

# **INCREASING THE NUMBER OF WOMEN TEACHERS IN RURAL SCHOOLS**

## **A Synthesis of Country Case Studies**

### **South Asia**

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## Abbreviations and Glossary

### Abbreviations

AEO	:	Assistant Education Officer
AIOU	:	Allama Iqbal Open University
AS	:	Alternative Schooling
ASPABE	:	Asian and South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education
AWW	:	Anganwadi workers
B.Ed.	:	Bachelor of Education
BEP	:	Bihar Education Project
BPEP	:	Basic and Primary Education Programme
BRC	:	Block Resource Centres
BSG	:	Block Steering Group
TTC	:	Teacher Training Certificate
CERID	:	Research Centre for Educational Innovation and Development
C-in-Ed.	:	Certificate in Education
CRC	:	Cluster Resource Centre
CT	:	Certificate of Teaching
DEO	:	District Education Officer
DIET	:	District Institute of Education and Training
DOE	:	Department of Education
DPEP	:	District Primary Education Programme
DSCERT	:	Directorate of State Council of Educational Research and Training
EFA	:	Education For All
FGD	:	Focus Group Discussion
FSP	:	Flexible School Programme
GOB	:	Government of Bangladesh
GOI	:	Government of India
GON	:	Government of Nepal

GOP	:	Government of Pakistan
HSC	:	Higher Secondary School Certificate, (12 years of schooling)
ICDS	:	Integrated Child Development Services
IGNOU	:	Indira Gandhi National Open University
LC	:	Learning Coordinator
LJ	:	Lok Jumbish
M.Ed.	:	Master of Education
MOE	:	Ministry of Education
MS	:	Mahila Samakhyia
NCED	:	National Centre for Education Development
NCERT	:	National Council of Education Research and Training
NCTE	:	National Council of Teachers' Education
NFE	:	Non-Formal Education
NGO	:	Non-Government Organisation
NPE	:	New Policy on Education
OSP	:	Out of School Programme
PMOST	:	Programme of Mass Orientation of School Teachers
POA	:	Programme of Action
PTC	:	Primary Teachers Certificate
PTI	:	Primary Teacher's Training Institute
PTT	:	Primary Teacher Training
RC	:	Resource Centre
RP	:	Resource Person
SAP	:	Social Action Programme
SC	:	Scheduled Caste
SCERT	:	State Council of Education Research and Training
SDC	:	School Development Centre
SKY	:	Shiksh Karmi Yojna
SMC	:	School Management Committee
SOC	:	School Outreach Programme
SSC	:	Secondary School Certificate, Passed after 10 yrs of schooling

ST	:	Scheduled Tribes
TLM	:	Teaching Learning Material
TTC	:	Teacher Training Certificate
UEE	:	Unversalization of Elementary Education
UEO	:	Upazila Education Officer
UPBEP	:	Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project
UPE	:	Universal Primary Education
VDC	:	Village Development Committee
WES	:	Women Education Section
WRITE	:	Women’s Residential Institute for Training and Education
WTF	:	Women Teachers’ Forum

### **Glossary**

<i>Adyapika Manch</i>	Literally meaning “Women Teachers Forum,” this was the name given to the forum evolved under Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan, India.
<i>Block</i>	A sub-district administrative unit in India. Although mostly known as a block, this is called <i>taluka</i> in some states and <i>janpad</i> in one state in India.
<i>Lok Jumbish</i>	Literally meaning “Collective Movement,” the name of a primary education programme in Rajasthan State, India. The programme has started many innovative practices in the sector.
<i>Mahila Samakhya</i>	Literally meaning “Women’s Collective” – this is the name of a women’s empowerment programme operational in several selected areas of certain states in India.
<i>Panchayat</i>	Panchayat is a traditional word in Hindi referring to five elders in a village who mediate conflict – the word is used for the three tiers of local self administration brought in by the 73 <sup>rd</sup> Constitutional Amendment in India – the highest being the district panchayat followed by the block panchayat and gram (village) panchayat.
<i>State/Province</i>	India and Pakistan have federal governments where the country is divided into several political units being governed by separate governments under the common constitution for the country. These units are known as the state in India and the province in Pakistan.
<i>Tehsil</i>	This is the administrative unit at sub-district level in Pakistan.
<i>Upzila</i>	This is the administrative unit at sub-district level in Bangladesh.

## **Chapter One**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **Background**

In 1997, UNESCO through the Asian and South Pacific Bureau of Adult Education (ASPABE), supported country studies on the situation of basic education for girls and women in Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. A high-level consultation meeting on basic education for girls and women was organized in Nagarkot, Nepal, in August 1997. One of the recommendations from this meeting was to undertake a comprehensive review of policies and programmes, existing provisions and strategies for increasing the number and enhancing the quality of women teachers in rural primary schools. Following this, UNESCO sponsored a study on women teachers in rural areas in the four countries. Upon completing the studies, a workshop was held in Nepal during August 28 - September 3, 2000, to share the country studies and synthesize them into a sub-regional report outlining the situation, problems and potentials regarding the number and functioning of women teachers. The sharing and synthesizing experience showed that although there are several country specific issues in each of these four countries, there are a number of common problems and features that could be used for mutual learning among the countries.

#### **Objectives of Preparing a Synthesis Report**

The primary objectives of preparing a synthesis report for the sub-region are as follows:

1. To review and assess the existing sub-regional policies and programmes for increasing women teachers in rural primary schools,
2. To identify related issues/problems and good practices in the sub-region, and
3. To make suggestions for improving policies/practices for increasing the number and improving the functioning of women teachers in rural primary schools.

#### **Approach and Methodology**

The methodologies followed by the four country studies were guided by the terms of reference and the guidelines provided by UNESCO/PROAP. The guidelines were developed based on the recommendations of the Nagarkot workshop in 1997. These guidelines outlined the basic indicators that needed to be reviewed and assessed. The indicators included:

- ❖ Recruitment and promotion policies being followed in general and in specific programmes

- ❖ Specific provisions with the explicit or implicit goal of increasing the number of women teachers in rural India
- ❖ Specific provisions to support women teachers in terms of transport, accommodations, physical facilities in schools, etc.
- ❖ Specific provisions to support women teachers in terms of academic performance in the classroom (teacher training, academic support, etc.)

The four countries' research teams largely followed a similar approach in conducting their studies. Both quantitative and qualitative information available from secondary sources were analysed at length. All four studies also undertook primary fieldwork, albeit on a small scale, in selected districts and provinces. Although there was variation in actual techniques followed by different study teams, these mainly included interviews and focus group discussions with various concerned people – men as well as women teachers, principals, students, supervisors, community members and local management committees, education administrators and policy makers. The specific approach followed for fieldwork by each country study was as follows:

### ***Bangladesh***

Three upazilas from three districts were chosen for conducting primary fieldwork. From each of the upazilas, 15 primary schools were chosen and from each of the primary schools, principals, all female teachers and girl students were interviewed. The sample of primary schools consisted of all types of schools – government primary schools, registered primary schools, unregistered primary schools, satellite schools and NGO schools. Focus group discussions (FGDs) were held with mixed groups of parents, schoolteachers, supervisors, school management committee members and upazila education officers. Policy makers, planners, managers and researchers were also interviewed. Guidelines and interview schedule were used as tools for conducting interviews and FGDs.

### ***India***

Two states, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh (UP), were identified for greater focus and primary fieldwork. Senior policy makers, education administrators, teacher training experts and researchers were consulted and interacted with at length regarding relevant policies and practices being followed in that particular state. Thereafter, one district and one block from that district were identified in each state. The identified districts and blocks were average in terms of educational indicators such as girls' participation rates. FGDs were held with teachers in a few schools in each block. Teacher trainers, parents, students, community representatives and NGO representatives were interviewed at district, block and village levels. In addition, consultations were also held with teachers, trainers, administrators and policy makers in two additional states, Orissa and West Bengal. Due to the small size of the primary fieldwork area, the quantitative interpretation of information has been avoided.

## *Nepal*

Four districts were identified for fieldwork on the basis of the highest and lowest representation of women teachers. Sunsari and Kaski were selected as having the highest proportion, and Parsa and Sindhupalchok were selected as having the lowest proportion of women teachers among all the districts in the country. In each district, two primary schools were selected to provide feedback on the women teachers' situation in rural schools as well as to help compare schools with and without women teachers. The District Education Officer (DEO) was consulted for the selection of these schools on the basis of office records. Interview schedules were prepared for the DEO, trainers, parents, men and women teachers, principals, children, out-of-school students, NGO representatives and others.

## *Pakistan*

Rural women teachers from one selected district in each of the four provinces of Pakistan were interviewed for this study. Altogether, 70 women teachers were interviewed. These teachers were asked about their levels of satisfaction with economic incentives, work environment, government rules and regulations, and the nature of their workload. In addition, they were asked about the quality of students, the attitudes of parents towards teachers, transportation and other problems faced by the teachers, and the nature of in-service training opportunities available to them. FGDs were organised by the District Education Officers (DEOs) in these districts with rural primary school teachers, parents and education administrators. These helped in assessing the conditions of women teachers in rural areas.

Each country also organised a national seminar to present and share the draft study report to gather feedback and suggestions for developing more suitable policy and practices for increasing the number of women teachers in rural primary schools and enhancing their quality of functioning. The participants in this seminar included education policy planners, managers, teacher-training specialists and academicians.

## **Synthesis of the Country Studies**

As mentioned earlier, a week-long workshop was held at Nagarkot in Nepal from August 28 to August 30 followed by concluding sessions in Kathmandu from August 31 to September 3, 2000. The main objective of the workshop was to develop this synthesis report. The workshop approach consisted of the following steps:

1. Presentation of and discussions about the country case studies and their findings.
2. Developing the outline and chapter scheme of the synthesis report.
3. Preparation of chapters for the purpose.
4. Presentation and sharing of the chapters followed by discussion.
5. Interaction with various specialists, representing various institutions.
6. Revision of the chapters based on feedback and preparation of the draft report.

Any report developed by a group of divergent professionals in a workshop needs refinement and content editing. The draft synthesis report was carefully edited and rewritten wherever necessary by one of the professionals who was team leader of one of the country studies and had participated in preparing the draft synthesis report.

### **Limitations**

Although the study's focus on women primary teachers in rural areas appeared simple, the scope of study was expanded in all four countries. Pronounced variations in the number, share and capabilities of women primary school teachers across different parts of the country made it difficult to cover all the aspects in detail. The limitations became compounded because of severe constraints on time and resources that affected completion of the studies. Yet the country studies do provide an overall picture of the country with respect to women teachers in rural primary schools.

The synthesis report attempts to present the sub-regional picture and a common frame for reference. These countries, especially Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, share a common history, which is reflected in the similarity of some of the policies and practices followed. Similarities are also there in some of the programme designs being adopted in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. However, there are certain specific features of each country that need to be kept in mind while reading the synthesis report.

For instance, in the case of Bangladesh, unlike the other three countries, more than 75 per cent of the primary schools are not run or supported by the Government. The Government manages only about half of the total primary schools, the other half being managed by NGOs. India is a vast country with a population about fifty times larger than Nepal, with diverse culture, topography and levels of development. The federal nature of its polity at times means significant variation in the policies and programmes being followed by different states, especially in the case of recruitment and other issues that are controlled by the respective state governments. Though small in size, Nepal's difficult topography and remoteness of most rural areas present a number of problems that need special efforts and attention. Historically also, the modern education system is a relatively new feature and hence the base is not very strong in Nepal. Pakistan, unlike the other three countries, does not have a co-educational system even at the primary level of schooling. Almost all schools in rural areas are single-gender schools. All the teachers in girls' schools are women and similarly all the teachers in boys' schools are men.

The availability of information in the public domain was an issue in each of these countries. In view of the lack of data from public sources, the sample survey results have been used for certain quantitative indicators in relation to women teachers in rural areas, especially for Bangladesh and Pakistan. Since the sample size is small (126 women teachers in Bangladesh and 70 in Pakistan), these results need to be interpreted with caution. In the case of India, although the data are available for the entire country, statistics are accessible only up through 1993. The annual statistics being published by the Government do not

distinguish between urban and rural areas. The availability of statistics is an issue in Nepal also and some of the vital information is not available at the national level. These problems acted as one limitation for the studies as well as for the synthesis.

### **Structure of the Report**

This chapter introduces the report and provides the background, objectives, methodology and limitations. The second chapter discusses the profile of women teachers in terms of number, proportion, academic background, training and nature of their job. The chapter also discusses the rationale for having women teachers in primary schools on the basis of evidence and arguments provided by the country studies. The next chapter details the policies and practices regarding recruitment, selection, placement, transfer, teacher training, incentives for teachers, alternative schooling experiments, support measures and work environment. The chapter analyses these factors from the perspective of their impact on the number and functions of women teachers in rural areas. The following chapter filters the issues and problems emerging from the analyses in the second and third chapters. The last chapter provides suggestions for improvement in the situation regarding availability of women teachers in rural areas in the South Asian countries of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan.

## **Chapter Two**

### **WOMEN TEACHERS IN RURAL PRIMARY SCHOOLS – A PROFILE**

This chapter deals with the comparative analysis of the profile of women teachers in rural primary schools in the sub-region (Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan) in terms of number and percentage, rural and urban, qualifications, training levels and nature of employment. This profile has been presented in order to indicate the increase in number and percentage, to identify urban/rural gaps in the percentage of women primary school teachers, to determine their qualifications and training status, and to picture the nature of their employment. The chapter starts with a discussion of why women teachers are important at all.

#### **Why Women Teachers are Important in Rural Areas?**

Although these studies had been undertaken with the premise that women teachers in rural areas are necessary in order to have a positive impact on girls' participation rates, these studies went into the issue of why women teachers are important and provide some interesting insights. The arguments put forth in favour of having women teachers vary and include the perspectives of community demand and management on the one hand, and girls' specific needs along with the issue of gender equity on the other.

The country case studies show that the sense of security was an important factor amongst parents. Most of the parents felt that the presence of at least one woman teacher makes them feel more secure about their daughters. This becomes more important for girls in Grades III and above. Most of the administrators and trainers perceived women teachers to be more effective in Grades I and II, where building teacher-child relationships is critical. The administrators in India considered women teachers to be "more sincere" also because they do not indulge in local politics. Mothers in Nepal reported that they were more comfortable in talking to women teachers regarding their children's progress and problems. According to these studies, children were also reported to be more comfortable with women teachers in most cases. This was true for both girls and boys. Children find women teachers sympathetic, patient, affectionate and open to questions and discussions.



*Instead of going to school, Nepali girls play in the market area*

One of the important arguments in favour of women teachers is that they act as role models for girl students. In rural situations, where the girls do not come across many educated women as such, the presence of a woman teacher serves this critical purpose. This is very important for development in the formative years. It was found that girls in schools with no women teachers had problems in identifying with male teachers in this respect. Another argument relates to the issue of gender equity. Children, both boys and girls, are expected to be more gender sensitive if they grow up in an environment where they see both men and women perform similar functions and duties as compared to one where they see women performing only stereotyped jobs.

Evidence from Pakistan suggests a positive link between the presence of women teachers and the academic performance of students. An achievement survey for primary classes showed that both boys and girls in rural and urban areas performed better when taught by a woman teacher. This is evident from the following table:

**Table 2.1. Students' Composite Scores According to Teacher's Gender (Pakistan)**

<i>Teachers</i>	<i>Urban</i>			<i>Rural</i>		
	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Girls</i>	<i>Boys</i>	<i>Total</i>
Women	63	60	62	63	71	64
Men	53	56	54	50	59	55

*Source:* Determinants of Primary Students' Achievements; National Survey Results; MSU; Islamabad; 1995.

Women teachers, therefore, are important for primary schools in rural areas for a variety of reasons. The findings from these studies seem to reinforce the basic premise that the presence of women teachers in primary schools creates a positive impact on girls' education in the sub-region. Hence, in this light, a discussion of their profile in the sub-region becomes relevant to see the present situation and understand the trends in this context.

### Number and Proportion of Women Primary School Teachers

Evidence from the four countries of the sub-region, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan, exhibit an increasing trend in the number and percentage of female primary school teachers at the national level during the 1990s (Table 1).

Statistical data from Bangladesh show rapid increases in the total number of women teachers in the country from 33,000 in 1990 to 48,000 in 1998, registering an increase of about 45 per cent in a period of eight years. A similar trend is observed for India where the number of women primary teachers increased from 473,000 in 1990/91 to 643,000 in 1997/98. This implied an increase of about 40 per cent during the same period of time. In Nepal, the number of women primary teachers increased by about 31 per cent during the four-year period of 1995 to 1998 when the number increased from 16,000 to 21,000. The rate of growth has been slow in Pakistan where the number of women teachers increased from 98,000 in 1990/91 to 116,000 in 1997/98. This implies an annual increase of only 18 per cent, which is the lowest among these four countries (Table 2.2).

**Table 2.2. Number and Percentage of Women Teachers at the Primary Level in Selected Countries of South Asia**

(Number in thousands)

Year	Bangladesh		India		Nepal		Pakistan	
	Number	Per cent Share	Number	Per cent Share	Number	Per cent Share	Number	Per cent Share
1990/91	33	21	473	29	–	–	98	33
1995	43	27	533	31	16	19	115	34
1996	45	28	553	32	18	20	109	33
1997	34	28	585	33	21	22	113	35
1998	48	31	643	34	21	23	116	33

Source: Country Reports; UNESCO; August, 2000.

The rate of increase in the number of women teachers has exceeded the growth in the number of total teachers in the sub-region except in Pakistan. This is obvious from the increase in the proportional share of women teachers in Bangladesh, India and Nepal. In Bangladesh, the share of women teachers increased from 21.19 per cent in 1990 to 31 per cent in 1998. The proportional share of women teachers in India increased from 29 to 34 per cent during the same period. In Nepal also, the share of women teachers registered growth for the time

period 1995 to 1998 by increasing from 16 to 21 per cent. However, in Pakistan the percentage share of women teachers remained static at about one-third of the total number of teachers in the 1990s.

It may be noted that country aggregates do not always provide the real picture for the entire nation. Wide variations exist across states/provinces/districts in terms of proportional representation of women teachers among total number of teachers in all four countries. For instance, in India, the proportion of women teachers is more than half in some states like Kerala whereas this is less than one-third in many other states like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Orissa. Similarly, inter-province differences exist in Pakistan where the proportion of women teachers is the lowest in Balochistan and the highest in Punjab. The variation also exists even at the district level within the states/provinces in India and Pakistan. In Bangladesh and Nepal also there are variations in proportional share of women teachers at division and district levels. Sylhet and Chittagong divisions in Bangladesh are examples where percentage shares of women teachers are much less than in other divisions.

### **Urban-Rural Gap**

Since 70 to 80 per cent of the population of this sub-region live in rural areas, where large numbers of out-of-school children (especially girls) reside, it becomes important to review and analyse the availability of women teachers in rural areas. A perusal of the data for urban and rural areas reveals that the aggregate position in terms of number and proportion of women teachers for the nation as a whole does not always indicate the real picture for the rural areas. Evidence from the four countries indicates that there is a pronounced rural-urban gap everywhere with the proportion of women teachers being very low in rural areas as compared to that in urban areas.

The data for all of India showed that the share of women teachers in rural areas was only 25 per cent in rural areas as against 60 per cent in urban areas in 1993. An analysis of the trend observed between 1986 and 1993 in India reveals no change in the rural-urban gap for the distribution of teachers. Although the relative share of women teachers has increased in most Indian states for both rural and urban areas, the rate of increase has invariably been slower in rural areas with a couple of exceptions such as in Karnataka and Orissa. Data for about half of the country's low female literacy districts being covered by the special programme, District Primary Education Programme (DPEP), for as late as 1998-1999 and 1999-2000, also do not reveal any significant change in this proportion. The extent of the rural-urban gap also varies from state to state with this gap being the least in Kerala. We need to mention that the rural-urban gap is high even in those states such as Haryana and Punjab where the overall representation of women teachers is high.

It can be seen from Table 2.3 that the rural-urban gap is almost as sharp in Nepal also. Only 18 per cent of teachers in rural areas are women in comparison to 51 per cent of teachers in urban areas. The availability of women teachers is a real problem in remote hilly areas where physical access is a real issue.

**Table 2.3. Percentage of Women Primary Teachers in Urban and Rural Areas**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Proportion of women teachers in Urban Areas</i>	<i>Proportion of women teachers in Rural Areas</i>
Bangladesh	1998	NA	60 *
India	1993	60	25
Nepal	1998	51	18
Pakistan	1998	50	36

*Source:* Country Reports; UNESCO; August, 2000.

\* Based on the sample survey for all types of primary institutions (government, non-government & NGO operated schools). The data for the other three countries are for the entire nation.

In Pakistan, though the rural-urban gap exists in the proportional share of women teachers, this is not as sharp as in case of India and Nepal. Women constitute about 36 per cent of all teachers in rural areas and 50 per cent of all teachers in urban areas. However, this difference is significant given the fact that almost all of the schools are single-gender schools. It is clear that the access facilities are smaller for girls than for boys in rural areas whereas there is almost no difference in urban areas.

In the case of Bangladesh, data for rural-urban differences were not available at the national level. The data presented in Table 2.3 are from a small sample survey of all types of schools and hence do not represent the whole of Bangladesh. This sample indicates a high representation (60%) of women teachers in rural areas. However, this includes all types of schools including government and NGOs, and the percentage of women teachers in rural areas is generally much lower in the case of government primary schools. Since NGOs manage about half of the total schools in rural areas and almost all teachers employed in NGO schools are women, it is likely that the share of overall availability of women teachers in rural areas is high here as compared to other countries in the sub-region.

### **Educational Qualifications**

The minimum entry qualification is the same for men and women teachers with very few exceptions in the primary schooling system of these four countries. The secondary level of education is being adopted as the most common minimum qualification required for becoming a primary teacher in this sub-region. While the same eligibility criteria are applicable for the entire nation in Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan with minor exceptions, they vary from state to state in India. Although some states require only secondary level education, most of the states in India require a higher level of minimum qualification at Grade XII pass. The qualification profile of women teachers in the sub-region suggests that the majority of them possess higher qualifications than the minimum required in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan.

In Bangladesh, evidence from the sample survey of rural schools shows that among the primary school women teachers, more than two-thirds have educational qualifications above the entry requirement, i.e., a secondary school certificate (SSC) in the second division. Almost 30 per cent of women teachers have obtained the SSC, 41 per cent have obtained a higher secondary school certificate (HSC/class VII) and 27 per cent have graduate level education while the remaining teachers have degrees at the masters level.

Statistical data for all of India (1993) show that although the educational qualification was higher than the minimum for a substantial number of women teachers in both rural and urban areas, the average qualification of women primary school teachers in rural areas was lower than that in urban areas. In urban areas, 41 per cent of women teachers have qualified up to the secondary level, 20 per cent have obtained higher secondary certificates (HSC) and 38 per cent are educated at the graduate level. In contrast, 56 per cent of women primary school teachers in rural areas have qualified up to the secondary level, 22 per cent have obtained an HSC and only 13 per cent have graduate degrees.

In Nepal, only about one-third of all women teachers had educational qualifications higher than the minimum requirement. National statistics for Nepal (1998) indicate that of the total women primary teachers, 66 per cent have only a school-leaving certificate (SLC – secondary level of education), 24 per cent have obtained intermediate certificates and 7 per cent have graduate degrees. A small percentage (3%) of women teachers have not even obtained the SLC whereas a negligible number have degrees at the masters level.

In Pakistan also, like the other three countries, all women primary school teachers in both urban as well as rural areas meet the minimum qualification requirement of matriculation. There are a few exceptions in the province of Balochistan where relaxation was granted in view of remoteness and non-availability of local qualified teachers. The results of the small field-based assessment in rural schools indicate that 36 per cent of women primary school teachers have matriculated, 24 per cent have secured the HSC, while 26 per cent are graduates and 14 per cent post-graduates.



*Primary school in rural area in Pakistan*

## Training Levels

Training levels of women primary school teachers in rural areas in the sub-region are generally very high, except for Nepal (Table 2.4). In Pakistan preservice training is compulsory for primary school teachers and no teacher is employed without professional training except in some remote areas of Balochistan. For the majority of the states in India professional preservice training is compulsory for all teachers (including women) starting work in the primary schools. In the case of Bangladesh preservice training is compulsory for men but not for women. Preservice training is not a requirement for the appointment of women teachers in Nepal either.

**Table 2.4. Training Status of Women Primary Teachers in Rural Areas**

<i>Country</i>	<i>Year</i>	<i>Per cent Trained</i>	<i>Most Common Level of Training Achieved</i>	<i>Duration of Training</i>
Bangladesh	1998	92	C. in Ed	1 year
India	1993	90	TTC*	2 years
Nepal	1998	35**	PTT	180 hrs and 330 hrs
Pakistan	1998	93	PTC	1 year

\* Different names in different states.

\*\* For women teachers at national level (not exclusively in rural areas).

In this sub-region the training period for primary school teachers varies from a minimum of 180 hours (5 months) in Nepal to a maximum of 2 years in India. In Bangladesh, at the time of appointment, most women primary school teachers do not have any formal training. However, newly recruited women teachers in both urban as well as rural areas are provided training opportunities when they first begin work. The sample survey showed that about 90 per cent of women teachers had completed this training, which is equivalent to preservice training. It was also reported that although it is not a requirement, 25 per cent of women teachers had undergone preservice training at the time of appointment.

In India, preservice training was compulsory for government sector teachers in almost all states. Therefore, the share of trained teachers is naturally high. However, it is interesting to note that a larger percentage of rural women teachers (90%) have undergone preservice training as compared to urban women teachers (80%). The share of untrained women teachers is highest (35%) among teachers with graduate degrees working in urban areas. The share of those having been trained is higher for women teachers with lower academic qualifications in both rural and urban areas.

Training levels of primary school teachers, both urban and rural as well as men and women, are high in Pakistan. The national statistics showed that about 93 per cent of women rural primary school teachers are formally trained. All teachers covered under the field-based assessment were reported to have undergone preservice training.

In Nepal, the percentage of trained women teachers is very low in comparison to other countries in the sub-region because of two reasons. One is the fact that primary school teachers do not need preservice training at the time of recruitment. And the second reason is that although there are mechanisms for inservice training to serve the purpose of induction training, the coverage is limited and has not been able to cope with the rapid expansion of the system. It takes a long time before all teachers get their turn for this training and hence a large number of teachers are untrained.

In the context of teaching capabilities, women teachers in Bangladesh report facing problems in teaching mathematics and English in both urban as well as rural areas. In Pakistan too, national survey results suggest that in both urban and rural areas men teachers achieved higher scores in teacher capability tests than did women teachers in the subject fields of mathematics and general knowledge.

### **Nature of Employment**

The primary education system in rural areas in the sub-region is mainly funded and managed by the Government with a very low participation from private or non-government agencies. Some parts of these countries do have aided schools that are managed privately with substantial financial support from the Government. The recent past has also witnessed the emergence of private “English medium” schools in some rural parts of the sub-region but the phenomenon is currently not common and as yet not very significant. As mentioned earlier, Bangladesh is an exception where out of 63,534 formal primary schools, only 37,710 are government controlled, the rest (25,824) being managed by non-government agencies. However, the non-government schools receive a substantial part of teachers’ salaries from the Government in terms of subvention. In addition, 22,568 NGO learning centres are also offering basic education to primary school age children. These NGO learning centres do not receive any financial support from the Government.

In all government primary schools of Bangladesh, the teachers are appointed on a regular and permanent basis. For non-government primary schools (registered and unregistered), the teachers are appointed locally, generally on a temporary basis. The appointment of teachers in non-governmental schools needs government approval because the Government pays a subvention for them. The amount of subvention is different for different categories of non-government schools. The rate of subvention to teachers of registered non-government primary schools was increased to a maximum 80 per cent in the financial year 1998-1999. The Government does not have any control over the appointment of teachers in NGO learning centres. They select and appoint the teachers for their primary schools on a temporary basis; usually the salaries and qualifications are lower than those of government schools. The Government does not pay any subvention for these teachers. In most of the NGO primary schools and learning centres, the teachers are women.

In India, the government-funded primary schools are managed either by the state governments or by the local bodies (panchayats). Private aided schools are managed privately but receive substantial aid from the Government for salaries. Private unaided schools do not get any funding from the Government.

In India, about 85 per cent of rural primary school teachers are employed by schools managed by local bodies and governments. These are followed by aided private schools, which employ another 10 per cent of rural women teachers. Private unaided schools give employment to less than 5 per cent of women teachers in rural primary schools. On the other hand, private unaided schools employ the largest share, which is more than one-third of women teachers, in urban areas. There is no significant difference in the nature of service for women teachers in rural and urban areas. Around two-thirds of women teachers are permanently employed in both urban and rural areas. The percentage of women teachers working on a temporary basis was about 25 in both rural and urban areas. About 10 per cent of the teachers were working on an ad-hoc basis. The share of permanent women teachers was the highest in government schools, followed by local bodies, private aided and private unaided. Only about one-half of the teachers working in private unaided schools had permanent jobs. The percentage of ad-hoc teachers was the highest in the private aided schools, followed by those run by local bodies.

Although the statistics are not available, both permanent and temporary teachers exist in government primary schools in Nepal. The quota for temporary posts is also distributed from the Women's Education Section of the Ministry of Education (MOE). These quotas are to be converted to permanent posts in phases. In some cases though, the posts are permanent; the working teachers might be temporary, as they have not yet passed the qualifying test.

All primary school teachers in Pakistan, both men and women in urban and rural areas, are employed on a permanent basis in the government sector schools. Only 2-3 per cent of primary school women teachers are employed by the private sector in rural areas. This percentage is corroborated by evidence from field-based assessment. Salary scales for all government employees, including teachers in all areas, are the same across the four provinces in the country.

A discussion of the profile of women teachers in the sub-region makes it clear that the distribution is unfavourable for rural areas, with notable rural-urban gap. However, the women teachers in rural areas are also generally well qualified in all four countries. The majority of them have also undergone training, with the exception of Nepal. The majority of women teachers working in government schools in the sub-region are permanently employed.

## **Chapter Three**

### **REVIEW AND ASSESSMENT OF EXISTING POLICIES AND PROGRAMMES**

The specific policies, programmes and practices in different countries determine the availability of women teachers in rural primary schools to a large extent. This chapter reviews and assesses the critical ones including recruitment, teacher education, professional development avenues, promotional opportunities, work environment and support facilities in the sub-region. The focus is on analysing the changes that have appeared during the late 1980s and 1990s. An effort has been made to identify the common as well as country-specific features and to highlight good examples.

#### **Recruitment, Selection and Placement**

Growing concern for girls' education in the sub-region has been reflected in the policy statements of all four countries, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. A perusal of policies reveals that although there has long been an emphasis on increasing the number of women teachers in primary education, it got a definite thrust during the late 1980s and 1990s. The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) envisages that 60 per cent of all teachers in primary schools will be women. The Education Policy (1997) focused on adopting measures for filling this quota for women teachers urgently and recruiting only women teachers for further vacancies, if need be. India, in its New Education Policy (1986) and Programme of Action (1992), clearly emphasized the need best reflected in the schematic formulation of Operation Blackboard. This Government of India (GOI)-sponsored scheme for all its states propagated and supported the idea that every school must have at least two teachers, one of whom should be a woman. In Nepal, the Education Regulation (1992) made it mandatory for every primary school to have at least one woman teacher. In 1998, the Government of Nepal (GON) established a policy to recruit women for 50 per cent of the vacant posts. At present, the policy is to recruit only women for these posts. The Government of Pakistan (GOP) has emphasized the increased recruitment of women teachers for its rural areas in its National Education Policy (1992), the Social Action Programme and the recently announced National Education Policy (1998-2010).

#### ***Eligibility Criteria for Women Teachers***

These policy statements and concerns have also been converted into certain specific provisions in all four countries. In Bangladesh, apart from a 60 per cent reservation for women in government schools, there is a difference in the eligibility criteria for male and female candidates; men must obtain the HSC and complete one year of preservice training whereas women require only a secondary level of education. The country has established more than

20,000 satellite schools, each having Grades I and II as feeder schools in rural areas. These are being managed entirely by local women teachers.

The situation is complex in India where the recruitment of teachers is a state matter. The state governments make their own policies leading to a large variation in the country. While some states like Karnataka and Orissa have made provisions for favouring women candidates in teacher recruitment at the primary stage, many states such as Assam, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have no such policy. There are differences in the eligibility criteria that exist in different states, with some states following successful completion of ten years of schooling as the requirement and others twelve years. Uttar Pradesh, the largest state in the country, has recently made graduation and a degree the minimum requirement. One to two years preservice teacher training is a requirement in the majority of the states. However, in the formal schooling system there is no difference in the eligibility criteria in terms of qualifications for women candidates in any state with the exception of certain tribal areas.

In Nepal also, there is no difference in the eligibility criteria between men and women candidates; both require a secondary level of education. Preservice training is not a requirement and teachers are provided with induction training after appointment. However, a special provision exists for women candidates who can apply up to the age of 40, whereas men can apply only up to the age of 35.

There is generally no inter-province variation in the recruitment policy followed by different provinces in Pakistan. Successful completion of ten years of schooling plus one year preservice teacher training is the requirement for becoming a primary school teacher for both men and women in all provinces. Under the Social Action Programme, the age bar for women candidates was relaxed to 50 years. A special provision was made for Balochistan where the availability of women teachers in far-flung rural areas was an issue. The women with only eight years of schooling were recruited with provisions for special induction training. Since most schools are not co-educational, and the women candidates are recruited for the announced posts for women candidates only, the reservation policy does not have any relevance.

### ***Selection, Placement and Transfer Processes***

It is obvious that despite definite policies for recruiting women teachers they are not adequately represented in the teaching force in the sub-region, as seen in the last chapter. One of the important factors for this gap is the process of selection being followed for recruiting the teachers in different countries. The GOB requires a standardized written test followed by an interview at the district level. Evidence suggests that highly qualified candidates apply and women with lower qualifications fail to compete and attain the minimum marks. As a result the 60 per cent quota for women candidates remains unfilled. This system was introduced in 1997 due to widespread reports of alleged malpractice at the upzila level recruitment process. However, in the new process also, once selected, the teachers are appointed for upzilas. The

situation is similar in one state, Bihar, in India, where a centralized selection process was introduced due to reports of anomalies in district level appointments.

The process of selection varies among different states in India. The most common process followed is a combination of merit and interview, although the relative weight given to these two varies in different states. Merit is reflected in terms of marks attained in different examinations of Grades X and XII, and preservice training. A similar process of selection is followed in Pakistan. The District Education Officers (known by different names in India) are the appointing authority in Pakistan as well as in most states of India. Although the assessments for vacant posts are made on the basis of school-level requirements, the appointments are not for individual schools in either country.

Nepal also follows a combination of qualifying test and interview conducted at the district level. However, two types of competitions are held, one for all candidates and one exclusively for women. Women can participate in the general competition as well. In addition, the school management committees, which receive grants from the GON and have their own sources also, are free to hire local teachers on a temporary basis. This means is being used mainly for recruiting local women teachers wherever women with the required eligibility are available. Nepal as well as Bangladesh follows the policy of placing women teachers, so far as possible, in their home village/ward/thana.

All four countries have some transfer policy in place. The GOB permits the transfer of teachers within upzila; a minimum of three years is required before transfer can be sought. After marriage women have a chance to transfer to their husband's place of residence if it is within the upzila. In India, the policy varies among the states and most states follow the rule of allowing transfers only after three to five years of tenure at one place. Some states have the policy of posting teachers to their own block, while some others follow the practice of not allowing teachers to be placed in their own village/*panchayat*/block. The rationale is that when posted in or near their own home locality, they tend to neglect their professional duties. In recent years, the trend is to move away from these practices and allow teachers to be placed in or near their own homes. Inter-district transfers are permissible only in exceptional cases. Nepal also follows the policy of allowing transfers to permanent primary school teachers only after three years of tenure in case of inter-district transfers. Unlike the other three countries, in Nepal there is no specific rule for transfers within the district. In special cases, even inter-regional transfers are permissible. The policy of minimum three-year tenure for becoming eligible for transfer even within districts exists in Pakistan. Preference is given in Pakistan to posting in the home district and villages.

No definite criteria exist for allowing transfers in any of these countries in the sub-region. The individual applications are processed and the respective administrators at different levels, whatever the case may be in different countries, are entitled to take decisions. This leaves a lot of room for maneuvering and subjective influences to play a role. Apart from political interference, teachers' associations also influence the transfers. Women teachers are widely reported to prefer posting in urban areas in all four countries for a variety of reasons. These reasons will be discussed later.

### ***The New Recruitment, Placement and Transfer Policy in Karnataka, India***

The recruitment of primary school teachers is done at the district level through a merit list prepared on the basis of marks obtained in Grade XII and the diploma course in teaching. Greater weight is given to candidates who have studied till senior secondary level in rural areas in the form of additional 10 per cent points to the marks obtained. Half of the posts are reserved for women.

The process of counseling is followed for initial placement as well as transfers and redeployment. A simple computerised decision support system has been developed for the purpose.

For transfers, a vacancy database is created with the help of the principals of the schools, which is circulated among the teachers. After seeing the list of schools, the teachers submit their application for transfer giving reasons. These applications are prioritised on the basis of the reasons for transfer, and teachers are allowed to appear for the counseling process in the order of their priority. A set of objective criteria has been developed taking the personal needs of the teachers as well as that of the education system into account. During the counseling, the teacher is shown the latest database of vacancies and is asked to choose any of these places. Once the place is selected, a transfer order is immediately printed and given to the teacher, and the vacancy database is updated for the next teacher. There is also a provision for the inter-district transfer in the system. The entire process takes two to ten days depending upon the number of teachers in the district and takes place once a year. The perusal of the priority criteria makes it obvious that women teachers get preference over men teachers in some respects. The whole process is objective and transparent and has been successful in removing subjective influence.

#### **The priority criteria for transfer of teachers in Karnataka**

1. Priority criteria for transfer within the district
2. Terminal illness
3. Physical handicaps
4. Other serious medical ailments
5. Teachers occupying surplus posts which have been transferred to other schools
6. Husband and wife cases where both are in government service
7. Female applicants with less than 3 years service left
8. Male applicants with less than 3 years service left
9. Other female applicants who completed 3 years in the same place
10. Other male applicants who have completed 3 years in the same place

The field experiences have clearly revealed that subjective elements, especially political interference, are quite common in the selection of candidates in all four countries wherever the interview has a role in the process. The extent of influence depends on the individual initiatives of the administrator or political leader. The same situation exists for transfers because of the lack of a transparent policy in many parts of the sub-region. Therefore, what is important is the development of a transparent policy of selection, placement and transfer with adequate mechanisms and objective criteria. In this context, the recently developed policy in Karnataka, one of the states in India, deserves to be mentioned.

### **Teacher Training and Academic Support**

Access to professional development opportunities determines the functioning and performance of all teachers including women. Both preservice and inservice training opportunities and access to academic support attain importance because of their relevance for the quality of the academic processes.

#### ***Preservice or Equivalent Training***

All four countries in the sub-region have elaborate systems of teacher training with institutions at national, state/province and district levels. Preservice teacher training is provided through a two-year course in most states in India and a one-year course in Pakistan through Teacher Training Institutes at district level. In India, there is preferential admission of women to these institutions in many states. In Pakistan, there are separate institutions for women. In Bangladesh also, women teachers are provided one-year teacher training at district-level institutions. However, due to the backlog, it takes three to ten years after employment for women teachers to receive this training. Nepal also provides induction training of 180 to 330 hours to primary teachers after recruitment and, like Bangladesh, it takes three to five years after joining the work force to get this opportunity. However, the Distance Learning Teacher Training Centre in Nepal has now started providing 180 hours training in coordination with the National Centre of Educational Development. This training is for both permanent and temporary teachers.

Indira Gandhi National Open University (IGNOU) in India and Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) in Pakistan are providing distance teacher training courses to large numbers of students. The women and residents of remote areas in both countries, who would otherwise find it difficult to receive such training, have welcomed this programme. Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) was the first distance education institute in South Asia. Established in 1975, its Institute of Education is one of the main teacher training institutions. In 1985, the Teacher Education Department was established as a separate department, the largest department catering to both preservice and inservice teacher training. It has trained 288,604 students for primary teaching during 1980-1999, of which about 56 per cent were women.

The real issue with respect to preservice training for women teachers is how effective it is in equipping them with the skills to cope with actual classroom problems in rural areas. The requirements of teacher education go beyond the knowledge of theories, teaching methods, and competencies for subject teaching. Problems in the rural areas of this sub-region could include large classes, difficult situations like multi-grade classrooms, teaching the first generation of school-goers, classroom management, working with parents, enlisting community support and implementing incentive schemes. However, in reality the primary education teacher curriculum in the regular institutions does not cover these matters and suffers from a lack of contextual relevance. This is true for the three counties of Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. To some extent, it explains the reluctance of women teachers with urban backgrounds to serve in rural areas. The curricula and training process do not prepare or motivate them to take up the real challenges in the field. In Nepal, field situations and experiences find some expression in the training programmes because the packages of 180/330 hours are conducted in segments with school postings in between.

However, there appears to be growing concern regarding this gap in curricula. The Education Policy (1997) in Bangladesh mentioned revising the curricula and making pre-service training a two-year course. The New Education Policy of Pakistan (1998-2010) outlines the review and revision of the curriculum and the methods of instruction in teacher training institutions to bring them in line with the requirements of modern trends in the field. One of the steps taken in this regard is the initiation of a three-year pre-service course for primary school teachers on an experimental basis. The National Council for Teachers Education (NCTE) in India has developed the Curricular Framework for Quality Education, which is expected to guide the state-level institutions. However, the changes that are happening are still inadequate in all these countries. Some evidence of inservice training more directed towards practice and real situations is available in some parts of the sub-region. For instance, Uttar Pradesh in India has recently included a few techniques as well as content areas in its preservice course with the objective of developing an understanding of real classroom situations.

### ***Preparing Rural Girls/Women to Become Teachers***

In the context of a lack of adequately trained women teachers in rural areas, two experimental programmes implemented in parts of India and Pakistan need special attention. In Rajasthan, one of the lowest female literacy states in India, under *Lok Jumbish*, a special programme for primary education, an effort was made to train women from rural areas to become teachers or take up other development jobs. In 1995, the *Women's Residential Institute for Training and Education* (WRITE) was started for this purpose. In the beginning many women did not turn up for admission but the situation changed after the first batch of girls completed the course. The residents of WRITE are provided free boarding and lodging, as well as necessary learning materials. In addition to scholastic education, opportunities are being provided to build self-confidence among the residents. The girls are required to manage their dining facilities and to learn how to ride bicycles. A programme of mobile teacher training was implemented in Balochistan province of Pakistan with a similar purpose.

### **The Mobile Women Teacher Training Programme in Pakistan**

*The Mobile Female Teacher Training Programme (MFTTP), funded by UNICEF, was an experimental programme launched in 1993 in Balochistan. It was designed to create a pool of potential women teachers in rural and remote areas. In these areas, young women with an 8<sup>th</sup> grade pass or better were unable or unwilling to participate in the regular residential pre-service training programmes due to cultural constraints. As such, the MFTTP “brought the training to the teacher”. Training was conducted on high school premises in village centres to which girls from surrounding areas were transported daily. The programme was a three-month course and offered a pre-service equivalency programme enabling the candidates to be appointed as teachers. Upon improving her qualification to matriculation, a teacher became eligible to be promoted to a regular teacher position without further training. According to a recent assessment, about 3,300 girls in remote rural areas were successfully trained by MFTTP, transforming them into a pool of teachers eligible for teaching in primary schools.*

The Feeder Hostel (FH) programme in Nepal also needs to be mentioned here although it is not a teacher training programmes as such. The GON is running 18 FHs in the country with the objective to prepare local girls in rural areas to become primary school teachers. These hostels are being run to provide the secondary level education of Grades VIII to X to rural girls and all the expenses of boarding, lodging and education are being borne by the Government. The girls are being selected on the basis of remoteness of their villages and poor economic conditions of their families. The girls are also provided guidance and remedial teaching in these hostels so that they can perform better. India also has a programme of residential schools for secondary education for girls in tribal areas, known as ashram schools. Some research studies in India have emphasized the need for promoting secondary education among girls through residential facilities with the primary aim of having locally available women teachers in rural areas.

#### ***Inservice Professional Development Opportunities***

Inservice training for primary teachers in the sub-region did not receive much priority until the early 1980s. This was infrequent and ad hoc in nature, and guided by one project or another in most cases. The situation, however, changed in the late 1980s and 1990s with a lot more emphasis on the quality of teaching and the need for periodic training. However, the situation varies in the sub-region with India having already developed a decentralized institutional structure and processes at sub-district levels in most parts, Bangladesh in the process of developing such a system, Nepal making substantial progress in this regard and Pakistan still to develop such a mechanism. However, Pakistan also has periodic teacher training at the province level.

The need for decentralized institutions at sub-district level for periodic teacher training was realized in India in the light of the experience of teacher training programmes that took five to six years to cover all the primary teachers in the district. The new programmes in



*Training of facilitators in India*

elementary education, such as Lok Jumbish (LJ), Bihar Education Project (BEP), Uttar Pradesh Basic Education Project (UPBEP) and District Primary Education Project (DPEP) emphasized the importance of yearly inservice teacher training and promoted the establishment of decentralized structures at sub-district levels to accomplish this activity. Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) were established as decentralized structures for teacher training, monthly teacher meetings, on-site academic support, school visits and demonstrations. The evidence reveals that the majority of the country's primary school teachers are receiving 7 to 15 days of training every year. However, this is still not a universal phenomenon in the country.

Bangladesh is in the process of establishing Upazila Resource Centres (URC) at the sub-district level, the concept being somewhat akin to the BRC in India. The country already has a system of cluster training under which primary teachers are provided two to seven days training locally within a sub-cluster covering 5 to 10 schools. Local resource persons including teachers and administrators are used in these training programmes. Both men and women teachers are invited to participate. This cluster training has provided opportunities for a large number of teachers to receive regular training. On average, teachers get an opportunity to attend a recurring training programme once every three to four years.

Nepal has also established Resource Centres (RC) at sub-district level, which are being used for teacher training and teacher meetings. These RCs have been established under the Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP), which covers 60 out of the total of 75 districts in the country. One RC covers 10 to 12 primary schools. Each week subject teachers meet to discuss and share their problems related to subject teaching. A teacher, therefore, gets an opportunity to share experiences once every one to two months.

In Pakistan, the institution of Education Extension Centres at provincial level has the responsibility of providing teacher training. However, due to the large number, it becomes

difficult to cover all teachers in a reasonable period of time. The National Policy of Education (1998-2010) focuses on using both formal and non-formal means to provide increased opportunities for inservice teacher training to the working teachers preferably at least once in five years. Pakistan as well as India is also using distance education to provide inservice training to primary teachers. AIOU is the institution in Pakistan and IGNOU as well as other state-based universities in India are the institutions for the purpose. Since 1975, more than 220,000 primary teachers have received inservice training by AIOU in Pakistan.

### **Women Teachers Forum (Adhyapika Manch) under Lok Jumbish in India**

WTF or Adhyapika Manch was started in 1994 on an experimental basis in Pisagan block in Rajasthan with the intention of enhancing women teachers' participation in residential teacher training camps and to encourage them to become master trainers. Women teachers were invited to a 2-day conference to discuss the various aspects of their work, particularly training. Women teachers mentioned how the unequal culture of schools was replicated in LJ training programmes. Male teachers tended to control the situation and showed scant regard towards them. Satisfactory toilets were not provided, and, of course, no arrangements made if they had to bring their small children with them. In the course of exchanging views, women teachers collectively decided that provided satisfactory arrangements were made they would also participate in residential training programmes and would not in any manner get left out of the educational reform process set in motion by LJ.

These forums took responsibility for women's participation in training programmes. They did insist that if any women had special problems, lenience should be shown towards them. But such cases were exceptions, and women teachers began to participate in training programmes as equals. They also tried to create a different culture in the training programmes, insisting that all persons show mutual respect and consideration during training programmes. Women teachers' forums have begun to take up women's grievances in schools also. They also motivate women teachers to offer themselves as master trainers and to participate in planning meetings.

Interestingly enough, these groups got involved in developing other activities as well. They developed integrated programmes in several blocks as a result of the new understanding and perceptions with regard to women's development. These include

- formation of more Women Teachers Forums;
- training of Sathins (women workers), dais (village midwives) for co-operation with LJ;
- emphasis on selection of women as NFE instructors and preparation of design for their training in women's development prior to regular NFE induction training; and
- involvement of village-level women's groups in income generation, rural employment and other programmes;
- organisation of Girls' and Women's fairs.

In India, Bangladesh and Nepal, training and support activities have focused on activity-based teaching practices, multi-grade teaching and school-community relationships. The participatory mode of training and involvement of teachers has been emphasized in these training programmes. Although large numbers of women teachers have participated in these inservice teacher training programmes in all three countries, some of the evidence from India indicates women's reluctance to participate in residential programmes. Family expectations and responsibilities, fewer women teachers and the lack of day-care facilities at training centres for participants' small children have been cited as reasons for this reluctance. Lok Jumbish in Rajasthan developed the concept of the *Women Teachers' Forum* (WTF) to solve this problem and other related issues.

The experiences from all the countries also reveal that the presence of women resource persons (RPs) in the training programmes also helps in ensuring better participation of women teachers not only in terms of their presence in the training programme but also in terms of their participation in training activities. Therefore, all the countries in the sub-region are making efforts to involve larger number of women trainers wherever possible.

### ***Academic Supervision***

School supervision is the responsibility of district and sub-district level education administrators in all four countries. The supervisors, known by different names in these four countries, report to the *upzila*/block/sub-division level education officer in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. In Nepal, the size of the district being small, the supervisors report directly to the District Education Officers. These supervisors are primarily meant for academic supervision but generally have a lot of administrative responsibilities also. The number of schools to be covered also varies among these countries and happens to be generally large in India, Nepal and Pakistan. This makes it difficult to provide meaningful academic support at the desired frequency. However, the supervisors in Bangladesh are relatively better placed as they have minimal administrative responsibilities and the number of schools covered is also smaller, varying generally from 10 to 12 only.

In recent years, the concept of a separate academic support person other than the administrative post has become common in most parts of India, Nepal and Pakistan. This person generally has the responsibility of only 10 to 12 schools and no administrative responsibility. In India, one of the primary responsibilities of the CRC coordinator is to visit schools and provide on-site academic support. Unlike supervisors, the majority of the CRC coordinators have direct experience in primary school teaching. Similarly, in Nepal the resource persons at the RCs are also responsible for school visits and on-site support to teachers. In Pakistan, learning coordinators have been provided for the specific purpose and they report directly to District Education Officers. Although these personnel are specially trained for the purpose, their functions vary in different parts of the country both in India and Pakistan.

On the whole, it can be said that although the sub-region has an elaborate system of teacher training and support, there are a number of issues related to curricula, processes, content

and management that need to be addressed. There are certain common problems, especially in preservice training, but there are also problems that are specific to countries, especially in inservice training. There is a possibility of mutual learning among countries of the sub-region in the case of inservice training.

## **Promotional Opportunities and Incentives**

### ***Promotional Opportunities***

Promotional opportunities are limited for teachers in primary schools in all four countries. In most cases, they retire in the same post after decades of service. In Bangladesh and India, the school head masters are either recruited directly or are promoted from the teachers. In Pakistan, there is no direct recruitment of principals and this is a promotion post for primary school teachers. However, the posts are limited and many teachers do not get a chance to access this opportunity. Unlike these three countries, in Nepal there is no difference in the salary scale of teacher and head master in primary schools and the latter just gets an additional allowance. However, there is a provision for periodic enhancement in the salary scale for primary school teachers in all four countries. In Bangladesh, India and Pakistan, there is a possibility of promotion to upper-primary/secondary schoolteacher or some of the education administrative posts if they fulfil the basic eligibility qualification. However, due to the existence of very few such posts, primary teachers rarely get an opportunity to use this provision. Seniority is the main criterion for whatever promotional opportunities are there. There is no special preference given to women in general or women with experience of having worked in rural areas in particular.

There is no avenue to move up and utilize the experiences of teaching at the primary level in any of these countries. Although there is increasing evidence of primary teachers used as resource persons and master trainers in training programmes, as well as for the posts of coordinators at sub-district level institutions, these are not treated as promotion posts. As a result, these signify only horizontal movement and not any vertical mobility. The New Education Policy (1998) in Pakistan mentions identifying the factors hindering promotion of primary education teachers. Some of the states in India are making provisions for the primary school teachers with specified years of experience and qualification to join District Institutes of Education and Training on a deputation basis. But such examples are not very common.

### ***Special Incentives for women Teachers in Rural Areas***

Pakistan and Nepal have made certain special provisions for teachers serving in rural areas. The GON has a policy of providing additional allowances to teachers coming from outside amounting to 25 to 100 per cent of the total salary depending upon the remoteness of the place. This applies to both men and women teachers and is not meant for local teachers. In Pakistan also, there is a provision of an allowance of Rs. 75.00 to 300 for posting in remote areas. There is no such provision in India and Bangladesh.

All four countries in the sub-region have some system of awards at various levels for teachers to recognise their efforts. Apart from the awards given by the Government, it is also common to find the local management committees and the community providing awards to teachers in rural areas. This is one form of intervention for raising motivation. Pakistan also has an interesting scheme involving distribution of edible oil to women teachers working in rural areas.

### **Edible Oil Incentive Scheme in Pakistan**

To encourage women primary school teachers in rural areas, the World Food Programme launched a project titled, "Promotion of Primary Education for Girls in Balochistan and NWFP". The project, focusing on rural schools, provided a monthly incentive of vegetable oil (one tin of 5 kilograms) to all girls who attended school for at least 20 days each month. Women teachers were also provided two tins of vegetable oil if they came regularly for at least 22 days each month. The incentive was applied during the school year for nine to ten months. The project has helped to increase the attendance levels of recipients to 95 per cent. It provided an opportunity for teachers to create greater awareness of the benefits accruing from girls' education as well as to discuss the progress of their students with parents. It also seems to enhance the status of the teachers in the community.

### **Work Environment and Support**

It is important to understand and assess the work environment and support facilities that exist for primary teachers, especially from the perspective of women teachers working in rural areas. These factors play a pivotal role in creating the learning environment and inculcating motivation in teachers.

#### ***Physical Facilities in Schools***

The information available for the countries in the sub-region indicates that the work environment, especially the physical environment, is not encouraging for women teachers in rural primary schools who have to work under difficult circumstances.

In India, the 1993 national data indicate that only 2 per cent of the rural schools had functional separate toilets for girls, compared to the figure of 14 per cent in urban areas. The information available from a small sample of 40-45 schools in the rural areas of Pakistan and Bangladesh show that about 40 to 50 per cent of rural primary schools had this facility. This, however, cannot be taken as representative. In Nepal also, although definite information is not available, the majority of schools in rural areas do not have this facility.

Drinking water is another facility that can be considered basic for any work place. In Bangladesh drinking water is available in 80-85 per cent of rural primary schools, according to government documents, while the same field-based assessment based on a small sample

indicated this percentage to be only 68 per cent. In India about 30 per cent of rural schools and 34 per cent of urban schools had this facility available in 1993. Although data are not available, it is expected that the number of toilets as well as drinking water facilities would have improved substantially during the late 1990s in India, as huge allocations were made for the purpose under the 10<sup>th</sup> Finance Commission and other special programmes. In Nepal drinking water is not available in the majority of primary schools in remote areas. The same small sample-based assessment in Pakistan indicates the availability of drinking water in 40.5 per cent of girls' schools in rural areas.

In India and Nepal, most of the rural primary schools do not have electricity. In Bangladesh and Pakistan, hardly 10-15 per cent of rural primary schools have electricity but fans are usually not provided to rural primary schools except perhaps one fan to the principal in some areas. This facility is not considered essential for rural primary schools except those located in areas of the sub-region affected by the tropical hot season.

### ***Residence, Transport and Security***

Due to the lack of female teachers from rural areas, the majority of teachers placed in rural primary schools live in urban areas. This makes the issue of residence, distance and transport very important in this sub-region. Nowhere is there a provision of any residential facility for school teachers and it is not easy to find accommodation to rent in rural areas. Moreover, it is difficult for women in this sub-region to leave their families and reside separately for long periods. The women with an urban background also find it difficult to adjust in rural areas. This implies that teachers invariably come from a distance.

The primary schools are located in remote and difficult areas, which makes the issue of transport very critical. In places where roads and public transport systems are developed, the situation is better and teachers do not generally face many problems. But in areas where the infrastructure is not so developed, teachers, especially women, have to depend on infrequent public transport, which is not very dependable. The commonly reported complaint of women teachers arriving late and leaving early needs to be seen from this perspective. The use of bicycles or motorbikes is generally not very common amongst women in many parts of these countries. The difficult terrain in most parts of Nepal and many parts of other countries, makes this problem more complex.

In India, Pakistan and Nepal, it is not uncommon for young women teachers to be teased by influential persons in the villages where they teach or the villages they have to pass through. Walking alone in remote areas is a security hazard for women teachers anyway.

### ***Support from Parents and Community***

Field-based assessment indicates that in Bangladesh, India and Nepal a woman primary teacher in a rural area enjoys varying levels of support from school management committee members, community and parents. While some teachers view the support as highly satisfactory, others do not feel satisfied with the assistance they are receiving. These three countries have

community-based formal bodies in the shape of village education committees (VEC)/school management committees (SMC). These bodies have a managerial and monitoring role in regard to primary schools in all three countries. These committees have at least one woman on seven and five-member committees in Nepal and Bangladesh respectively. In India, the representation of women on these committees varies from 33 to 50 per cent. The participation of women on these committees can be expected to make them more sensitive towards women teachers.

The small sample survey suggests that in Pakistan, more than half of rural women primary teachers are satisfied with the behaviour of community and parents. Pakistan does not have any formal community bodies with a defined role in primary schools. There have been some efforts in all these countries to use teachers for girls' education, which also helps in establishing better teacher-community relationships. In Nepal, under BPEP, a special programme has been launched to involve women teachers to act as change agents to give a boost to girls' enrolment as well as to increase gender sensitivity in the community.

### **Women Teachers as Change Agents in Nepal**

The Programme was launched in 1999 in 24 selected Village Development Committees of 12 districts where girls' participation rates are very low. The objectives of this programme are:

- To develop awareness about the importance of girls' education in the community.
- To develop gender sensitization in the community.
- To increase girls' enrollment in school.
- To implement advocacy programmes in rural communities.

Under this programme, 20-30 female teachers were given orientation for 10 days regarding how to operate an advocacy programme on girls' education and gender equity in the community. Success is being noted, as the girls' enrollment is increasing in the VDCs of those districts.

### ***Support from Colleagues and Administration***

In the field-based assessments that occurred in Bangladesh, India and Nepal, the majority of the women primary school teachers reported that their male colleagues generally cooperate with them. This does not apply to Pakistan because the country has separate primary schools for girls and only women teachers are posted in these schools. Pakistan is also unique in the sense that the entire administration is separate for women and consists of only women. From district officials to supervisors and trainers, all are women for women teachers.

Field interactions suggest that women teachers interpret the representation of women at key posts in education administration as being helpful in understanding their problems. Representation of women in education administration is very low in Nepal. In Bangladesh,

the representation of women is low despite the fact that it is higher than that in general administration, where it is extremely low. It has not been common for women to choose administrative jobs in general, though the situation is slightly changing. The situation is better in India with higher representation but this too cannot be termed as satisfactory. DPEP, with its large presence in the country, did try to improve women's representation in programme management. According to one study<sup>1</sup>, the proportion of women at state level varied between 16 to 36 per cent and between 7 to 16 per cent at state levels. It is clear that special efforts are needed to improve women's representation in education management posts in different states.

The three countries – Bangladesh, India and Nepal – have also tried to make efforts to sensitize administrators and trainers about gender issues. In Bangladesh and Nepal, a number of workshops have been organized for gender sensitivity. Most states in India are organizing regular training on gender sensitivity for administrators as well as teacher trainers besides integrating this aspect in almost all other interventions. Under DPEP, every district has a post of gender coordinator to coordinate activities that relate to girls' education. The gender sensitization of women teachers themselves also remains an issue. Although their involvement in training and community development issues has helped them to some extent, this issue needs greater emphasis in all four countries in the sub-region.

The discussion makes it clear that women have to work under difficult circumstances. Lack of physical facilities in schools and absence of transport support are common. Women do not always receive adequate help and support from the community or administration. Most of the gender sensitization activities are guided towards girls' education and the problems faced by women teachers as well as their perspectives also need to be integrated.

### **Women Teachers in Non-Formal, Alternative and Innovative Schemes**

It is important to discuss the phenomenon of non-formal and alternative schooling schemes that are operational in the sub-region because of the large presence of women teachers in this sector. In order to provide primary education to out-of-school children, non-formal education centres were started in these countries during the late 1970s and 1980s. In Bangladesh, these centres are known as NGO learning centres and there are currently more than 24,000 such centres operational in the country. In India, there are more than 125,000 NFE centres functioning primarily in the rural areas. Nepal also started a similar programme, known as the Out-Of-School Programme, with a similar purpose. NFE centres exist in Pakistan as well and these were started as a scheme under the Prime Minister's Literacy Commission.

These NFE programmes provide primary education in condensed form to children who are not being reached by the formal schools. Flexible scheduling and local teachers with some (one to three months) induction training are common features of these programmes.

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<sup>1</sup> The Mid-term Review of Efforts to Improve Girl Child Participation Rates & Integrate a Gender Perspective in DPEP Districts and States (August, 1997); DPEP.

In Nepal and Pakistan only women are teachers while in India there is a mix of both men and women. Some items like blackboards are provided along with some educational materials. There are generally fewer instructional hours than in formal schools.



*Women teachers teach in non-formal education class in Bangladesh*

Except for Bangladesh, these programmes were subject to criticism, especially on account of number of instructional hours, inadequate training and compromises with the quality of teaching. In the wake of these criticisms, new schemes of alternative schooling programmes have started up in some parts of the sub-region in order to improve the quality of education while maintaining the flexibility of the non-formal system. India also witnessed the introduction of para-teachers into formal schools in many parts of the country. Although their representation in terms of percentage of total number of teachers may not be very large, their number is significant in some of the states and they are serving large numbers of children. Teacher absenteeism and irregular attendance in rural areas was one of the main reasons leading to the emergence of this phenomenon. The use of para-teachers in regular schools began only in the eighties, the first initiative being the Himachal Pradesh Volunteer Teachers' Scheme, which started in 1984. However, the Shikshakarmi Project (SKP), which was launched in 1987 in Rajasthan, however, can be seen as the pioneer in popularizing the concept for the rest of the country. At present many Indian states with huge shortages of teachers have developed elaborated schemes of recruiting para-teachers for their formal schools, while many others have developed state-specific models of alternative schooling, often known by different names.

Although the specific approach and features vary for different programmes, there are some basic common features that are important from the perspective of women teachers. The teachers for alternative schooling programmes are invariably from the same village/area and there is an explicit emphasis on preference for women teachers. Many alternative schooling programmes recruit only women teachers and some have relaxed the eligibility qualification

for women in case of a lack of candidates. Programmes that provide two teachers have made it compulsory to have one of them a woman. Community involvement is another common feature. All these programmes are managed by local bodies – panchayats, village education committees or mothers groups. The experiences, as evidenced by documentation and evaluation, suggest that these programmes have largely been successful in drawing out-of-school girls and have given an opportunity to local educated youth, often women, to gainfully use their time and education. However, lowering the eligibility criteria for women has also been criticized for making a compromise with quality.

These programmes have been named alternative schooling primarily to signify that these are “alternatives” to formal schooling in terms of quality of learning and not merely a poorer version of education. In order to ensure that quality is maintained, intensive teacher training programmes have been designed at induction as well as at subsequent intervals. The duration and frequency, however, vary for different programmes and so does the quality and impact of the latter. The para-teachers in formal schools as well as alternative schooling centres are invariably paid less than regular government teachers in formal schools and the nature of employment is contractual. These programmes have often been criticized for inadequate payment and provisions.

A number of other innovative residential programmes have also been implemented in the country, under the aegis of different government and non-government agencies. These focus on intensive courses either for girls in the age group of 10-14 years who have missed the bus and find it difficult to go to formal schools or for rural women who can later function as local teachers or development workers. These programmes have emphasized formal as well as social learning with elements of health, environment, and legal literacy. They have largely been successful.

The Government of India, in the light of these experiences, has recently revised its guidelines for non-formal, alternative and innovative education making it much more flexible and broad-based with a definite focus on training, support and other minimum provisions. The guidelines clearly state that 75 per cent of the teachers for these programmes should be women and provisions have been made for special intensive training of women teachers from rural areas. Bangladesh and Nepal have also started some schemes of alternative schooling. The Satellite School Programme of Bangladesh is important because of the fact that, unlike India, the GOB has changed the nature of employment for these women teachers from contractual to permanent.

Nepal has also started two new similar programmes of alternative schooling, known as the School Outreach Programme (SOP) and Flexible School Programme (FSP). The main objective of SOP is to provide access for children who cannot attend school due to its distance from home. The centres are located in nearby homes or temples or other such places in the village. The class size is 12 to 15 children, who are provided with free learning materials as required. This programme is meant especially for children 6-8 years of age, covering Grades I to III. The formal school curriculum is being followed. Priority is given to women

### **Satellite School Programme of Bangladesh**

The programme of establishing satellite schools was introduced in 1997 to increase girls' enrolments and decrease drop-outs. There are 2,945 satellite schools (1999), each having Grades I and II. These schools are fully managed by local women teachers. The teachers and students in these schools number 5,318 and 193,857 respectively (1999). The attendance of students is reported to be very high. The measure has helped in improving the rate of children's school attendance in rural areas.

These schools are functioning as feeder schools for formal primary schools and also serve the purpose of pre-primary education. Due to scattered residence, smaller children find it difficult to go to nearby formal schools because of a number of physical barriers and many other problems. By the time children complete Grade II, they are older and can go to nearby villages to study in formal schools. The Government has adopted this programme, which was initiated first by a private project, and the teachers have been absorbed in the government service.

teachers, who receive 15 days preservice training. Inservice training is also provided to them covering the aspects of multi-grade teaching, the use of textbooks in classroom instruction, and teaching approaches. The salary is less than in formal schools but higher than the NFE centres. There is no difference in the qualifications of these teachers and those for formal schools. The programme is currently operational in 19 districts of Nepal.

The other programme, FSP, is running in 15 districts and similar to SOP in its objectives, teacher training approach and in giving preference to women. In this programme, classes are in the morning or evening depending upon the convenience of the children. The FSP is targeted towards children 8-10 years of age. In this programme the primary formal school curriculum of 5 years has been condensed to 3 years. The class size is small with 20 children per class, each of which is provided with learning materials. The nature of employment is contractual in both programmes.

The above discussion makes it clear that although the alternative schemes are needed to reach previously ignored children, problems such as teaching quality, nature of employment, monitoring mechanisms and others require close attention. It is important to consolidate positive experiences and institutionalize the processes and mechanisms so that these schemes become alternatives to the formal system in the real sense of the term, especially in regard to ensuring the availability of women teachers in rural areas.

## **Chapter Four**

### **ISSUES AND PROBLEMS**

The discussions in the previous chapters based on an analysis of trends, policies and practices in the four countries of the sub-region raise a number of issues relating to the number and functioning of women teachers. Although there is a general acceptance in the sub-region that women teachers are important and also recognition of the fact that special efforts are needed for increasing the number of women teachers in rural areas and to improve their functioning, pointed measures are lacking. The policy guidelines do exist for special efforts in terms of goal statements but focused mechanisms to achieve those goals are not always developed. As a result, the policies are not implemented and targets are not achieved. The major issues that concern women teachers and the problems that they face are highlighted here.

#### **Selection, Placement and Transfer**

It is amply clear from the discussion in the last chapter that these countries intend to have recruitment policies that encourage recruitment of more women teachers. However, the analysis also revealed that the processes followed for selection, placement and transfer often lack suitable mechanisms and adequate safeguards that would ensure recruitment of larger numbers of women candidates.

It is common to have individual interviews as part of the selection process for recruitment of teachers. Although there are merits in using the interview as one of the means for identifying candidates, the experiences from the sub-region suggest that this allows and encourages favouritism and other forms of corrupt practices. Hence, it becomes important to find an alternative mechanism based on objective criteria with no opportunity for corrupt practices.

Bangladesh as well as some states in India have tried to either eliminate the interview or give it minimal weight. This has helped them to minimize the role of subjective elements. However, the use of centralized testing in Bangladesh and some states like Bihar in India has given rise to other problems. As mentioned earlier, the open test means a competition among unequal parties because of the participation of highly qualified candidates and the test being geared for those with minimum qualifications, namely matriculation or high secondary pass. The general level of higher education being lower among women than men, women candidates fail to compete in these situations despite possessing minimum qualifications. The entry of highly qualified men candidates or even women candidates does not always ensure better quality teaching or an improvement in the system for several reasons. One reason is that primary teaching requires specific orientation and skills and high academic qualification does not necessarily ensure these. Experience suggests that highly educated persons join teaching because of the lack of other opportunities, meaning they are not career teachers and

not motivated enough to take their jobs seriously. They tend to leave the job at first opportunity. In the case of women, those with high academic qualifications generally have an urban background and are not willing to serve in rural areas.

The placement and transfers of primary school teachers are not based on any transparent and objective criteria, with some exceptions. This also means enough space for subjective elements and corrupt practices leading to a skewed distribution of teachers in favour of urban areas. Pupil-teacher ratios are heavily loaded in favour of urban areas in all these countries. The absence of suitable placement-transfer policies is one of the factors responsible for the large rural-urban gap in the availability of women teachers observed commonly in the sub-region.

Pakistan needs special mention, as the system is different because of single-gender schools. Only women teachers are recruited for girls' schools and the fact that they represent only about one-third of total teachers shows that there are fewer girls' schools than boys' schools. Thus, the issue of increasing the number of women teachers in Pakistan is also linked to the increase in the number of girls' schools or for additional posts for women teachers.

### **Shortage of Educated Women Candidates from Rural Areas**

The spread of education, especially at the upper-primary and secondary levels, is poor in rural areas in the sub-region. It is true that given the poor socio-economic situations and low levels of literacy and social awareness in rural areas, coupled with the low participation of girls in primary schooling, the demand for secondary education is not very high. Most of the efforts have also been in the direction of increasing the participation rates at the primary level as the first step. However, there needs to be a minimum ratio between primary and other levels of education and also the recognition of inter-linkages.

The development of primary education depends on the extent as well as quality of secondary education. It is not possible to have enough women teachers for rural areas without making special efforts to provide secondary education to rural girls.

In the absence of an adequate supply of educated women from rural areas, the majority of the current teaching force must obviously come from urban areas. Usually these women are not always motivated to work in rural or remote schools. It has also been reported that even when educated women are available in rural areas, they are not allowed by their families to join the work force due to prevalent socio-cultural factors.

### **Problems Faced by Women Teachers in Rural Schools**

Women teachers in these four countries have to face many problems in schools. Most primary schools lack adequate furniture and space for women teachers to relax when they are off duty. There are no separate toilets for girls and women in the majority of primary schools in rural areas. Drinking water is also an issue in these schools although the extent of the problem varies for different countries. The absence of basic facilities can have serious

implications because teaching time and motivation may decrease when women teachers have to go to somebody's house or to a distant place. In addition, the lack of ready access to health services in case of emergency is also a problem for women teachers. If the teacher happens to be a young mother, the absence of child-care facilities in or near schools adds to the list of problems.

Socio-cultural factors and gender discrimination have also emerged as problems in all four countries of this sub-region. In Bangladesh and Pakistan religious restrictions and the purdah system for women sometimes interfere with discharging their duties in rural primary schools. Family expectations and household responsibilities also make it difficult for women teachers to devote any time for preparation at home. The environment in schools is not always very friendly to women or gender sensitive. This environment affects their functioning adversely. They also do not always receive support from the community and face a lack of understanding concerning their problems.

### **Absenteeism, Transportation and Security**

Teacher absenteeism is a general problem in the rural primary schools to some extent in all the countries of the sub-region and women teachers are as much a part of the problem as men. It is also common for women teachers to arrive late and leave early. Deeper enquiries have revealed that the main reason is the lack of proper roads and adequate transportation. Most women teachers reside in towns and commute daily to their work place. Their dependence on whatever public transport is available has an adverse impact on the school's working hours. Security, as pointed out earlier, also emerges as a major issue due to the remote locations of primary schools. Residential facilities are not available in the villages and it is otherwise also difficult for women to leave their families behind and live separately.

### **Lack of Incentives**

Working in rural areas of the sub-region implies working in difficult situations and involves challenges at many levels. Some sort of incentive for working in these areas may help in attracting more women teachers and motivating them to perform better. Pakistan's experience of a special scheme for women teachers in one province has had good results. Nepal too has made some allowance for distance and remoteness but that is not linked to attendance and applies to both men and women. The lack of any such incentive scheme in India and Bangladesh makes it more difficult to attract more women teachers and encourage them to work in rural areas.

### **Teacher Commitment and Accountability**

The issue of teacher absenteeism or lack of quality is also linked to the issue of their accountability to the community, parents and students. Although there are genuine problems of transport and lack of facilities, their performance cannot be separated from the issue of teachers' professional commitment and accountability, an issue that applies to men as well

as women. If women teachers do not attend class regularly or get to school late all the time, the students as well as the community will not accept them as good teachers and will not extend the support they need. The mechanisms of supervision fail to inculcate any sense of accountability. The urban background deters women teachers from identifying with the rural context and hence they fail to develop a positive relationship with the community.

### **Curriculum and Process of Preservice/Induction Training**

As discussed earlier, preservice/induction curricula for primary school teachers is characterized by an over-emphasis on theoretical aspects. Little space is provided to practice and actual challenges including social and pedagogical aspects. No distinction is made between the needs of an urban school and a rural school. These aspects are common for all four countries in the sub-region.

Although the issue of revising these curricula is mentioned repeatedly in the national policies and plans of these countries, research findings indicate that change in the teacher training curricula in these countries has not exceeded 13 per cent during the last 50 years. This means almost no change during the period and that is the reason why pre-independence western models with minor modifications are still in vogue in these countries. The issue can be fully addressed by demolishing the borrowed models of teacher training curricula and designing locally specific models keeping the context and objectives in view. The process of curriculum development has also been mainly dependent on “experts” who are not always informed about the needs and situations in the field. The involvement of teachers and others from the field in the process of developing curricula for preservice training is not common in these countries.

The techniques and modes followed for transmitting the content of training are also an issue. The lecture method remains the most common. Although there are a few compulsory school attachments, these do not provide ample exposure to real situations. Newer techniques of problem solving and group work are rarely followed.

### **Inadequate Inservice Professional Development Opportunities**

All four countries of the sub-region have specific institutions and programmes for imparting inservice training to women primary teachers of rural areas. Primary Training Institutes in Bangladesh, Primary Teacher Training Colleges, Resource Centres and Women Education Section of MOE in Nepal, District Institutes of Education and Training (DIETs), Block Resource Centres (BRCs) and Cluster Resource Centres (CRCs) in India and Education Extension Centres/Bureau of Curriculum of Pakistan have been established for the specific purpose of preservice and inservice training to teachers. However, as mentioned earlier, except in India, primary teachers are not getting opportunities for regular inservice training on a continuous basis. In India also, although the majority of teachers now get this opportunity, the phenomenon is still not universal. Regular coverage is not possible without developing a decentralized training structure, which all countries except Pakistan are trying to do.

It is also important to recognize newer methods of professional development for teachers. Training is important but not the only means for this purpose. Exchange visits and action research are other means but have rarely been tried as viable methods of capacity building for primary teachers. Certain programmes started in the 1990s in the sub-region did focus on some of these methods but they are not yet widespread.

### **Management of Inservice Training**

The management of whatever inservice training programmes are conducted also leaves much to be desired. One major issue is that of identifying teachers for training. It has been observed that some teachers are called again and again for different training programmes while others do not get a single chance for years. Subjective influences play a role because of the presence of some sort of financial benefits for participation in training. The issue has been resolved to some extent in India where training calendars are being followed for the blocks in coordination with the block/district administrators.

The lack of adequate facilities and other support measures for women teachers to participate in the residential training programmes has been identified as an issue in India. These include the absence of day-care centres for children and the absence of women resource persons. A general insensitivity towards the specific needs of young mothers or middle-aged women in the training programmes discourages women teachers from participating.

### **Background of Teacher Trainers and Quality of Teacher Training**

It is common in these four countries to appoint education administrators in the teacher training colleges as faculties and also as heads of institutions. In most cases, these administrators have no formal training in primary teaching or as trainers. Such administrators not only supervise and manage the training activities in the institution but they are also on the bodies responsible for curriculum development for teacher training. In Nepal and Pakistan they are also examiners in teaching practice and check the lesson plans while they themselves generally have no exposure or expertise in the area. There are exceptions like Karnataka State in India where having a B.Ed. Degree is compulsory for education administrative service cadre. However, this degree is not aimed at primary teaching as such.

These trainers are also generally not motivated and interested in their jobs. The posting in these institutions is seen as a punishment posting for those who are not considered efficient enough for administration or those who do not have political backing. In Pakistan trainers in elementary colleges of education, though experienced and trained, are those who are transferred to elementary colleges on the basis of seniority and are usually at the age of retirement, hence lacking any interest and effort in the training process.

The lack of instructional materials, laboratory schools and other facilities also affects the quality adversely.

### **Lack of Promotional Opportunities**

The lack of promotional opportunities in general and any special provision for women in particular affects the morale and motivation of women teachers. This issue is there in different forms throughout the sub-region. Since the posts in training institutions are invariably linked with qualification, primary school teachers with lower qualification fail to be eligible. There is no practice of substituting academic qualification with suitable experience and there is also no practice of awarding fellowships or study leave to let teachers improve their academic qualification.

## Chapter Five

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are being presented to address the issues and problems identified in the context of increasing the number of women teachers and enhancing the quality of their functioning and performance in rural areas of the sub-region. Although it is recognized that each country or even locality needs to find the most appropriate solutions to its problems depending on local context and needs, these recommendations are generic and applicable to all four countries to a large extent. Most of the recommendations are based on experience within the sub-region and hence their feasibility in the regional context is not a matter for doubt.

#### **Selection, Placement and Transfer Policies**

- ***To develop a transparent selection process with adequate mechanisms and safeguards to ensure identification of the most suitable candidates for teaching in primary schools.*** In case of written tests being used for the screening of candidates, there should be separate tests for candidates with different levels of schooling. For example, three levels of test could be developed for grade 10 pass applicants, grade 12 pass applicants and for candidates with university degrees (Bachelor level or above). This would ensure competition among equals for both men and women without compromising quality. Women possessing minimum qualifications would not have to compete with candidates with high academic qualifications.
- ***To remove or minimize the role of the interview in the selection process.*** If needed, the interview could be replaced by a better focused and carefully developed identification process for assessing the candidate's basic communication skills and inclinations. This would not be an easy task, especially if it needs to be administered on a large scale. However, the experiences of personnel identification processes being followed in some programmes in certain countries (in the sub-region and elsewhere) could be reviewed for the purpose.
- ***To develop an objective set of criteria for placement and transfer so that political and other forms of influences do not play a role.*** The special needs of women teachers could be built into these criteria. The Karnataka State example in India provides one model in this regard. The effort should be guided not only towards having more women teachers but also to ensure that every school gets at least one woman teacher.

- ***To introduce flexibility or relaxation in the basic qualification for women candidates when there is an acute shortage of woman teachers.*** Preferably, there should be no difference in the approach to merit tests for women or men. Wherever flexibility is allowed, this should be combined with intensive training on basic content as well as teaching skills. The mobile teacher training programme in Balochistan province of Pakistan and the Shikshakarmi Project in Rajasthan State, India, are two such examples.
- ***To decentralize the appointment of teachers at sub-district level.*** While Bangladesh has already decentralized its recruitment at the upzila level, India, Pakistan and Nepal mostly follow the practice of recruiting teachers at the district level. If the appointments are decentralized to the sub-district level, making it necessary to recruit women candidates from the same block, the availability of women teachers for the block could be ensured to some extent.

### **Measures for Educating Rural Girls to Become Teachers**

- ***To develop facilities for secondary education for girls in rural areas.*** Unless local girls are educated and recruited, it would be difficult to resolve the issue of the shortage of women teachers in rural areas. Nepal is making an effort in this regard through its system of feeder hostels.
- ***To start long-term (two to three years) training for rural girls to prepare them to become teachers.*** This could be specially designed for less qualified rural girls. The elements of secondary education and teacher training could be combined. Considering that access to higher education among women seems to be limited to urban women, this appears to be one feasible solution to allow the entry of rural women into the teaching force. In this respect, the Lok Jumbish experience of Rajasthan State, India, could be studied as a model.

### **Measures for Improving Facilities and Providing Incentives**

- ***To recognize that the provision of separate toilets and drinking water is essential for women teachers and girl students.*** These facilities should not be seen as non-essential items as their presence would help women teachers to perform their duties better to a large extent.
- ***To provide essential medical care items and a cabinet for keeping personal belongings of the teachers.*** These seemingly not so important provisions should be seen as basic needs of women teachers. These items would also make them feel cared for and motivate them to give their best.
- ***To develop teachers hostels at the cluster level for women teachers in remote areas.*** In remote areas, this kind of facility could be a residence for teachers from all nearby schools. However, the feasibility and cost-effectiveness of such measures should be assessed beforehand.

- ***To provide accommodation/residential facilities for women teachers under the aegis of the school authority/school management committee.*** If the teacher is willing to stay in the village and it is not possible to rent living quarters, the SMCs/VECs could be made responsible for arranging accommodation.
- ***To arrange transport for teachers.*** Wherever essential, transport could be arranged for teachers both morning and evening. All schools on one route could be covered and the intervention could be made cost-effective. Teachers including women should also be encouraged to provide their own transportation, and loans should be made available for them to buy bicycles or motorbikes.
- ***To develop innovative incentive schemes.*** In order to motivate women teachers to work at rural schools and attend regularly, certain innovative schemes could be developed. It would be important to link these to attendance rather than just to posting.

### **Making Teacher Training and Professional Development Activities Relevant and Robust**

- ***To revise the preservice and induction training curriculum and design with an emphasis on the real problems of rural areas.*** The training curriculum needs to be redesigned with an emphasis on practice and real classroom situations. The aspects that have been described in detail in previous chapters, such as dealing with multi-grade situations, large numbers of children, and first generation learners, need to be included along with theory. In order to expose the candidates to actual situations and context, fairly long school attachments should be made part of the training design. The understanding of the contexts should be from both pedagogical and social perspectives. On the whole, training should be such that it not only makes students professional teachers but also prepares them to face challenges in the social context. The inclusion of teachers in the process of developing training curricula should be institutionalized.
- ***To include the life-skills approach within the preservice/induction training programme.*** Since teachers, especially women teachers, are required to deal with growing girls, it would help if they themselves are well informed and prepared to do this. The inclusion of life skills aspects such as population education, health issues, and legal literacy would help teachers in this regard. In addition, the specific problems that teachers may face while working in rural areas also need to be addressed. For instance, since transportation emerges as a major issue, it is essential to deal with that in the training itself. Apart from preparing women candidates to face this issue, the teacher education programme itself could include teaching women candidates how to ride bicycles. Similarly, they could also be given some training in self-defense techniques. This could be seen also as a gender sensitization process for these trainees. Such experiments have been made at a small level in India with considerable success in programmes such Mahila Samakhya.

- ***To schedule calendar-based inservice teacher training covering all teachers.*** In order to avoid favouritism, the calendar-based approach should be followed for inservice training. This would ensure that everybody gets a chance and the opportunity is not limited only to those who are influential.
- ***To arrange training programmes in such a manner that it ensures participation of women teachers.*** Measures such as maintaining a minimum of one-third women candidates or having at least one woman resource person would help in attracting more women teachers to these training programmes. If essential, facilities such as day care for young children of women teachers should be provided.
- ***To create new kinds of professional development opportunities.*** Provisions should be made for resource (technical as well as financial) support to primary teachers for activities such as action research and undertaking a study course. These would help in raising the quality of teaching as well as the motivation level of teachers. Special provisions could be made for women teachers. These would also require orientation and skill building, and inservice training programmes could be used for this purpose.

### **Creating Promotional Avenues**

- ***To create promotional avenues in resource centres and training institutions.*** Certain posts in resource centres and training institutions can be reserved for deserving primary teachers. This could be linked to performance based on objective appraisals and should help in raising the level of motivation and competence among teachers. This initiative should be seen in conjunction with measures for action research and professional development.

### **Gender Sensitization, Counseling and Forum**

- ***To organize gender sensitizing activities/training for teachers, trainers and administrators.*** This measure would help at many levels including making the environment friendly for women teachers. Apart from making the education administrators and trainers gender sensitive, the presence of women at different layers of the hierarchy also matters a great deal and needs to be encouraged. The presence of women in training programmes/institutions goes a long way to ensure the participation and involvement of women teachers. Women on selection committees and departmental promotions committees would also help.
- ***To organize counseling sessions for women teachers and their family members, if needed.*** Women teachers, at times, go through difficult circumstances for many reasons. Family members generally oppose their posting in rural areas, commuting to remote areas and their participation in residential training programmes. Some mass media activities coupled with provisions for counseling of teachers and their families may help in obtaining their support.

- ***To create a separate forum for women teachers.*** A separate forum for women teachers would help them to open up and identify issues that affect them all. This also helps in evolving solutions and develops a sense of responsibility. The experience of Lok Jumbish in India has been encouraging in this regard. These fora could be developed as responsible platforms for not only collective understanding but also for professional development and the sharing of professional experiences. The experiences of western countries could help in this context.

### **Mechanisms for Ensuring Accountability to the Community**

- ***To develop formal community-based mechanisms for school monitoring.*** In order to ensure that teachers feel accountable to the community and parents rather than to their administrators, it is essential that local bodies be given a direct role in monitoring school activities. Although such institutions exist in Nepal and India (SMCs and VECs), these need to be strengthened and their personnel given adequate training. The countries where such formal mechanisms do not exist should create them and provide necessary support to make them functional and effective. The involvement of women in such bodies would help women teachers even more.
- ***To orient teachers through training and motivate them through suitable measures.*** Training programmes should focus on these aspects also so that teachers are oriented and feel responsible towards their students and profession. In addition, other measures such as involvement of teachers in certain academic activities and recognition of the accomplishments of teachers at different levels would also help.

The above suggestions have taken both the quality and quantity of women teachers into consideration. It is not enough to simply increase the number of women teachers. It is also essential that they come regularly to school, teach students so that they learn properly what they should learn, and motivate students, especially girls, to attend school regularly. They should also make the community aware of the importance of education as well as raise their confidence in the schooling processes. These recommendations, therefore, cover a wide spectrum of recruitment to training and incentives to monitoring. If these four countries, which happen to have the world's largest number of out-of-school children, the majority of them girls, adopt these suggestions suitably, the situation would definitely improve.

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