

# NEWSLETTER

# ANTRIEP

VOL. 2 NO. 2, July-Dec 1997

Bi-annual

## Improving Teacher Supervision and Support Services

The Second Annual Meeting of ANTRIEP held at Seoul was preceded by a seminar on Improving Teacher Supervision and Support Services/or Basic Education in Asia. Our readers were informed that the July-December 1997 issue of the Newsletter would focus on the theme of the Seoul Seminar. Thus the present issue of the Newsletter brings to the readers notes and articles analysing the trends in supervision and support systems in the Asian countries.

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The International Institute for Educational Planning Paris initiated a project to analyse and understand varying country experiences in providing professional support to teachers and primary schools. This project was implemented in five Asian countries, namely, Bangladesh, India, Korea, Nepal and Sri Lanka. The country studies focused on : (i) the profiling of the existing systems of teacher supervision and support systems in the respective countries; (ii) the functioning of support systems highlighting major issues and problems; and (iii) measures to be adopted to improve the supervisory systems to provide effective support to basic education.

We had requested the respective researchers of the above five countries to send a brief write-up focusing mainly on the objectives, methodologies and major findings of their studies. It gives us immense satisfaction to note that the research teams from all these countries have responded very promptly to our request. These write-ups are included in this issue of the Newsletter. The International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris, which initiated the study, prepared an overview paper highlighting major trends and critical issues in teacher support systems as in operation in the countries of this region, it is included as a lead article in this issue.

As a part of our effort to share information on activities of the member institutions, we had requested them to send us information on regional programmes

organised by them. We have got responses from Korea, Sri Lanka and India. It is heartening to note that many member institutions do organise regional programmes. We include the information thus received in this Newsletter so as to share it among the readers. We hope that information on such activities initiated and undertaken by all member institutions will find a place in the future issues of the Newsletter.

In the previous issue of the Newsletter we had given information on the Educational Management Information Systems developed by Nepal with a request to member institutions to collaborate with the CERID, Kathmandu, Nepal, in case they were interested to develop similar systems in their own countries.

As a part of the local capacity building exercise to facilitate decentralized planning in education, NIEPA has recently brought out modules on Decentralized

Planning. This issue of the Newsletter carries information on these modules.

We are happy to inform that BRAC, Bangladesh has joined the ANTRIEP family. We take this opportunity to welcome the new member. This issue contains a brief introduction to - BRAC - the new member institution.

We are receiving encouraging responses to the Newsletter from various individuals and institutions. We hope that the contents of this Newsletter will help researchers, planners and practitioners to share the country experiences in the field of Teacher Supervision and Support Services in the neighbouring countries. We would welcome suggestions and comments on the format and contents of the Newsletter.

**Editor**

## **Supervision and Support Services in Asia**

### ***Results of an ANTRIEP Research Exercise***

Recent research on the state of school supervision is scant and the evidence is mainly anecdotal. In order to collect more detailed information, which is indispensable to any programme to improve on the existing services, the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP), in co-operation with other ANTRIEP member institutions, has recently completed a series of national diagnoses in five Asian countries: Bangladesh, Nepal, the Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka and India (State of Uttar Pradesh). Each national research team relied mainly on two sets of information: existing official and other documents and interviews with a selected group of

supervisors, teachers and school heads. The research results were discussed at a regional seminar, organized at the Korean Educational Development Institute, in May 1997. This contribution summarizes the conclusions of the research work. A more detailed comparative analysis, together with each of the five national diagnoses, will be published soon by the IIEP.

### ***The Present State of Supervision Services***

Everywhere the structure of supervision and support services is relatively complex and intricate, for several reasons:

1. Different types of schools are supervised by different actors. This is most obvious in Sri Lanka,

as five distinct types of schools are visited by supervisors posted at different levels, at times in collaboration with each other. In Nepal, until a few years ago, supervision of primary and secondary schools was also the responsibility of different actors. But, in 1989, it was decided to combine these tasks and to assign supervision of both the school levels to the same person. This reform, however, is now also being contested by some supervisors, who feel inadequately equipped to offer subject-specific guidance at secondary level.

2. It is not always easy to distinguish supervisors from other officers, who have purely administrative tasks, such as the district education officer in Nepal, who shares offices with the supervisors. In Sri Lanka, all officers of the Sri Lanka

3. In at least two countries a special category of staff is responsible for offering support to teachers by visiting them in their schools (as opposed to control and supervision as such). This is the case of the “resource persons” in Nepal and of the “master teachers” in Sri Lanka. In the other countries, support seldom consists of visiting schools, but is more in the form of teachers going to “support” centres.

Notwithstanding this complicated and sometimes confusing picture, it is possible to identify one or two actor(s), who s/are mainly, if not exclusively, in charge of supervision through regular visits to schools. In Korea, this is the “junior school supervisor”, while the “school supervisor” reviews reports and manages the supervision tasks. In Nepal the “school supervisor” is the real supervision agent. In India (Uttar Pradesh) and Bangladesh, where, different levels of staff work in supervision, the “real” supervisors are respectively called “Assistant Basic Shiksha

Adhikari/Assistant Basic Education Officer)” (ABSA) and “Assistant Thana Education Officer” (ATEO). The officers at higher levels generally have more of an administrative task and less of visiting schools. As explained above, the situation in Sri Lanka is somewhat more complex.

An important criticism of the supervision system is that the supervisors are burdened with too many schools and teachers. Table 1 shows that this critique is certainly valid in Bangladesh, Nepal and Uttar Pradesh, and somewhat less so in Sri Lanka. It is not surprising, therefore, that supervisors in these countries pay very little attention to academic guidance and carry out school visits merely as administrative routine. In addition, many officers fail to visit all schools under their responsibility regularly. To illustrate this well-known complaint, some data can be quoted on Sri Lanka. In this country, about half of a sample of 69 school heads stated that their school had not been visited during the last year by an education officer and about one-fifth said that their school had not received any visit of a “master teacher”. Interviewing a sample of 292 teachers, it was found that a quarter of them had not been supervised by any officer or by any master teacher. On the other hand, while some schools were not visited at all, four head teachers indicated that their school had been visited three or more times by supervision teams over the last year. This leads to the conclusion that, even if time is probably insufficient to visit all schools, the distribution of time between schools is equally problematic. Because of the heavy workload of the supervisors, which is aggravated by the problem of the lack of transport facilities and remoteness of certain schools, and in spite of the official norms set for planning visits, the most important criterion for selecting schools for supervision becomes the accessibility of the school. The situation was

found to be quite isimilar in Bangladesh, Nepal and India. In Korea, the picture is different altogether because school visits are far less important than in the other countries. Furthermore, a significant shift has recently occurred: “school visits have changed from supervisors randomly selecting schools to schools actually requesting them”.

In all the countries, supervision staff have many tasks to perform, including duties of an administrative nature. In Uttar Pradesh, supervisors are expected to undertake 31 tasks, of which most are administrative, including collection of statistical data, handling payment of salaries and pensions of teachers and other employees, supervising school construction programmes, etc. Everywhere they have to play different roles, some of which are difficult to combine: the tension between giving guidance and support to teachers and, at the same time, controlling and disciplining them is easy to imagine. The conflict between visiting schools, the core task, and the less im-

portant but, may be, more urgent duties, such as report writing is equally difficult to solve.

In order to get some information on the distribution of time between the different tasks, a sample of supervision and support staff and of school heads and teachers was interviewed in four of the five countries (Nepal being the exception). A few points which emerged are the following.

The relative importance of visiting schools, supposedly the main task, differs much from one country to another. In Sri Lanka, both supervisors and master teachers spend about 70 per cent of their time on such visits, in Bangladesh and Uttar Pradesh respectively, about 55 per cent and more than 40 per cent of supervisors’ time goes to such visits; in Korea, on the other hand, school visits occupy only 7.5 per cent of their time. The relative importance of academic supervision as compared to other more administrative tasks also varies greatly. In Sri Lanka, classroom observation and assistance to teaching are for both supervision staff and master teachers the number one tasks. Sri Lankan supervisors are engaged for about 40 per cent of their time in classroom supervision, about 20 per cent in supervision of school administration, but only about 15 per cent in writing reports and clerical work. In Uttar Pradesh, on the other hand, the most important tasks are “supervising construction of buildings” and “collection of information”, each taking up about one-third of the supervisor’s total workload, with less than ten per cent going to “academic supervision”. In South Korea, the number one task is “administrative/office work”, which keeps supervisors busy for just over half of their time.

On the whole, the above presentation of basic facts shows that - to varying degrees depending on the country concerned - supervision services are not functioning very well. While this is due

**Table 1 Number of Schools and Teachers per Supervisor**

Country	Official School	Supervisor	Teacher Supervisor
Bangladesh	ATEO	29,8	121,0
Korea	Junior supervisors	3,2	55,5
Nepal	Supervisors	32,4	170,5
	Supervisors + Resource persons	20,9	109,8
Sri Lanka	SLEAS Officers	10,1	185,2
	Master Teachers	41,6	764,8
India	ABSA		
	Uttar Pradesh	67,9	188,8

*Note: For Bangladesh, Korea and Uttar Pradesh, only primary schools are taken into account; in Nepal and Sri Lanka, both primary and secondary schools are considered. In Nepal, resource persons are functioning only in 40 of the 75 districts.*

in part to the heavy workload of the supervisors, it has also to do with a number of problems related to the way supervision services are being managed. Without entering into any detail, some major problems can be highlighted:

- \* The material working conditions of supervisors are generally poor in the four countries of the South-Asian region. In addition, the lack of sufficient support for traveling is a serious problem;
- \* Recruitment procedures differ from one country to another, but one issue needs to be stressed: an analysis of the profiles of existing primary school supervisors indicates that they do not necessarily possess -either the essential professional training for teaching in primary classes or the experience of teaching at that level;
- \* Professional training for supervisors is not satisfactory. This is true both for induction and in-service training;
- \* Lack of motivation on the part of school supervisors, as a result of the poor career prospects is a serious constraint; and
- \* The procedures to ensure that follow-up be given to supervision reports are inefficient: in all five countries, these reports are put to some use, but seldom to remedy quickly problems noted in specific schools.

### ***New Trends in Supervision***

In the face of the many and diverse problems facing supervision, education authorities have attempted to improve its efficiency and quality in several ways. While a few of these attempts have been fully implemented, a number of trends can be discerned.

Supervision staff is asked to focus on giving support to teachers and on their professional development. The change of terminology in different countries is the first expression of this trend. In general, there has been a move away from using the term “inspector”, in view of its pejorative connotations. In most cases, these cosmetic changes in terminology have aimed at a more fundamental reform, namely one in attitudes. In both Korea and Nepal, the transformation of supervisors to “change agents” was put forward as an objective in a context of increased democratization of the society during more recent years. It is worth noting that such reorientations in the job descriptions have not automatically led to changes in the way supervisors actually undertake their tasks. Indeed, one of the recurring complaints by teachers everywhere is that the emphasis of supervision is still too much on control.

Linked to this first change is a trend towards more transparency. For the moment, this is a transparency mainly within the education community: supervisors are supposed to discuss during and after their school visits with the staff they have evaluated; standard report forms and checklists are available, so that teachers have a better idea of the inspection procedures. In a few places, for instance in Uttar Pradesh, it is expected that supervision and support staff discuss with communities. Nowhere yet have school inspection reports been made open to the public.

Arguably, the most significant changes are structural ones. They are the result of a number of other trends, including the rapid expansion in the numbers of schools and teachers, a general policy of decentralization, and more specifically, the felt need to decrease the distance between schools and supervisors.

There exist in principle two ways of shortening the distance between schools and supervisors. The first one is to bring the administration closer to school, by creating, under the level which is presently closest to school, another level of supervision and support staff. In Sri Lanka responsibility for school supervision is assigned, according to the latest education policy, to the divisional education office which operates below district level. In the same way, in Bangladesh supervisors who are in charge of visiting schools are posted at Thana level which is the smallest administrative unit below district. In Korea, the supervision department at central level has been recently closed down and all responsibilities for supervising primary schools have been decentralized at city or county level. In Uttar Pradesh, on the other hand, although each supervisor is responsible for one block, almost all are based in the district headquarters.

The second way of shortening distance between schools and supervisors is to bring schools closer to the administration, by assembling them into clusters and around resource centres. This strategy is used in at least three of the five countries under study. Such resource centres have been set up both in Nepal and Uttar Pradesh while in Sri Lanka a special category of advisors has been created in the form of the itinerant Master Teachers.

The next logical step in the decentralization process is to reinforce school-based supervision and support practice, a new trend which can be observed world-wide, including in the Asian countries studied under this project. In Korea, School Based Autonomous Supervision (SBAS) was recently introduced to allow schools themselves to develop and run supervision policies that are appropriate for their circumstances and demands.

### *Conclusions*

Three conclusions, which can be drawn from this analysis of supervision and support, deserve special attention.

Firstly, reforming supervision, in particular to ensure that its impact is felt in schools, is presently a priority in almost the whole Asian region. It is realized that a strong and coherent supervision and support system is needed to improve on the quality and efficiency of schools. That realization is not just based on some theories and research work, but, in a number of countries, grew out of the negative experiences, which these countries underwent, when they either abolished or totally neglected school supervision.

Secondly, this does not imply that inspection, as it used to exist, can be restored. To some extent, inspectors had only themselves to blame for the neglect they suffered from: their services were in most cases of little help to teachers and to the system, because of their ritual focus on administrative control. Supervision should become a more comprehensive and more frequent exercise, which gives increased attention to pedagogic issues. Supervisors must spend more time in classrooms and with the teachers. In order to achieve this goal, all countries have embarked upon serious structural reforms which aim at bringing supervision and support services closer to the school.

The final conclusion is, however, that the successful implementation of these reforms implies that original answers are given to the various management problems cited above. Further reflection is needed on how to improve on recruitment and training practices and on how to keep staff motivated throughout their career. Excessive workload certainly will have to be overcome. One way of doing

so is to ask the system to concentrate more on poorly functioning, inefficient or isolated schools. An efficient supervision and support system should be truly flexible and diversified. Schools, which function properly, with competent and experienced principals and efficient internal control mechanisms, have less need for external supervision and support. On the other hand, poorly functioning schools, with untrained principals and poorly motivated teachers, do need systematic and sustained supervision and

support services, of different kinds, via locally posted supervisors, resource centres, master teachers and so on. The implementation of such diversified services demands the development of a reliable and relevant information system on the quality of schools.

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## **Teacher Supervision and Support Services for Basic Education in Bangladesh**

### ***Introduction***

Many studies have shown that school and teacher supervision and other support services are important factors for controlling and improving the quality of primary education. The study on 'Improving Teacher Supervision and Support Services in Basic Education' was conducted by the National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM), Bangladesh. The objectives of the study were : (i) to profile the existing system of teacher supervision and support system in Bangladesh; (ii) to identify the inconsistencies and flaws in the structure and functioning of the system; and (iii) to extend research support to the government for formulating policies and taking corrective measures to strengthen the system.

### ***Methodology***

The study is based both on primary and secondary sources of data. Secondary data were collected from research publications, official documents, office records and reports. Primary data were collected from two districts and two thanas

thereunder. Thana is the lowest administrative unit in the country. The educational functionaries entrusted with the responsibility of regular routine supervision/inspection of primary schools and teachers are the Assistant Thana Education Officers (ATEOs). They were interviewed and administered questionnaires as part of the study. Along with them, other supervisors and inspectors of different categories, Headmasters and Assistant Headmasters were also interviewed. The beneficiary group - the assistant teachers of the primary schools - were interviewed for getting feedback from them about teacher supervision and support services. Field level survey was conducted in 16 primary schools located in the two thanas, two Thana Education Officer's offices and two District Primary Education Officer's offices. Interviews were held among 65 ATEOs, 16 headteachers and 50 assistant teachers of the selected schools.

Separate questionnaires were prepared for interviewing the TEOs/ATEOs and the headteachers while a separate format was developed for interviewing the supervisors of other

categories. No questionnaires, however, had been prepared for interviewing the assistant teachers. Members of the research team has discussions with them and exchanged views on matters related to supervision and professional support they receive.

Primary data, collected through the questionnaires, meetings and discussions with different groups were tabulated and analysed. The major findings of the study are highlighted below.

### ***Major Findings***

Teacher and school supervision in the basic education sub-sector of Bangladesh is the responsibility of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) under the Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) of the government which is headed by a Director General. The Directorate is manned by officers of different levels. School visit is the responsibility of each of the officers.

The study reinforces the findings of many previous studies made in this area in different countries. Supervisory services in Bangladesh, like in many other countries of the world, are weakened by the excessive workload and poor working conditions of the main body of supervisors, namely, the ATEOs. The natural consequence is that, greater part of the working time of the supervisors is spent in carrying out formalities of supervision and little time is spent on extending professional support to teachers.

The study report also shows that the supervisors are not resourceful enough to extend pedagogic support to the teachers as they are trained neither in teaching methodology nor in supervision techniques.

The supervisory services in Bangladesh are characterised by weaknesses and inconsisten-

cies in the reporting and follow-up mechanisms. The better part of the whole supervisory system however, is the existence of a well-denned structure of supervisors of different categories, a supervision guideline and a system of regular routine visits to the schools by the supervisors.

Interestingly enough, the study has identified the need for a more humanistic approach to the supervision process carried out by the ATEOs. It also pinpoints (he areas in which teachers are badly in need of professional support.

Consequent upon the bifurcation of the Directorate of Public Institutions (DPI) in 1981 and the placement of the Thana Education Officers under the Directorate of Primary Education, the supervision structure of the primary education sub-sector has been strengthened.

Establishment of school clusters and entrusting the ATEOs with one cluster each has resulted in the creation of a body of supervisors and reinforcement of the system of academic supervision at the field level.

The additional responsibilities of supervising the non-govt primary schools given to the ATEOs has resulted in excessive workload for the ATEOs, affecting their regular supervision activities.

The working conditions of the ATEOs are characterised by lack of office facilities and limited promotion prospects.

The District Primary Education Officer is the chief functionary of primary education at the district level encompassing the thanas. But the budget allocations and sanctions of the budget for the primary education at the thana level are directly placed under the Thana Education Officers by the Directorate of Primary Education.



This gap in respect of financial powers is very likely to have a bearing on the supervision of primary schools.

The monthly salary bills of the teachers have to be countersigned by the Assistant Thana Education Officers (ATEOs) before the payment is made to the teachers by the Thana Education Officers (TEO). This financial authority of the ATEOs over the teachers necessarily results in a superior-subordinate relationship between them. This reduces the ATEOs from becoming teacher-friendly and consequently academic assistance provided by the ATEOs largely loses its efficacy.

The study shows that cluster training has been imparted to a very small proportion (16.42%) of the ATEOs while imparting sub-cluster training to the teachers is a major component of the job responsibilities of the ATEOs. It implies that 83.58% of the ATEOs are imparting training to the teachers without themselves undergoing train-

ing. This is a serious limitation in the system of academic support provided by the supervisors to the teachers. Besides, the newly recruited ATEOs before receiving any training start discharging their professional duties. This affects the quality of academic support provided by them.

The internal supervisors - the headteacher- have undergone training courses. They are not imparted training in management, supervision and inspection which reduces the effectiveness of internal supervision.

The study shows that 78% of the ATEOs have expressed the need for training which implies that they need further development of professional skills for discharging their duties properly.

Teachers are badly in need of support in the fields of learner assessment, preparation of lesson plans and using teaching aids and equipment.  
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## **Improving Teacher Supervision and Support Services for Basic Education in India**

### ***Introduction***

Elementary education in India expanded considerably during the post-independence period. This quantitative expansion was not always accompanied by qualitative improvement in education. The steady decline in the standards of education may be partly due to a weak supervision system which fails to provide academic leadership and support. The research study on 'Improving Teacher Supervision and Support Services for Basic Education' was an attempt to examine the present status of supervision so as

to suggest appropriate measures to improve it. The empirical evidence for the study is collected from the most populous state of India, namely, Uttar Pradesh.

The main objectives of the study were: (i) to diagnose the existing system of supervision and support services for basic education in Uttar Pradesh; (ii) to identify the major problems of supervision and support services; (iii) to seek appropriate strategies for reorganising and strengthening supervision and support system; (iv) to make the role of teacher and school

supervisor more effective for improving the quality of basic education.

The study is based on a sample of 133 (10% of the total) supervisory staff (ABSAs/SDIs), 119 Headteachers selected from EFA and Non-EFA districts of Uttar Pradesh. Structured questionnaires were administered to Headteachers and supervisory staff and it was followed up with informal interviews. Informal interviews were also conducted with selected experts. In order to observe the actual working of the supervisory and support system, the research team also undertook field visits to both EFA and Non-EFA districts of Varanasi and Meerut respectively. For a comprehensive study of the support services a field trip to Allahabad was also undertaken.

For a thorough understanding of the supervision system, group discussions were also held with Assistant Basic Education Officers, Village Education Committee members. Coordinators of Block Resource Centres. Cluster Resource Centres, head teachers and the elected heads of the villages.

### ***Findings***

The data thus collected were then analyzed using relevant statistical measures. The empirical analysis in the study indicate that:

- (i) Assistant Basic Education Officers are overloaded with work. There are around 1,30,000 primary and upper primary schools in Uttar Pradesh. As per the norm of 50 to 60 school per Assistant Basic Education Officer, the required number of Assistant Basic Education Officers for effective supervision is 2,300. But the government has sanctioned only 1,57 posts, out of which only 1,239 posts have

been filled and 338 posts are still lying vacant. This clearly shows the heavy workload of the Assistant Basic Education Officers in the State;

- (ii) Only 16% of the time of the supervisory staff is devoted to work related to academic aspect. The remaining 84% of the time is devoted to non-academic, administrative or community-support activities, like-tree plantation, census work, child census, family planning drive, animal census, supervision of construction work, distribution and supervision of mid-day meals, small saving scheme, health checkup, administration of examination work, scholarship distribution, election duties, collection and dissemination of information, etc;
- (iii) One Assistant Basic Education Officer supervises about a hundred schools, twice a year
- (iv) No support in terms of office, residential and transport facilities is provided to the supervisory staff at the block level;
- (v) The supervisor' staff is not provided travelling and daily allowances in time;
- (vi) The budget for supervision and support services is limited and inadequate at the state level;
- (vii) There is no provision for regular in-service training programmes for the supervisors;
- (viii) The inspecting officers rarely write comprehensive inspection reports;
- (ix) The urban-based municipal board schools are completely neglected with a negligible support from the State;

- (x) At least one full day is required for the comprehensive supervision of a primary school but generally more than two primary schools are supervised in a day;
- (xi) At least two days are required for a comprehensive supervision of an upper primary school. In practice more than one school is supervised in a day;
- (ii) Teachers of basic schools too expressed the need for guidance and availability of comprehensive inspection reports as they have a positive impact on the working of the schools;
- (iii) Teachers also felt the need for educational support and guidance from supervision for effective subject teaching and
- (iv) The coordinators of Block Resource Centres and the Cluster Resource Centres are unclear about their duties and lacked proper training and initiative.

### ***Recommendations***

The study suggested that:

- (i) The role of the supervisory staff needs to be reconsidered and clearly specified in a proper perspective;
- (ii) The existing system of supervision neglects the important role played by the support system, so care should be taken to have a stronger support system for supervision of basic education;
- (iii) At present, more importance is being attached to administrative control with limited scope for decentralisation;
- (iv) The authoritarian attitude of the school inspector also needs to undergo a radical change. It should be made more democratic in nature where the supervisor acts as a friend, philosopher and guide of the teacher:

- (v) The study also indicates that the overwhelming workload of non-academic tasks leads the supervisor to neglect academic task. Thus the impact of supervision and support services on class-room teaching and student achievement is below expectations;
- (vi) The teachers are also dissatisfied with the support services provided which they felt are not functioning properly and thus not contributing much to the basic education system;
- (vii) Emphasis needs to be laid on openness and transparency in transactions between and among the supervisor, head teachers, teachers and the pupils. Planned efforts are also needed for instant solutions to teachers' problems at the school and village level without much bureaucratic involvement;
- (viii) It is suggested that a Block Education Officer is required for every block, with an office and residential facility at the block level to make supervisory process more effective;
- (ix) The focus should move to the total school evaluation rather than on individual teacher supervision for overall improvement in the school and in children; and
- (x) Village Education Committee should have a more participatory role to play in the process of supervision and support services to improve primary education.

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# Teacher Supervision and Support Services for Basic Education in Korea

## *Introduction*

The basic objective of this study was to investigate policy measures to improve teacher supervision and support services through national diagnosis study. The study examined the following research questions:

- (i) The current status of supervision in Korea focusing on the overall structure, basic facts and figures, working conditions and the actual operation of supervisory and support services;
- (ii) Critical issues and major problems in supervision and support services;
- (iii) Developmental directions to be pursued to make the supervisory system more effective and thus of better service to basic education.

## *Methodology*

The methods adopted in the study included a review of related literature and research reports, an analysis of statistics, a questionnaire survey, and interviews with supervisors and specialists in supervision. In particular, 34 supervisors from offices of education, located in 3 different cities and regions (large, middle and small size), were interviewed for in-depth analysis of their daily activities.

## *Major Findings*

Most supervisors in Metropolitan and Provincial Offices of Education are not satisfied with school supervision in their region. The reasons for dissatisfaction differ, however, between supervisors and teachers. Supervisors say (their role is diminishing

due to the fact that they cannot effectively conduct their work because of various limitations and conditions. On the other hand, teachers say that supervisors lack sufficient professional knowledge and that their schools cannot be supervised properly due to various circumstances. Nevertheless, both agree that supervision should be viewed as an important support service.

Consequently, supervisors claim that their authority must be re-established by improving their working conditions, expanding training programmes, increasing welfare, and assigning more assistants to them. Teachers point out that they have too many classes and administrative chores to cooperate with supervisors. They say this condition must also be ameliorated. Also, teachers are not satisfied with the authoritative and structured attitude of the offices of education.

If supervision is to have any real effect on enhancing the quality of education in schools, we must institute a system where instructional supervision can provide guidance on teaching methods. It is because of a lack of instructional supervision that teachers are dissatisfied with the offices of education. They think that getting advice from fellow teachers and senior teachers is a better way to enhance their expertise.

The study identified the following problems in supervision system in Korea :

First, supervisors and teachers do not have enough time and peace of mind to carry out supervision work due to a heavy administrative workload. Supervisors have too much clerical work to do any

research and study for supervision. Teachers also have too much work to receive supervision or to supervise themselves.

Second, few steps are taken to retain supervisors. Presently, supervisors can transfer to a senior position at a school after attaining the necessary experience. Thus they tend to think of their position as a mere stepping stone to a vice principal's or principal's position. Moreover, even though supervisors are in the same age-range and have similar experience as principals and vice-principals, they receive less salary. This makes retaining outstanding supervisors very difficult. Also, little effort is expended on attracting young and qualified supervisors.

Third, supervision is not meeting the needs of schools and teachers and so is often perfunctory. Teachers want to receive supervision that is suitable to their circumstances, backgrounds, and experiences but since supervision follows one set course, it does not give any real and positive assistance to the teacher.

Fourth, there are only a few programmes which train and foster supervisors' expertise and promote research work. In addition, heavy workloads prevent supervisors from enrolling in these programmes. There is also a lack of professional development programmes to help develop supervisors' careers.

Fifth, supervisory evaluations should be carried out fairly and outstanding schools should be rewarded accordingly. However, at present, there is no system to support and award teachers and schools that have conducted supervisory work well. Specifically, the results of supervisory evaluation should be tied directly to the amount of funds granted to schools. This is related to the lack of monitoring of supervisory evaluation reports.

Sixth, a major obstacle for supervision is education based on university entrance examination. Presently, there is a fair amount of supervision in elementary schools and a little less in middle schools, but almost none in high schools. The reason being that middle and high schools give too much attention to advancing students to the next level of education and do not take time to consider other factors in education, such as management of school curriculums and School Based Autonomous Supervision.

### *Prospects and Tasks*

The present trend is to decentralize supervision duties through the introduction of School Based Autonomous Supervision (SBAS). Such a system has the advantage of being able to consider the peculiarities of each school region, as well as the needs of individual teachers. It can carry out differentiated supervision also. Accordingly, the government's role has diminished to administering national supervision, while the role of local offices of education has increased to emphasize individuality.

The work of supervisors is vital since school evaluations can lead to greater accountability in schools. Through school evaluation, we can determine the schools successfully meeting their responsibilities, presenting school curriculums, and achieving set educational standards. Consequently, policies are being developed to enhance the professional expertise of supervisors.

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# Improving Teacher Supervision and Support Services for Primary Education in Nepal

## ***Background***

Modern education in an organised manner started in Nepal only after the advent of democracy in 1951. Since then several efforts for the development of education in the kingdom have been made. Primary education is defined as the basic education in the country and it was given special fillip at the time of the coronation of the present king, in 1975 when primary education was declared to be made free by stages.

Primary education in Nepal comprises-1st to 5th grade. All the schools are under the administrative jurisdiction of a District Education Officer. Nepal is administratively divided into 75 districts and in each of the districts there is one District Education Office headed by District Education Officer (DEO). There are several administrative and professional staff (including school supervisors) in the District Education Office. Schools in the district are divided into a number of areas and each area is assigned to a specific school supervisor. On an average primary school has 152 students and 4 teachers, out of which one is a female. One school supervisor has to supervise on an average 21 schools (comprising both primary and secondary levels).

In 40 districts where the Basic and Primary Education (BEP) is in implementation, primary schools are formed into several clusters, one Resource Centre (RC) is built for each of the primary school clusters and resource persons (RPs) are employed to look after the schools under each of the RCs. The RPs supervise and provide support to the schools in one or two clusters depending upon the number of schools. Resource persons are based in Resource Centres whereas regular school su-

perators are based at District Education Offices (i.e. at district headquarters). There is one Programme Coordinator in each district under the DEO who looks after the project activities. Very recently, in the districts covered by the BEP the regular school supervisors have also been converted into RPs with specific RCs assigned to each of them. Now, both regular school supervisors and resource persons have to supervise both primary and secondary schools in their cluster.

## ***Objectives of the Study***

The overall objective of the study was to find ways for strengthening supervision and support services for teachers and schools in order to improve the quality of basic education. The study focused on the diagnosis of the existing system of supervision and support services and attempted to identify suitable strategies for the reorganisation and strengthening of teacher and school support and supervision.

## ***Methodology***

The study methodology consisted of the following three major approaches:

- (i) *Study of Secondary Information:* Major studies in the supervision system in Nepal (about 18 books and reports) were reviewed and analysed.
- (ii) *Extensive Interaction:* A working committee consisting of five researchers at CERID was constituted to go into and reflect on the various outcomes of the study. An Advisory Committee was formed under the chairman-

ship of the Secretary of MOE and with the representations from the concerned agencies including schools and DEOs. Moreover, a seminar participated in by prominent educators, educational researchers, educational planners, policy makers, administrators, supervisors, head teachers and teachers was organised to obtain their ideas on the current school supervision and teacher support mechanism in the country.

(iii) *Field-based Case Studies of Selected Districts*. Three districts, Chitawan, Banke and Jumla, were selected for case studies of the supervision system in practice. Chitawan is located at the central part of Nepal and is populated by people from almost all other parts of Nepal. Banke is located in the Terai of Mid-Western region of the country. Jumla is one of the most remote mountain parts of the country where educational development is rather slow and where supervision system is difficult to apply because of the lack of roads and other means of access.

IIEP guidelines for the study on Supervision and Teacher Support were used as the basis for tools development. The tools consisted of focus group discussion guidelines, interview, questionnaire and observation guideline sheets.

### **Major Findings**

The study findings show that there is a need for rethinking about the supervision strategy in Nepal in order to make the supervision system in the country more effective and functional.

(i) One of the major issues of the current supervision system is that the supervisors are overloaded (21 schools per supervisor) with specified as well as unspecified tasks. Also, the

tasks of supervision and instructional support call for conflicting roles from the supervisors: the need to inspect/monitor and evaluate the performance of the school as a whole and make recommendations for corrective measures and, in the mean time, to provide guidance and support for development. There is thus a need to simplify the tasks. The tasks should be categorised into parts, such as monitoring tasks and instructional support tasks. The stipulated tasks should be minimised and well-defined so that these could be easily comprehended and properly interpreted in case of doubt or conflicting opinion between the supervisor and the supervised. The case should be settled based on the stipulated mandate and responsibilities.

(ii) A related issue of supervision pertains to the lack of effective logistic support to the supervisors. The problem is heightened by the fact that in most cases, the only means to reach the schools is on foot since there are no roads to get access through vehicles. Very often, the supervisors need to stay overnight on the way to school or in the school area. There is lack of residential facilities in such staying in the villages. Therefore, most supervisors pointed out the need for provision of basic amenities such as sleeping bags and torch-lights.

(iii) Another important issue of supervision arises from the ad-hoc way in which supervisors are recruited. During the implementation of NESP (1971-1976) and after, most of the supervisors were freshly recruited; they lacked experience in teaching, school administration, and supervisor's skills. Consequently, in many cases supervisors were not able to discharge their duties competently and with confidence. In the schools where there

were experienced and qualified teachers, most supervisors failed to deal with the school situation tactfully. Although the problem is well understood but the ad-hoc recruitment of inexperienced and under-skilled people as supervisors (or resource persons) still continues.

In the same vein, serious questions are being raised regarding the validity of the criteria followed in the recruitment of temporary supervisors and the RPs in BPEP and about the abilities of the supervisors because of the telltale influences exerted by the politicians in the recruitment on the individual basis. There is, therefore, a need to reform the recruitment, system so as to make it more objective and effective in selecting better supervisors.

- (iv) In order to well equip the prospective school supervisors, on-going degree programme (B.Ed. of Faculty of Education, TU) needs re-consolidation, especially in terms of its practicum component so that the supervisors will be in a position to perform their responsibilities with sound professional competency.
- (v) One of the lacunae in the current supervision system is training of personnel involved in the supervision system. Although there are some provisions for in-service training made by MOE, these are highly inadequate. Inappropriate training has often perpetuated problems of supervision. Recently, NCED has revised the training curriculum and started the regular training programme of supervisors. Training should be provided to all concerned - DEO, supervisor, resource person, headmaster, teacher and the SMC members on the aspects relevant to school system monitoring and support. There is also the

need for parental education on the aspects relevant to school functions, monitoring and support system.

- (vi) Although BPEP model of school cluster and resource centre seems to address many aspects of supervision and teacher support, the issue with this model is one of sustainability. Another issue with this model is the increased involvement of RPs in training activities rather than supervision of other support activities. Their role is more drifted towards training activities. In other words, they are now considered more as formal trainers than as coordinators of the support activities. There is, therefore, a need to reassess the role of RPs.
- (vii) Locally supervision system requires local participation, and decentralised delegation of responsibilities and authorities. In this context, the internal supervision and support should be strengthened with enhanced role and responsibilities of headmasters and SMC members. For this purpose, provision of relevant training should be made available to them.
- (viii) The idea of supervision in the past was seen more as a centralised authority imposed on the school (than as a facilitation and support service. present, with the implementation of school cluster system and the provision of resource centres and resource persons the idea of supervisor resource person to provide support to teachers and schools is put into practice. On the other hand, the inspection aspect of school supervision is suffering a lot as a result of lack of motivation and administrative lethargy. Very often the supervision work is taken as routine work. Lack of co-ordination between different authorities involved in supervision and support system highly visible. Lack of proper monitoring of



activities of supervisors is often pointed out the community people, school staff and even newspapers. On the other hand, supervisors complain that DEOs and other responsible authorities do not pay due attention to their field reports. Hence, there is a lack of a system functioning effectively in the current situation.

Therefore, the supervision system should have two distinct and parallel aspects, one for system monitoring and the other for resource support. Each section in the scheme should have clearly defined and specified minimum tasks that are easily identifiable if necessary. Moreover, certain preconditions, such as training the supervi-

sors, more political stability in transfer of the supervisors and DEOs frequently, and legal fence mechanism for teachers against vested act of supervisors need to be fulfilled before implementing the suggestions for improving supervision services in Nepal.

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## **Issues and Trends in Teacher Supervision and Support Services for Basic Education in Sri Lanka**

The study examined the issues and trends in teacher supervision and support services for Basic Education in Sri Lanka.

The issues highlighted in the study focused on two main aspects, namely, (i) Management; and (ii) Daily functioning and operation of Supervisory Services.

### ***Issues in Supervision***

Management issues comprise areas as recruitment, training, professional guidance, monitoring and evaluation. There are two types of supervisors: the Sri Lanka Education Administrative Officers (SLEAS), and the Master Teachers. The recruitment procedures vary for these categories.

For recruitment of SLEAS officers, procedures and basic requirements are minuted in the Gazette Notification Extra Ordinary dated 15 October, 1986. However, those procedures as laid down are not completely adhered to, giving rise to an issue about cadres. There are three classes of officers i.e. Class I, Class II and Class III. Class I of the SLEAS has only a General Cadre while II and III have a General and a Special Cadre in each. Although cadres are determined, there is a discrepancy between the approved cadres and the existing cadres. The actual cadre of Class II far exceeds the approved numbers, while there are vacancies in Class III.

Moreover, the absence of a proper and updated database on SLEAS officers results in lack of

valid seniority list. With the implementation of decentralization policy, management and administrative structures in education have changed over time, without proper revision of cadres.

Another notable feature is the absence of primary level education officer among the special cadre. The number of schools and teachers have increased considerably from 1986-1995, without a corresponding change in the number of supervisors.

Partial data collected from four provinces out of eight provinces reveal that the supervision staff is relatively old - 45% are above the age of 55 years (the age of retirement). The situation poses a question of innovative thinking in a large group of officers.

To bring about effective supervision a trained supervisor is necessary. From the year 1976 Staff College for Education Administration (now changed to Department of Education Management Development of the National Institute of Education) has been entrusted with the training of education officers. However, only a small percentage of officers have been given in-service training. Lack of funds for payment of travelling and subsistence to officers is a limiting factor in this regard. There has been no specific training to undertake supervision of primary level education by SLEAS officers.

Although the performance of supervisors can also be supported by professional guidance by providing manuals and guidelines specially on ethical aspects and attitudes, these are inadequately used for this purpose.

In the absence of an appropriate database concerning the performance and quality of schools and teachers, no realistic and pragmatic monitoring activities can take place. Also indicators are less widely known and used for improved

monitoring of schools. Apart from performance indicators, data in general on coverage of schools for supervision is lacking. Monitoring tools need emphasis to make supervision effective. Policy is, however, laid down for purposes of monitoring the supervisory activities of officer, by its own hierarchy.

As mentioned at the outset, the other category of supervisors engaged in Primary Supervision are Master Teachers (MTs), sometimes referred to as In-Service Advisors. A major problem existed in recruitment of Master Teachers. This was manifested in the form of certain irregularities and delays, which have now been rectified from recent times. A new scheme has been introduced where specialist MTs including those for primary level education will be appointed. There will be 299 divisions in the island, and for each division two such MTs will be recruited. Since the available number is 245, another 353 new MTs are required to fill the cadres.

A coordinated effort for pre-service training is necessary. The National Institute of Education which is responsible for development of primary level curriculum, the Ministry of Education, and Provincial Department of Education have to collaborate in training of MTs. The school curriculum, methodology, preparation of teaching aids, role of the MTs have been the main components of pre-service training.

The availability of professional support and guidance is minimal. There are neither manuals and guidelines, nor clear job descriptions provided to MTs. At present MTs as a service are included in the recently formed Teacher Service. This service has three classes: I, II and III. To be eligible to become a Master Teacher, one has to be in either class I or II.

Another aspect is the daily functioning and operation of supervisory services. Lack of infrastructure facilities, poor environmental conditions, difficult terrain limit access to schools in remote isolated areas. Moreover, the degree of commitment on the part of both SLEAS Officers and MTs has a bearing on the number of schools covered and frequency of visits.

Although officers do not indicate that they have a heavy workload, those officers whose divisions are within densely populated Municipality limits, state that the workload is heavy. During the course of discussions, it was revealed that proper planning and monitoring could solve this problem.

In the planning of school visits by officers, monthly plans are prepared, where dates for incidental visits are indicated without detailed plans providing the schedules for follow-up visits. The number of visits per month by an officer is decided by the zone (an education administrative unit), without reference to the schools to be visited. These plans are forwarded in advance to the zone/division. For incidental visits officers select schools at their discretion.

There are two types of school visits - incidental and team visits. In the latter type, the visit is announced in advance. The objectives of visits are similar. However, in team supervision, diversity of aspects of school management are covered in addition to both primary and secondary sections of school. In school visits the MTs concentrate on classroom teaching.

Two kinds of reports are prepared - monthly work done report by each officer and MT, and those prepared by individual officers and by the coordinator of the team. In the monthly work done report, the name of school and date of visit are stated. In theory, the report should provide feedback to the principal and the staff, information

for follow-up activities and planning, and any other necessary action by the higher authorities. Certain shortcomings, such as making vague and brief statements, lack of any specific instructions for quality improvement are negative features observed in some reports. The reports are not published, and hence are not available to the public. There is hardly any follow up activity. The supervising officers lack authority to take action in case of defaulting functionaries.

At school level, there is no separation of pedagogic and administrative supervision. Although separation of the two fields is not practical at school level, the officers supervising play a dual role of control and facilitation. In one instance authority is used whereas in the later situation, the type of relationship is one of influencing teacher behaviour. There remains a superior - subordinate relationship between the supervising officer and the teacher. The status of the MTs also remains a question. There is no parity of status between the officer and the MTs and principal and MTs. In team supervision information from the MTs is conveyed to the principal only through the officer. On the other hand, there is lack of recognition of the young officer by the mature principal, since he feels those officers are less equipped for supervision.

### ***Trends in Supervision***

Trends in supervision evolve on several aspects, such as improvement of teacher status, transparency in appointment and promotions, shift of emphasis on supervision from a system of external to in-school supervision, empowerment of teacher and principal and approach to supervision from more authoritarian to democratic form. Over the past few years, planned efforts are made to regularize recruitment, promotion, training and appraisal system of teachers. Since April 1995 the Sri Lanka Teachers' Service has been

introduced. The Teacher Service is of five different grades, namely Class I, Class II and Class III, Grade I and Grade II (Gazette Extra Ordinary Notification of Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka of 3rd April 1995 bearing No. 865/ 3). With the establishment of the service, there is a transparent promotion scheme which provides an improved motivation accompanied by an improvement of salaries. Moreover, training and retraining become essential for career improvement. The regular training is expected to enhance professional quality of the teacher. The proposals for appraisal consist of several aspects - regularity of training and promotion, need for maintenance of records and identification of persons responsible for appraisal. A National Authority on Teacher Education (NATE) is to be established for overall policy development, planning, coordination and monitoring and accreditation of programmes of the integrated National Teacher Education System. Along with the development of teacher professionalism, another parallel change is the shift of emphasis from external supervision to internal supervision. There will also be enlarged school based management system. The principals will exercise more authority and be responsible for and held accountable for the management and supervision of school activities. It should lead to more innovative and creative practices in school. Several such examples were noted in schools that came under the research study. The school held and a part of the peer group of teachers of the primary level classes, make observations of classroom teaching of a selected teacher. The date and time of supervision are known, and the teacher prepares a model lesson. A post-observation discussion takes place between the principal, supervision team and the teacher concerned. This system helps teachers to be more competent, and develop confidence. The changes will also make provision for improved community participation and

the school can be better understood in relation to its social setting. This understanding will develop with greater participation of the community in school management matters. With policies of decentralization of administration to the grass root level and the understanding that occasional visits by external supervisor cannot alone solve maintenance problems and look into developmental tasks, in-school supervision is envisaged as another route to quality improvement in school.

An innovative strategy developed to strengthen principals and teachers for self-sustainability has been undertaken by the Department of Education Management Development of the National Institute of Education. The project activities facilitate organisational development of disadvantaged schools through the empowerment of teachers and principals. This enables them to identify problems and search for solutions. Ten in-house sessions are conducted over one and a half year period. The process has helped the teachers to be reflective practitioners. Studies conducted by the facilitators themselves show that the strategies and processes used in this project have led to improvement of total learning situation in the school.

Shift of emphasis from teacher supervision to whole school evaluation is another current trend. Providing teachers with advice and facilitation for classroom teaching as a device provides partial solutions to major school problems. Thus the whole school is subject to evaluation by a team of officers. The approach to supervision has changed from an authoritarian one to that of a democratic approach.

*Summary prepared by R.K.K. C. De Silva.*

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## **NEW MEMBER INSTITUTION BRAC (BANGLADESH)**

Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) started in 1972 as a Relief Agency. In the next year it got transformed into a Development Programme focus-sing on the relief work among famine and flood victims. In 1973 the focus was shifted to community development. BRAC emphasises mainly on rural development activities focusing on Village Organisations. It has around 54,000 Village Organisations covering around 32,000 villages. Important rural development programmes initiated by BRAC are Poultry Programme, Rural Enterprise Project, Fisheries Programme, Vegetable Cultivation Programme, Sericulture Programme, Health and Population programme etc. Educational programme is also been as one of the elements in the rural development activities of the BRAC.

BRAC started educational activities in 1985 through its NFPE (Non Formal Primary Education) programme. The major effort through this programme was to provide primary education to rural children. This programme started with 22 experimental schools in Bangladesh. At present there are around 34,000 NFPE school operating under BRAC. These schools enrol around 1.1 million children and employ around 33,000 teachers.

BRAC educational programme pays special attention to the needs of the girl child. Nearly 70% of the students in BRAC schools are girls. Similarly, 97% of the teachers are women. The NFPE schools are flexible in timing, located close to homes of children. Most of the NFPE schools are single teacher schools, where one teacher is responsible for 30-33 students. The teacher moves with the same cohort of students from

Grade I to Grade III. These children join regular primary schools after three years in BRAC schools. The drop out rate in these schools are low when compared with the schools run by the Government.

The organisational decisions are taken by the governing body which consists of the Chairman, Executive Director and members. BRAC is a non-government organisation and its resources are mobilised from nongovernmental sources. It gets funding support from various international agencies. Apart from that it mobilise its own resources through various income generating activities initiated through its own activities.

More than 50% of the resources are mobilised through its own activities. The major divisions of the organisation are Rural Development, Research and Evaluation Division, Health and Population Division, Non-formal Primary Education Division. Each of these divisions are headed by a Director. All these were work under overall guidance of the Executive Director. At present BRAC has around 17,500 full time staff.

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