Purpose of FRP
The guiding concept of FRP is to generate information relevant to the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES), Nepal, on planning, implementation and management of BPEP II with respect to its various components.

It is important for FRP to provide MOES with two distinct kinds of research-based information:

(i) Specific recommendations pertaining to key issues and questions related with BPEP II, and

(ii) Periodic information on indicators of the primary education system.

Focus of FRP

- Longitudinal Study and Research on Key Questions will be complementary to each other.
- The Longitudinal Study will provide MOES information on the status of basic and primary education in the country on a periodic basis.
- At the same time, in-depth research studies will focus on WHY things are working (or not working) the way they are to-day and on WHAT should be done BY WHOM to change the situation at various levels.
- Therefore, FRP will provide the government a set of quantitative indicators on the performance of the system as well as a lot of supporting evidences and action steps.

Key Research Questions
Key research questions decided by the Ministry of Education and Sports / Department of Education are the main part of the Formative Research. In this respect, five workshops at the regional level and one at the national level were conducted, and a gist of the findings of the workshops was presented to the Department for discussions. The list of tentative research questions prepared earlier at a meeting at DOE was thoroughly discussed in the final meeting at CERID on September 17, 2002 and decisions were made on the research areas and on the questions for the Formative Research in the current fiscal year. The list of research topics/questions proposed by the Research and Development Section of
DOE and a similar list prepared by the Donors’ Coordination Office were also used as reference to avoid duplication. There were several research questions which clustered around one single topic. Therefore, such topics and their subsidiary components were meticulously decided.

There were certain areas which required continuous research. Some of the earlier developed research proposals had a longitudinal framework. For example, school effectiveness research focused on the inputs from schools in the last phase and it was proposed that community and resource centre support aspects be included in the second phase. It is thus expected to become a complete study. Similarly, the study on effective classroom practices focused on the use of curricular materials, including teacher’s guide in the classroom. However, the original proposal had transfer of skills from teacher training and support from resource centre as two other aspects designed for use in the second phase. A similar longitudinal proposal on education of disadvantaged groups was submitted. Therefore, the proposed key research questions were reviewed in the light of this aspect of FRP.

Selected Key Research Questions for Formative Research

The following topics and research questions were decided for FRP in the fiscal year 2002/03. Studies on the topics, which were continuation of the first year studies, started in October 2002, and research on some other topics started later.

1. Classroom effectiveness study
   This study should address the following aspects/questions:
   - Why are teachers not using the skills acquired from training in the classroom?
   - What is the association between “inputs” and “processes”? Or, why is there no association between “inputs” and “processes”?
   - How can student participation in classroom activities be improved?
   - What is the teaching learning condition in Grade I?
   This research is expected to cover the following access-related questions as well:
   - How to revisit designing, development and dissemination modalities of the curriculum materials for encouraging the primary school age children’s participation in education?
   - To what extent does a teacher’s behaviour affect access and retention of students?
   - What about the teachers’ motivation status?

2. School effectiveness study
   This study should address the following aspects/questions:
   - What are the major concerns of the community people in regard to access, retention and quality of education in their community?
   - What are the major concerns related to school ownership?
   - What type of community support/participation is contributing to school effectiveness?
   - What kind of services are available in schools for the monitoring and supervision of school management, administration, class room delivery and resource mobilization?
   - How does community perceive and participate in school monitoring and supervision especially on school management, administration, room delivery, and resource mobilization?
   - How does the community assess the strength and weaknesses of the current RC and RP systems?
   - What are the characteristics of effective supervision and monitoring? Why is it working in some schools?
   - What are the areas where school supervision is strong?

3. Incentive programmes
   This study should address the following aspects/questions:
   - How are incentive programmes implemented?
   - To what extent have the incentive programmes contributed to increase the enrolment and retention of target children?
   - Why have the incentive programmes for children not reached the focus groups?
   - How is the incentive programme linked with the community mobilization programme?

4. SIP-based development programme
   This study should address the following aspects/questions:
   - How do the policy commitment and legal provisions support SIP?
   - What is the status of SIP design and its implementation? What are the problems faced in the design and implementation?
   - How has local planning capacity been enhanced?
   - What are the types of support that DOE/DEO provided the school and community for the design of SIP?
   - How is SIP integrated into VEP and DEP? Is SIP a base for preparing VEP and DEP?
   - Has SIP been tied up with resource support? What are the criteria for funding for SIP and for community managed schools? What is the fund-flow mechanism for financing SIP programmes and community-managed
schools?
- How is SIP implementation monitored? Who monitors the progress? Has the feedback from monitoring gone into the decision-making, funding or readjustment of the plan?
- Has SIP contributed to enhancing quality of education?
- What perceptible changes occurred after the start of the SIP process?

5. Multi-grade teaching
Multi-grade teaching is a reality in most of the primary schools in Nepal. Improvement in quality of primary education therefore depends on how the primary classes are managed and how the teachers are actually prepared. Specifically, this study should address the following questions:
- How are multi-grade classes managed in Nepalese primary schools?
- What types of curricular materials and teacher training Programmes are needed for effect in multi-grade teaching in Nepal?

6. Community-based Early Childhood Development (CBECED) programme
This study should address the following aspects/questions:
- How are the communities managing CBECED programmes supported by BPEP, DOE?
- What are the important aspects of better community involvement?
- How far have the CBECED programmes/centres been effective in enhancing participation, retention and achievement of primary school children?
- Are there any examples of success stories pertaining to CBECED programmes?
- How can the ECD programme be made sustainable and replicable?

7. Incentive programme for Muslim children
One of the findings of a previous FRP study on disadvantaged groups indicated that mere monetary incentive might not be appropriate or enough to attract certain special focus group children to education. The study pointed out a need for identifying other strategies to increase the educational participation of the Muslim community, considered as a special focus group by the DOE. In this context, the following questions have been identified as the topic of research:
- Why are Muslim children not motivated to join schools?
- What are the factors which have held Muslim children from getting benefits from the existing school system?
- How do parents/community members perceive the school education system?
- What are the socio-economic conditions of the Muslims whose children go to school and whose children are out of the school?
- What do Muslims generally expect if they send their children to school?
- How are Muslim children treated in schools?
- Are the home environment of the Muslim children and the school environment incongruous?
- What kinds of incentive schemes will motivate the Muslim children to participate in school education?
- What factors would help increase the enrolment of Muslim children in school education?

8. A week in teachers’ life
Teachers’ motivation is a major concern in Nepal. Some people in the FRP donor community also raised this as a pertinent issue. Thus, it is felt that the inclusion of this topic would help to make FRP a complete study. In this context, the following specific research questions have been identified:
- How does a week in teachers’ life look like?
- What are the demands (professional as well as family) of being a teacher?
- What are the de-motivations frustrations and dilemmas? How do they vary with different personal, professional and socio-economic backgrounds?
- What are the important traits of becoming a better teacher?

9. Management transfer of primary schools to community
Transfer of primary school management responsibilities to the community is a recent policy of MOES. An in-depth study of the policy of handing over 100 selected schools to communities will be of great help in the implementation of the policy. In this regard, following research question was decided:
- How can management be transferred in the context of decentralization?

The System Indicator Study
The system indicator study under FRP will focus on the given set of 40 indicators pertaining to 5 major components of basic and primary education programme. These indicators were decided after several rounds of interactions with the MOES and DOE personnel. The study intends to obtain primary data on various indicators from the sample schools. Therefore, care has been taken to use only the indicators which could be computed with the data obtainable from schools.
Feature and strategies of System Indicator Study

- The study has periodic (every six month) data collection, analysis and reporting on various indicators.
- All the sample districts, RCs and schools will be followed for at least the end of BPEP II.
- Other individual research studies are linked to it. The data collection activity of this study is organised jointly with other in-depth research studies wherever possible.
- Individuals in District and Resource Centres are assigned the task of periodic data collection.
- Care has been taken in the sampling design to incorporate regional variations and variations in terms of various kinds of BPEP inputs.
- The selected districts have been divided into 16 strata. One to two districts are included from each stratum. The excluding Western and Mid-western mountains strata are excluded on the ground of their population proportion and inaccessibility.
- Three to five primary schools are included in the sample from each district.

Study sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strata</th>
<th>District</th>
<th>No. of Schools</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eastern mountains</td>
<td>Sankhuwasabha</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern hills</td>
<td>Ilam; Dhankuta</td>
<td>4+3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Eastern Terai</td>
<td>Morang</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central mountains</td>
<td>Rasuwa</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central hills</td>
<td>Kavre</td>
<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Central Terai</td>
<td>Chitawan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kathmandu Valley</td>
<td>Lalitpur</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western mountains</td>
<td>Kaski; Syangja</td>
<td>5+4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Western Terai</td>
<td>Kapilvastu</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Western mountains</td>
<td>Surkhet</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mid-Western Terai</td>
<td>Bardia</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Far-Western mountains</td>
<td>Darchula</td>
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<tr>
<td>Far-Western hills</td>
<td>Dadeldhura</td>
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<tr>
<td>Far-Western Terai</td>
<td>Kailali</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>16 62</td>
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Addressing Emerging Issues

In addition to the pre decided issues, FRP addresses the issues that emerge in course of its implementation. For this purpose, there is a provision under FRP to conduct some micro studies of up to three months' duration. Some such issues are also addressed through on-going research studies. For example, "A week in teacher's life" is one such study being dove-tailed to "Effective Classroom Teaching/Learning Practice". Similarly, "Transfer of school management to community" is another micro study associated with FRP research on SIP.

In addition to these eight studies, this year FRP has also been conducting one stock-taking exercise on the studies related to BPEP II like in the first year.

**Studies Conducted Under Formative Research Project (Fiscal Year 2002/03)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Components</th>
<th>Research</th>
<th>Principal Researcher</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Access and retention</td>
<td>1. Effectiveness of Incentive/Scholarship Programmes for Girls and Disadvantaged Children</td>
<td>Mr. Narendra Prasad Phuyal</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Early Childhood Development</td>
<td>Mrs. Komal Badan Malla</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Access of Muslim Children to Education</td>
<td>Mr. Hafiz Md. Parwez</td>
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<td>Learning achievement</td>
<td>4. Effective Classroom Teaching / Learning Phase II : Transfer of Training Skills</td>
<td>Mr. Ganesh Bahadur Singh</td>
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<td>Management and capacity</td>
<td>5. School Effectiveness: Phase II</td>
<td>Mr. Vishnu Karki</td>
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<td>building</td>
<td>6. Multi-Grade Teaching: Status and Issues</td>
<td>Dr. Prem Narayan Aryal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIP-based Development</td>
<td>7. School Improvement Plan</td>
<td>Mr. Hari Prasad Upadhyaya</td>
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<td>Overall</td>
<td>8. Longitudinal Study on System Indicators</td>
<td>FRP team</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9. Stock-taking of Research Studies on BPEP II</td>
<td>Mr. Tirtha Bahadur Manandhar</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Published by

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