which in turn reports to MOES and DOE. In practice, however, DEO functions as an 'extension of the central department', with instructions coming directly from the centre. The administrative mechanisms within the education sector ensure that separate institutions take charge of particular specialized and sub-sector functions at the central level (e.g. CDC for curriculum matters, NCED for primary teacher training, DEC for distance-based teacher training, SEDEC for lower secondary and secondary teacher training, DOE for primary and secondary education administration, HSEB for higher secondary education administration). However, all these functions are co-ordinated by DEO at the point of delivery and implementation. Such an approach helps deliver and implement the educational services in a co-ordinated way instead of requiring each central institution to provide some local representation. This means that the DEO must possess a strong and competent team of professionals.

Notwithstanding the advantages of having a multi-purpose field office at the district level, there are some practical problems faced by administrators at both ends. Often, instructions and directives come from the central institutions in an unco-ordinated way. Many DEOs suggest that work schedules for programmes and activities are prepared centrally by different institutions without any local consultation. Technical institutions like NCED, CDC,

SEDEC, DEC, NFEC and OCE have their own programmes that are often developed independently. The same applies for aspects of the work of DOE. As such, the staff of DEO find themselves faced with often competing priorities, many of which have not been properly disseminated from the centre. Having said this, it should be noted that DEO has no line reporting relationship to centrally based technical institutions like NCED, CDC, SEDEC, DEC, NFEC and OCE. As such, there is no guarantee that their programmes and activities are properly prioritized within DEO. The extent to which technical initiatives are driven from above also has implications for the level of local ownership at the implementation stage. DEOs characterized themselves as being powerless and with no control or influence over their own affairs. Comments from district officials were revealing:

“Those who happen to make it to the top (in this case DOE and other central institutions) are the most fortunate ones. They happen to suffer from a superiority complex and we are treated as their subordinates who should be available to carry out their instructions.”

“We are just attendants, waiting to be told what we should be doing.”

“We simply carry out someone else’s agenda, we don’t have our own plan and mission.”

“What can we do, while decisions and resources are controlled by people sitting at the top.”

“Our voice and opinion has little value.”

The data suggested quite clearly that DEO staff felt largely detached from the plans and programmes that were devised and disseminated from the centre. The sense of isolation at DEO was both physical and symbolic, with local administrators viewing themselves as poor cousins to their colleagues at the centre.

Relationships with DEC and DDC

MOES, through the Education Act, has made a provision for establishing a District Education Committee (DEC) in each district, headed by the chairperson of the DDC and consisting of representatives of educational institutions, teachers' unions and district-based line agencies. In principle, this should act as a planning and advisory body, and provide for broader participation in educational matters for all stakeholders.

Reporting to the DEC, which is more political than professional, has both positive and negative implications. DEOs felt that the DEC had been helpful in making many difficult and often controversial decisions, in mobilizing local resources for public schools, and in re-allocating resources from the centre. However DEOs reported that they had come into conflict with DEC members in relation to the distribution of teacher quotas and programme funds, forming SMCs, and allowing schools to add higher grades or giving permission to open new schools. In the words of one DEO:

“The DEC provides us a shield in situations when everybody cannot be kept happy. As tension rises, you have to protect yourself by saying that you didn't do it, because the DEC is there with the authority to take decisions and you are merely implementing what was decided in the DEC meeting.”

When interviewed, DEC members said that the process of educational decision-making at the district level had to be collective because:

“... DEOs are inexperienced, and unconfirmed in their positions and in no way in a position to make decisions independently in the politically complex environment of the district.”

Reflecting on the short tenure of DEOs, another DEC member suggested that DEOs needed much support in order to be effective. In his own words:

“DEOs are like visitors, who come to the district for a little while and, therefore, keep little or no knowledge about the district and its realities. What can you expect from an immature and inexperienced DEO in such a situation? Dealing with teacher unions, parents, SMC members, VDC officials and NGO workers is simply out of the capacity of DEOs.”

While DEC members see themselves as playing a central role in managing district affairs, sharing decision-making can deprive the DEO of his executive power. As one DEO suggested:

“We are constantly under pressure and there is little scope for making decisions independently. There are directions and orders coming from the DEC members in the name of good advice.”

In some districts the DEC appeared to be more of a rubber stamp, but in many others it was seen more as an implementing body rather than an advisory one. The confusion, ambiguity and tension between the DEC and DEO appeared to emanate, in part, from the overlapping nature of their job descriptions. Having a DEC with planning functions overlaps with the DDC; the legitimate body responsible for development planning. In this regard, two issues clearly emerged from the data. First, the roles and functions of the DEC should be seen in the light of the new Local Self-Governance Act. Second, a committee structure, more representative and professional in its purpose and composition, needs to be instituted to support the work of DEO.

Relationships with schools

The relationship between DEOs and teachers has traditionally been one of supervision. This relationship, although viewed by teachers as counterproductive to their professionalism and independence, is pervasive in the Nepalese educational bureaucracy. However, with the introduction of the ladder-based teacher career system, the teaching service has been organized into three tiers (Class I to III) along the same lines as the Civil

Service system. Head teachers of secondary schools normally have the status of a Class II officer, equivalent to that of DEO. For many DEOs the enhanced status of teachers and head teachers presents a challenge to maintaining administrative control within the district. DEOs felt particularly vulnerable in relation to the head teachers of the higher secondary schools, in large part because of their perceived lower status to these senior school-based officers.

Staffing and staff development

Profile of DEOs

The age of the respondent DEOs ranged from 33 to 55 years, with a mean of 47.5 years. The majority of these DEOs were in their 40s or 50s. Most originated from the Central and Western Development Regions. The mean length of time that responding DEOs had worked as employees of MOES was 18.6 years. All respondents had at least a Bachelor's degree, and almost 50 per cent held master's qualifications. There were no females in the sample of fifty DEOs, and there are currently no female DEOs within the entire national pool of 75.

Job descriptions and their relationship to job tasks

In order to supplement the questionnaire and interview data, a focus group discussion was held with seven DOEs. Here, there was a particular wish to gain their views and opinions about job descriptions and responsibilities at the district level. DEOs commented on each of the functions listed in the job descriptions against the following parameters: (a) frequency of undertaking of the function; (b) degree of clarity; (c) availability of technical expertise, resources and staffs; (d) overlaps with other institutions; and (e) delineation of procedures, rules and regulations.

A number of conclusions were drawn. First, there were clearly gaps between what was stated in the job descriptions and what DEOs were

undertaking on a day-to-day basis. In some cases, job descriptions were extremely inaccurate.

Second, DEOs claimed to have rarely consulted their job descriptions, suggesting that judgements concerning the quality of their work were not based on their performance in their formally assigned role. In this regard they complained that their work was overly dominated by ad hoc requests from the centre that were often the result of political ‘emergencies’ and ‘crisis situations’.

Third, because of the pressure on DEOs to undertake immediate and ad hoc tasks dictated from the centre, longer term strategically important tasks were often neglected.

Finally, the roles and responsibilities of DEO Office are increasing rapidly due primarily to a failure to share power, functions and resources with other actors at the district, sub-district and local levels.

Approximately 20 per cent of the time of DEO respondents was spent on what they referred to as ‘conflict’ or ‘crisis management’. The other major use of their time was on ‘maintenance’ functions such as basic administration and reporting. Activities that could be considered as ‘developmental’ were often left uncompleted. In general, it seemed that DEOs had practically no time to plan activities, mobilize expertise and resources, or initiate development activities.

Arrangements for appointment

As stated earlier, DEO is a gazetted Class II position, equivalent to the rank of under secretary in the ministry. The post of DEO is part of the Education Service, meaning that individuals from other service categories cannot be appointed as DEOs.

Of the 75 DEOs at present in post, only 38 (51 per cent) are confirmed in their positions, with the remainder either serving on an ‘acting’ or ‘officiating’ basis. An acting or officiating DEO is a gazetted Class III official, who has been temporarily assigned a higher level position (in this case the position of DEO). The large number of DEOs (49 per cent) appointed on an acting basis have distinct implications for the quality of educational leadership and management in these districts. Being a DEO involves heading the institution as well as providing educational leadership to the entire school system of the district. It is therefore essential that persons in these positions are carefully identified and appointed. There appear to be no defined criteria or procedures for identifying and appointing DEOs. Participants in the focus group discussions revealed that for the most part, one’s connections, often political, played a key role in being selected as a DEO. One’s seniority, leadership capacity, training, and understanding of the educational situation in the district were thought to be minor factors in appointment as a DEO.

The minister, as executive head of the ministry, exercises the final authority in making transfer decisions concerning gazetted officials. In the past it was common for ministers to delegate this power to the departmental secretary. More recently, it has become common for politicians to make such appointments directly: quite possibly the major reason for the high turnover of DEOs.

Induction and staff development

As a matter of principle, once the assignment decision has been made, new DEOs must be appropriately inducted into their new roles and responsibilities. However, there were no such induction courses within the ministry to support newly identified DEOs. Respondents described their experiences:

“It felt like being sent to fight a war, but without any weapons.”

“I learn from my own mistakes and failures, and gained experience by doing on the job work.”

“There is no one to help you out. I had to take a long journey myself and without any clues beforehand.”

“The job of DEO is becoming increasingly complex. One needs a new set of skills and competencies to be effective in the role of DEO.”

Although there are no systematic efforts to provide induction training to DEOs, survey data indicate that DEOs in the study had in-service training opportunities. More than half of the serving DEOs had participated in supervisor-level training, hardly surprising given that acting or officiating DEOs are recruited from the ranks of supervisors. Almost one-third of the respondents had undergone administration and management training organized by the Nepal Administrative Staff College (NASC). Even though NCED has a training programme designed specifically for DEOs, only one-quarter of the total respondents claimed to have had this training. One reason for this is that acting or officiating DEOs (as Class III officers) are ineligible for NCED’s DEO training programme.

Staffing in district education offices

Staff allocation is calculated on the number of schools within the district. Districts in the ‘A’ category will have a total of 25 staff in addition to nine to 14 supervisory staff. ‘B’ category districts have 19 staff in addition to four to eight supervisory staff. There are some 2,019 staff positions allocated for the 75 districts. Of the total staff positions allocated to MOES (2,733), 74 per cent of positions have been allocated to the district offices.

There are three basic categories of personnel in the District Education Offices: (a) administrative; (b) professional/supervisory; and (c) clerical and support staff. Almost 64 per cent of the total district level positions are at the clerical/support staff level (non-officers); a high proportion. Initially hired to

serve senior officers, maintain records and perform clerical tasks, lower level staff are being increasingly viewed as redundant as the role of the district office changes. Indeed, non-gazetted II and III staff are to be eventually phased out of district administration.

On being asked to assess the extent to which the posts allotted to the DEO office were adequate in view of the nature of jobs and the job load of the office, respondents were found to be almost equally divided. Of the respondents, 51 per cent reported that the existing level of staffing was inadequate. Those who considered the posts to be inadequate stated that the need was more in technical areas (22 cases) than in administrative areas (three cases). There was a more perceived demand for gazetted level posts than for non-gazetted level posts. The participants in the focus group discussions were clear on two points. First, the existing staff – both supervisory and clerical – has not been fully utilized. Second, the level and type of staffing needs to be revised in view of the role of the DEO office in the emerging context of district planning, implementation and monitoring of educational programmes and increasing need for school supervision.

DEO opinions on staffing practices

District education officers were asked to comment on the staffing practices employed within MOES. The following insights emerged: (a) staff posting and/or transfer within the ministry rarely involves consultation with the concerned office; (b) staff posting and/or transfer is carried out without regard for the training and experience profile of the new appointee; (c) there is no defined tenure for the post of DEO and no formal obligation on the part of MOES to adhere to established norms; (d) there are no transparent criteria for staff posting and/or transfer; (e) heads of institutions do not have the authority to make inter-divisional transfers; and (f) the personal interest and motivation of concerned staff are not taken into account in staff posting and transfer.

Factors influencing the selection of personnel for staff development programmes

A fair, transparent and competitive system of selection of staff is a key to the success of any staff development programme. Limited staff development opportunities were made available to MOES personnel under the BPEP and SEDP programmes. Data show that people working in the districts have fewer chances of being selected for overseas study tours or training courses. The survey asked DEOs to identify the three most important factors (from a list of five) that influenced the selection of personnel for staff development programmes (studies, training, or study tours). In descending order, these were: access to power; job efficiency of staff; and seniority of service.

Appraisal and evaluation

DEOs revisited many of the issues raised by the central SMEs and section officers reported earlier in *Chapter 3*. Performance evaluation of MOES staff from the central level to the district level has remained an issue of much criticism. Most staff members felt that the criteria used for assessing their performance lacked relevance (89 per cent) and transparency (98 per cent).

Job tenure, rotation and transfer

As a consequence of frequent staff rotation, educational leadership at the district level has not remained stable over recent years. Among the senior posts within MOES, the post of DEO is most unstable. The average tenure of the current group of DEOs is approximately 8.2 months. The shortest tenure was 1 month and the highest, 42 months (one case only). Of the total DEOs at present serving, 81 per cent had been in office for less than a year, with 11 per cent having served for over a year but less than two years. Only a small number of DEOs (8 per cent) had been working in their present posts for more than two years.

Clearly, the tenure of DEOs is generally short, interrupting the stability of educational administration in a large number of districts. The impact of DEO movement has not been assessed carefully. It must be assumed that frequent transfer reduces the operational efficiency of DEO Office and severely affects field-level implementation work. This results in much discontinuity; in the words of DEOs themselves:

“The life of a DEO is one of packing and unpacking.”

“The schooling of my children has been ruined as a result of this. Their school changes every six months or so.”

“By the time we have established a working relationship in the office and in the district, by the time we have understood the educational situation in the district, and by the time we have developed some ideas about school reform in the district, suddenly the bell rings and we must either move to another district or lose the job altogether.”

“There is always a constant fear of being transferred from one district to another. You have to work amidst uncertainty and confusion. How to survive or retain the job, rather than how effectively you get things done, becomes the chief concern.”

“You basically work by the wish and liking of the political leaders in power. There is little scope for making decisions using your judgement. Any evidence of lack of faithfulness to the people in power, be they MPs, teacher unions, or local leaders, can ruin you. You will be recommended for transfer from the district.”

Respondents gave many potential reasons for transfer; (a) one's own interest to move to a 'resourceful' district (for instance where BPEP II is under implementation) from a 'non-resourceful' district (districts with no educational projects at all); (b) one's desire to move to a non-remote (urban) district from a remote district; (c) local pressure to remove DEO in cases where the latter does not agree to provide the co-operation sought by local

politicians; (d) desire of national politicians to place people who they believe can best serve their interests; and (e) management decisions to withdraw low-performing DEOs and place competent personnel in their place.

While so many possibilities existed, respondents felt that transfers were almost always initiated by the centre and related in the main to the broader political agenda of powerful individuals and groups. Even though good performance as a DEO was rarely recognized or rewarded (e.g. by continued tenure in one's post), poor performance usually resulted in swift removal and reassignment.

Incentive structures

The provision of incentives plays an important role in shaping the attitudes and morale of staff, especially those who work in districts with limited facilities. In this regard, DEOs were asked to describe the nature and extent of the incentive structure in their district. Important incentives were described as job security, opportunity for advancement, recognition of good work done, and possibility for higher studies. However, for the majority of respondents, such incentives were not easily available or obtained. As such, DEOs felt no great compulsion or motivation to work in sustained or innovative ways. The constant and real threat of transfer, and the lack of foundation for decisions about DEO transfer, only compounded their sense of fatalism. Indeed, within the present climate of rapid transfer and rotation, it is hard to see what, if anything, could motivate DEOs to best represent the wishes and aspirations of the communities they serve.

Information and communication

Nature of communication

DEOs hold and attend many meetings with a wide range of interest groups including MOES officials, teachers and community shareholders. Many

of these meetings are ad hoc and take a considerable amount of DEO's time and energy. Groups most frequently contacted by DEOs are teachers, NGO workers, VDC members, parents and SMC members. Other groups contacted on a regular basis are headmasters, regional authorities, local politicians, teachers' unions, social workers/community leaders, central authorities and teachers.

Communication between the District Education Office and other offices in the district, between the office and the centre (MOES/DOE and other central offices) and between the office and the schools of the district occurs in a number of ways. Fax and telephone are used to communicate with the centre, although the absence of telephone facilities in schools means that information from the office is usually conveyed by circulars, formal letters or during visits from DEO staff. Often information would reach schools when village members were in town and presented themselves at DEO.

District Education Officers were also requested to assess the quality of MOES's communication with the offices in relation to five factors. In summary, communication was described as being mainly about passing on directives and regulations in order to make inquiries and to gather information. Relatively little was directed at seeking the advice of DEOs or engaging them in higher level discussions about policy or strategy.

Major problems faced in communication

Finally, DEOs were asked to describe in their own words the various problems they faced in communicating effectively. These were summarized as follows: (a) lack of telephone facilities; (b) costly and inefficient postal service; (c) length of time to communicate with schools; (d) delays in delivering educational materials; (e) staff not skilled in replying to letters; (f) poor or non-existent typing and duplicating machines; (g) lack of vehicles for supervision; (h) inadequate numbers of peons to deliver messages to schools; (i) teachers' ignorance of the value of communication; (j) disruptions

due to bad weather; (k) lack of two-way communication; and (l) the remoteness of many schools.

Role of DEO in decision-making

While decisions related to routine procedural matters are taken at almost every level of educational administration, those decisions that are known to be policy decisions are taken at the highest level in the ministry, or at the political level. Decisions taken at a higher level are implemented through a hierarchical system. DEOs are in the front line and play a very important role in defending and carrying out centrally made decisions. Ordinarily, it would be seen as inappropriate for central decisions to be questioned by DEO, even though those responsible for implementing the decisions may be in disagreement. During the interview process, DEOs cited a number of examples of such decisions, which they reported as being extremely difficult to implement in their districts (e.g. school calendars, free schooling, formation of SMCs).

Adequacy of decision-making authority

DEOs were further asked to consider the extent to which the authority given to them was adequate. Of the 46 respondents, 63 per cent considered their formal authority to be inadequate, while the remaining considered the authority given to be adequate even though they usually elected not to resort to this formal authority. Those DEOs who felt that they had inadequate authority indicated the following areas in which DEOs needed further power: (a) all teacher administration areas (appointment, transfer, promotion, dismissal); (b) determination and distribution of teacher quota according to needs and re-deployment of teacher quotas; (c) school administration matters (formation of SMCs at all levels, school clustering, giving permission/approval to open new schools or teach higher grade classes); (d) spending budget on construction work and creative work; (e) preparing DEP independently and

submitting it to DEC for approval; and (f) enforcing a system of reward and punishment (or a code of conduct) to discipline schools and teachers.

Consultation by central authorities in relation to decision-making

DEOs were asked to consider the extent to which higher level authorities consulted with them on matters which affected the administration and management of education at the district level. Their responses are presented in *Table 4.2*.

Table 4.2 Extent of decision-making consultation with DEOs by higher authorities (in percentages)

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Always</i>	<i>Most times</i>	<i>Some-times</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>(N =)</i>
Deputation and transfer of DEO staff	–	2	14	33	51	40
Performance evaluation of DEO staff	61	17	10	4	8	48
Awarding medal/reward to DEO staff	6	2	36	23	33	48
Selecting your staff for training/study	6	–	27	16	51	49
Awarding grade increment to your staff	4	4	16	23	53	49
Determining budget for district level development programmes	12	6	29	18	35	49
Determining teacher quota for the district	–	–	10	19	71	48
Formulating education rules and regulations	–	4	31	20	45	49
Amending the education rules and regulations	–	4	33	19	44	48

The data suggest that higher level authorities usually consult DEOs mainly for the purpose of carrying out performance evaluations of district staff. Consultation about staff development, budgets, policy and rules seemed rare and tended to reflect the view that DEO was perceived as an administrative unit rather than as one concerned with programme implementation and educational improvement.

Role of different actors in decision-making

To investigate the extent of external influence on district level decision-making, DEOs were asked to consider the influence exerted by certain individuals. The distribution of their responses is presented in *Table 4.3*.

Table 4.3 Extent of influence of different actors in decision-making at the district level (in percentages)

<i>Actor</i>	<i>Much</i>	<i>Not much</i>	<i>Little</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>(N =)</i>
Parliamentarians	51	27	18	4	49
DDC members	43	33	20	4	49
Senior MOES officials	15	27	33	25	48
National consultants	2	26	24	48	46
Teachers' unions	54	15	23	8	48
Donors	21	15	28	36	47
Political parties (local leaders)	64	19	13	4	48
District education committee	52	40	8	–	48
Private school associations	16	18	41	25	49
SMC	15	27	32	26	47

These data suggest that external actors exert considerable influence on district level educational decisions. The most influential agents are the political parties, the teachers' unions, DEC members, parliamentarians and the DDC

members. Even donors were found to exert influence. The fact that there are multiple actors playing roles in educational decision-making suggests that DEOs must be skilful in negotiating and dealing with multiple interests. Currently, it could be argued, very few DEOs have sufficient skills of this sort.

Planning

District education offices were created primarily to implement centrally formulated policies, plans and programmes. Traditionally, the practice has been that the sector plans and programmes would be formulated by the concerned ministry, endorsed by the cabinet, and implemented by the departments through their district-level line agencies. Decentralization experts argue that this practice continues to exist despite the fact that the government has a declared policy of local governance and decentralization (i.e. full devolution), As Martinussen (1993: 95) suggests:

“Most of the line agencies continue to plan, implement and operate in their traditional top-down and vertical manner. Their planning and decision-making are mostly intra-departmental with very little involvement of outsiders, whether local authorities or other line agencies.”

Process of the District Education Plan (DEP) preparation

During the administration of the questionnaire, districts were engaged in preparing for the first time District Education Plans (DEPs). Significantly, this activity was devised and directed centrally by DOE. On being asked to comment on their experience of this process, many DEOs said that the entire exercise was undertaken hurriedly and without adequate preparation. Some were negative about the planning exercise, describing it as part of an ‘externally driven’ agenda. For others, the process was viewed positively as an opportunity to gain first-hand experience of district planning.

A large majority of DEOs stated that they did not have the expertise necessary to lead the development of the district plan. A number of impediments were cited, the main factors being: (a) lack of adequate educational data; (b) lack of trained educational planners; (c) lack of adequate time for planning; (d) lack of guidelines for planning; and (e) lack of specification of budget ceilings for different components of the plan.

Having gone through this experience, DEOs were asked to consider the main skill deficiencies amongst staff members in DEO. These were: (a) ability to identify data/information needs prior to formulation of DEP; (b) competency to collect and compile data in systematic data; (c) competency to use and analyze data and information; (d) computer skills including programming; (e) skills in trends analysis and estimation; and (f) team work.

Introducing a decentralized planning process is not only about data, guidelines and planning skills, particularly in a culture of centralized planning and management. As decentralization experts believe, local planning is concerned with developing a new relationship between central administrators and local authorities. DEOs were sceptical about the commitment of central authorities to support the process of local planning. They suggested that there was: (a) a lack of respect from central authorities for locally prepared plans; and (b) a lack of willingness from the centre to allocate funds based on local targets and priorities.

DEOs were also asked to describe how the annual targets for the district office were determined, and a range of responses were received. Of the 43 respondents, 22 per cent suggested that targets were determined according to the ninth plan. Others (25 per cent) claimed that targets were fixed by the within DOE, whilst a third group suggested that targets were based on assessment studies. A final group of 26 per cent claimed that MOES had some influence in setting targets that were normally based on estimates from the previous year. Even though responses were evenly split over these four

areas, it seemed clear that the centre still maintained much influence over local planning.

Budgeting

District budgets are divided into a regular budget and a development budget. Out of 48 district education officers, 20 suggested that the regular budget was ‘grossly inadequate’ and another 26 suggested that it was ‘slightly inadequate’. In the case of the development budget, almost one-third of respondents felt that it was ‘grossly inadequate’ and nearly two-thirds felt that it was ‘slightly inadequate’. Districts submit their budget estimates for various programmes, but only rarely receive the amount requested (i.e. the amount calculated by them as being essential to conduct their programmes).

DEOs cited budget constraints as one of the major causes of poor programme implementation. While getting adequate resources for planned programmes has remained a perennial problem, further hurdles exist in spending the approved budget. According to financial regulations, all sectors must get authorization to spend the budget that is released in instalments. Usually, delays in releasing programme budgets mean that some planned activities are severely affected or that the bulk of the planned activities must be undertaken hurriedly within the last few months of the fiscal year; an indication of poor planning and budget administration.

Monitoring and evaluation

Monitoring

DEOs were asked to describe the way in which the district office was involved in monitoring educational programmes in the district, the methods used for monitoring, the perceived effectiveness of the monitoring system and, finally, the arrangements for evaluating the current monitoring system.

The data suggested that DEOs used a range of approaches to monitoring district level programmes, although few of these were systematic or well-structured. Monitoring usually took place without reference to benchmark indicators. Rather than monitor programmes against some fixed criteria, and with some purpose in mind (e.g. programme improvement) DEOs tended to suggest that monitoring was ad hoc, poorly conceptualized and disconnected from improvement strategies. Commonly used monitoring techniques included: (a) personal school visits; (b) progress reports from schools; (c) discussion and consultation with school supervisors and RPs; (d) meetings with parents, head teachers and SMC representatives; and (e) insights gained from district-level seminars.

Three out of 48 DEOs stated openly that no monitoring activities were carried out in their districts. For others, the most common method of monitoring was via periodic reporting related to externally set and quantifiable attainment targets. Despite the undoubted usefulness of these activities, it seemed that the data collected were not utilized in any way that enhanced the capacity of DEO staff, or improved the support given to programme implementation. DEOs were clear that a rigorous and systematic process for monitoring programmes and activities was needed. This should place DEO at the centre of school improvement planning. The following points were summarized from the questionnaire data: (a) preparation of monitoring reports was often delayed; (b) feedback to concerned authorities was often delayed; (c) there was too much stress on quantitative achievement; (d) budgets for monitoring activities were often inadequate; (e) there were no clear processes for monitoring; and (f) administrative inaction had reduced people's confidence in the usefulness of monitoring.

Supervision

DEOs were asked a number of questions about their role in and the overall purpose of school supervision. Out of 47 respondents, only one DEO

stated that he did not have time to undertake personal supervision visits in schools. Five respondents were able to make occasional visits, whilst the bulk of the group (35 respondents) claimed that they made regular visits to local schools across the district.

DEOs made many ambitious claims about the nature and extent of their engagement in school visits, and in many cases these claims seemed unreasonable given the geographical separation of the schools in many districts, the lack of available transport to make such visits, and DEOs' earlier claims that they were 'bogged-down' in ad hoc administration and 'crisis management'. Their claims also failed to reflect the observations of consultants engaged in the study who noted the observations of head teachers that DEOs were rarely seen in schools. Whilst it is certain that many DEOs were having some regular contact with schools, what seems clear is that this contact was low-level, general and unfocused. Any 'supervisory' aspect did not involve detailed strategies for school improvement, enhancing access or involving parents more in the management of the school. Rather, DEOs tended to visit schools for public relations events (i.e. award ceremonies), to deal with problems and other crises and, to a much lesser extent, to inspect teaching and facilities. The value of such supervision for pedagogical and teacher development appeared to be marginal.

DEOs were also asked to talk about the work of school supervisors in relation to school-based supervision. Whilst school supervisors undertook a range of tasks (from participating in meetings, liaison with parents and conflict resolution), little of their work involved the collection and compilation of statistics or data used in programme improvement. More often than not, such data were generated for centrally determined and organized monitoring, and appeared to be disconnected from practical school improvement initiatives. Indeed, DEOs viewed supervisors as working in ways that undermined the confidence and purpose of schools. Relations were based on power and hierarchy, with supervisors treating schools in an off-hand manner. Rather

than focusing on working with teachers to identify and deal with problems, supervisors were viewed as more interested in recording and quantifying problems.

When asked to identify the factors thought to be contributing to poor school supervision, DEOs produced a long list of factors, many of which were related to their working environment, poor school supervisor preparation and factors associated with the professional attitudes of the school supervisors.

Evaluation

DEOs were asked whether the educational programmes conducted in their districts were formally evaluated. Several DEOs stated that there existed some sort of a system for programme evaluation, but mostly initiated and conducted centrally with limited or no district participation. Many others claimed that nothing was in place.

DEOs were also asked to describe the way in which programmes were evaluated. There was no uniformity in this regard, with various combinations of local (i.e. district) and central procedures. What seemed clear, however, was that there was less co-ordination of evaluation activities between the districts and the centre. There appeared to be problems with the extent to which the results of evaluation exercises were disseminated to districts and used in programme improvement. Even though some claimed that feedback from evaluations was utilized to some degree, there was no evidence of the use of systematic procedures in this regard. Indeed, the procedures adopted seemed very much dependent on the programme and the personalities involved. Only two out of 46 DEOs suggested that funds were adequate for carrying out the evaluation of district level programmes.

DEOs views about improvement in this regard were also noted. In brief, they felt that: (a) evaluation should be more formative than summative; (b) the

District Education Office should have an evaluation section; (c) all decisions on improvement and consolidation of programmes should be based on feedback given by evaluative studies.

Capacity building needs at the district level

Two sets of questions were asked with a view to determining the capacity building needs at the district level.

Measures for upgrading institutional capacity

DEOs listed a range of factors necessary to enhance the capacity of the district office. These included the following: (a) less frequent monitoring of staff; (b) non-politicized working environment; (c) policies to promote professionalism; (d) regular monitoring of work at all levels; (e) transparent policies and directives from authorities; (f) fair distribution of work among staff; (g) training and studies (staff development) based on organizational needs; (h) transparent job descriptions for staff; (i) punishment of poor performers; (j) appointment of staff based on objective criteria; and (k) opportunities for higher studies and visits in foreign countries.

Other institutional building measures that were rated fairly highly included the following: (a) creation of assistant DEO posts; (b) increased access to consulting inputs and technical assistance; (c) sufficient budgetary provision; (d) independent, clear, honest and impartial central administration; (e) objective evaluation of job performance; (f) enforcement of accountability measures; (g) appointment of educationally competent persons to district education committees; (h) upgrading of DEO posts to Class I level in the case of large school systems; (i) designation of focal persons for ECD, NFE, special education; and (j) provision of computer support systems.

Training areas for upgrading professional competency level of staff

DEOs provided a variety of responses to an open-ended question that sought their views about the necessary areas for upgrading the professional capacity of the district staff. Three needs were identified most often: (a) skills in preparing district and school level educational plans and programmes; (b) pedagogical skills for providing teacher support and supervision; and (c) skills in the management and implementation of educational programmes.

Other areas mentioned by a large group of respondents included the following: (a) programme monitoring; (b) programme evaluation; (c) training design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation; (d) mediation, negotiation and interpersonal communication; (e) conducting professional meetings/group facilitation; (f) computer skills; (g) micro-planning, school mapping; and (h) data collection, processing, analysis and utilization.

This was clearly a long list. Perhaps, most surprisingly, it reflected areas of competence that one might expect DEOs to possess already: especially those who had already undertaken DEO training. Rapid turnover, politicization and a local environment in which there was little time or possibility for extended focus on programme development, seemed to limit DEO to the role of local agent of MOES. Much needed to be done to improve the work of DEOs: both in terms of training and skills, as well as in terms of creating a professional environment in which they might take control of local educational administration.

Conclusion

The work of the District Education Office and Officer is central to programme implementation and improvement in a decentralized education system. However, the data suggest quite clearly that there has been little

decentralization in the Nepalese context. At best, centrally devised and controlled strategies had been ‘de-concentrated’ but there is little sign that local officials or the communities that they served feel true ownership for the process and direction of education in the districts.

Complicating matters, DEOs are clearly a vulnerable group. Obviously, many are powerful in their own right. However, many provided graphic details of the ways in which they had been manipulated and undermined. In addition to weak or misdirected leadership from the centre, DEOs, like other MOES officials engaged in district administration, were poorly prepared for their work and inadequately supported. The recent district planning exercise, whilst valuable and needed, served to illustrate the weak professional basis of educational provision at the local level.

Chapter 5

Institutional capacity within schools and resource centres (RCs)

Introduction

This chapter examines capacity building issues at the school level, and is divided between schools and resource centres (RCs).

School level data were collected from two sources. First, an in-depth study of nine schools and, second, the administration of a survey questionnaire to a group of 190 primary head teachers attending a month-long training course at three Primary Teacher Training Centres (PTTCs). Data related to the RC system were collected by a survey and follow-up interview with over a hundred RPs in nine districts.

Structure and relationships in schools

Schools and their teachers have a direct line management relationship to the District Education Office (DEO) and District Education Officer, as well as the School Management Committee (SMC). Nevertheless, it is widely acknowledged that the SMC lacks formal power, and is often constituted in line with political considerations. Parental involvement in SMCs continues to be limited and is hindered by the growing tendency of affluent parents to remove their children from the public system. Other local bodies (e.g. VDC, DDC, etc.) have no formal relationship to local schools. While the Local Self-Governance Act attempts to define the roles of local bodies in relation to education, their influence has remained marginal.

Whilst the bond between schools and the community is weak, there is a growing recognition amongst policy-makers and the community that schools should be 'given back' to their local stakeholders. Currently, therefore, legislation before the Parliament proposes that SMCs be formed by direct election and that 50 per cent of the members be parents. Even though such legislation appears necessary to rectify the problem of parental involvement in schools, it should be noted that there is a long tradition in Nepal of close school-community relations (i.e. schools were initially constituted, developed and managed by the local community). Notwithstanding imminent change, the current school financing regulations, and norms related to the management of teachers (e.g. the establishment of a national teacher service commission to facilitate the centralized recruitment of teachers) remain substantial barriers to local ownership.

Staffing and staff development

Any discussion of staffing in schools must begin with the role and function of the school leader. This is dealt with immediately below, and is followed by a consideration of staffing and staff development issues related to teachers themselves.

Profile of primary head teachers

This section presents a profile of primary head teachers in Nepal in terms of gender, age, teaching experience, experience of school leadership, and academic qualifications. Head teachers in the primary schools of Nepal are mostly male (97.4 per cent), with a negligible proportion of head teachers being female. Most head teachers fall in the age group of 41-50 (43 per cent), followed by those in the age group of 40 and below (36 per cent). Head teachers are recruited from the ranks of teachers, although seniority in teaching is not always considered in their selection. The Education Regulation

stipulates that permanent tenure in teaching is a necessary pre-condition for primary headship. The teaching experience of head teachers in the sample ranged from one year to over 20, although less than one-quarter of them reported having less than five years of classroom experience.

Head teachers have a five-year tenure with the possibility of extension. About 35 per cent of the respondents had been in the post of head teacher for less than five years, with approximately 25 per cent having between five and ten years' experience. The proportion of head teachers with more than ten years' experience is small, suggesting a relatively high turnover. Two-thirds of the head teachers in the survey possessed the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) as their highest academic qualification. This is the minimum academic requirement to become a primary school teacher. Approximately one-third of respondents possessed an intermediate (grade 12) level certificate, or an academic degree. In this regard, head teachers vary little from their teacher colleagues, with low academic qualifications being the norm. During the interviews, both head teachers and teachers stated that the existing academic requirement of an SLC-level qualification was not adequate to deal with the increasing instructional and managerial responsibilities confronting schools. It was emphasized that the academic qualification of a primary school head teacher should at least be a bachelor's degree. Much of this profile data is represented in *Table 5.1*.

Head teachers were asked to rate the extent of their personal and professional competence, with self-assessments being sought in relation to six dimensions: conceptual clarity about work; technical/professional skills; managerial ability; analytical ability; problem solving ability; and level of self-confidence. As can be seen from *Table 5.2*, head teachers held relatively low opinions about themselves on almost every count, judging their own competence as being 'average' or 'below average'. Competences such as analytical ability, managerial ability and conceptual clarity of work were rated low, with self-confidence, problem solving ability, and technical/professional

skills seen as slightly better. There were no differences in the ratings of head teachers in terms of gender, years of service, or training. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there appeared to be a strong relation between one's academic qualifications and perceived degree of competence. Head teachers with higher academic qualifications rated themselves more favourably in relation to all six parameters of competence than their counterparts with lower qualifications (SLC only).

Table 5.1 Demographic characteristics of head teachers

<i>Characteristic</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Male	185	97.4
	Female	5	2.6
Age	Age 40 and below	68	35.8
	Ages 41-50	81	42.6
	Over age 51	41	21.6
Teaching experience	Under 5	44	23.1
	5-10	52	27.4
	1-15	35	18.4
	16-20	25	13.2
	Over 20	34	17.9
Experience of work as a head teacher	Under 5	66	34.7
	5-10	46	24.2
	11-15	37	19.5
	16-20	36	18.9
	Over 20	5	2.6
Academic qualification	SLC	126	66.3
	IA	60	31.6
	BA	4	2.1

Table 5.2 Head teachers’ perceptions of their own competence

<i>Criteria</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Total</i>
Conceptual clarity about work	25 (13.1)	69 (36.3)	96 (50.5)	190
Technical/professional skills	36 (18.9)	76 (40.0)	78 (41.0)	190
Managerial ability	24 (12.6)	78 (41.0)	88 (46.3)	190
Analytical ability	19 (10.0)	74 (38.9)	97 (51.0)	190
Problem solving ability	39 (20.5)	66 (34.7)	85 (44.7)	190
Level of self-confidence	41 (21.5)	69 (36.3)	80 (42.1)	190

Note: Figures in parentheses are percentages.

Head teachers were also asked whether they had adequate knowledge and skills for ‘successful’ headship. A large majority (some 70 per cent) admitted that they lacked the knowledge and skills needed to manage a primary school effectively. Of the total of 190 head teachers, only a very small proportion (7 per cent) felt that they possessed ‘adequate’ or ‘highly adequate’ knowledge and skills, and approximately one-quarter felt that they had ‘just adequate’ knowledge and skills. During the field visits, teachers were asked to comment on the ability of their head teacher to manage and lead the school and its staff. Here, the views of teachers were stark: with a widespread perception that many head teachers were insufficiently experienced and inadequately trained. Head teachers’ self-assessment suggests that the existing stock of ‘competent’ head teachers is both academically and administratively ill-prepared to manage the primary school, and that there is an urgent need for upgrading their qualifications and skills.

Induction and staff development of head teachers

There is no formal organized job induction for newly appointed head teachers. Much of the learning is therefore on-the-job. One head teacher said, ‘We are left in a sink-or-swim situation’. Head teachers stated

unanimously that no induction training of any kind was provided to them. Notwithstanding this, many head teachers have attended short management training courses provided through NCED and BPEP. Nearly 54 per cent of the total respondents claimed to have participated in BPEP's 12-day course, while 46 per cent attended NCED's 30-day course. In all cases, these courses were provided well after appointment to the post of head teacher, with the majority of the respondents (66 per cent) suggesting that they gave little more than some introductory knowledge of issues concerning school management. Indeed, the usefulness rating of these courses was not encouraging: over 86 per cent of respondents rated these courses as being 'not very helpful' in coping with the complexity of school leadership. A brief content analysis of these courses exposed a simplistic notion of school management: the emphasis being on rudimentary things such as preparing a school routine, keeping a school account, organizing meetings and, for example, administering examinations.

Head teacher job descriptions and their relationship to job tasks

The job descriptions of school heads are outlined in the Education Regulations and are prepared and approved by MOES. As such, it can be assumed that they reflect the intentions and expectations of MOES. Nevertheless, the study revealed that head teachers were not provided with a job description for their work at the time of their appointment. The District Education Officers, who are the appointing authorities, hand letters of appointment to new head teachers, but no written job description is provided. The reason for this is unclear, although one could suggest that it is a consequence of head teacher job descriptions already being in the public domain.

Exploring this situation further, head teachers were asked if they had ever consulted their official job descriptions once in post. Surprisingly, only 12 per cent of the 190 respondents claimed to have seen their job descriptions, with the overwhelming majority (88 per cent) suggesting that they had never

seen this document. It must be mentioned here that the roles, functions and duties of the head teachers are specified in the Education Regulations. Of the 12 per cent that had seen their job description, the majority thought that the document focused on ‘clerical’ functions rather than those expected of an ‘institutional head’.

School Management Committee (SMC) members, teachers and parents expressed a complete ignorance of the formal roles and responsibilities of the head teachers as they are stated in the education regulations. Although the SMC is constituted as the governing body of a school, it appeared that it is never involved in defining the roles and functions of head teachers and teachers.

In the main, primary head teachers must undertake both teaching and administrative responsibilities. For many, teaching is a primary responsibility because the shortage of teachers forces them to assume a full teaching load. As such, little time can be devoted to school administration or other school development related activities, and for the most part, any involvement in school administration or development must take place to the detriment of classroom teaching.

When asked about their actual activities, an overwhelming majority of head teachers (92 per cent) stated that the workload was ‘too heavy’ for them to work efficiently. Perhaps unsurprisingly therefore, most (almost 90 per cent) described their work as ‘neither challenging nor enjoyable.’ *Table 5.3* summarizes the distribution of time of those 190 head teachers involved in the study. Of the ten broad activities within their remit, teaching occupies the most time (70 per cent). The remaining 30 per cent of their time is distributed across several activities: visiting the DEO; paperwork/financial management; liaison with parents, local leaders and community workers; planning and programming; attending meetings; and, for example, data related work. Of great significance, only 1 per cent of the time of these head teachers was spent on teacher support and supervision.

Table 5.3 Distribution of time of head teachers

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Percentage of time spent</i>
Teaching	70.0
Visiting the DEO	12.0
Paperwork/financial management	5.0
Doing odd jobs as per the instruction/orders from higher authorities	3.0
Meeting with parents, local leaders and community workers	2.0
Planning and programming	2.0
Attending meetings	2.0
Data related work (data collection and reporting)	2.0
Staff meetings	1.0
Supervising and supporting teachers	1.0
	100.0

School administration in Nepal is primarily district-based with DEO taking charge of all the resources and affairs of the school. As such, head teachers find themselves in a situation where no initiative could be taken at the school level unless there is approval of DEO. Not surprisingly, therefore, visiting the DEO is the second most time-consuming task confronting head teachers. Such visits have a number of purposes: collection of teachers' salaries; collection of government grants to schools; collection of textbooks and other materials provided by MOES or other central institutions; and, for example, the submission of school statistics. Head teachers must make these trips to DEO office themselves because schools cannot afford to hire administrative assistants. As one head teacher remarked:

“This is price you pay for being a head teacher. You spend a substantial amount of time in DEO office. Sometimes you are there for days because either the DEO is out of the town or his staff are on leave. You know how much the children's learning suffers when you are away from your school.”

Compounding the task of school leadership, head teachers have no formal role in the appraisal of teachers, which takes place on two levels. First, the school supervisor linked to the school provides a written evaluation, which, in many cases is not informed by extensive knowledge of the teacher's classroom expertise. Second, DEO reviews this evaluation, adding his own comments and mark. In both cases, these assessments are made without the input or judgement of the school head teacher, a situation that is completely unacceptable if schools are to be locally accountable and geared towards continuous improvement and development.

Issues related to the teaching staff

There are defined criteria for allocating teachers to schools. For example the current formula allows for one teacher per 55 students in the Terai region; one per 45 in the hills districts; and one per five in mountainous areas. However, an analysis of the ratio of students to teachers suggests that the distribution of teachers rarely adheres to this formula. At present many districts are experiencing heavy surpluses of teachers. Others are in serious shortage. To meet such local shortages, many schools have been forced to recruit teachers locally, usually with the financial support of local bodies, or by raising fees from parents. In reality, a range of factors – including political considerations – influence teacher allocations, and for a system based on free basic education, it is difficult to say how such practices affect the attitudes and commitment of parents. On the one hand, parents are playing an increasingly important role in their schools as financial stakeholders. On the other hand, they are made more aware of the lack of authority of their local communities in relation to schools, the removed but overwhelmingly dominant role of the centre, and the mismanagement that politicians' officials inflict on the system.

In general, teachers do not have written job descriptions, making it difficult for head teachers and others to guide, direct and evaluate their work. This is perhaps symptomatic of the lack of accountability within the teaching

profession, and certainly provides an insight both into the difficulties faced by head teachers in leading their schools, and the traditional lack of interest from policy-makers in school-based teacher management.

Unlike the uncertain situation of job tenure within central-level institutions, teacher tenure is relatively long, stable and secure. Whilst it could be argued that this is a consequence of the system seeking to ensure stability and coherence, the reality is that teachers are highly immobile and unresponsive to the needs of system. This means that many mediocre and incompetent teachers are able to remain in their jobs without fear of removal.

Teachers' recurrent training

The initial training of teachers has been dealt with extensively by other reports and studies and lies beyond the scope of IA study. Typically, people would enter teaching without any formal pre-service education, and would then wait to be sent to training centres for in-service training at some point well into their careers. As a result, new teachers do not receive any formal induction. Most recently, the government has made a policy of providing ten-day's recurrent training each year to every teacher funded solely by BPEP II. These courses are provided through the resource centres. The effectiveness of these courses has not been assessed; however, anecdotal evidence suggests that they have not made any significant impact on classroom practices.

None of the schools visited by IA project team had its own funds, or access to funds, with which to organize staff development courses. Similarly, none of the schools were given a voice to shape the training that they were offered by their local RC.

Reward structures

Salary structures and benefits for teachers are equivalent to those of civil servants. While one line of thought suggests that teachers are grossly

underpaid, and that this affects their commitment and motivation to teaching, research is equivocal. Much more needs to be done to ascertain insights into teacher motivation. Nevertheless, teacher absenteeism is high across the country and especially in remote areas. The incidence of ‘moonlighting’ and, sadly, ‘daylighting’, continues to increase. What can be said, however, is that teaching is not the first choice of many entrants. Most of the respondents in the study claimed to have ‘fallen into teaching’ after ‘failing’ in other pursuits, or in their formal education. Teachers definitely enter the profession with low or at least questionable motivation, and often suggest that they are not deeply motivated to remain in the service. They often cite the reward system as one important deterrent to work in a committed and innovative manner.

Information and communication

It may not be an exaggeration to state that schools in Nepal exist in isolation. In part this is because of the rugged topographical condition of the land which makes interaction problematic. It is also due in part to the lack of collaborative activity built into Nepalese schooling. Finally, it could be argued that physical isolation and a lack of collaboration are reinforced by the ‘institutional distance’ that is maintained between District Education Offices – as managers of education at the district level – and the schools that they ‘serve’. The formal contacts between the offices and the schools under them are mostly problem-centred, or revolve around district staff passing on directives and instructions from the centre. Only in rare cases do the DEOs engage with schools on professional issues concerning teachers’ development or school improvement. Informal contacts between the DEOs and the schools are even less common, being limited in the main to those times when school staff travel to the district office. In defence of the DEO, it must be noted that district-based school supervisors are appointed to liaise with schools. Nonetheless, research and field reports suggest that school supervisors pay a very limited number of visits to the schools in their catchment areas. The

DEOs communicate with the schools mostly to deliver instructions or orders, to collect school statistics, to disburse the grants-in-aid money in instalments, to send teachers for training, to allot teacher quotas and, finally, to deal with issues related to teacher appointments and transfers. For the most part, DEOs come into direct contact with schools only when serious problems arise that demand their involvement. For their part, schools have several reasons for maintaining regular contact with the DEO. Such activities include: (a) regular reporting of school activities; (b) obtaining grants-in-aid funds; and (c) collecting teachers' salaries and allowances.

Whilst it is common in Nepal to see head teachers present in the offices of DEO for days on end, many matters cannot be resolved by district staff. It would seem that smooth and efficient communication and interaction between schools and DEOs – central to initiatives such as the cluster-school arrangement under the BPEP – appears conspicuously absent. As a consequence, non-BPEP schools tend to communicate and interact with one another individually. Collective engagement appears rare. The lack of institutional solidarity on the part of schools has weakened their ability to pressure the government for fair and equitable treatment.

An attempt was made to examine the frequency of communication between primary schools and different layers of educational management (see *Table 5.4*). First, the data make clear that communication between the schools and regional and central authorities is virtually non-existent. Compared to other layers/institutions, schools are found to have frequent communication with the DEOs and RCs. The communication between the school and central and regional authorities is mediated through DEO office resulting in no direct communication. It is interesting to note that a large majority of the primary head teachers reported having no communication with the VDCs. The education regulation has not envisaged any educational-oriented role for the VDC, although VDC officials are represented on the SMC. The school is not accountable to any local body, including the VDC. In this regard, schools

operate more like part of MOES bureaucracy with no reporting relationship at the local level.

Table 5.4 Pattern of communication between schools and other education bodies

<i>Authority level</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Total</i>
Central level authorities (MOE, DOE)			190	190
Regional level authority (RED)			190	190
District level authorities (DEO/DEC/PC)	6 (3.6)	130 (68.4)	54 (28.4)	190
Cluster level authorities (RP, RCMC)		136 (71.6)	54 (28.4)	190
Local level authority (VDC)		44 (23.2)	146 (76.8)	190

Note: Figures in parentheses represent percentages.

During the field visit to the nine study schools, 25 parents were interviewed to ascertain the nature of school-community relations. Of the 25 parents, only four reported that the school had invited them to discuss their children’s learning. There was only one instance in which a teacher paid a home visit to inform parents about the progress of their child. Three parents reported that they had come to know about the progress of their children during incidental meetings in the town or marketplace. At least two generalizations can be made about school-community relation. First, parents do not see themselves as having any defined responsibility for the learning of their children. Second, teachers appear to encourage this limited involvement in schooling by ignoring the important role that parents *could* play in supporting good learning. Almost 90 per cent of head teachers surveyed stated that there was no declared policy of involving parents in school activities or children’s learning. In seven out of the nine schools visited, schools had no

policy to promote parent/school relations. From the study sample, parent-teacher meetings were missing in eight of the nine schools.

Notwithstanding this, the 190 head teachers interviewed for the study said that it was common to hold 'parent days' in their schools. Usually conducted on an annual basis, these meetings aimed to inform parents and community members of the school's activities and its progress. Unfortunately, and in line with findings in many Western settings, head teachers complained that most parents failed to attend such meetings. Of those parents who did engage with the teaching staff, respondents claimed that very little of this dialogue was a two-way discussion about the learning of the children. Further, none of the sample schools sent formal reports to parents about student progress. Rather, parents were consulted informally; usually by being summoned to the school in order that teachers could complain about the deficiencies of their children.

Not surprisingly, therefore, a substantial number of parents ($n = 9$) expressed dissatisfaction about their children's learning opportunities. Crowded classrooms, negative teachers, poor teaching and ill-treatment of children by teachers were often cited as considerable sources of dissatisfaction. Whilst a lack of educational consciousness among parents must be viewed as being partially responsible for parental indifference towards their children's progress, schools' neglect to keep parents informed about their children appeared to be a significant cause of poor relations between the school and the parents.

The study revealed that although parents have a minimal role in school management and/or children's schooling, they do play a meaningful role in the physical development of the school. Though most are poor, 16 of the 25 parents interviewed reported that they had made some kind of contribution to the school. This included resources to support the construction of school buildings and playgrounds, drinking-water projects, plantation of trees in the school compound, and even cash contributions.

Head teachers were asked whether their schools had a functional School Management Committee (i.e. an SMC that is formally constituted in accordance with the Education Regulations, and whose members meet regularly to discuss school issues). In only 26 per cent of cases did head teachers describe what could be interpreted as ‘functional’ SMCs. In some cases, schools were found to have two parallel SMCs: one constituted by DEO under the Education Regulations; the other by the VDC or municipality under the Local Self-Governance Act (LSGA). The SMCs constituted under the LSGA have not been given formal status by MOES and DEO. Notwithstanding these discrepancies, head teachers were asked to assess the overall performance of their school’s SMC, and here an overwhelming majority (94 per cent) felt that the committee had not been effective in carrying out its functions. There were many pleas from school leaders for the SMCs be revitalized.

Focus group discussions were held with teachers, parents and local community members in order to discuss issues concerning the composition, roles and responsibilities of the SMC. Participants in the discussion groups saw the following flaws in the present composition of SMCs:

- SMC formulation based on nomination rather than through election by parents. This encourages politicization of SMCs.
- Too many members on the SMC.
- Real stakeholders are often excluded from membership (e.g. the chair person of SMC is not nominated from amongst the parents of school-attending children).
- Nomination of members of very low educational status.
- Lack of institutional representation of local NGOs.
- Non-representation of teachers on the SMC.
- Nomination of non-resident members on the SMC.
- Non-transparent roles of the SMC.
- Very low representation of stakeholder parents (i.e. those whose children attend the school).

- Non-representation of students on SMC at secondary level.
- Lack of programmes to educate the SMC members on matters of educational governance.
- Frequent changes in regulations related to SMC have affected its ability to set and maintain a course or direction.
- Undefined accountability of the SMC.

Head teachers were asked to indicate whether there was any need for revision in the composition of the SMC, and an overwhelming majority of respondents (92 per cent) saw the need for considerable changes. Most respondents stated that there should be greater representation of parents, founders/donors and local social workers on the committee. It was, however, emphasized that MOES should consider redefining the roles and responsibilities of the SMC. There was considerable agreement in relation to the following roles and responsibilities for the SMC:

- Managing the physical facilities of school.
- Appointment and professional development of teachers.
- Monitoring, supervision and evaluation of the school's functioning.
- Mobilizing financial, human and community resources for running the school.
- Planning for the development of the school.
- Formulating and implementing educational programmes for the school.
- Taking action related to teachers and the head teacher.
- Reporting trimester progress to the DEO through the school supervisor.
- Overseeing the conduct of the school according to the prescribed rules and regulations.
- Monitoring the attendance of teachers.
- Enforcing the reward and punishment system for teachers.
- Raising student enrolment.
- Enhancing public participation in school affairs, and strengthening school community relations.

- Maintaining and protecting school property.
- Recommending promotion for good performing teachers.
- Auditing of school accounts.
- Maintaining educational records of the school.
- Solving emerging problems within the school.
- Launching programmes of educational awareness in the community.

Planning

At the school level, planning means preparing the Annual Plan of Operations (or Annual Calendar of Operations) and carrying out various activities in accordance with it. About 25 per cent of the head teachers surveyed reported having prepared the Annual Calendar of Operations. A large majority of these respondents claimed not to have carried out any planning-related activity. An Annual Plan of Operations would typically show what activities (e.g. examinations, extracurricular activities, staff meetings) will be conducted, and when. Planning thus takes the form of ‘event planning.’ Data collected from field observations tend to confirm the survey data. In only two out of the nine schools, an Annual Calendar of Operations was prepared.

In reality, however, it was apparent that the so-called Operation Calendar is actually an Annual Plan for School Activities prepared by the DEO and distributed to the school. School-based planning in the sense of preparing special schemes for academic, physical and instructional development is virtually non-existent. Most recently, DOE has introduced the concept of school improvement planning (SIP), requiring schools to identify their priorities and targets for improvement; including both short- and long-term development activities. The plan is to be developed in a participatory manner in consultation with parents and community members. SIP is being piloted in a few districts, but those schools involved in the survey did not have experience of this new initiative.

Decision-making

The data support the well-established finding that public school head teachers have little discretion in relation to decision-making. There is little scope for self-management, with the bureaucracy controlling the key resources needed to run the school. For the most part, the following decisions are located out of the scope of individual schools: (a) what should (or could) be taught (i.e. subject knowledge); (b) how students should (or could) be taught (i.e. teaching methodology); (c) what materials will be used (i.e. teaching materials); (d) how teachers will be selected, trained and appointed (i.e. human resources); (e) when schools will begin and end their academic sessions (i.e. timing); (f) financial resources to satisfy the specific educational needs of each school; and (g) involvement in developing criteria for allocating funds to schools, and the ability to raise funds locally (finance).

Over 80 per cent of the head teachers in the survey suggested that they had not been given the opportunity to take responsibility for the development of their schools.

Another issue examined during the data analysis was the adequacy of the authority held by key stakeholders in schools.² It goes without saying that in order to be able to perform effectively, one should be given authority commensurate with his or her responsibilities. A proper balance is needed between job responsibilities and authority. With this in mind, head teachers were asked to assess whether the authority given to them was adequate. Here, only a few respondents (13 per cent) reported having adequate authority, while a substantial majority (61 per cent) felt that the authority provided to them was inadequate. About one-quarter of head teachers felt unable to make an informed judgement about the issue. These results are hardly surprising given the earlier suggestion that most decisions affecting the governance of primary schools are taken at the district level.

2. See *Table 5.A* in *Appendix 2* for a full presentation of the data.

Notwithstanding these findings, head teachers felt that they had sufficient authority in relation to drawing up the annual timetable, making teacher assignments, approving teachers' leaves, taking disciplinary actions on students and managing student enrolment and attendance. Importantly, however, head teachers felt that they lacked authority in relation to evaluating teachers' performance, taking disciplinary actions on teachers, teacher supervision and introducing supplementary/additional readers in the school. Head teachers felt that they had no authority in relation to appointing teachers, dismissing or transferring teachers, rejecting teachers deployed by DEO, deciding on fees to be raised from students, determining expenditures on instructional aids, raising funds for the school, adapting curriculum to local conditions, forming SMCs and giving pay rises to teachers. The following observations from respondents tended to summarize the situation:

“You really feel powerless, having no power at all.”

“I would have accomplished a lot if I had complete authority in my school. You don't get much done for want of authority rather than for want of resources or your own capacity.”

Data seem to suggest that head teachers are powerless not only to manage their instructional programme and staff, but also to effect any significant change in school practices or attitudes. Most curricular, financial and administrative decisions are placed in the hands of the District Education Officers, with little autonomy or discretion given to head teachers. Contrary to stated intentions, the creation of the RC structure may have added an extra layer of administration between the school and the District Education Office, with head teachers viewing the cluster system less as an aid to teacher and school development and more as an additional layer of bureaucracy.

As a follow up, head teachers were asked to consider what additional authority they would require in order to be effective in their roles and five

domains emerged: staff development; teacher management; financial management; school planning; and instructional programme. In relation to staff development, head teachers recommended that they should be vested with the authority to select teachers for training, and to plan and implement staff development activities. Staff development has been a highly centralized activity. Teacher training is planned and executed centrally, with some role for DEO. However, schools – most affected by the quality of teacher training – have no role at all in the nomination of teachers for training. Indeed, in some cases, teachers would be invited for training courses without the knowledge of their head teachers. Not surprisingly, the most immediate outcome of this lack of co-ordination is a disrupted teaching timetable in the school.

Head teachers seem to be aware of the damage that the current centralized system of teacher training has done to the school. Under teacher management, head teachers desire the authority to discipline, reward and punish teachers, to assess their performance, and to appoint and promote them. Currently, DEO, or higher authorities, exercise these functions. The centralized nature of teacher recruitment, assessment, evaluation and promotion renders head teachers virtually powerless, with little or no role for them in the management of their staff.

There is an ongoing national debate about whether teacher management should be a centralized or localized activity. Head teachers in the survey tended to support the decentralized system of teacher management where head teachers, rather than district or higher authorities, exercise authority in matters of teacher recruitment, assessment, evaluation and promotion. Financial management (see *Table 5.5*) is another area where the head teachers would like additional authority to raise fees (67 per cent) and manage school funds (78 per cent). In the area of school development planning, head teachers recommended that the authority to plan and implement school improvement plans should be delegated to the individual school level.

Table 5.5 Areas for additional head teacher authority

<i>Area</i>	<i>%</i>
Authority to select teachers for training	66
Authority to plan and implement staff development activities	66
Authority to discipline teachers	76
Authority to reward and punish teachers	76
Authority to assess the performance of teachers	86
Authority to appoint and promote teachers	66
Authority to raise fees	67
Authority to manage school funds	78
Authority to introduce additional readers	88
Authority to plan and conduct school level examinations	88
Authority to plan and implement school improvement programmes	56
Authority to take charge of all instructional matters	88

Monitoring and evaluation

The nature of monitoring and evaluation in schools is very similar to the arrangements in place for school planning. Activities are driven by the accounting needs of central agencies and largely disconnected from the developmental agenda of the school. While DEOs collect such data, there are no obvious ways in which they, or school supervisors, use them to improve the work of schools.

One powerful example can be seen from the system of recurrent budgeting from the central Government which goes largely unmonitored or assessed, either in the school, DEO or centrally. Additionally, there appears to be a weak monitoring of the increasing tendency of public schools to charge fees. Not only is this practice illegal, central authorities have virtually no

understanding of the amounts being raised or the purposes to which they are put.

Whilst monitoring and evaluation appear to be driven by the needs of the centre, there is little evidence to suggest that schools benefit from such exercises, or understand them.

Issues related to resource centres

Profile of resource persons

A total of 106 resource persons (RPs) were involved in the study and information was gained primarily by use of questionnaire instruments. *Table 5.6* presents the demographic composition of this group and this sample can be viewed as being representative of the system as a whole. Clearly, RPs are predominantly male, with the ratio of females at 2 per cent typical of the country as a whole. A number of reasons have been put forward to explain this low participation by women. Most commonly, it is argued that females are less mobile: a major pre-condition for work as an RP.

The mean age of RPs in the study was 43 years, with most falling in the age range of 41-50. In terms of their areas of competence, the majority of RPs are specialists in Nepalese and social studies. This has a serious effect on their ability to organize in-service training courses for English, science and mathematics teachers.

It is generally accepted that persons with previous teaching experience should be appointed in the post of RP. Despite this general principle, people without any past teaching experience have been appointed to the post of RP. Indeed, of the 106 RPs, 28 per cent had no experience of teaching! It is even more interesting to note that only 21 per cent had experience of teaching at

the primary level! As such, one can make the strong assertion that those recruited to provide pedagogical support to primary teachers are neither properly trained for their work, or appropriately experienced. Recruitment of RPs with experience of primary teaching must be enforced. An alternative would be to insist that RPs undertake a certain amount of teaching in a primary school before starting their RP induction course.

The RP position attracts few people with higher academic qualifications. Indeed, only 4 per cent of the total RPs surveyed possessed a Master's degree, while all others had Bachelor's degrees in education. A large majority of RPs (72 per cent) have been on secondment from teaching positions, while the remainder were appointed directly from their degree studies.

Profile of resource centres

There has been a constant debate about the RC 'concept' ever since its introduction in Nepal in the 1980s during the Seti Education for Rural Development Project. There are some who argue that a secondary school is best suited to host the RC due to the availability of better trained teachers and better physical facilities. On the other hand, others argue that due to differences between the needs of primary and secondary teachers, secondary schools are not appropriately positioned to support primary teachers. Therefore, in recognition of the need for professional relevance, the RC has been located in a primary rather than the secondary school. Nevertheless, there is no declared national policy concerning the location of the RC. However, data obtained from 106 resource persons suggests that for the most part secondary schools have been the administrators' choice as host location the RCs.

The RC provides a venue for training and other professional events, and as such MOES has a policy of providing a separate building with a training hall for the RC to conduct its activities. Nearly 70 per cent of the resource

Centres do have separate buildings, while 13 per cent operate from a room provided by the schools themselves. A few RCs have neither separate RC halls or separate school rooms.

Table 5.6 Demographic characteristics of resource persons in the sample

<i>Characteristic</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Male	104	98.1
	Female	2	1.9
Age	Mean age	43.1	
	Age 40 and below	32	30.2
	Ages 41-50	62	58.5
	Over age 51	12	11.3
Area of specialization	English	1	2
	Nepalese	25	50
	Social science	21	42
	Mathematics and science	3	6
Teaching experience (A)	Prior teaching experience	76	71.7
	No prior teaching experience	30	28.3
	Experience of teaching in primary grades	22	20.7
	Average years of teaching	15.9	
Teaching experience (B)	Minimum teaching experience (years)	1	
	Maximum teaching experience (years)	35	
Work experience	Average years of work	6.3	
	Under 5	30	28.3
	5-10	58	54.7
	Over 10	18	17.0
	Number of RCs served by RPs	3	
Academic qualification	Bachelor's degree	102	96.2
	Master's degree	4	3.8
Nature of appointment	On deputation from teaching	76	71.7
	Fresh appointment	30	28.3

On average, one RC has some twenty schools in the cluster, with a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 39. Terai districts are likely to have more satellite schools than districts in the hills and mountains. The average numbers of students and teachers per cluster are estimated to be 4,888 and 108 respectively (see *Table 5.7*).

Table 5.7 Features of resource centres

<i>Characteristic</i>		<i>Number</i>	<i>%</i>
RC location	Higher secondary school	12	11.3
	Secondary school	58	54.7
	Lower secondary school	16	15.1
	Primary school	20	18.9
Availability of RC hall	RC building	74	69.8
	Separate school room	14	13.2
	No provision	18	17.0
Other indicators	Schools per cluster	19.8	
	Minimum	10	
	Maximum	39	
	Average number of students per cluster	4,888	
	Average number of teachers per cluster	108	

RP motivation

Table 5.8 provides an insight into the motivation of educational professionals to engage in school development activities. One obvious factor appears to be the potential opportunities to escape from what many refer to as the ‘boredom’ of teaching. Aligned to this is the wish to undertake ‘less stressful’ work. A substantial number of resource persons have held positions as teachers or head teachers and for these respondents, RC work is clearly viewed as being less demanding than teaching or school management. Data suggest that those leaving teaching or head teaching positions to become resource persons do so to get away from the boredom and stress involved in teaching. However, the question must be asked about whether such people

are qualified to become resource persons, especially as one essential function of the resource person is to work with the teachers to help them improve their teaching.

It is perhaps inadequate to assume that this negative factor is the sole motivation for engagement as an RP. The data show that many people join the post of resource person for personal reasons, especially for their own personal or career advancement. Others took the position because of a desire to ‘provide effective supervision’, ‘make a contribution to the education sector’, and ‘serve one’s own district’.

Table 5.8 Motivation of RPs

<i>Factor</i>	<i>Number of respondents</i>	<i>%</i>
To escape from the boredom of teaching	96	57
To do less stressful job than the job of teaching or school management	96	57
To get a work best suited to one’s qualification	76	45
In the hope of getting opportunity for career advancement in BPEP	66	39
To interact with people from different horizons	58	34
Meet one’s financial needs (economic reasons)	57	34
To imbibe new skills and capabilities	54	32
To seize opportunity for a government employment	53	31
To broaden one’s professional horizon	52	31
To provide effective supervision on the sheer force of one’s teaching experience	46	27
To make contribution to the education sector	46	27
To serve one’s district	42	25
To visit new districts	40	24

Induction and staff development

While job induction training is unavailable to a large majority of educational personnel, supervisors and resource persons constitute an exception. Whilst 65 per cent of the total resource persons were found to have attended job induction training, it is perhaps significant that approximately 35 per cent of respondents have not had any formal introduction to their work. As a matter of principle, job induction training should be given prior to the job assignment so that the jobholder is fully informed of his or her roles and responsibilities, and has the skills and competencies required to perform the duties. However, the survey data show that job induction training does not precede job assignment as a matter of course. Almost all respondents stated that job induction training became available much later in their RP career! In the past, the Resource Centre Development Unit (RCDU) organized a course to orient resource persons; however, under BPEP II this role has been the responsibility of NCED.

The survey attempted to examine the usefulness of the induction training courses. Of the total respondents, only 48 per cent rated the induction courses as being 'extremely helpful', while the rest found the training either 'just helpful' or 'not so helpful'. Many felt that the induction course may have been useful in providing a general introduction to the BPEP, but not in developing teaching and pedagogical support skills. As a future but pressing task, it will be necessary to evaluate the existing induction course in order to assess its suitability to resource persons.

Self-assessment of competence by resource persons and supervisors

Only a very small proportion (4 per cent) of the total resource persons involved in the study believed that it was essential to have the appropriate knowledge and skills to carry out their work. A large majority (63 per cent) believed that it was important to have some of the required skills, and it was noteworthy that almost one-third of resource persons had a low opinion of

their own professional ability. This is perhaps unsurprising given that most resource persons do not have adequate training for their work.

Resource persons were asked to rate their level of competence in terms of six dimensions: conceptual clarity about work; technical/professional skills; managerial ability; analytical ability; problem solving ability; and level of self-confidence.³ On almost every count, respondents saw themselves as having ‘average’ or ‘below average’ levels of competence. This suggests an urgent need for effective programmes for RP professional development.

Respondents were also asked to assess the extent to which the knowledge and skill requirements of the job of an RP matched with their own qualifications, experience and training. Only one-third of the total respondents believed that they had the qualifications, experience and training required by the job, and a large majority considered themselves to be lacking the necessary competence. Given that most resource persons have training in secondary school teaching and have never had any experience of work at the primary level, it is not surprising that a majority of them find little match between the knowledge and skill requirements of the job and their own qualifications, experience and training. This mismatch can only be addressed by a more systematic process of RP selection and training.

About 39 per cent of the total resource persons surveyed reported that they were enrolled in master degree courses, with the majority of such studies being self-financed (91 per cent). It is interesting and disturbing to note that resource persons at present posted in the districts – and unable to attend the regular classes required for degree studies – were nevertheless enrolled in the various Kathmandu valley campuses of Tribhuvan University!

Such constraints on the work of RPs tend to suggest that there would be a great deal of dissatisfaction amongst the cadre. Nevertheless,

3. See *Table 5.B* in *Appendix 2* for a full presentation of this data.

approximately 52 per cent of respondents claimed to find their job challenging, but at the same time enjoyable. Importantly, however, 37 per cent found their work challenging but not particularly enjoyable. Disenchantment with the job of RP – on the grounds of it being neither challenging nor enjoyable – was calculated as being present for 11 per cent of the resource person respondents.

Sources of learning for RPs

Respondents were asked to assess the degree to which certain learning opportunities had an influence on their actual professional learning, and the data indicate that a number of sources are important. Three factors were found to have had significant influence on job learning: (a) one’s own experience; (b) training courses; and (c) the study of related materials. As stated earlier, resource persons have a Bachelor’s degree in education from the FOE of Tribhuvan University. Unfortunately, most respondents found their study in the university to be of little help due to the theoretical nature of the FOE curriculum. Guidance and support received from the central officials was also rated poorly. *Table 5.9* summarizes the main findings.

**Table 5.9 Sources of job learning
(percentages given in parentheses)**

<i>Source of learning</i>	<i>Much</i>	<i>Just</i>	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Total</i>
Study in the university	24 (14.4)	76 (45.8)	66 (39.8)	166
Training programmes	106 (66.2)	34 (21.2)	20 (12.5)	160
Learning from seniors	56 (35.9)	68 (43.6)	32 (21.5)	156
Learning from peers and colleagues	60 (36.0)	68 (41.0)	38 (23.0)	166
Own experience	140 (84.3)	14 (8.4)	12 (7.2)	166
Guidance/support from DEO	58 (34.9)	70 (42.2)	38 (23.0)	166
Guidance and support received from the central officials	40 (23.8)	76 (45.2)	52 (31.0)	168
Study of related materials	90 (53.6)	48 (28.6)	30 (17.9)	168

Over two thirds of respondents felt that they received inadequate support from the district office (DEO) and central office (DOE), while one-third said that they had not received any support from these two institutions whatsoever! Interestingly, RPs felt that the amount of central support had declined following the abolition of the RCDU. As such, it was recommended that a separate group or unit within DOE should be solely responsible for co-ordinating, supporting and initiating the development of RP/RC system, and appropriate financial and professional resources should be provided for this task. This group/unit should be dynamic and creative and able to network with other central institutions and sections to ensure that RPs are not unduly laden with work tasks.

Job descriptions and their relationship to job tasks

Job descriptions for resource persons have been outlined in a number of BPEP documents and the survey asked resource persons to record if they had ever consulted this formal outline of their tasks and responsibilities. Of the total respondents, some 22 per cent claimed to have never seen their job descriptions, while the majority (78 per cent) claimed that they had consulted it at least once. Even though the majority appeared to be aware of the formal requirements of their work, the survey revealed that the day-to-day work of the resource persons was not always guided by these job descriptions. Indeed, only 23 per cent of respondents reported a close link between their job descriptions and actual duties. A large majority (77 per cent) claimed that their job description did not usually guide what they did on a day-to-day basis, with three reasons being put forward as an explanation: uncoordinated and fragmented requests from district and central bodies; specific administrative tasks for DEO; and urgent/ad hoc matters that arise from time to time. Opinions were sought from RPs on the nature of their job descriptions, and the following observations were collated.

- The roles and responsibilities are not specific enough to guide the day-to-day tasks to be performed.

- The job description does not prioritize or order job functions in terms of their importance or the work load they entail.
- The job description does not acknowledge or take account of the conditions and realities under which jobs are performed.
- Constant revision of the job description for RPs has lead to confusion.
- The job description is independent of the means and resources available to RPs.
- There are gaps between what the job description says and what the central and district authorities ask RPs to do.
- The job description does not take account of the skills and competencies that RPs actually possess.

As regards the clarity of job responsibilities, most resource persons responded in the negative (84 per cent). Only a small number expressed no confusion over what they should be doing. These data suggest that clarification of RP job description is needed in order to ensure a consensus at every level as to the role of RPs. It is important that DOE rewrites the job description of the resource person in consultation with the resource persons themselves, and that this takes account of the needs of the teachers and head teachers who are to be supported by the RC system.

Resource persons were also asked to assess their own workload. Here, a large majority (74 per cent) claimed that their workload was too heavy. The lack of clear job descriptions, and the tendency among central and district authorities to use resource persons as ‘stand-by field officials’, makes the work of the resource person burdensome. As such, central and district officials need to be discouraged from using the resource persons for administrative tasks, and DOE must ensure that there are alternative options in relation to implementation tasks at the operational level.

Following on from this, supervisors and resource persons asserted that they must attend to many orders and instructions that did not concur with

their stated job descriptions. Such instructions often come in an unco-ordinated manner and conflict with their expected work tasks. Unfortunately, there is little or no opportunity for RPs to deny the requests emanating from above or elsewhere. *Table 5.10* summarizes the various sources from which RPs receive orders and instructions, and the predominance of centrally-imposed directives must be cause for concern that RPs are devoting little time to supporting the local needs of cluster schools.

Table 5.10 Sources from which RPs receive orders and instructions (percentages given in parentheses)

<i>Authority level</i>	<i>Frequently</i>	<i>Never</i>	<i>Total</i>
Central level authorities (MOE, DOE)	114 (71.2)	46 (28.8)	160
Regional level authority (RED)	130 (80.2)	32 (19.8)	162
District level authorities (DEO/PC)	140 (86.4)	22 (13.6)	162
Local level authorities (DEC, RCMC)	136 (84.0)	26 (16.0)	162
School level authority (Head teacher of RC school)	88 (88.0)	12 (12.0)	100

Time distribution of resource persons

Resource persons appear to be engaged in at least 13 different types of activities, with the proportion of time spent on different tasks varying considerably. School supervision is given the highest importance, and appears to account for some 22 per cent of RPs' total work hours. This is followed by observation of classroom teaching, which is estimated to consume 13 per cent of RPs' time. The third most cited area concerns the time spent by RPs in conducting professional meetings of teachers (11 per cent). Recurrent training takes some 8 per cent of RPs' time. Significantly, guiding teachers and providing them with professional support appeared to receive the lowest priority.

The data show that resource persons must undertake a number of other functions that do not relate directly to pedagogical support or teacher development. These include: planning, programming and co-ordination related tasks done at the DEO; data related work; activities relating to BPEP implementation; doing odd jobs as per the instructions/orders from higher authorities; undertaking SLC exam-related work; and organizing cluster-wise activities related to the appointment and performance of teachers. Collectively, some 39 per cent of the total time of resource persons goes on these non-core functions. Of the total time, resource persons spend about 5 per cent of the time on their own professional development.

In order for the RC system to be an effective support system for primary schools and teachers, resource persons must work closely with the teachers in their classrooms. The data reveal that RPs in-class support and supervision function is not a priority task. Given this, it will be necessary to monitor RPs actual time in schools.

Adequacy of authority

Resource persons were asked to assess whether the authority given to them was adequate for the performance of their duties. Here, a negligible number of resource persons reported that they had adequate authority, while a large majority were either indifferent (37 per cent) or felt that they had inadequate authority (57 per cent). Of course, the post of RP is a staff position, with very little or no administrative and financial authority. There is very little that can be decided at the cluster level. Most decisions governing the RC affairs are either handled centrally or dealt with by the District Education Offices. Nevertheless, in order to be effective in their roles, resource persons feel very strongly that they will need to be vested with administrative and financial authority. One wonders whether an RP would need administrative and financial authority because the job of RP is to provide professional support to the teachers and this job is to be carried out in a collegial environment.

Role of RPs in decision-making

While resource persons may not have any formal decision-making authority, there may be occasions when the District Education Office consults them in the course of educational decision-making. For example, RPs are likely to be consulted in the selection of teachers for training. This is mainly a consequence of RPs having data about the school system, including the training status of teachers. In general, the data indicate that consultation with the resource persons is likely mainly in relation to professional matters (e.g. selection of teachers for in-service training courses etc.), but less so in relation to administrative and financial matters (e.g. formation of SMC, transfer/deputation of teachers, supply of teacher quotas, reward and punishment of teachers, evaluation and promotion of teachers, and allocation of resources for schools). This seems to be a rather rigid distinction and, according to RPs themselves, an indication of limitations placed upon their role.

Role of resource persons

Resource persons were also asked to indicate the roles that they envisaged for themselves, with a total of 15 areas suggested. One interesting finding was the tendency amongst resource persons to see the resource centre as a separate echelon of educational administration between the district and the schools rather than a support system for improving teaching. Resource persons tend to view themselves as educational authorities and are often used as supervisors or agents of the district educational administration. For some, this administrative role is a source of prestige and status. Significantly, respondents tended to emphasize roles concerned with programme implementation, school supervision and reporting, teacher quotas and appointments, and issues concerned with the formation of SMCs. It was rare for RPs to emphasize tasks related to teacher or school development: in or out of the classroom. Such a narrow conception of their role seems only to be reinforced and strengthened by attitudes and demarcations within the

district and central-level administrations. The view of RPs as programme administrations was further emphasized by teachers and head teachers who themselves appeared most likely to consult RPs for administrative rather than professional reasons.

Resource centre management

A Resource Centre Management Committee (RCMC) is constituted under the chairmanship of the chairman of the School Management Committee of the host school, with representatives from the satellite schools. Of the 104 RPs who provided data, 84 (81 per cent) reported that RCMCs have been formally constituted in their resource centres, while 19 per cent reported that none had been formed. The main purposes of establishing an RCMC are to provide support and supervision to RP, and to ensure the smooth functioning of the resource centre. An attempt was made to assess the extent to which RCMCs are engaged in a number of the activities envisioned by MOES. Seven different activities were identified in which RCMC involvement was reported (see *Table 5.11*) and these include: planning for RC level activities; implementing and monitoring RC level activities; mobilizing resources; improving the management and quality of instruction within satellite schools; overseeing and monitoring the functioning of the RC; ensuring co-ordination among the satellite schools; and extending essential support to RP. However, the data suggest that such activities do occur in a minority of resource centres only. In a large majority of RCs, these activities occur rarely, if at all. Clearly, there is a need to strengthen the RCMC so that it can provide management support for the resource centre.

Table 5.11 Activities conducted by the Resource Centre Management Committee (RCMC)

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Sometimes</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Not at all</i>	<i>Total</i>
Planning for RC level activities	12	46	30	84
Implementation and monitoring of RC level activities	6	50	32	84
Mobilization of resources	14	38	36	84
Improvement of satellite schools under the RC	16	42	30	84
Overseeing and monitoring of the functioning of RC	10	34	42	84 (100%)
Co-ordination among the satellite schools	10	54	22	84 (100%)
Extending necessary support to RP	12	50	24	84 (100%)

Scale: 1-3 (1 = not at all, 2 = rarely, and 3 = sometimes).

Resource persons felt strongly that there were serious flaws in the composition of the RCMC. Nearly 81 per cent of the respondents responding to the survey mentioned that MOES should consider revising the composition of the RCMC, with greater representation of teachers and head teachers.

Conclusion

The problems facing schools are many. While there are a number of schools that could be considered as ‘effective’ or ‘successful’, the vast majority suffer from a lack of resources, including qualified staff, materials and facilities. The arrangements for school leadership are also weak. Perversely, inadequate resources and unclear leadership affect the RC system that, while founded on good intentions, has not yet shown itself to be an appropriate vehicle for teacher and school development. Like the movement

towards decentralization in general, school development must be owned and driven by the school's community: parents, teachers, the head teacher and the students themselves. To this end, the problem of inadequate resources seems almost a second-order issue. Of much more importance is the need to establish local democracy, ownership and accountability in schools.

With the exception of a small number of schools, the data suggest that Nepalese schools have little in common with the characteristics of effective schools in the developed world. One recent and often-cited summary of the school effectiveness literature is that by Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995). This highlighted 11 key characteristics of effective schools including such elements as participative leadership, collegiality and collaboration, high-quality classroom teaching, parental involvement in children's learning and school-based staff development. In relation to this last point, school effectiveness research very strongly supports the view that in-service education must be context-specific and ongoing (Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll, Levis and Ecob, 1988) and that staff development must be embedded in school development planning (Stoll and Fink, 1994). For many school effectiveness researchers, the role of leadership is a key to 'transforming' school structure and teacher culture (e.g. Sammons, Thomas, Mortimore, Owen and Pennell, 1994; Stoll, 1994). Very few of these characteristics emerged from our data, or have been noted in others studies of schooling in Nepal. Furthermore, where good practices do exist, they appear not to be utilized for the purposes of inspiring and informing the rest of the school system.

In relation to the RC system, two very useful themes emerged from the study. First, the RPs' range of tasks are beyond the scope of one individual but, more importantly, symptomatic of a misunderstanding of the RC concept. Even if one RP was able to perform all of the tasks listed in the job description, it is disputable whether this would lead to better teaching and learning in classrooms. Indeed, involvement in classroom-based teacher/school

development is a relatively small part of RPs' current duties. Thus, much more thinking is required before RPs become effective in the most important aspect of their work: supporting teachers' development.

Second, head teachers are not expected to play a leading role in the development of their schools. There may be an official rhetoric in this regard but the practice of school leadership in Nepalese government-aided primary schools suggests that the head teacher is primarily a classroom teacher and, secondly, a school administrator. Indeed, the most cursory of glances at RPs' job description, and the reality that RPs are viewed as 'supervisors' of teachers, suggests that head teachers are expected and encouraged to play only a minor role in relation to teacher and school development. Given this context, it is difficult to see how RPs, seen by teachers themselves as externally located 'agents of the DEO', can lead school-based teacher development.

Chapter 6

The role of women in MOES

This chapter considers the representation of women across MOES, and the way in which the status of women in Nepal affects both their involvement in educational administration and their opportunities for career development.

Introduction

In recent years, there have been significant efforts made to improve the situation of women in Nepal. Nevertheless, women continue to constitute one of the most disadvantaged social groups in the country. All indicators of human development (e.g. NESAC, 1998) suggest alarming disparities between men and women. Among other things, the status of women is influenced greatly by prevailing and long-established social and cultural forces.

Egalitarian measures and non-discriminatory laws adopted by the Government of Nepal have had very little impact on women's lives. Existing social norms, for example those related to family, marriage and property ownership, contribute collectively to placing women at a disadvantage. The participation of women in the civil service, and in the educational management system of Nepal in particular, must be seen in the overall context of the status of women in the society.

The Government of Nepal acknowledges that until women are made equal participants in the advancement of the Nation, no significant improvement can be brought to socio-economic situation of the country. The Ninth Plan aims at integrating women into the developmental mainstream by:

(a) promoting gender equality and women's empowerment; (b) increased participation in all sectors; (c) providing a concrete shape to the concept of 'gender'; (d) ensuring women's involvement in the formulation, implementation and evaluation of sector policies and programmes; (e) accelerating the process of multi-faceted empowerment strategies aimed at uplifting their social, economic, political and legal status; (f) protecting and promoting the rights and interests of women; and (g) eliminating violence, exploitation, injustice and the atrocities that are commonly committed against them.

Representation of women within the civil service

The position of women in society is mirrored within the civil service. The elitist, hierarchical and competitive nature of Nepalese bureaucracy makes it one of the least representative work places in the country. As a result of severe gender inequalities in the country, women trail far behind men in all spheres of life: political, economic, social, administrative and managerial. Data show that the participation of women in the civil service of Nepal is alarmingly low. Available statistics indicate that women constitute only 7.5 per cent of the total work force in the Nepalese bureaucracy. Whilst the Ministry of Health has the highest percentage of female employees of all the ministries (50 per cent), this is due primarily to the fact that almost all nursing positions are occupied by women.

In the gazetted category (officer level), 4.58 per cent of posts are held by women, rising slightly to 7.8 per cent in the non-gazetted category (non-officer). Of the total number of women employed in the Nepalese civil service, almost one-third were employed as typists, followed by lower-level clerks (non-gazetted Class III). A full summary of this situation is provided in *Table 6.1*.

**Table 6.1 Women's representation in the civil service
(percentages given in parentheses)**

<i>Class</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Total</i>
Special	77 (97.5)	2 (2.5)	79
Gazetted Class I	608 (95.9)	26 (4.1)	634
Gazetted Class II	2,594 (96.8)	86 (3.2)	2,680
Gazetted Class III	7,197 (94.9)	389 (5.1)	7,586
Total	10,476 (95.4)	503 (4.6)	10,979
Non-gazetted Class I	17,272 (93.7)	1,160 (6.3)	18,432
Non-gazetted Class II	22,178 (91.8)	1,989 (8.2)	24,167
Non-gazetted Class III	9,826 (86.5)	1,529 (13.5)	11,355
Non-gazetted Class IV	1,930 (96.6)	68 (3.4)	1,998
Typists	1,530 (68.8)	695 (31.2)	2,225
Drivers	1,643 (100.0)		1,643
Peons	30,611 (94.5)	1,769 (5.5)	32,380
Total	84,990 (92.2)	7,210 (7.8)	92,200
Grand total	95,466 (92.5)	7,713 (7.5)	103,179

The absence of women at officer-level signals their virtual absence from senior management or decision-making roles. It should not be surprising, therefore, if the administrative and policy decisions of government bureaucracy fail to take account of the interests of women.

Gazetted positions in the Nepalese civil service are divided into administrative and technical categories, and *Table 6.2* shows the distribution of women between these categories. Data show that women's presence in the administration sector is virtually non-existent (1.5 per cent of the total personnel in the administrative cadre at the gazetted level). Of the total gazetted personnel in the administration category, the number of women is

only 58. In the technical category, however, women's representation is a bit higher (6.3 per cent), attributed to the high number of females in the Ministry of Health.

Table 6.2 Women in senior civil service positions

<i>Class</i>	<i>Administrative</i>			<i>Technical</i>		
	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>%</i>
Special	66	1	1.5	13	1	7.7
Gazetted Class I	233	5	2.1	401	21	5.2
Gazetted Class II	1,038	20	1.9	1,642	66	4.1
Gazetted Class III	2,597	32	1.2	4,989	357	7.1
Total	3,934	58	1.5	7,045	445	6.3

In recognition of this problem, the government has committed itself to reducing discrimination between men and women through a national action plan. Steps adopted to enhance women's participation include: (a) preparatory courses for female candidates to help them succeed in public service examinations; (b) a reduced probationary period (6 months) as compared to men (one year); (c) an extended entry age (40) for females (as against 35 for men); (d) early eligibility for promotion to the next higher level of the civil service; and (e) maternity leave of 60 days.

Even though such positive discrimination measures are commendable, it appears as though their impact has been negligible. For instance, the government's Ninth Plan proposed that a certain portion of seats should be reserved for women in the competitive examinations held by the Public Service Commission. Nevertheless, women's participation has not greatly increased and there is much evidence to suggest that female competitors remain highly disadvantaged in the public service examination.

Representation of women in educational management

Available data show that women in Nepal are seriously under-represented in management and decision-making positions within the field of education. Whilst there are certain positions that involve leadership and substantial decision-making responsibilities, many others may be described as routine. The study has analyzed women's participation in MOES, focusing on their influence at the level of policy development and decision-making.

Of the total 1,016 officials in the gazetted category of MOES, the overwhelming majority (95 per cent) are male. Forming a small minority (5 per cent), women are concentrated overwhelmingly in the lower levels of the hierarchy (see *Table 6.3*). Clearly, there is little correspondence between the relatively large number of women in teaching posts and their presence in management positions. The Ministry of Health has the highest number of females in the gazetted ranks (17 per cent).

Table 6.3 Women in the MOE service

<i>Level</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Total</i>
Class I	21 (100.0)	0 (0.0)	21
Class II	135 (93.1)	10 (6.9)	145
Class III	810 (95.3)	40 (4.7)	850
Total	966 (95.1)	50 (4.9)	1,016

When attention turns to women in designated leadership positions, the situation is more severe (see *Table 6.4*). Whilst some 15 per cent of women hold positions as section heads in MOES, the position in the field (i.e. in districts, RCs, and schools) is extremely biased: at all levels of the schooling system, less than 5 per cent of leaders are female.

Table 6.4 Number of women in different positions of educational leadership

<i>Position</i>	<i>Number of females</i>	<i>Females as a % total</i>
Primary head teachers (19,290)	653	3.4
Lower secondary head teachers (3,495)	47	1.3
Secondary head teachers (1,371)	51	3.7
Resource persons (883)	42	4.7
Supervisors (487)	26	5.3
District education officers (75)	0	0
Technical section officers (75)	0	0
Section chiefs in MOE/DOE (27)	4	14.8
Regional education directorates (5)	0	0
Institution heads (director-generals, executive directors and directors)	0	0

Such statistics make clear that women play a marginal role in the management of MOES and, without substantial affirmative action over the next ten to fifteen years, are unlikely to increase their influence. Data confirmed that women's chances of entering into the civil service are less, as are their chances of obtaining leadership and decision-making roles. The study confirmed that men have a markedly higher early advancement rate than women. The average time taken to obtain promotion from gazetted Class III to Class II level is 17 years for females as compared to 12 years for males. The promotion system gives credit for the number of years spent in remote and very remote districts, which most women lack due to their immobility.

The study also showed that women have fewer chances of earning higher level academic degrees and of being selected for in-country and overseas training courses and study tours, both of which are important to

promotion opportunities. The average amount of in-country training provided to male staff of MOES is estimated to be approximately 3.6 weeks during their professional life-time. The relevant figure for women is approximately 2.5 weeks. In the case of overseas training – including academic study programmes – the figures for men and women are 3.1 weeks and 1.6 weeks respectively.

An analysis of the reward system for civil servants paints a similar picture. Here, it is sufficient to note that whilst 30 per cent of male officials (Class III and above) earn national medals or awards of some kind, only 14 per cent of women do likewise.

Representation of women in schooling

The teaching profession has been less discriminatory to women compared to other professions. Since women have become actively engaged in the ‘productive’ work-force, teaching has been one of the few professions favoured by them. According to the statistics of MOES, the total teaching force in the country is 130,650. Nevertheless, only 24,455 (or 19 per cent) are women. Whilst the teaching force in many developed and developing countries is increasingly female – a phenomenon often referred to as the ‘feminization’ of the teaching profession – the situation in Nepal is very different. Here, schools face a serious shortage of female teachers, with the crisis most acute in rural and remote areas.

A predominant view in educational development suggests that the greater participation of women in the teaching force can be a significant factor in increasing women’s access to schooling, as well as educational quality. As such, MOES has developed and retained a policy of hiring at least one woman teacher in every primary school in the country. During the first phase of BPEP I, some 4,000 women female teachers were recruited. However, as this recruitment was carried out centrally without the substantial involvement

of local communities, most of the female teachers recruited were from urban and semi-urban areas or district headquarters, and were not prepared to go to schools in remote villages.

It is estimated that some 8,000 primary schools are still without a female teacher. Critics call the policy an example of ‘tokenism’, believing that the policy ‘aim’ is to satisfy observers that the government has addressed the problem by providing female teacher representation in each school. A number of those teachers interviewed during the course of the study believed that they were appointed to their school for political reasons alone. They also felt that the view of MOES that one female teacher in each school makes a difference, was inadequate and cynical. Women teachers hired to work in school cultures dominated by males saw themselves as ‘helpless’, ‘invisible’, ‘isolated’ and ‘lost’. It was emphasized strongly by respondents that a critical mass of women teachers were needed in areas where girls’ enrolment and retention were serious problems. Whilst beyond the scope of IA study, the aims and effectiveness of the Ministry’s current policy of attempting to allocate female teachers in scarce numbers across the entire school system needs serious examination.

Women’s involvement in schooling also needs to be supported by their elevation to managerial positions. MOES policy in relation to female teachers must also take account of this. Nevertheless, any policy development must tackle persistent and entrenched attitudes about the role of women in organizational life.

Perceptions of females in MOES

The degree to which female officers are effective in their roles depends to a large extent on how they are perceived by their male supervisors, colleagues and subordinates. Interview data painted a poor picture of the view held by men of their female colleagues. Common statements were that

women were ‘too emotional’, ‘too sensitive’, ‘not bold enough to make tough decisions’, ‘less dashing’, ‘less willing to take on challenging roles and responsibilities’, ‘less available to undertake additional assignments’, ‘less argumentative’, ‘less decisive’, ‘less assertive’ and ‘less prepared to take risks’. During the focus group discussions with female officers, the names of a few senior female managers surfaced over and over again. Some of these women are nationally known to be successful and effective in their roles. The participants felt that the success or effectiveness of these women as managers was due in large measure to the ‘male’ characteristics that they displayed.

Clearly, there is a perception that women are deficient in the necessary managerial traits and skills required for success in administrative leadership. The attitudes of DEOs in relation to women head teachers seemed to sum up the situation across MOES:

“There are not many female teachers who are willing to become head teachers. Women are not interested in such positions because it demands extra work and hardship.”

“Local communities prefer men in such key positions.”

“I never considered appointing a female as a head teacher. It just didn’t occur to me.”

“I must hear complaints from schools that have women head teachers.

“Appointing women in leadership roles should come as a policy and District Education Officers should be instructed by the MOE to nominate women in head teacher posts. We might get women at least at the primary level.”

“Being a head teacher at the secondary level can be a tough job. You’ve to control the crowd of teachers and students, who are often unruly. In teaching, yes, we must encourage women, but in school administration, I don’t think so.”

Whilst male leaders have a limited empirical basis on which to hold such prejudices, the wide-spread perception that women are weak, passive, less flexible and more cautious, greatly affects their prospects for advancement. There were very few senior officers in MOES who viewed women as holding the same level of competence as their male counterparts and thus there was no great urgency amongst these influential staff to rectify the current imbalance and injustice.

Male officers attempted to support their opinions, stating that the rate of absenteeism amongst women was higher than that amongst men at all levels, and that ‘time-on-task’ was lower among women. As one senior officer explained:

“Females are not serious about their work. They are likely to take more leave as they have so many household matters to take care of.”

Further, male colleagues explained that women were less apt to provide extra effort, commitment and time in situations when assignments so demanded. This was particularly true for married women due to their household and child-care responsibilities. MOES managers felt that women could not handle the responsibilities of home and career simultaneously. Few saw the need for the ministry to provide adequate day care for the children of MOES staff in order that women could play more demanding and central roles.

On the other hand, respondents felt that the few women in positions of responsibility and leadership had many strengths that were undervalued or non-existent in MOES and that their involvement as officials and managers could have considerable impact on the culture of the ministry. In particular, they were felt to be ‘caring’, committed to ‘participatory’ processes, and appeared to ‘promote community and co-operation’. Even though participants argued that these attributes could be conducive to creating positive working atmospheres, they felt that professionalism, managerial efficiency and

organizational productivity might suffer. This seemed to be a limited view of what constitutes good governance and leadership. A more telling insight came from another senior male leader who suggested that the non-confrontational and participatory working styles that appeared typical of female managers would be disadvantages in a highly politicized work environment.

So many of the social relations in MOES appeared to be governed by broader norms and attitudes related to women. In general, male staff members were unhappy to be placed under the control or supervision of a female officer. Junior male officers claimed not to respect female officers to the same extent as their male colleagues. Whilst instructions from male colleagues were usually carried out, many women complained that they were met with resistance when attempting to organize and supervise the work of male subordinates. It was felt widely that women officers were unable to command the same degree of loyalty from their junior staff as were men.

Opportunities for staff development and career enhancement

Focus group discussions were held with women officials in the Ministry, where participants stated unanimously that it was extremely difficult to balance their careers with substantial home duties. For married female officers, the biggest obstacle to their advancement was the constant conflict between work obligations and those of their family. The importance of a supportive family was stressed repeatedly. Female respondents suggested that they had no special privileges or advantages as women officers. Child-care facilities or flexible scheduling for women workers would have helped.

In spite of many initiatives aimed at reducing discrimination, a very effective form of informal segregation appeared to exist in which the dominant male group interacted mostly with their male counterparts to the exclusion of women. Whereas social norms made it possible for men to move freely around

the ministry; visiting sections, discussing matters of importance, gaining vital ‘insider’ information, and learning about potential staff developmental opportunities, such movement was generally not possible for women. It was particularly inappropriate for female officers to make informal contact with their male counterparts, especially in the offices of these colleagues. Women officers stated that it was also common for them to be excluded from MOES gatherings and social events. As one female MOES officer explained:

“It is so difficult and painful competing with men in a system that the men understand better and with which the men are more familiar and comfortable.”

In an organization characterized by strong channels of informal communication and influence, and where formal roles are not necessarily indicative of actual power, opportunities of these types are vital if women are to have the same possibilities for exerting influence and control over their own careers.

The exclusion of women from important informal decision-making processes seemed substantial, with female respondents themselves explaining that they were only consulted ‘when it is absolutely necessary’. Women complained that there were deliberate attempts to prevent them from taking on important assignments and that they were normally given less challenging and less attractive jobs and tasks. It was rare that they were invited to take on leadership roles.

Of course staff development opportunities are stated as being available equally to men and women alike. In reality, many informal mechanisms exist to limit their access to important staff development opportunities. In relation to long-term and high status courses and scholarships, women felt that they were rarely encouraged to apply and were often unaware of such opportunities. There were even instances within MOES when scholarships designated for women had been taken up by men.

In relation to work-based support from colleagues, women claimed that they did not receive the same amount of assistance, feedback and guidance from their supervisors as did their male colleagues. Unlike men, it was largely impossible for them to discuss personal matters with their (usually) male colleagues or supervisors. Nevertheless, many believed that adequate career counselling and the presence of successful role models would enhance women's progress at work as well as their choice to pursue high-status careers.

Further affecting their motivation for staff development, many women felt that their workplace was not always safe and enjoyable. Therefore, personal security at times became a matter of concern.

Conclusion

There is no significant constituency within MOES prepared to promote the view that women are as competent as their male colleagues. Rather, women are viewed as lacking the qualities often associated with successful leadership. The unacceptable attitudes and practices of male managers are supported and reinforced by women managers themselves who undermine their own self-image. Rather than reflecting some perceptive insight into the deficiencies of women as educational leaders, such views are built on the foundation of widespread social prejudice and reinforced by the self-interest of the male elite. Such attitudes restrict greatly the chances of women obtaining positions of institutional power and influence.

MOES is concerned about increasing the numbers of female teachers, and this concern is reflected in its policy statement. However, there is no recognition of the fact that women should also be placed in leadership positions. This is pressing given that women are heavily under represented as head teachers.

There appears to be little or no incentive to facilitate the entry of women into educational management. Women have fewer training opportunities and have little access to important information. Placement and promotion practices do not favour women. There is a lack of safe and separate accommodation for women at training sites and in the workplace.

Women managers enjoy a limited degree of autonomy and power as compared to their male counterparts; evidenced by the degree of women's access to and control over information and social resources, participation in decision-making, and the low esteem with which they are held by their supervisors, colleagues and subordinates.

Educational planning does not take adequate account of gender analysis due to the lack of skills to analyze, plan and examine gender issues. The Women's Education Section (WES) is mostly occupied with routine tasks rather than the ongoing and comprehensive analysis of gender gaps in educational policies and programmes, gender audit of curriculum and training materials, monitoring and supervision of gender-related activities and addressing concerns related to equity. Gender-inclusive strategies that aim to gain male support for gender equity in teaching and educational management are lacking. Nevertheless, the designation of gender co-ordinators at the regional level is a significant first step.

Part III

Capacity building issues and activities: facilitating
the long-term implementation of BPEP II

Chapter 7

A vision for human resource development

Approaches to human resource development

Having presented the findings of the study, the aim in this chapter is to relate these findings to what is already known about individual and institutional development in order to generate a conceptual framework that can be applied by MOES staff in the preparation of an HRD plan.

There are, broadly, two popular approaches to human resource development. The first involves individual courses, training programmes and learning opportunities aimed at enhancing the capacity of individuals to perform effectively. The second concerns institutional approaches that are aimed at improving the ways in which individuals work together to achieve group goals. Even though institutional approaches are concerned to develop individuals in ways that fit the needs of their organizations, such approaches to staff development may still be limited if they are dominated by the agendas of others (e.g. governments, unions, vested interest groups).

Of course human resource development must lead to skilled and technically proficient teachers, educational planners, administrators and curriculum specialists. But it must also enable such staff to challenge the implicit and explicit assumptions that govern and constrain their work. The fundamental idea underpinning the conception of human resource development adopted for this study is that it must empower staff to act as professionals: to analyze their environment, to act independently, as well as to represent and

defend the explicit rules and guidelines that have been established to organize their work.

A conceptual model of human resource development

Such an approach to staff development suggests that it should be conceptualized in terms of three distinct types of activities: individually focused activities; institutionally focused activities; and system strengthening activities. Each of these requires some elaboration.

Level 1: Individually focused activities

At this first level, human resource development activities must focus on providing individuals with the technical competencies to perform their organizational functions. For instance, teachers and resource persons may require appropriate initial training and well-structured and organized recurrent training in areas such as basic subject content knowledge, curriculum knowledge, diagnostic skills and skills with which to perform community outreach work. School head teachers require skills in instructional leadership, school development and administrative management. Central MOES administrators, on the other hand, require a wide range of specific professional skills in areas such as human resource development, budgeting and finance, planning and programming, and curriculum design and implementation.

In addition to such specific technical competencies, a range of general skills are required across the divisions and sections of MOES and DOE. These include leadership and supervisory skills (recruitment, selection induction, staff development and appraisal, etc.), enhanced capacity in relation to office systems and procedures, information technology and, perhaps, upgraded language training. Examples of individually focused human resource development initiatives include: (a) management skills; (b) leadership and supervisory skills; (c) human resource management skills; (d) information

and technology (IT) skills; (e) interpersonal and gender skills; (f) technical/professional/pedagogical skills; and (g) language skills.

Of course, the delivery on a large scale of individual skills and expertise will undoubtedly have implications for the institutions in which these individuals work (thus strengthening them in various ways). But they are not sufficient. Such skills need to be nurtured and supported in open, collaborative and learning-oriented environments. For this, capacity must be developed at the second level.

Level 2: Institutionally focused activities

As individual staff develop new skills and expertise, the institutional environments in which they work must also be strengthened. New norms of practice need to be fostered in areas such as communication in and across work units. Collaboration and teamwork must be encouraged by the adoption of new processes and approaches that aim to interconnect the work of units and sections. Thus, rather than being dominated by formal courses and training programmes, staff development at this level could take the form of immediate strategies for re-engineering inadequate processes, procedures, responsibilities and accountabilities. More substantially, it could include the development of 'action learning' networks aimed at bringing staff together in and across units to solve and learn jointly from persistent problems. Further examples include: (a) properly defined roles and responsibilities; (b) clearly defined job descriptions; (c) improved reward structures and incentives; (d) deployment of staff with appropriate skills and expertise in relevant positions; (e) transparent rules and procedures; (f) improved channels of communication; (g) access to facilities and resources; (h) encouragement for collaboration and team work; (i) delegation of authority and responsibility; and (j) merit and performance based job assignment, placement, staff development, staff appraisal and promotion system.

Such activities would be aimed at enhancing the organizational climate in which staff work, encouraging staff to work with and for the organization rather than against or in spite of it. However, just as there are limits to the effectiveness of level 1 staff development activities, so too are there limitations at the level of institutions. As individuals are influenced by the organizational context in which they work, so too are institutions influenced by systemic factors related to the norms and practices of public administration, politics and civil society. Ultimately, staff development at the levels of the individual and institution must be supported by initiatives at a third level.

Level 3: System strengthening activities

Staff development cannot be disconnected from the overall context in which it takes place. In Nepal, there is now a strong body of research, reports and studies that point to the structural deficiencies in national governance and public administration. MOES is immune neither from the issues that limit the quality of governance and administration in Nepal, nor from the solutions that must be implemented to overcome them.

At this level, fundamental changes need to occur in the way staff are recruited and assigned to MOES, transferred and rotated within sections and units, and appraised and developed. Whilst it may be convenient, and to some extent necessary, to defer to the regulations laid down by the Public Service Commission, there is much that MOES itself can lead if it wishes seriously to maximize the effectiveness of staff development capacity building activities. Examples at this level are more difficult to bring to fruition. Nevertheless, measures include: (a) a political commitment towards good governance, public sector reform, and true decentralization; (b) empowerment of staff and institutions so that they control and own their performance and development; (c) assurance of autonomy to both individuals and institutions; (d) a strong civil service with limited political interference; (e) improved quality of overall governance and administration; and (f) transparent, open and accountable administration.

Developing transparent promotion procedures, assigning new positions, developmental opportunities and resources to staff on the basis of merit and need, and developing procedures to create open and accountable administration, are all within the remit of MOES and in close parallel to public sector reform initiatives that are already under way across Nepal. There is no doubt that reform in these areas is needed and problematic. However, it must be recognized that human resource development activities at Levels 1 and 2 are dependent to a large extent on the creation of good systems of governance.

Implications of the framework

One obvious criticism of this framework is that it is too ambitious given the current capacity of MOES. On the contrary, the framework is intended to set the agenda for capacity building activities for the next 10-20 years and must thus be robust enough to meet the needs of MOES as it develops its capacity over time. In any event, the framework enables initiatives at each of these three levels to commence at different times (e.g. immediate-, short-, medium- and long-term) and in different ways (e.g. formal courses, training packages, work-based learning, study tours, etc.). Whilst there will undoubtedly be pressure to commence capacity building activities with immediate, practical, relevant and achievable training programmes – and the framework makes this possible – it should by now be clear that a sole reliance on activities at Level 1 will result in partial capacity building at best.

Whilst BPEP partners must work together to prioritize activities and developmental initiatives, the framework places responsibility on MOES to clarify its own position: either make a commitment to structural and system-level reform a central part of its human resource development programme (e.g. eliminate frequent job rotation, accept the principle of selection and promotion on merit, etc.), or revert to the type of technical inputs (albeit very well designed and targeted training programmes) that have characterized educational development in Nepal thus far. Obviously it is anticipated that a

middle path will be found: to commence Level 1 staff development activities whilst at the same time developing Level 2 activities to strengthen institutional communication and collaboration, and to set these initiatives within the overall context of system-level administrative reform (Level 3).

Another potential criticism of the framework is that it is based on a belief that lasting and effective staff development must be grounded in extensive political and administrative reform (largely driven from the centre) rather than in practical and achievable training programmes (targeted largely at the interface with students, teachers and the community). These are two approaches based on different sets of beliefs, both of which have merit. However, the framework outlined here enables this debate to be deferred. By contrast, it proposes multiple points of focus: on individual skills development; on improved interconnections between MOES divisions, sections, units, schools, DEOs and RCs; and on overall administrative reform. Rather than advocating one approach, the framework suggests that lasting educational development will emerge from the dynamic interplay between all three levels. Notwithstanding this approach, it is hard to accept that lasting change can be driven by local practice alone, independent of the moral leadership required by senior MOES officials, politicians and donor agencies.

Conclusion

The framework outlined here provides an innovative way to approach human resource development in a large organization. Rather than focus on one aspect of HRD, it is based on a multi-dimensional approach. Within this approach, the HRD Plan to be informed by the study will include short-, medium- and long-term human resource development activities aimed at individual, institutional and systemic development. In this way, it is hoped that human resource development initiatives will occur at different times and points as well as in a more comprehensive manner.

Chapter 8

Towards a human resource development plan

Introduction

MOES and BPEP II donors recognize that it is essential to build institutional capacity of sector institutions, and upgrade the professional knowledge and skills of educational personnel to achieve increased efficiency, access and quality in basic and primary education. As stated in the PIP and several other policy documents of MOES, much higher priority should be given to capacity building – the enhancement of skills and the strengthening of institutions. Educational development by its very nature needs high quality teachers and head teachers which in turn requires high quality teacher trainers, specialists, managers and administrators competent to guide, direct and support the system. The upgrading of education professionals' expertise and institutional capacity is recognized to be of central importance for achieving objectives of BPEP II.

In this context, an institutional analysis of the entire MOE system was undertaken with a view to assessing the existing institutional capacity, practices of educational governance and management, and identify capacity building needs within the education sector. The remainder of this chapter presents the recommendations emerging from the analysis and interpretation of the data that were collected as part of the institutional assessment.

Overall, the data support the commonly held beliefs of many that the educational management in the country is inefficient in performing its functions,

ineffective in delivering educational service, inadequately represented, non-responsive to public and local demands, unfair and unhelpful to parents and clients, non-accountable for its actions, overstuffed and unstable. It would not be an exaggeration to say that most development constraints are now increasingly those of lack of institutional capacity rather than poor policies or even lack of resources. Therefore, capacity building should get a high priority within MOES. Staff skills and commitment should be built towards improving the quality, access and equity of the education system – key tasks of MOES. However, human resource development should not only be seen in terms of skill training and study tours as has been the case in the past. Equally important is the need to build up: (a) systems of educational planning, monitoring and evaluation; (b) appointment and retention of personnel with appropriate qualifications, training and experience; (c) information exchange and communication flows; (d) institutional culture for team work and sharing of knowledge; and (e) the development of behaviours and attitudes appropriate to their roles and functions. The human resource development plan to emerge from this study must attempt to counter both the stereotype and the reality.

A number of organizational processes influence what takes place within the classroom such as setting organizational goals; planning how to accomplish these goals; allocating financial, personnel, and other resources; co-ordinating the various organizational activities; collecting, analyzing, processing and reporting educational data; evaluating how teachers and other educational personnel function and which policy measures may improve their performance; and assessing the degree to which organizational goals are met. In other words, sound systems and practices of planning, decision-making, communication and information management, personnel management and evaluation, financial and resource management, are essential pre-conditions that contribute towards achieving a high quality educational process. Historically, there has been too much emphasis on teacher training. However, it has gradually become clear that capacity development of an education system can no longer be viewed as something that is only necessary for teachers. There is a growing recognition

that everyone who affects student learning, from the ministry of education, central institutions, regional and district level institutions to teachers, supervisors, SMC members, and parents must continually improve their knowledge and skills in order to ensure student learning.

The recommendations highlight measures to be taken at three different levels of management (i.e. central level, regional/district level, cluster/school level) in relation to the following key domains: (a) organizational structures, mandates and functions; (b) staffing and staff development; (c) information and communication; (d) planning; and (e) monitoring and evaluation. Finally, a set of skill requirements deemed essential at different levels will be presented.

It should be noted that the set of recommendations presented here are not a priority ranking of new initiatives. That task is deferred for the team who will undertake the writing of the HRD plan. Their work will be supported by MOES staff who will play an important role in interpreting the findings and rating the recommendations in a way that best fits the immediate, mid-, and long-term needs of the ministry and its educational partners.

Principles and premises

In making the recommendations, the study team has been guided by a number of principles and premises about capacity building and human resource development. These are outlined below:

1. At the individual level, capacity development should shift away from the present narrow view of ‘skill upgrading’, and it should involve changing perceptions, assumptions, values, common sense, practical skills, attitudes, style and relationships. Such skills as strategic thinking, problem solving, articulation, negotiation, conflict resolution, leadership, empowering and enabling people, team building, networking, decision-

making, and so on, are critical and need to be fostered. It is also essential that MOES staff have essential behaviours of transparency, accountability, responsibility, management, self-confidence, interpersonal trust and service to the people.

2. At the organizational and institutional level, capacity development should involve creating appropriate organizational structures, defining roles and relationships, changing institutional culture, and developing an enabling environment where people can best utilize their talents to achieve both individual and organizational goals. Unless the structures and cultures in which individuals work are changed, the new knowledge, skills and attitudes provided to the people will not lead to organizational improvement. Instilling a greater sense of performance and service in organizations, integrity, de-politicization, accountability and responsiveness should be one priority for institution building.
3. Institutions within MOES must move from being single-purpose to multi-purpose organizations. This provides opportunities for the integration of functions and for efficiency gains from the sharing of resources.
4. All capacity development activities within MOES must be launched within a national human resource development policy framework and strategy. Such a policy should identify priority areas for capacity development within the different sub-sectors at all levels, relating directly to the implementation of educational development initiatives.
5. Being in MOES is being a professional, not merely a civil servant. Capacity development activities should therefore aim to develop professional values, competencies, skills and ethics on the part of MOES staff.
6. Professional development is not an event that is separate from one's day-to-day professional responsibilities. Rather, professional development is an ongoing activity woven into the fabric of every educator's professional life. Human resource development should therefore be embedded in the job and should aim at improving practice. Job-embedded learning clearly provides a different view of in-service

learning. It changes our thinking about work from completing tasks to viewing daily experiences as opportunities to learn.

7. Student learning should be the core of entire capacity building and HRD activities. These efforts should centre primarily on issues related to learning and learners.
8. In the wake of the continued push towards centralization, one key issue has been how to build the capacity of new institutions that are entrusted with the roles and responsibilities of managing education at the local level. Capacity building efforts should also look at training needs of the local level administrators and professionals who are increasingly assigned responsibilities for which they are yet to be prepared.

Measures for capacity building at the central level

Organizational structures, mandates and functions

Rethinking the role of MOES

MOES is at present overwhelmed by the day-to-day management and operational requirements of the education system. Generally, the burden of day-to-day management takes precedence over other crucial tasks such as strategic planning, regulation and monitoring and the setting of standards. In recent years, almost everywhere the role of the government is being fundamentally reviewed. In the present changing context, MOES should not be seen as the sole or main provider and manager of educational services. It should see itself more as a facilitator, catalyst and regulator. As such, the role of MOES should shift from its current focus on the provision of education to that of overseer of the education system, strategic planner, and setter of standards. Its focus would be on higher order strategy and policy. It should be recognized that actors in the private sector and civil society can and should undertake a role in the provision of education. There is a need for major

reorganization of functions and responsibilities involving shifts in the division of labour between the public sector, the private sector, civil society, non-governmental organizations and local bodies.

Creation of a national education policy council

Educational planning and policy-making will be promoted by the development of a single policy formulation council rather than the current system of single-purpose multiple committees and councils. There is a strong need for the creation of a forum for strategic actors both within and outside MOES. Here the study team would like to recommend the creation of a National Education Policy Council in the form of a think-tank to discuss national educational issues, development challenges, and to assist MOES in formulating educational policies.

Focusing on core technical functions

MOES should separate policy management/enforcement from service delivery. There is a tendency to do everything in-house and that most activities across all levels of educational management are driven by service delivery. In many instances, MOES and its constituent bodies can act as providers but, for the most part, MOES should limit its role to core functions, such as setting policy, delivering funds to operational bodies based on defined criteria and procedure, creating an enabling and stable environment, and evaluate performance. It should refrain from performing provider or operational roles itself. By so doing, MOES could gain more effectiveness, efficiency, equity and accountability. It is worth stating that MOES will not be limiting its role by contracting and assigning certain activities to public, private or non-governmental providers. It would still be responsible for policy, providing financing, controlling the quality of services, and ensuring that these services are distributed equitably. MOES may consider framing a definite policy regarding the outsourcing of services. The ‘technical ministry’ concept of

MOES emphasizes that it would move away from routine implementation related functions and focus on overall policy formulation, planning, co-ordination, standards setting and monitoring tasks and that people working within MOES will have professional capacities to take a leadership role in operations related to educational process such as teacher education, curriculum development, educational evaluation, and educational administration.

*Transfer of implementation responsibility
to district education offices*

Central institutions within MOES are often engaged in implementation functions. There is a tendency to develop programmes centrally and implement them in the districts with the help of the district level staff. As a result, central institutions have little or no time for important functions such as policy management, programme development, programme monitoring, norms setting, professional leadership, enforcement of norms and policies, supervision, policy and programme dissemination, technical assistance to districts, and quality control. The implementation of programmes in districts, schools and communities should rest with the district education offices. This arrangement will relieve central institutions from the burden of implementation. It will require profound changes in the traditional ways of doing business. MOES must identify activities that can be better handled by lower levels of the educational management system, and transfer such responsibilities to appropriate authorities.

*Build strong partnerships with NGOs, CBOs, civil society
and local governments*

The education system is highly centralized, co-ordinated, managed and regulated by MOES. The combination of varied and complex roles in one large ministry is not supported by appropriate mechanisms to ensure their effectiveness and efficiency. Whilst MOES continues to be a major provider

of educational services, there is also a growing private sector and a vast network of NGOs. In recent years, there has been a qualitative shift in the types of actors involved in the education sector. Changes need to occur in the way in which MOES structures its activities, but also in the scope of its own involvement in schooling. The government must consider establishing strong partnerships with the private sector, civil society and NGOs and the private/voluntary sector and there should be a renewed thrust to promote and revitalize the right type of NGOs and external providers. A clear policy on the involvement of and partnership with the private/voluntary sector and NGOs needs to be developed and MOES should develop proper mechanism of control, monitoring and feedback in order to delegate functions to such providers.

The engagement of civil society and the private sector in a dynamic partnership will improve the quality of educational and educational development services, enhance social responsibilities and ensure the broad participation of citizens in educational decision-making. Fighting illiteracy and/or universalizing basic and primary education is an enormous national task for which MOES cannot work alone. MOES must therefore attract partnerships with NGOs, CBOs, civil society and local governments (DDCs, municipalities and VDCs), especially for the implementation of programmes requiring heavy community participation. These programmes may include early childhood education, women's education, girls' education, special education, adult education and areas such as community mobilization. It should be the responsibility of DOE to identify the providers, assess their capacity, contract tasks for implementation, and control the quality of their work. This arrangement could create new dimensions, new dynamics and new signs of co-operation and partnership amongst MOE/DOE, NGOs, CBOs, and local governments. MOES can utilize resources and expertise available outside the government system through partnerships. One can observe a degree of suspicion, even antagonism towards NGOs, resulting in part due to a lack of communication and partnership between the government and NGOs.

Organizational mandates

The following institutions are mandated with their functions:

- MOES** Direct the formulation of educational policy and giving directions; sectoral planning and programming; policy analysis and development; institutional co-ordination; foreign aid co-ordination and mobilization of national and international resources; education sector management information system; monitoring and evaluation; providing technical assistance to sectoral institutions; public relations and parliamentary affairs.
- DOE** Annual programming and budgeting for primary and secondary education; design of educational development programprogrammes and dissemination; research and development; technical assistance to districts for programprogramme implementation; policy management and enforcement; feedback to the ministry on educational policies and programmes; supervision and monitoring of programme implementation in the districts.
- CDC** Curriculum policy framing and planning; design, review and revise curricula and textbooks; authorize textbooks and supplementary reading materials; promote sound assessment practice in schools through assessment guidelines and training workshops; develop teacher support materials for effective use of curricula and textbooks; curriculum dissemination and monitoring; curriculum evaluation and research; development of school library.
- NCED** Planning and organizing in-service training of teachers, educational managers, head teachers and other educational personnel; training of trainers; accreditation of training courses; support and supervision to PTTCs; research on teacher development and teaching.
- NFEC** Annual planning and programming for adult education programme; post-literacy and continuing education programme.

Reorganization within the central institutions of MOES

MOES's existing structure should be revisited so that the structure facilitates MOES in undertaking its new roles and responsibilities, such as policy-making and planning, standards setting, co-ordination of donor assistance, monitoring and evaluation.

Following the establishment of DOE, the role of the Educational Administration Division of MOES has become irrelevant for two reasons: First, MOES will not be involved in actual implementation and administrative tasks. Second, all administrative tasks would eventually be transferred to DOE. Therefore, there is a need to redefine the roles and functions of the Educational Administration Division and this has to be seen in the emerging functions of MOES such as policy development, analysis of educational policy issues, co-ordination, standards setting, monitoring etc.

MOES, in recognition of the value of human resource development, has recently established the organizational training and development section. This section is located within the General Administration Division. The study team feels that planning for human resource development cannot be separated from the overall planning of educational development. The gap between HRD activities and an organization's activities and programmes is not productive. Therefore, the organizational training and development section could be located under the planning division. Capacity building activities could be housed in this section. This will facilitate interaction between programme people and those involved in staff development planning.

The study has revealed a number of organizational/structural dysfunctionalities and inconsistencies in the MOE/DOE. The restructuring of MOES in 1999 was undertaken without any organizational assessments, as there was urgent need for creating a department to take charge of BPE activities (i.e. DOE) following the abolition of the Basic Primary Education

Development Unit (BPEDU). This restructuring has resulted in a proliferation of a number of new administrative units, whose functions and roles have not been properly conceived (i.e. private and boarding schools, educational materials distribution, policy analysis, organizational training and development, research and development). There is no clear delineation of functions among the several sections in DOE. In some instances, responsibilities assigned to the sections do not match section titles (e.g. training and supervision section, women's education). In some cases, works do not feature in the structure. There are frequent mismatches between organizational charts and section activities. There is fragmentation of important activities that may be better served by being brought together. Sometimes, often contradictory and unrelated tasks and functions have been jumbled together. Some functions are found located in more than one section or institution. Uneven distribution of tasks and responsibilities, confusion about one's roles and functions, slow or absent co-ordination, weak linkages between and/or among the sections within the same institution, conflicts between sections over control of programmes and resources, blurred lines of authority and responsibility, examples of hollow structures and orphaned functions were also noted. It is recommended that MOES revisit the existing organizational chart and reorganize the ministry and its constituent bodies at the central level. This will require an in-depth analysis of the current organizational structure.

Develop capacity within MOES to carry out management auditing

Capacity needs to be developed within MOES to conduct in-depth analyses of the jobs that are mandated and jobs that are actually carried out by various levels and units of MOES organization and see if any jobs are misplaced, not attended, or grossly overlapping. In other words, conduct management auditing of the structural functions and place the functions on appropriate structures.

Amalgamate independently operating teacher training institutions into NCED

Teacher training is rather fragmented and uncoordinated. There are at least three separate institutions currently involved in teacher training: (a) SEDEC, (b) NCED and (c) DEC. In addition, DOE's teacher training and supervision section is also involved in recurrent types of teacher training courses for primary teachers. These four institutions should be amalgamated with NCED in order to avoid fragmentation, overlapping and waste of resources in teacher training. In the long run, NCED could be developed as an autonomous institution with its own Governing Council. The PTTCs should be converted into regional centres for educational development (RCEDs) with added responsibilities.

Alternatively, DEC could have an independent existence with re-defined roles and responsibilities, but mainly relating to pre-service and in-service training of all levels of teachers, educational broadcasts to supplement and complement formal teaching in schools, and an open educational programme to serve children who remain outside the formal school system.

Unified management of formal and non-formal primary education

MOES may also consider merging some of the functions of NFEC with DOE to reduce existing overlaps, fragmentation, and lack of co-ordination in the delivery of formal and non-formal education. Achieving universal primary enrolment requires that institutions and strategies handling formal and non-formal education are better co-ordinated and brought into the single line of command. Therefore, school outreach, flexible schooling and out-of-school programmes currently under NFEC should be transferred to DOE.

Changing administrative practices

Perhaps DOE is one of the most important institutions whose actions determine not only how other actors in the centre will play their part but also the effectiveness of the sector. An analysis of DOE operations shows that there is a need to bring about substantial shifts in its roles and functions. Examples are listed below:

<i>From</i>	<i>To</i>
Low risk taking	High risk taking
Procedural	Professional
Supply driven	Demand driven
Self-serving	District oriented
Cost/input indicators	Output/satisfaction/performance indicators
Highly reactive	Highly proactive
Hierarchical	Teamwork/flat/flexible
Single mode of delivery	Alternative delivery
Implementation	Strategy development
In-house	Partnerships/contracting
Last minute business	Advance planning and plans/programmes direct activities
Administrators in control	Professionals in control
Crisis management	Carefully planned action

Alignment of authority, responsibility and resources needed

In DOE, section chiefs have planning, implementing, supervisory, and reporting responsibilities with regard to their respective components. The data revealed that DOE sections, where much of the action happens with respect to programme implementation, are devoid of the authority and resources needed to accomplish their tasks. Most activities often lead towards the apex of the hierarchy. It is not clear which activities must go through the topmost position and which decisions should be left for the second or third level positions. The

chiefs are found to have very little authority in terms of completing the tasks of their own sections. They are just the ‘initiators’ of the activities. In many instances, the final decisions lie beyond the section’s structure. So, the section chiefs have to spend a considerable amount of time in following-up to get things done leaving very little time for planning, monitoring and taking up new initiatives. This results in serious delay in completing the tasks. In order to avoid unnecessary delay in completing a task, the activities could be distinguished in terms of policy or operational levels, allowing the section chiefs to make operational level decisions. In order to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in programme implementation, it will be necessary to strike a balance between responsibility, decision authority and access to resources. Professional autonomy granted to the sections has little value unless corresponding decision-making and financial authority is not assured. The director-general and directors should free themselves from the trivia of routine administration to ensure that they can effectively provide strong institutional leadership and can devote time to strategy development.

Adopt a task force approach for field implementation

BPEP II is still being planned, managed and implemented centrally, although efforts towards decentralization continue. In this regard, DOE will continue to have a key role in programme development and implementation. In order to facilitate the effective and efficient implementation of the programmes, the organizational structure of DOE has to be designed in a manner so that sequential chain of processes are followed in implementation and the desired synergistic effects are enhanced. Our analysis of organizational structures and processes reveals that different sections/units of DOE and other central institutions place unilateral emphasis on their respective programmes and activities often in isolation without sufficiently considering the integrated functioning of the larger overall system. Existing structures and processes do not allow structural integration and therefore activities get implemented in the most disconnected and fragmented manner. It is recommended to form interdisciplinary programme development and implementation teams in DOE,

drawing members from different sections/units and institutions. For instance, such a team can consist of people from CDC, NCED, NFEC, DEC and from different sections of DOE and this team would be responsible for a defined geographical/development region. Each team would be responsible for developing comprehensive educational programmes for the given area and overseeing programmes in an integrated manner. One immediate benefit of the task force approach is that central programmes and activities are conceived in totality in consideration of the needs of a given geographical area and also delivered in an integrated manner. This would make the programme more responsive to the achievement of outcomes. Competition among the teams about achievements could stimulate improved quality performance.

Staffing and staff development

Formulate a national training policy

There is no formal training policy for education sector management. Although courses are provided for supervisors and District Education Officers, no other courses exist for other categories of educational personnel. There is a need for a national training policy in human resources development. Without it, human resource development will be haphazard, unsystematic, uncoordinated and without direction. Unplanned and ad hoc staff development activities can become costly. All decisions about staff development should be made and supported within the framework of the national HRD policy. A systematic plan for staff development is also needed to enhance MOES' ability to manage and develop the education system. Such a plan is essential to improve not only the efficiency and effectiveness of the ministry and its constituent bodies but also for the organization and management of the education system.

Reorganize the education service

Most positions within MOES belong to the Nepal Education Service; one of the service categories within the civil service. Thus, educational

administration in Nepal is structured along the professional line on the assumption that managers of education should be knowledgeable in curriculum development, teaching methods and techniques or foundations of education. However, a pure public administration view remains inadequate to respond to the complex organizational, institutional and individual problems of managing the education system.

Against this background, the creation of a separate service category and groups has not only enhanced specialization but also offered a better prospect for career advancement to the employees. These employees have the advantage of having some training in general education and pedagogy, but a disadvantage in that they have little training as managers, planners or administrators. Therefore, two actions are recommended. First, each new entrant should be provided with training in general and personnel management, administration, accounting, budgeting, communication, monitoring, leadership, etc. Second, MOES should also consider opening the door to statisticians, economists, policy analysts, sociologists, political scientists, gender analysts, information specialists by creating separate service sub-groups of educational planning and research. Many of the tasks relating to educational development, such as educational planning, monitoring, evaluation, research and statistical analysis, information management require an interdisciplinary team of people. Arrangements should be made so that persons hired under the educational planning and research sub-group have prospects for career advancement. Unless such prospects are assured, retaining people can be difficult.

The Education Service, among others, has been divided into two groups: (a) educational administration; and (b) test and measurement, which comprise nine sub-groups in the former group and two sub-groups in the latter. One major purpose of this classification is to enhance specialization. But, this specialization exists only at the entry level (Class III). At the Class II level, there is no such elaborate classification of service sub-groups, resulting in a serious mismatch between jobs and incumbents' qualifications and expertise.

In other words, at the Class II level, roles are largely multi-functional rather than specialized. Specialization is not always desirable and necessary, but in specific functions – such as curriculum and textbook development – teacher training and examinations specialization must be maintained to avoid the placement of persons without relevant training and academic background. Therefore, it is recommended that the classification of service groups into sub-groups should be maintained up to Class II level at least for select positions in CDC and NCED by permitting Class III specialists to be promoted to Class III within the same area, so that in positions such as teacher trainers and curriculum and textbook developers, people with relevant background and training are posted.

Finally, there should be a more rigorous screening procedure for candidates seeking career positions in MOES. Such screening should include many of the measures adopted by other ministries in HMG (e.g. written testing, interviews, aptitude tests, etc.). Additionally, the entry qualification should be raised from a B.Ed. degree to a M.Ed. degree. This, however, may not be possible in the immediate term. As such, candidates with combined B.A./B.Ed. qualifications should be given preference when assessing entrance qualifications.

Assessment of education and training needs

Training needs of educational personnel have not been assessed systematically. A review of NASC and NCED experience shows that training needs are determined on an impressionistic basis. FOE courses have become obsolete or irrelevant to the changing need of MOES due to the practice of devising courses in the university without regard of the ministry's needs. A broad assessment of training needs from a national perspective must be undertaken periodically so that training institutions can devise courses according to the needs.

*Link training opportunities to performance
and organizational needs*

Training opportunities in MOES are not linked to performance, commitment or to the needs of the organization. The study revealed that staff are selected for in-country and overseas training primarily on the basis of political or personal considerations. Not only does this practice undermine the quality and potential usefulness of these training opportunities, it creates great unhappiness and dissatisfaction amongst those who are excluded. Rather than strive to improve their performance, the message for such staff is clear: create effective political and social networks that will enable access to staff-training decision-making processes. Study tours are perhaps the best example of the effects of an inadequate staff development strategy as they have no clear purpose, no explicit process for analyzing or disseminating the findings, and are completely disconnected from organizational improvement. Nevertheless, middle and senior level MOES staff – indeed, even political representatives – view such tours and activities as one of the major goals to be achieved whilst they have access to power and influence. Donor agencies play an active role in supporting such distortions. For instance, given the interference and partiality of training and staff development decisions, it may be helpful to build better practices via the introduction of a ‘training passport’ that staff would carry with them throughout their careers and which would specify an entitlement to particular staff development and training opportunities at various key stages (e.g. pre-management levels, preparation for DEO roles, etc.).

Provide staff with updated job descriptions

There are job descriptions for most officials and institutions within MOES. These job descriptions are rarely consulted. Most officials are not fully aware of their roles and responsibilities and in many cases do not hold current, detailed and agreed job descriptions that might enable their performance to be assessed against some explicit criteria. This is not viewed

in MOES as being problematic. Rather, most staff work to informal guidelines and have a number of responsibilities and accountabilities not necessarily related to the unit or section in which they work. Job descriptions should be prepared or updated for all MOES staff. They should specify tasks, accountabilities, lines of authority and the expected results. They should play an important role in appraisal and promotion. Each employee should immediately be provided with job descriptions.

Develop job specifications for key positions in MOES

Staffing decisions (e.g. placement, and transfer) are sometimes made without consideration of requirements of the job and staff competencies. Instances of mismatch between the qualifications and skills required by a certain position and the skills, training and experience of the incumbents have been found. The lack of knowledge about the job, i.e. job demands of the employee and human and technical skills that are required, can also contribute to poor staffing decisions. Therefore, it is recommended that MOES should prepare job specifications for every key position describing the minimum acceptable qualifications, knowledge, skills, judgement, physical skills, communication skills, experience, and abilities that the incumbent must possess to perform the job successfully. A written job specification will help identify staff with appropriate qualifications.

Improve staff posting and transfer practices

Staff posting and transfer decisions are taken at the highest level. Administrative culture makes this act a near secret process. Staff are posted and transferred without consultation with the concerned units and the expertise background and work motivation of the staff. With every change in the government, staff are transferred on a massive scale. The study suggests that staff posting and transfer practices of MOE could be improved by:

- (a) consulting the related office head before making any transfer or placement;
- (b) using job specifications to ensure that the person has the required

qualifications, training and experience; (c) linking posting/transfer with the interest and motivation of the concerned staff; (d) sticking to the existing minimum two-year rule; and (e) decentralizing personnel management functions.

Planned interchange and mobility of staff

Job rotation can be used as an on-the-job management development technique. Central staff have greater learning opportunities than their counterparts in the districts. Staff working in educational reform programmes have higher opportunities than others. Current practices of staffing can cause operational and morale problems as some staff never manage to be posted in central institutions or in institutions where external support is available. While staff retention is often emphasized in DOE, it is often forgotten that many others working within MOES also deserve to be posted in BPEP. MOES should consider adopting a job rotation policy where employees are rotated to allow them to gain different kinds of experience: administrative, managerial, professional.

Improve performance appraisal system

The existing annual confidential appraisal system is inherently problematic as it fails to measure levels of performance of individuals. It is too subjective to offer any accurate and fair evaluation of actual job performance. The personnel evaluation systems are ineffective for the improvement of performance. The employee does not get professional constructive feedback that would lead to improvement in individual as well as organizational performance. It is flawed in many ways, not least because it encourages a lack of accountability and transparency. It is completely disconnected from individual or organizational development and is viewed as an accounting tool at best and an instrument of control and domination at worst. Data suggest that personnel appraisal becomes a subjective and invariably a process of testing of loyalties and performance. Improvement of

appraisal procedures will require more objective and reliable criteria, training of managers and institution heads in personnel administration and human resource management, and clear delineation of standards of performance and excellence.

Greater participation of women in leadership positions

The representation across MOES of women and disadvantaged groups is dismal and there is little evidence that MOES has thought seriously about how to end the discrimination that these groups incur. They have virtually no access to formal power or influence and are grossly under-represented in leadership positions. Adequate provision should be made to ensure greater participation in professionally qualified women in the management structures at both central and district levels through substantial affirmative actions and intensive gender awareness activities. Capacity development must target gender disparities and foster gender balance. The different needs of men and women must be assessed and addressed. Obstacles to their participation in staff development courses must be addressed. Women's needs and constraints must be seriously considered while taking decisions on placements, transfers, and staff development. MOES must consider reserving a certain percentage of head teacher and RP positions for women.

Strengthen the capacity of FOE

Capacity development efforts have for the most part concentrated on MOES and its institutions with little or no attention to the need to develop the capacities of the other national partners, whose contributions are critical for the success of the educational policies and programmes. FOE is the main supplier of human resources required for the ministry. Among other things, the professional and institutional capacity of MOES and the school system as a whole is dependent on the capacity of FOE. For most academic staff in the FOE, teaching is a low priority and there is a serious shortage of faculty members who are qualified to teach or to undertake research. FOE has not been able to attract competent students. In many cases, students do not even

attend classes because, like their professors, they have jobs in other parts of the country. Library and laboratory facilities are almost non-existent. Courses are outdated and many of these courses were initially designed to prepare secondary teachers rather than education specialists and experts required for the ministry.

FOE is largely unsupported by the government, and except for a handful of academic staff, FOE as an institution is far removed from the educational development initiatives and school reform activities currently taking place in the country. The MOE requires graduates with knowledge and skills beyond teacher training, but FOE has been slow to respond to this new demand. It neither has the capacity to influence educational policy nor educational practice. Given the central role played by FOE, helping it to grow professionally and institutionally should be a part of comprehensive educational reform strategy for the country. The government should consider providing support to FOE to help improve existing academic and training programmes, as well as to create new ones. Assistance should be provided to undertake curriculum reform and to develop the professional capacity of the faculty through academic upgrading programmes, exposure visits, faculty exchange and funded research of different players in the education sector, including FOE.

Training in interpersonal and gender skills for senior managers

Educational reform in Nepal has been an international undertaking. The government receives bilateral and multilateral grant and loan assistance from several international organizations. MOE/DOE staff need to develop expertise in dealing with international organizations. They need to negotiate with donor representatives, articulate the needs and priorities of the government, challenge the viewpoints, and prepare the reports and documents required by different agencies. Senior managers of MOE/DOE need adequate interpersonal skills for dealing with people of different nationalities.

*Teaching experience be made a requirement
for entry into the education service*

The ministry is identified to be a ‘technical ministry’, and only those who have acquired professional degrees in education have access to its careers. The Nepal Education Service forms a service group, meant for those who have Bachelor degrees in education and those who want to join the ‘technical ministry’. Being in MOES basically involves working with teachers but the paradox is that teaching experience is not a pre-requisite for joining the Education Service. During the interview process some respondents indicated that the demand of a few years of teaching experience on the part of incumbents in the Education Service would add extra value. There are certain positions within MOES, which would particularly require teaching experience: school supervisors, teacher trainers, textbook developers, district education officers. It is desirable for MOES staff to understand the realities of classrooms and school life. Teaching experience should be a valued requirement for entry into MOES and preferential treatment should be considered for candidates with teaching experience. The quality of teacher trainers, specialists and textbook writers (educationalists) would be enhanced if they have had experience of teaching.

Job induction courses

Due to the lack of adequate on-the-job and in-service training systems, newly appointed or delegated personnel take a long time to become efficient and effective in their respective positions. Training programmes for educational personnel must take account of their dual role as managers and educational professionals. To this end, a job induction training programme should be developed for newly recruited Class III personnel to prepare them for the jobs that they have to perform, familiarize them with the work environment, and provide them with the fundamentals of public service management and administration. The induction course should be seen as a foundation

programme with two strands. First, it should provide new educational personnel with a basic understanding of educational policy, educational plans and programmes, educational rules and regulations, roles and responsibilities of various institutions within the sub-sector as well as pedagogical issues such as curriculum, teacher training, assessment and examinations. Second, new recruits should be provided with the basic fundamentals of public service management, public policy, development administration, fiscal administration, financial rules and regulations, office management and government procedures.

Introduction of tailor-made courses

Educational personnel in MOES perform multiple functions. There are a number of posts in different offices of MOES that require diverse specialized technical skills. The knowledge and skills required of a person in CDC might be entirely different from those required by NCED or NFEC. These specific competency/skill requirements cannot be met through induction courses that are primarily designed to orient staff to the fundamentals of management and educational administration. Therefore, it is recommended that MOES develop and impart a number of short-term in-service training courses tailored to the specific skill requirements of the personnel undertaking specific work roles and responsibilities in different institutions of the MOE. Such courses might include educational planning, curriculum and textbooks development, non-formal education, early childhood education, teacher training, school supervision, educational management information system, test and measurement.

Training of senior managers in modern tools and management techniques

Institutional heads and those in supervisory roles are heavily involved in functions relating to personnel/human resource management. Most senior managers perform these functions without any training in human resource

management. With the introduction of externally supported school reform programmes, the demand for the use of modern management techniques such as job description, job analysis, performance evaluation, strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation – has increased dramatically. The study shows that there is a lack of awareness and application of these modern tools and techniques of management in almost every institution. The situation in the district offices is even worse partly because there is little or no exposure among the staff but also these tools are rarely used even in the central institutions. Training courses should be organized for senior managers in the application of modern management tools and techniques without delay.

Introduce a compulsory annual training to all staff

Compulsory refresher training should be introduced for a duration of at least one week. This should be an appreciative training in the general developments relating to educational reform, public sector management, educational policy, etc.

Introduce a mandatory field stay programme

Central staff must be subjected to a mandatory annual field stay programme of at least one-week duration to familiarize themselves with the school and community conditions, and gain first-hand experience of programme implementation.

Increased sharing of experiences and new knowledge

One extremely positive and low-cost method of staff development is to encourage sharing of knowledge and skills among the staff members. Staff members, returning from overseas or in-country training courses, workshops, seminars or study tours, should be required to share their newly acquired experience, knowledge and skills with others in the organization. Institutional arrangements should be put in place to support such activities.

Need for a more focused approach of staff development

Training has, in the past, been a peripheral activity within MOES. Senior officials and managers are hardly involved in deciding which training activities will be offered and where. Training is regarded as being the responsibility of specialized institutions outside the institution where the activities take place. This 'remove and train' approach offers a very weak link between training and the wider goals of the organization as well as the day-to-day work of employees. Since the link between training and actual work practice is weak, employee behaviour seldom changes as a result of those training activities. A more focused approach to training and staff development is needed that is closely linked to the daily work of employees. Staff development activities, therefore, should be closely linked to the actual demands of the daily work environment. These activities should be delivered on a just-in-time basis and directly in the context of the job or task at hand. In this mode, the trainee is not taken away from the job, but receives assistance on the spot and during actual work activities. This opportunity allows the staff to learn the knowledge and skill identified by himself / herself. In organizations like DOE where jobs demand a high degree of professional rigour and which must work to cater to the needs of the entire sector, such a focused approach of staff development should be put into practice. Towards this end, an HRD officer may be appointed to initiate, co-ordinate and facilitate training and development activities.

Maintain a lean staff

IA has revealed that the present numerical strength of personnel in both the central and district offices can be considered sufficient to carry out the present volume of tasks. The challenge for the system as a whole is to remain lean in the structure and number of personnel while fully exploiting available human resources already at its disposition. However, a more detailed and documented study can be undertaken on management systems and processes for the calculation of the workload and personnel needed. Based on such a

study, the detailed personnel allocation by institution and sections could be finalized.

Link non-monetary incentives with performance

Incentive systems are critically important in improving both individual and organizational performance. Despite the importance of financial incentives, non-monetary incentives play a very strong role in explaining good performance. Research shows that organizations that focus on motivating staff, even in the absence of monetary rewards, consistently have better performance. A number of non-monetary incentives do exist in MOES: opportunities to study abroad, foreign study tours, possibility of academic upgrading, awards and medals, possibility of being getting greater and more important responsibilities, involvement in committee works, placement in high profile institutions, etc. Data show that hard-working, committed and goal-oriented staff are often not rewarded, nor are the non-productive staff punished. The use of these non-monetary incentives has not been prudent. Data confirm that non-merit considerations play a big part in the distribution of these non-monetary incentives, which often becomes disincentive to the many who are excluded. The distribution of non-monetary incentives should be performance-based, equitable and directly linked to the work.

Institution heads' ability to enhance the most direct incentive, salary or pay raise, is very limited as reward structures are normally uniform. Salary increases are not tied to merit and performance, leaving the more productive individual in the same boat as a non-performer. Even the non-monetary rewards are centrally controlled. The heads of institutions feel powerless in that they have little or no resources to reward their best performing staff. They do not have any role in the nominations of staff for foreign or local training courses. Individual institution heads or managers should have discretion in matters of rewarding their subordinates.

Increased co-ordination and utilization of technical assistance

Technical assistance can potentially play a key role in supporting national capacity building. There is no clear policy as regards the use of national or international technical assistance. It is supply driven and the system is inadequately informed about the activities to be undertaken under technical assistance. Evidence suggests that available technical inputs have been grossly underutilized or poorly utilized. Data signal widespread dissatisfaction within the system about the indiscriminate use of consultants, and with the poor performance of the technical assistance system as a whole. There is little evidence that the system has built its capacity as a result of technical assistance received externally. Successful utilization of technical assistance will require able and competent government counterparts. External assistance will be better utilized when the local counterparts are able to direct the experts. Technical assistance should be genuinely demand driven and respond to national needs. There is a need, too, for a radical change in the way in which technical assistance resources are utilized. Managers should have access to resources under technical assistance resources. This will require a simple procedure of acquiring such resources.

Information, communication and decision-making

Improve intra and inter-institutional flow and exchange of information

MOES is a large organization having several units such as institutions, divisions, departments, and sections at the centre and there are a large number of units in the regions and districts. Apparently, the size of MOES becomes an impediment to effective communication. However, it is possible to devise appropriate communication systems. Evidently, effective and efficient communication becomes as essential as life-blood for MOES. Data indicate that information and communication at all levels is based on strict hierarchies

and reinforced by informal power networks. There are few examples in MOES of two-way communication, or of communication based on trust, shared purpose or respect. It is recommended to increase the flow and exchange of information among the various units and institutions through increased prompt and efficient frequency of circulars, inter-unit/inter-institution meetings and publication of a newsletter.

Establish 'knowledge centres' within the institutions

Capacity development requires good access to information. A learning organization is one in which people are engaged in a continuous learning process. Towards this end, 'knowledge centres' should be established within the institutions, where staff can access the latest information on school reform, recent developments in the field of education, best practices, innovations, findings of national and global studies on education, etc., through the Internet and e-mail.

Increased use of information technology (IT) in day-to-day work

MOE should consider using modern methods and technology within its institutions to increase efficiency and reduce paperwork. It should integrate information and technology in its day-to-day work. In the most immediate term, all Class III officials should be provided with computer training. In the long-term, however, MOE should promote the use of computer intelligence for effective planning, monitoring, controlling and decision-making. The induction training course suggested above should also provide basic skills in computer application, modern information systems, and use of other machines and technologies. Some countries (e.g. Malaysia) have instituted an IT management award to recognize individuals and government departments for excellence in IT use and management in order to promote wider use of IT.

Planning

MOES considers planning to be an essential activity and institutional infrastructures have been created for undertaking planning activities. In many cases there appears to be: (a) top down approach to planning; (b) a lack of integration between different sub-sectoral plans; (c) a lack of long-term strategic vision; (d) unrealistic targets; (e) a lack of trained personnel; (f) lack of accurate and reliable information; (g) a lack of a mechanism to assess local realities and needs; (h) gaps between estimated resource needs to carry out planned activities and actual allocations; (i) ad hoc or piecemeal allocation of resources; (j) little assessment of the resources required to undertake activities; (k) delay in releasing funds; (l) inadequate co-ordination in planning efforts of different institutions/sections; (m) limited involvement of relevant staff and stakeholders in planning and programming; (n) weak linkage between planning and implementation; (o) poor connection between annual work plans and budgets and long-term plans; (p) little or no reference to previous year's planning in the preparation of annual operating plans; (q) short-term nature of planning, based on availability of resources; (r) failure of plans to provide direction at the operational level; (s) limited scope for reviewing plans and learning from the experiences of plan implementation; (t) fuzzy distinction between strategic and operational planning; (u) programme planning carried out based on donor requirements; (v) stakeholders involved as passive recipients; (w) no comprehensive system for determining programme objectives, beneficiary needs, and targets; (x) programme design divorced from monitoring, evaluation and reporting activities. A number of remedies could be considered.

Create an interdisciplinary team of planning officers

The planning of a complex programme like educational reform is an interdisciplinary task. The planning sections of DOE/MOE should be strengthened in terms of their professional capacity to carry out sectoral assessments, formulate plans and programmes, allocate resources, set targets,

and monitor and evaluate educational plans and programmes. These sections should have staff officials with a relevant background and training in educational planning, statistics, economics, policy analysis, information science, and programme evaluation. An interdisciplinary team of planning officers should be created in these sections that can not only prepare sectoral and sub-sectoral plans and programmes but also provide technical assistance to other line agencies and districts to prepare the plans. These planning officers should belong to the educational planning and research cadre.

*Provide short formal training in planning
to all Class II and III officers*

Each Class II and III official within MOES should receive short formal training in planning, programming and budgeting without delay.

Make a distinction between strategic and operational planning

A distinction between strategic and operational planning is needed so that those who are to plan and control the strategic issues do so without being involved in operational tasks, and those who have operational responsibilities do so to operationalize the national visions and goals. The existing PIP and ASIP that guide BPEP II operations are mixed up and contain elements of both strategic and operational planning.

*Establish a strategic planning team in the planning division
of MOES*

The planning division of MOES as the superior body should be responsible to guide the sectoral institutions and the districts with regard to the perspective, long-term planning including the definition of the vision and corresponding strategies. The division should be advisory to the National Planning Commission in matters of educational planning and programming. It should assume a strong leadership in the development of visions (long-

term/perspective/policy planning) of 10 years and beyond as well as in the development of corresponding mid-term plans for a period of three to five years. In doing this, the planning division may establish a strategic planning team including representatives from different institutions in the sector. It should organize strategic planning workshops and other appropriate exercises and produce policy paper, which provides the overall guidance to the sector as a whole. The role of the planning division should change from the collection and compilation of the planning inputs coming from the different institutions, into facilitating the different institutions and sections in preparing their own plans.

*Establish an intersectional planning team
in each institution within MOES*

The sectoral institutions (e.g. DOE, CDC and NCED) would then undertake annual planning and programming activities to operationalize the national visions, goals and strategies. There would be an intersectional planning team in each sectoral institution headed by the respective institution heads. These teams would be responsible for technical aspects, consistency and comprehensiveness of planning documents. The planning division should be closely involved and be part of the respective planning team in order to provide guidance to ensure consistency between annual programmes and overall national visions and strategies.

Planning should always be based on past experiences. Hence, prior to the detailed planning, an evaluation of the experiences made should be carried out. The lessons learned should subsequently form the basis for the planning of the next phase.

Improve EMIS

Effective planning and monitoring cannot be achieved without an effective EMIS. There is a need to increase the availability of educational data particularly those relating to the distribution and use of teacher quota, student achievement, school performance, teacher performance, school supervision, availability and use of curriculum and instructional materials on the one hand, and to improve the credibility and accuracy of the available data on the other.

Monitoring and evaluation

*Monitoring and evaluation be made an essential part
of educational management*

Monitoring and evaluation is at the rudimentary stage within MOES. There are parallel systems of monitoring operating in MOES and in foreign-aided projects, with little interaction and collaboration. For the most part, monitoring is nothing more than a data collection game, mostly a quantitative one. Monitoring activities are highly centralized, which give priority to information needs of central agencies. Data suppliers see monitoring as a ritual of filling out forms. The monitoring and evaluation as a management tool is yet to be understood and appreciated by managers.

Develop a set of manageable and useful indicators

Data gathered are rarely transformed into meaningful information and indicators and hence into institutional action. It is recommended to create a set of manageable and useful indicators, which tell objectively about the nature and health of the education system. An ME system is badly needed to track DOE's ability to track physical and financial progress of implementation, detect deviations from targets, identify implementation difficulties and issues, and take necessary corrective measures.

Wider dissemination of findings and results of studies and evaluations

The awareness of studies and evaluations among policy-makers, implementers and administrators is very low. Dissemination should be an essential activity of all research activities, whether internal or external.

Increased documentation and use of research and evaluation findings

Available data and perceptions of respondents in the survey confirmed that studies and evaluations have had no influence in policy formulation, programme development or implementation. A proper mechanism of documenting the research studies in the field of education is urgently needed. The newly created policy analysis section in MOES can begin to act as a documentation centre. Brief papers should be prepared based on the findings of the new studies for the consumption of senior policy-makers of the ministry. This will enhance policy-makers' access to new knowledge and research findings, which will eventually lead to increased use of information in policy-making.

Avoid duplication by creating a single system of data collection

Duplication in data collection should be eliminated and a single system of data collection should be instituted using common methods or formats at least for core data.

Make monitoring a participatory process

Monitoring has primarily been a central activity. Stakeholders and beneficiaries of the educational system have little say in the monitoring process. Parents and community members who are normally kept away from educational affairs can contribute immensely in the monitoring process.

Set performance goals and standards

Performance goals should be set for the regions, districts and the schools and measured to find out how well they are meeting these goals. The performance of the regions, districts and schools should be evaluated against these goals and targets.

Establish a reporting system

Institutions at all levels do not produce any reports to inform the public of their activities and accomplishments. A system of preparing performance reports should be established whereby each institution from the centre down to the school level produces a report describing its performance results and/or the levels of achievement on identified indicators. Performance reports should be transparent and readily available to the public. The ability of the institutions to publish and disseminate reports on their operations must be strengthened through training and other forms of support.

Establish a core group of monitoring experts in MOES/DOE

A monitoring system cannot function without a core group of trained professionals in the field. Therefore, monitoring and evaluation sections of MOES, DOE and other institutions should have people with specialized training in monitoring. Since monitoring is embedded in every activity, every official, both Class II and III, will benefit from some training in monitoring.

Measures for capacity building at the regional and district level

Redefine the structure and functions of the Regional Education Directorate

The Regional Education Directorate (RED) is seen as another unnecessary layer of educational bureaucracy that simply complicates the administrative process and relationships between the centre and the district. The existence of RED has remained at stake for they have failed to become performing structures. The establishment of DOE in the centre has further overlap and duplication and has rendered RED as an excessive layer of hierarchy in the management of education. A review of the existing job descriptions of RED showed that many of the functions either overlap with the central institutions or with the district education offices. Many of the functions have lost meaning in the context of decentralization where district is conceived as the unit of planning and development. Our analysis of the questionnaire and interview data clearly reveal that RED has been predominantly an organization of limited control and service to the districts, and also for service to the central institutions. The ability of RED to carry out many of the functions assigned to it is constrained due to lack of resources and effective authority. During the interview process, it was repeated over and over again that the powers and functions delegated to it are only found on paper and that someone else does their actual exercise at a higher level.

Many respondents still feel that RED should be retained with monitoring functions, because central institutions are too far from the districts to carry out programme monitoring at the district level. The budget speech of the fiscal year 2000/2001 states that RED should be made responsible for carrying out monitoring and co-ordination tasks. However, field data do suggest that many of the expected monitoring functions have not been effectively carried out, although instances of RED staff paying occasional field visits are found

provided there are funds and instructions from the centre. There are no incentives to report mismanagement, poor performance, or good performance for that matter. In the absence of effective authority, RED cannot take any administrative action against poor performance or mismanagement. Perhaps for all these reasons, the Administrative Reforms Commission of 1991, the Basic and Primary Education Master Plan of 1997, and Organizational Structure Study of 1999 had recommended to abolish RED. There is sufficient evidence to conclude that there is no need of an intermediate structure between the centre and the districts in its present form. Therefore, MOES should urgently redefine the structure and functions of RED. Three models of RED organization have been presented for consideration:

- RED as an extension of DOE where it merely assists DOE in monitoring the implementation of centrally formulated programmes. In addition, it will have a few other activities specifically assigned to it by central level institutions (e.g. administration of SLC examinations; teacher personnel administration; collection, compilation and processing of educational statistics; administration and supervision of higher secondary schools, etc.). DOE and other central institutions are far removed from the districts to carry out monitoring and supervisory functions. Therefore, it is imperative to have a supervisory/monitoring body close to the implementation site.
- RED as a self-contained entity (a DOE in each region) where each RED takes on responsibility for planning, programming, budgeting, implementing and monitoring educational programmes and also for administering schools and teachers. Should MOES decide to convert REDs into a form of regional DOE, there will be need for redefining the role and organizational structure of the central DOE.
- RED could possibly be converted into regional offices for the Regional Office of the Controller of Examinations (ROCE). The ROCE is heavily burdened with the tasks relating to the administration of SLC examinations at the expense of developmental tasks. Therefore, much

of the work of ROCE could be delegated to the regional offices so as to allow the former to focus on tasks such as test development, standardization, analysis of test scores, feedback to schools and districts, research on achievement related issues etc. In this case, RED would be abolished in its present form and with its present mandate.

Redefine the roles of the DEOs

The following roles have been identified for the District Education Offices: (a) district planning and programming; (b) school improvement planning; (c) oversee the administration and management of schools; (d) support SMCs and head teachers in ensuring that schools are properly managed; (d) supervise and guide schools and provide professional services and support; (e) implementation of educational development programmes; (f) school location / relocation planning; (g) teacher deployment and redeployment; (h) distribution of educational materials (textbooks, teacher support materials); (i) mobilize peoples' organizations, NGOs and other community-based organizations in matters of educational development; (j) performance measurement/evaluation of schools and teachers; (k) inform the public of the performance of schools; and (l) management of partnership contract.

New developments could include the following:

Restructuring of the DEO

The role of DEO must shift from that of implementation of centrally prepared programmes to that of planning, monitoring and evaluation of district level educational development programmes. This shift in the role will require an appropriate organizational structure. The institutional analysis study has found a number of organizational anomalies: wide span of control, illogical grouping of functions (one unit looking after teacher training and routine administrative functions), uneven distribution of responsibilities, lack of focal

persons with specific responsibilities to co-ordinate a number of components such as early childhood education.

Appointment of Class I level DEOs in districts with large school systems

The Class II status of the district education officers does not allow them to command head teachers and teachers who hold the same rank as DEO. Therefore, the government should appoint Class I officers in districts with large school systems. The Ministry of Agriculture (MOA) has already started appointing Class I officials in the district agriculture offices.

Stop appointing DEOs on acting basis

A large number of DEOs hold their positions on an acting basis. The appointment on an acting basis has distinct implications for the quality of educational leadership and management in the districts. There are no defined criteria for picking people for such acting appointments. Neither seniority nor any tangible indicators of performance is used in making such appointments. Data suggest that seniority, leadership capacity, professional maturity, training, understanding of the situation of the district, etc., should be considered in identifying and appointing the district education officers.

Comprehensive package for decentralized planning

There was a broad consensus that the attempts in the recent past to decentralize planning have been fundamentally flawed because they were not supported by efforts to build the required local capacity. Most important, attempts were made to introduce changes in planning practices without introducing corresponding changes in financing and management. Decentralization analysts argue that there is a need to view improved local planning practices in connection with devolution of resources and responsibilities to local authorities. Financial decentralization is a key to the

success of any decentralization process. Decentralization cannot succeed either in the short or long run without ensuring that resources are available to the decentralized organs to carry out responsibilities allocated to them. To this end, the study team recommends a comprehensive review of the BPEP in the light of the decentralization scheme. An immediate priority would be the need to provide assistance at the district level to complete the preparation and update of the DEPs that has already been initiated. District offices must be continuously engaged in the planning process. It is often said that the benefit of planning may not come from implementing the plans produced but from producing them. The reason is that by engaging in it one can come to understand the process of reform and its complexity. Further, district planning activities have been supported from the various donors which are already active in the country on different projects. There is little or no co-ordination among these different initiatives and efforts. More communication and co-ordination will be necessary among the actors.

Appoint planning officers in DEOs

MOES should consider appointing, in all DEOs, planning officers who will take overall responsibility of preparing DEPs and also co-ordinate the preparation of SIPs in schools. Of course, these planning officers will need an extensive training in educational planning, including others who are to work in planning teams.

Establishment of school districts

Each district could be divided into three to four educational zones (school districts). Each zone would be headed by an assistant DEO (ADEO) who would be responsible for school administration, teacher control and management, supervision and co-ordination of RCs, management and the implementation of educational development programmes and activities. Some of the authority currently residing with DEO could be delegated to the ADEO. These might include: (a) act as channel for the flow of information and

resources from DEO to the schools; (b) monitor educational performance of schools within the educational zone; and (c) recommend grants to schools and other types of school development funds, etc. A sub-district education committee may be set up to guide and support the ADEO and this committee could consist of representatives of the SMCs, VDCs and head teachers.

Redefine the role of the school supervisors

The roles and functions of the school supervisors should be examined in view of the developments and trends in both developing and developed countries with respect to school development. One such trend is that administrative supervision should be separated from professional development and support functions. Teacher support and supervision should be provided through RPs/SMTs and mentor teachers who are teachers themselves with demonstrated evidence of effective teaching, professional integrity and commitment. School supervision should be localized by making head teachers responsible for carrying out instructional supervision. Therefore, the functions of school supervisors should be devolved to the school head teachers. Other sources (e.g. parents, community members, local governments, PTAs) should also be mobilized to provide administrative and supervisory support to schools. The school supervisors should then concentrate on administrative control, school evaluation, administration, enforcement of rules and regulations, etc.

Define clearly the relationship between the DDC and DEO

There is considerable confusion among the district level educational staff on what should constitute the relationship between the DDC and DEO. The Local Self-Governance Act has entrusted the DDC with powers relating to planning, local development and governance. There is strong resistance and unwillingness among the district staff to share resources and powers with the non-traditional actors, including the democratically elected representatives such as the DDC and VDC. In the changing context, DEO staff must learn to work with these new actors. Therefore, DEO staff should

be trained, re-trained and re-oriented to make them service local authorities as educational planning advisers and technical assistants. It is important that MOES recognizes the new professional roles of district level staff. They should not be seen as agents of MOES expected only to carry out central instructions.

Allow district staff to be fully involved in the design and implementation.

One of the classic objections to decentralization is that local bodies are incompetent to plan educational programmes. It is often said that District Education Offices are incapable of undertaking expanded roles and functions. Much of the so-called ‘poor capacity’ comes from not being able to be involved in the activities. Individuals and institutions can best learn why they have the opportunity to be fully involved in the design, implementation and accountability of the process. The top-down prescriptive nature of planning and programming that offers district or local staff limited or no opportunity for participation does contribute to capacity development of both the individuals and the institutions. When the process of designing and implementing programmes is participatory, the process itself becomes one of ‘learning-by-doing’ and over time, incremental capacities are developed through a combination of on-the-job learning, improved access to information, increased interaction with colleagues, and increased opportunity for thinking.

Measures for capacity building at the cluster and school level

Change the focus of job descriptions of RPs

RP job description is far too ambitious and clearly beyond the scope of one person. The job description does not acknowledge the fact that RPs’ work with classroom teachers is a fundamental and essential part of their

role. They are seen as an extended arm of DOE to implement and oversee BPEP II activities at the local level rather than someone whose main job is to support and supervise teachers for their professional development and improved student learning. Involvement in classroom-based teacher/school development should be the primary function of RP. It is felt that the roles and responsibilities of RPs could be clarified.

Strengthen the professional capacity of RPs

It was unclear if RPs interviewed were entirely satisfied with the current training provision and, in fact, many felt that it provided too little in terms of skills for mentoring and supporting teachers in the classroom, diagnosing classroom teaching, curriculum management and innovation. Teachers have little faith and confidence in the professional capacity of RPs and in their ability to change classroom practices. It was claimed that many RPs have a weak professional base (e.g. subject and pedagogical expertise). RPs' professional competence will have to be substantially improved so that they are able to provide necessary pedagogical support to the teachers. This requires drastic revision in the existing training provision and also in the selection process. Where necessary, MOES should consider removing incompetent, non-performing RPs.

Make school administration site-based

School administration should be school-based management rather than district-based where the head teacher enjoys complete authority over matters such as planning, school calendar, student admission, teacher discipline, teacher management, instruction, staff development, selection of curriculum materials, school financing, resource generation, student assessment, etc.

Shift of focus from RPs onto head teachers

The existing school cluster model ignores the instructional leadership role of the head teachers. Head teachers could and should play a pivotal role in supporting the work of RPs and of the teachers in their respective schools. School-based teacher development cannot be attempted effectively by someone who is externally appointed. Greater reliance on RPs and supervisors in matters of school improvement can yield little. It should be acknowledged that head teachers are principally responsible for leading and supporting teachers and RPs should provide the head teachers with the support required to attain the goal of teacher development.

Redefine the relationship of RPs with the head teacher of the host school

RPs are essentially field-based staff, but this is not how it works. They see themselves as the core staff of DEO office. They report to the District Education Officers who is often away from the clusters where RPs work. DEOs misuse RPs by assigning them general ad hoc tasks. There is a tendency among RPs to stay in DEO office rather than in the RC school. The head teacher of the RC school has no control over RPs. So long RPs have reporting relationships with DEO, they will not be accountable to the RC school head teacher. Reported frequent absence of RP from the field results in part from the lack of reporting relationship between RP and the RC school head teacher. It is recommended that RP report to the head teacher of the RC school, not DEO. Salaries of RPs should also be paid through the host school. The host school head teacher along with RP should be accountable for the improvement of satellite schools within the cluster.

Introduce school improvement planning

School improvement planning (SIP) must be introduced as an instrument of school development. SIP uses school-wide and comprehensive strategies for improvement. Comprehensive school reform works on the theory that school reform must address all aspects and operations of school effectiveness, including physical facilities improvement, instruction, assessment, classroom management, professional development, parental involvement, community-school relationship, school management, etc. DEOs should assist schools prepare the SIPs. Understanding and using data about school and student performance are fundamental to improving schools. Without analyzing and discussing data, schools are unlikely to identify and solve the problems that need attention, identify appropriate interventions to solve those problems, or know how they are progressing toward achievement of their goals. Schools are often bombarded with external views of what their problems are from external agents such as supervisors, consultants, and central officials. SIP preparation is an opportunity for the teachers and parents to collect, analyze, interpret and use their own data for school improvement. Discussion about what the data mean, what might be the possible causes of the current state, and what might be done generates the motivation and energy to solve the real problems schools face. District Education Offices must be able to provide technical assistance to the schools to develop a plan for improvement. School supervisors should be trained in such a way so that they can assist schools in preparing the SIPs.

Introduce a school evaluation system

A standardized evaluation system would be required to monitor and evaluate school performance on a fair and objective basis. A team of supervisors/evaluators appointed by DEO should undertake periodic evaluations of the schools in the district covering from financial management to pedagogical practices. Performance measurement of schools should be used

to gain insights into, and make judgement about, the effectiveness and efficiency of their instructional programmes, processes and outcomes. Performance measurement connects plans and results. School performance information should feed into resource allocation decisions. Prior to its broad implementation, it may be tested or introduced on a pilot basis. A smaller number of schools could be selected to undergo reforms and then, once success is demonstrated on a small basis, the measure could be replicated to other schools.

Hold schools and teachers accountable for performance

Improving the system boils down to giving schools the means to improve performance, and holding them accountable for it. A school accountability scheme could be established under which schools would be required to perform satisfactorily on a number of carefully selected performance indicators (e.g. rate of teacher attendance, student enrolment, enrolment of children from low-income families, number of teaching days per year, existence of functional SMC and PTA/PA, presence of female teachers, student achievement, level of community participation, frequency of parent-teacher meetings, etc.) in order to get school development or improvement grants. Other necessary administrative actions may also be taken against non-performing schools and teachers, while best performing teachers and schools can be rewarded. Performance profiles could be prepared for each school, which would be made public. Competition rather than hierarchical supervision from supervisors, who are neither equipped to provide pedagogical supervision nor prepared to exercise administrative control, should become the main element of organizational control. Schools should be graded based on their performance.

Output-based funding to schools

Under the current system, government grants to schools are largely determined by inputs, with funding only very indirectly linked to outputs or outcomes. Education providers such as schools and teachers do not face any financial incentives to produce high quality education services. They receive the same amount of funding whether they are responsible for inferior or high quality teaching. Since teachers are centrally paid, local oversight bodies have little power to discipline or reward them. In particular, they have little ability to penalize non-attendance by deducting absences from teachers' salaries, or dismissing chronically poor performers. Putting greater emphasis on performance as a criterion of receiving funds could transform budgets into an instrument for putting pressure on public providers to be efficient.

Develop a separate reform package to support chronically low-performing schools

There is little doubt some schools have failed seriously to provide the right kind of educational experience to the children. Such low performing schools are mostly located in communities where families live in concentrated poverty. There are low expectations for students. Teachers are burnt out, and school facilities are run down, overcrowded and disorderly. DEO must identify such schools and provide technical assistance to these failing schools to develop a plan for improvement. It is essential that MOES establish a process of intervening in chronically low performing schools.

Establishment of a strong governance structure

Due to faulty composition and formation procedure, SMCs have not been institutionalized at the school level as a structure of school management and governance. SMCs are either non-existent or non-functional. A school board would be established in each school with strong participation from

parents. Parents are the clients of the school's services and its teachers and have a direct stake in the performance of the school. Other board members could comprise teachers and respected community members. School staff would be accountable to the school board.

Strengthen the educational leadership role of the head teachers

Head teachers should be given formal power and responsibility to lead teacher and school development. Head teachers, by and large, are inadequately equipped in the theory and practice of educational management, teacher professional development, and school development. They can neither exercise professional authority nor maintain administrative authority over their teachers. They should be trained in school management and instructional leadership and should work closely with RPs to improve their schools. Rather than rely on RPs to lead classroom teacher improvement, this should be the task of the head teacher. RP should be viewed as a supporting colleague who works mainly with head teachers to develop their schools. Fundamentally, school development must be driven and lead by the head teacher and not DEO or supervisor who is too removed from the school, its community and governance arrangements.

Head teacher selection through open competition, not by DEO nomination

Head teachers get their appointment by way of DEO nomination. In the absence of standards for selecting and certifying head teachers, the persons who happen to occupy the head teacher posts are not always the most senior or best teachers with managerial and leadership abilities. Being tenured in teaching is a consideration, not seniority. With this in mind, the study team recommends that this faulty procedure of head teacher appointment be corrected. Essentially, head teachers should be selected through open competition, not by DEO nomination. This is essential if head teachers are to

be respected guardians of their school communities. MOES may consider creating a separate cadre of head teacher within the teaching service.

Allow parents to form their own associations

The existing institutional structure of public schools diminishes and disperses accountability for performance in the education sector. Since parents and local communities have no say over how individual schools should be run, school heads and teachers are not accountable to their clients for the services they are providing. There are no formal or informal structures in the schools to promote parental involvement. There must be a greater role for parents and community members in school management. Parents can be represented in SMCs or school boards, but this representation is necessarily limited in size. Therefore, larger bodies such as parent associations (PAs) can be formed which can bring most or all parents together. Parent-teacher associations (PTAs) may also be formed to show a specific link between parents and teachers. These associations should have their own executive committees to make decisions on activities and overall operations. PTAs or PAs can have numerous functions such as fund-raising for schools, working with SMCs or school heads in maintenance and construction of buildings, mounting enrolment campaigns in local communities, conducting house-to-house advocacy with parents of unschooled children, working with teachers to improve children learning, and supervising school activities. Parents constitute a good starting point for initiating school-community relations because they have a natural interest in the education of their children. The government should even consider promoting this process of community building by making small financial grants to parents' associations. The association members will also benefit from training sessions in community mobilization, management and organization. One should understand that this proposal might invite resistance from the teachers, school administrators and more particularly the private schools who often interpret parental involvement in school affairs as an encroachment in their domain.

Encourage teachers to form subject-based professional associations

Our study does not depict a favourable image of the teaching profession. Teachers in Nepal have been active players in the national political process and union activities. In the eyes of the citizens, teachers are important political actors rather than professionals committed towards their profession and public education. A politically neutral teaching profession has become a delusion. While no immediate solutions can be foreseen towards the direction of an apolitical, neutral and non-partisan teaching profession, a few efforts could be initiated in order to professionalize teaching. One such option is to encourage teachers to form professional associations based on their subject area. Small financial grants could be provided to such associations for organizing professional upgrading activities. The National English Language Teachers' Association (NELTA), an association of teachers teaching English at schools and colleges, has proven itself a true professional body.

Skill requirements

Skills are needed at different levels and in different forms. Whilst this will be fully elaborated in the HRD plan, the following are some examples of needed skills.

Institution Skills required

MOE	Macro planning/strategic planning in education Educational policy analysis/sector analysis in education Educational policy formulation Educational planning, programming and budgeting School, enrolment and teacher projections Educational costing, expenditure and financing Resource analysis Efficiency and cost benefit analysis Human resource planning Financial management Programme monitoring and evaluation Personnel evaluation/measurement Educational management information system development for monitoring access, equity, quality and relevance and for policy and programme planning. Educational policy research and analysis Statistical analysis
DOE	Annual planning, programming and budgeting Designing educational reform strategies Managing large-scale educational reform programmes Review and assessment of district education plans Management of educational development plans and programmes Personnel management Teacher management Organizing workshops, conferences, seminars, etc. Personnel evaluation Collecting, compiling, analyzing, processing and using educational information Preparing and assessing project proposals Contract management Writing terms of reference for procurement of services and goods Civil works management Physical planning and school mapping
CDC	Curriculum theories Curriculum planning Curriculum development Textbooks writing Textbooks evaluation Gender and equity analysis of curriculum materials Writing teacher support materials, guides and resource books Curriculum dissemination and feedback General and financial administration

	Designing and executing educational research and piloting Assessment of student learning
NCED	Identification of professional development/training needs of teachers and other educational personnel Planning for in-service training of teachers Development of training curriculum, guides, courses and materials Training design, implementation, follow-up and evaluation Organizing workshops, seminars, and conferences Training management information system General and financial administration
NFEC	Planning and monitoring NFE programmes Research and evaluation Development of NFE materials Planning and managing literary campaigns Mobilizing NGOs/INGOs and local bodies for literary expansion activities Development of post-literary and continuing education programmes Planning for training of NFE workers
DEO	School administration Decentralized planning School improvement planning Teacher personnel management Preparation and costing of educational plans, programmes and projects Teacher evaluation Implementation management School evaluation and monitoring Working with NGOs, CBOs, TAs, local governments Administration and management of examinations General and financial administration
RC	Identification of recurrent training needs of teachers Planning of recurrent/refresher training courses Training follow-up Teacher evaluation Classroom observation and analysis of classroom data Teacher professional support Conducting professional meetings, workshops, and seminars Conducting community surveys Community mobilization Preparation and use of instructional materials

School	Institutional planning Teacher evaluation Community relations Collaboration with local bodies, parents and communities Community surveys Community mobilization Preparation and use of instructional materials School-based staff development School-based curriculum development and management
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There are also a host of general skills required by MOE staff that are independent of one's particular organizational role: (a) work planning/scheduling; (b) office memo writing; (c) report writing; (d) working in multi-cultural settings/group dynamics; (e) assertiveness skills; (f) gender sensitization; (g) organizing staff meetings and/or attending meetings; (h) presentation skills; (i) basic computer skills; (j) public relations skills; and (k) English language skills.

Another group of skills relates to management and professional skills:

Management

Principles and practices of management
Strategic planning and thinking
Management of change
Public accountability and awareness
Time and stress management
Office management
Conducting and participating in meetings
Conflict management and negotiation
Communication and inter-personal relationships
Decision-making and problem solving
Delegation
Development policies, plans and programmes of the government
Programming and budgeting
Management information system
Team building
Leadership

Professional/pedagogical

Theories of educational reform and change
Primary education
Secondary education
Early childhood education
Girls' education
Women's education
Adult education
Non-formal education
Teacher education and training
Test and measurement
Evaluation and assessment
Curriculum development
Continuing education

Towards a Human Resource Development Plan (HRDP)

The above concepts, issues and ideas are only an indication of the types of structural, cultural and training needs required to develop the capacity of MOES. The HRDP will expand upon all of these ideas – in terms of the detail of the training programmes, the interconnections between them and the ways in which they can be institutionalized within MOES and its various bodies.

To assist the reader in grasping the role, purpose and nature of each of the key recommendations, a summary chart is provided below. This will form the initial basis of the work of those involved in preparing the HRDP.

Summary of recommendations

<i>Policy recommendation</i>	<i>HRD level</i>	<i>Responsible agency</i>	<i>Organizational level</i>
Redefine the roles of MOES with greater focus on higher order strategy and policy	2	HMG and MOES	Central
Create a national education policy council	2	HMG and MOES	Central
Formulate a policy that allows building partnerships with NGOs, CBOs, civil society, and local governments in the governance and delivery of education	2	HMG and MOES	Central
Identify activities and tasks that can be better handled by different levels of the educational management and transfer these tasks to appropriate authorities	2	MOES	Central
Prepare a plan to transfer routine implementation related functions to districts and below to allow MOES focus on overall policy formulation, planning, co-ordination, standards setting and monitoring	2	MOES	Central
Revisit the existing organizational structures of MOES and its constituent bodies at the central level	2	MOES	Central
Redefine the organizational mandates of central institutions	2	MOES	Central
Train MOES staff to develop their capacity in carrying out management auditing	1	MOES/NASC	Central

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Amalgamate independently operating teacher training institutions	2	MOES with MOGA	Central
Prepare an organizational development plan for DOE and other central institutions for introducing improved administrative practices	2	MOES/DOE	Central
Implement organizational development plan	2	MOES/DOE	Central
Formulate a national training policy for educational personnel	2	MOES	Central
Reorganize the education service	2	MOES/MOGA/PSC	Central
Conduct assessment of training needs	2	MOES/NCED	Central
Formulate a staff development policy that links training opportunities to performance and organizational needs	2	MOES	Central
Prepare/update job descriptions for all educational personnel and provide them with updated job descriptions	2	MOES/MOGA	Central
Develop job specifications for key positions in MOES	2	MOES/MOGA	Central
Formulate transparent staff posting and transfer practices	2	MOES	Central
Formulate a job rotation policy	2	MOES	Central
Train educational managers in personnel evaluation	1		Central
Formulate a policy requiring mandatory teaching experience for entry into the education service	2	MOES	Central
Make a policy that allows reservation of females in administrative positions within the education sector	2	MOES	Central
Design and implement training programmes for senior and middle level managers in interpersonal and gender skills	1	MOES/NCED	Central
Design and implement training courses for senior and middle managers in modern tools and techniques of management	1	MOES/NCED	Central
Design and implement job induction courses for newly recruited Class III officials	1	MOES/NCED	Central
Introduce tailor made courses for educational personnel who are posted in specialized positions	1	MOES/NCED	Central
Introduce a policy of mandatory annual training to all staff	1	MOES	Central
Introduce a mandatory field stay programme	2	MOES	Central
Require participants of in-country and overseas courses to share experiences and new knowledge with their colleagues	1	MOES	Central
Assess the workload and personnel needed at all levels and based on the assessment develop a staffing plan	2	MOES	Central
Develop proper institutional arrangements for increased co-ordination and utilization of technical assistance	2	MOES/Donors	Central

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Improve intra- and inter-institutional flow and exchange of information between and/or among the institutions through publication of newsletters and other appropriate communication strategies	2	MOES	Central
Create a knowledge centre in DOE	2	DOE	Central
Prepare a plan to promote the use of computer intelligence for effective educational planning, monitoring, controlling and decision-making	2	MOES	Central
Create an interdisciplinary team of planning officers	2	MOES	Central
Provide short term training in planning to all Class II and III officers	1	MOES	Central
Create a strategic planning team in the planning division	2	MOES	Central
Develop a set of manageable and useful monitoring indicators	2	MOES/DOE	Central
Establish a documentation centre in MOES	2	MOES	Central
Formulate a dissemination policy	2	MOES/DOE	Central
Set performance goals for regions, districts and schools and evaluate institutions accordingly		MOES/DOE	Central
Establish a reporting system	2	MOES/DOE	Central
Establish a core team of monitoring experts in MOES and DOE	2	DOE	Central
Redefine the structure and functions of RED	2	MOES	Regional/District
Redefine the roles and functions of DEO	2	MOES	Regional/District
Develop a restructuring plan for DEO	2	MOES	Regional/District
Upgrade the status of the DEOs	2	MOES	Regional/District
Formulate a policy which discourages appointment of the DEO on acting basis	2	MOES	Regional/District
Develop a comprehensive plan for the introduction of decentralized planning in the education sector	2	MOES	Regional/District
Create posts of planning officers in the DEOs	2	MOES	Regional/District
Introduce the school district system	2	MOES	Regional/District
Redefine the roles of school supervisors	2	MOES	Regional/District
Revisit RP job descriptions	2	MOES	Cluster/School
Develop a training plan for developing professional capabilities of RPs	1	MOES	Cluster/School
Introduce necessary changes in the legislation giving greater powers to the head teachers	2	MOES	Cluster/School

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Change head teacher selection procedure	2	MOES	Cluster/School
Revisit the head teacher training package	1	MOES	Cluster/School
Introduce school improvement planning	2	MOES	Cluster/School
Introduce school evaluation system	2	MOES	Cluster/School
Develop a suitable governance structure for the schools	2	MOES	Cluster/School
Formulate a policy allowing parents to form own parent associations in their children's schools	2	MOES	Cluster/School
Provide funds to teachers to create and operate subject-based professional associations	2	MOES	Cluster/School

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Institutional analysis – plan of action

Programme: Nepal (Basic and Primary Education Programme II)
Authors: Min Bista, Institutional Linkage Programme (ILP) National
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Summary

As part of the Institutional Linkage Programme (ILP), it has been agreed that an institutional analysis (IA) will be undertaken in order to strengthen staff development and capacity building programmes within MOE and its constituent bodies. IA will map the institutional framework and institutional capacities of MOE and its constituent bodies, undertake skills audits and needs analyses of staff and staffing functions and make recommendations for strengthening staff development processes and institutional capacity in general. There will be a particular focus on supporting teaching and learning in the classroom via the RC system as well as on school leadership and school management.

IA will comprise four separate yet interrelated activities:

- Macro analysis of MOE and its constituent bodies in terms of the structures and functions that support the organization's aims and activities.
- Micro analysis across the key institutions, sections and units concerned with basic and primary education. Each institution, section or unit will

be examined in relation to the following five key domains: (a) organizational structures, mandates and roles; (b) staffing and staff development; (c) information and communication; (d) planning; and (e) monitoring and evaluation.

Micro analysis within each of these institutions, sections and units leading to:

- A series of case studies aimed at highlighting the progress and processes involved in key activities (i.e. budgeting and allocations, text book production, generation and use of statistical data, etc.).

A range of questionnaires and interviews will be conducted both within the central units of MOE, the regions, selected districts, resource centres and schools. The project will be managed by a steering committee comprising key MOE staff with additional support from the Programme Advisory Team (PAT) Office, TSAG and RDSSES staff. The project will commence in January 2000 and report late in 2000.

1. Background

The terms of reference for IA state that its objective should be to guide the development of staff competencies and institutional capacities. Further, the resulting recommendations should support the government's aims for decentralization of the education sector and for basic and primary education in general. It hopes to clarify and identify appropriate structures and functions and to support MOE-led decisions related to staff development and capacity building. Within this remit, particular attention will be given to the role and function of the resource centre system, to strengthening classroom practice in relation to teaching and learning and to school management and leadership.

There should be two main activities: first, a comprehensive analysis of the institutional set-up within the field of the basic and primary education

sub-sector; and second, the identification and planning of staff development and institutional capacity building activities for the remainder of BPEP II. The outcomes of IA should lead to practical action of the following two types: (a) mapping of the institutional framework and institutional capacities of MOE and its constituent bodies; skills audits of staff and staffing functions; (b) recommendations for strengthening staff development processes and overall institutional capacity. These two outcomes (the analysis and its recommendations) shape *Sections 2 and 3*.

2. Analysis activities

Phase 1: Macro-analysis of MOE and its constituent bodies

The aim here is to examine the structures, processes and communication at the system level of the sector, but mainly in terms of the interconnections between MOE, its regional and district bodies and other government departments and agencies. Tasks include:

- Mapping the institutional environment: the relationship of the educational sector in relation to government priorities and objectives and the interconnections (if any) between MOE and other ministries and public bodies. There should also be an effort to estimate the role and importance of donor bodies in shaping this environment and the ways in which MOE co-ordinates donor activities;
- Examining MOE's mandate and formal statement of aims and purpose. It will also be necessary to examine the extent to which MOE's mandate and attributions are sufficient to implement HMG/ N's educational policies. IA will look for potential dysfunctionalities such as conflicting attributions between MOE and other ministries or where MOE has limited influence over aspects of its work (i.e. financial delegation, recruitment numbers and procedures etc);
- Mapping MOE's structure and function and relating this to its mandate and formal aims.

Phase 1 will lead to a clarification of MOE's role and purpose and the relationship of this to its existing structures and functions. The aim is not to probe for deficiencies but, rather, to ensure that the structure is appropriate to the functions. Accordingly, any recommendations will be at the macro level concerned with structure and function of individual units and sections and their relationship to one another. As such, this aspect of IA will be less oriented towards development activities.

Data collection here will be based predominately on document analysis and a limited amount of follow-up interviewing of key staff, particularly in terms of testing out possible conclusions and recommendations.

*Phase 2: Micro-analysis **across** the basic and primary education field*

Units relevant to the scope of IA have been identified. Within these units certain key posts have been identified. Finally, a number of domains for investigation have been identified where the aim is to generate information of importance to all of the identified units and areas. The key headings for the domains are: (a) organizational structure, mandates and roles; (b) staffing and staff development; (c) information and communication; (d) planning; and (e) monitoring and evaluation.

Thus, having identified the key units and areas of MOE and its constituent bodies, the aim is to generate information on the above domains in order to consider sector-wide practice, issues and problems in relation to them.

*Phase 3: Micro-analysis **within** the basic and primary education field*

Having collected primarily quantitative information *across* the units and sections, the aim in phase 3 will be to undertake qualitative data collection (i.e. interviews and focus groups) *within* each of these units in order to build

up a more accurate picture of the strengths, weaknesses and requirements for capacity building within them. Thus, the earlier quantitative data will be complemented with rich and detailed accounts from staff who will be more able to express their views and relate their experiences. It is envisaged that the data collection here will be based on the four themes highlighted above (i.e. staffing and staff development; information and communication, planning, and monitoring and evaluation).

Phase 4: Process-mapping case studies

The final analytical tool will be a series of case studies that map the processes involved in undertaking key functions *within* and *across* key units.

Illustrative case studies will be drawn from a number of these units and will clarify and amplify both good and poor practice in MOE's discharge of its key tasks.

3. Recommendations for staff development and capacity building

The second planned outcome of IA is the generation of recommendations for activities to support staff development and institutional capacity building. This comprises two types of recommendations:

- First, immediate recommendations based on existing understandings of skills needs and developmental activities. This includes activities related to: (a) induction training and procedures; (b) supervision skills; (c) appraisal and review; (d) planning and statistics; (e) general management and leadership (especially for head teachers); (f) teacher supervision and development (especially for RPs); and (g) job-related training in general.
- Second, further recommendations will emerge during, and as a consequence of the various analytical tasks.

4. Management of the institutional analysis

IA would be undertaken primarily by Nepalese experts with Danish partners in a joint co-ordinating and liaison role.

IA should not be seen only as a discrete event but, rather, an opportunity for MOE to develop its self-evaluation and review processes. Essential elements that could be built into the project and which could assist with the aim of increasing stakeholder awareness, ownership and expertise could include: (a) introductory, mid-term and project completion seminars; (b) regular updates via written briefings from IA team; (c) information sessions at which unit or section level staff could be updated on progress and have opportunities to influence the direction of the analysis and interpretation of the findings.

5. Personnel involved

Nepal co-ordinator and project leader: Min Bista

DUE co-ordinator:	Stephen Carney
Consultants:	Kedar Nath Shrestha
	Chuda Nath Aryal

Appendix 2

Institutional analysis (IA) tables

**Table A2.1 Perceived adequacy of authority by head teachers
(percentages given in parentheses)**

<i>Aspect</i>	<i>Adequate</i>	<i>Inadequate</i>	<i>None</i>	<i>Total</i>
Drawing the timetable	190 (100.0)			190
Assigning teacher to classes to teach	190 (100.0)			190
Appointing teachers			190 (100.0)	190 (100)
Evaluating teachers' performance		190 (100.0)		190 (100)
Dismissing or transferring teachers			190 (100.0)	190 (100)
Rejecting teachers deployed by DEO			190 (100.0)	190 (100)
Sanctioning leave for teachers	190 (100.0)			190 (100)
Taking disciplinary action on teachers		190 (100.0)		190
Deciding on standards for admission of students	96 (50.5)	46 (24.2)	48 (25.3)	190
Establishing homework policies	110 (57.9)	45 (23.7)	35 (18.4)	190
Establishing standards for student promotion	98 (51.6)	39 (20.5)	53 (28.0)	190
Ensuring student enrolment and attendance	147 (77.4)	43 (22.6)		190
Taking disciplinary action on students	190 (100.0)			190
Supervising teachers		156 (82.1)	34 (17.9)	190
Deciding on school fees to be raised from students			190 (100.0)	190
Introducing supplementary/additional readers		145(76.3)	45 (23.7)	190

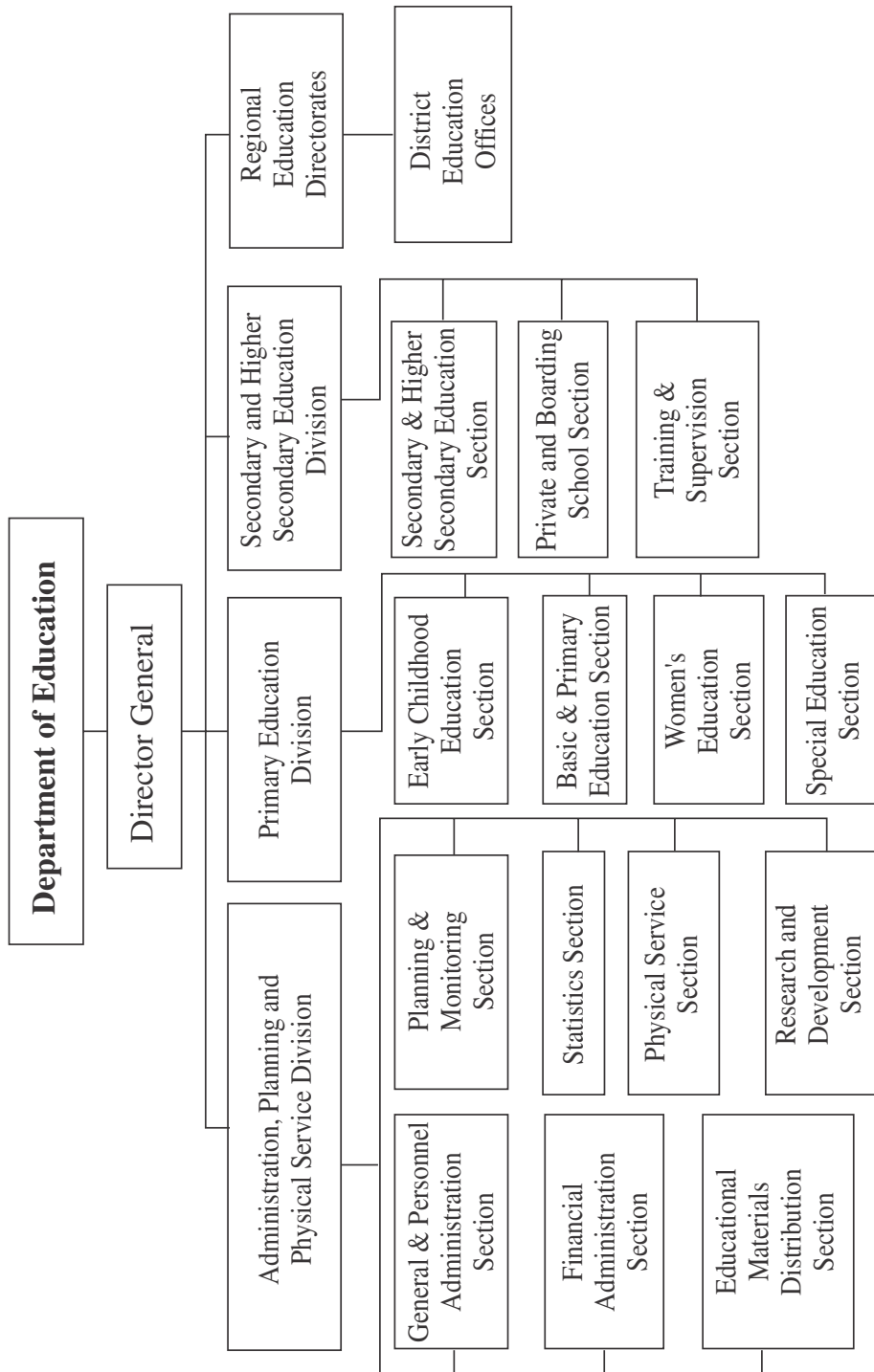
Determining expenditures on instructional aids		190 (100.0)
Raising funds for the school		190 (100.0)
Adapting curriculum to local conditions		190 (100.0)
Selecting teachers for in-service training	97(51.0)	93 (49.0)
Forming SMC		190 (100.0)
Giving a pay rise to teachers		190 (100.0)

Table A2.2 Perceived level of competence as rated by resource persons (percentages are given in parentheses)

<i>Domain</i>	<i>Above average</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Below average</i>	<i>Total</i>
Conceptual clarity about work	28 (17)	126 (77)	10 (6)	164
Technical/professional skills	12 (7)	136 (84)	14 (9)	162
Managerial ability	8 (5)	142 (88)	12 (7)	162
Analytical ability	16 (10)	126 (78)	20 (12)	162
Problem solving ability	10 (6)	138 (86)	12 (8)	160
Level of self-confidence	16 (10)	120 (74)	26 (16)	162

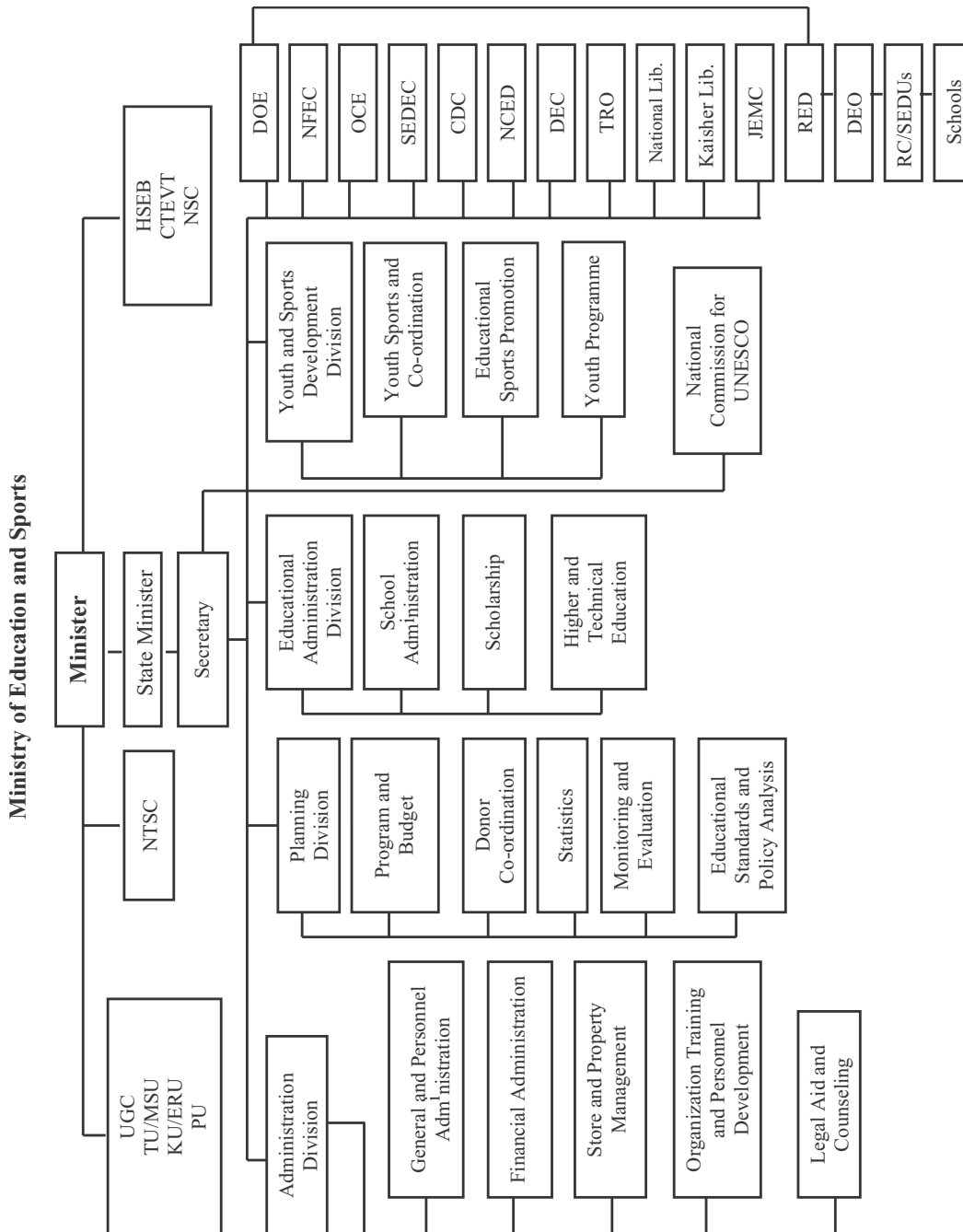
Appendix 3

Organizational chart: Department of Education



Appendix 4

Organizational chart: Ministry of Education and Sports



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