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CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In the preceding chapter, emerging problems and issues confronting the attainment of the goals of Education For All in general and the Nepal-specific discussion of these concerns were presented. The present chapter is an attempt towards a review of literature relevant to the theme of this study, which includes: books, published and unpublished research reports, research as well as policy related documents regarding problem of student dropout and retention in primary education.

Research and innovation in education in general and primary education in particular is of recent origin in Nepal. It was only after the political change of 1950 that the Government of Nepal started giving a clear attention towards the development of primary education in the country. Starting from the formation of the National Education Planning Commission (NEPC) in 1954, a number of committees and commissions have been constituted to develop a primary education plans and programmes in the country over the years. Likewise, many research studies mainly commissioned by the Government, donor agencies and NGO’s have been carried out. Some independent researchers have also carried out research in education and primary education. However, studies exclusively focused on the problem of dropout in primary education are still quite few in number. But, many of the studies on the problems of school education are found to have also touched the issue of dropout though not at a full length. Keeping this point in view, the present study has reviewed the available and relevant studies and documents relating to different aspects of primary education in Nepal. Apart from this, relevant studies made in other countries and contexts as well as related theoretical literature on this subject have also been scoured and reviewed. This is done in order to sharpen the focus of the present study as well as to guide and direct the design and methods of research of the present study.

This chapter contains a summary of the studies and documents so reviewed in connection with the pursuit of the present study. With a view to maintaining clarity in presentation, the discussion given below has been organized under such thematic headings as primary education policy and programme documents of Nepal, development of primary education in Nepal, issues in quality primary education for all, and problem of dropout and retention in primary education.
❖ REVIEW OF REPORTS, DOCUMENTS RELATED WITH PRIMARY EDUCATION POLICY AND PROGRAMMES IN NEPAL

Nepal does not have a long history of modern education. The country ushered into the era of educational expansion only after the political change of 1950. Prior to that there was no policy of education for all; education was meant only for the children of the few ruling classes and elite families. Mass education was either neglected or opposed. The Rana period in the history of Nepal is called the period of opposition to education. However, the religious institutions were providing educational service to the people. Both the Hindu and Buddhist religious establishments had reasonable component of educational services to be provided for the people. The temples and monasteries served as venues and priests served as teachers (Shrestha, 1982). Some attempts towards the growth of formal primary education were found to have been initiated during the Rana period. For instance, Rana Prime minister Dev Shamsher, introduced the system of Bhasha Pathashalas (vernacular schools) in the year 1901, which seem close to the definition of the modern primary schools (Shrestha, 1982). A Nepali primer, written by Jaya Prithvi Bahadur Singh, was used as the basic textbook in these schools. Public inns and huts were temporarily used to house the new schools. A literate Brahmin was appointed as teacher. One teacher was provided to a school for fifty students. About one hundred schools were established in the hills and plain areas. The reader, slates and pencils were also freely provided to the students. This was the first liberal educational policy in Nepal. By 1951, 321 primary schools were in operation and 8,500 students enrolled in these schools (Shrestha, 1982).

Immediately after the political change of 1951, the development of education began in Nepal with the efforts of government and the private sector. People began to establish schools even without regular government support. In hilly region literate groups started to run schools. In the Tarai region, the Indian teachers were invited to run schools. In this way, growing demand for education drew the attention of the Government to establish more schools across the country. Primary school textbooks were mainly imported from India. However, there was no uniformity in the primary education system in different parts of the country. This was mainly due to the lack of a national vision and objective of education. Therefore, the Nepal National Educational Planning Commission (NEPC) was formed in 1954.
The first policy document on the development of education in Nepal is the Report of the NEPC published in 1956, named *Education in Nepal*. This report stressed the need of providing basic education for the maximum number of people. It stated:

*Primary Education is the basic foundation of learning. For some, it is the base for an educational career; for most of our children in Nepal for a long time to come, it will be the only education they will have and thus it becomes comprehensive and terminal* (NEPC, 1956).

The NEPC Report offered a road-map for the development of education in Nepal. For the first time in the history of Nepal, a comprehensive national plan for educational development was formulated that covered such areas as primary education, secondary education, university education, adult education, teachers' training, instructional materials, administration & supervision, education financing, special services and a legislative programme.

The report has mentioned that the lack of educated personnel, of an educational system, and institution was biggest problem. In the context of primary education, the NEPC report said that primary education was required:

- to wipe out illiteracy,
- to provide a minimum fundamental education for the entire nation’s youth,
- to provide a foundation for the higher education to those who will take leadership in the next generation,
- to provide satisfying enriching properly directed development of children through their most formative years that may become wholly effective citizens, and
- to provide for the political, economic and cultural regeneration of Nepal.

The report also attempted to give an overall picture of the plan and had set some targets. It said that education would have to be universal, national and free; it would be for varying periods, and be adapted to many and varied needs such as vocational, social, political, and individual needs. It also spoke about the importance of decentralized organization, administration and supervision of education.
The NEPC report has given emphasis on primary education. It stated the objectives of primary education and propounded the free primary education in the initial stage and compulsory primary education as rapidly as possible. The report further mentioned that

- Primary education is the basic foundation of learning;
- Primary education should cover a period of five years;
- It should be free and compulsory;
- It should be co-educational; and
- Nepali should be the medium of instruction and the primary school curriculum must be geared towards meeting the actual needs of the masses of people of Nepal.

The report also focused the proposed schemes for the primary teacher’s training, preparation of curriculum and text book and development of financing system. The Normal School Division was established to train primary school teachers through outreach training centres. Efforts were made to establish one primary school in each of the polling booths of the 1958 general election. Thus, the report is treated as a ‘classic’ in the development of primary education in Nepal. This document guided the overall educational development in Nepal till the advent of the National Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971. However, since the report was mainly focused on initiating initial steps of developing primary and mass education, the problem of dropout did not appear in the scene.

**ARNEC: (1961)**

After the royal takeover of 1960, the new Government appointed a new committee in 1961 under the chairmanship of the Education Minister to declare a new policy of education keeping in view the changed context of the Nepalese polity. The report of this committee named ‘All-round National Education Committee (ARNEC)’ restated mostly the recommendations of the NEPC report. Therefore, this report is also called ‘old wine in new bottle’. This report dealt with various aspects of education in Nepal such as primary education, secondary and higher education, Sanskrit education, social education, teachers’ training, social and cultural programmes, and educational administration. A new feature of this report was that it
felt the need of pre-primary education and it recommended the establishment of child care centres for 3 to 5 years old children with joint cooperation of people and the government. The following were the recommendations of this committee which were directly related with primary education (MOE, 1961):

- The Government should adopt a liberal educational policy.
- There should be a single medium of instruction (Nepali) in all primary schools.
- Primary education should be free and compulsory.
- Primary education should be of five-year's duration for the children of 6-10 years age group.
- In order to improve the standard of education, teachers should be trained and the teaching profession should be made more attractive.
- Pre-primary education should be made available for the children of 3-5 years age group.

Like its predecessor NEPC report, the ARNEC report also was obsessed with expansion of primary education in Nepal. Understandably, the problem of dropout was once more ignored.

**NESP: EDUCATION PLAN (1971-76)**

The National Education System Plan (1971-1976), then popularly called the ‘New Education Plan’ marked a major shift in education policy and planning in Nepal. This plan, which appeared as the first periodic plan on education, was an attempt to directly link education with the broader policy goals of national development. Under the NESP, some radical shifts had been introduced in the structure, content, and even in nomenclature of the whole education system, right from primary education to university system. As the key thirst of the NESP was to produce required manpower for national development, heavy emphasis was laid on vocational and technical education. Apart from introducing many changes in curriculum and organizational structure of the education system, all schools of the country were in a sense ‘nationalized’.

The NESP introduced a three-tier system of school education such as primary education (grade 1-3), lower secondary education (grade 4-7) and secondary
education (grade 8-10). The span of primary education was cut down to three years and the objective of primary education was defined as basic literacy (MOE, 1971). Similarly, the objectives of lower secondary and secondary education were respectively defined as character-building and preparing students as semi-skilled workers.

The NESP set up a target of raising primary school enrolment rate to 64 percent by the year 1976. This plan had set the qualification of a primary school teacher as S.L.C. or equivalent, and teacher training was made compulsory for all teachers. The salary scales of teachers were substantially raised to keep them at par with other comparable positions in government service. The policy of implementing a common curriculum and uniform textbooks throughout the country was adopted. This plan introduced, with more vigour, Nepali as the medium of instruction in primary schools, and adopted such policies as free distribution of text books in primary education, and quality assurance in education through such measures as teacher training, effective classroom teaching, better school management, regular school supervision, and improved student evaluation.

The NESP also enhanced the provision of scholarship for poor children in primary education to reduce dropout owing to poverty. Hence, this is the first policy/plan document to address the issue of primary school dropout in Nepal.

- **The Seventh Amendment of Education Code (1981)** restructured the tiers of school education. The duration of primary education was again raised to a period of five years (MOLJ, 1981). Through this amendment the Government once more showed its commitment to enhance the quality of primary education through such four measures as better management and supervision, improved teacher quality, use of instructional materials, and improved physical facilities in schools.

- **In 1983, a Royal Commission on Higher Education** was formed under the chairmanship of the then Education Minister. The report of this commission was confined to improvement in the university education system of Nepal (RHEC, 1983). It had nothing to say about primary education reforms.
After the restoration of multi-party democracy in 1990, a national education commission was appointed to formulate education policies in conformity with the principles of equal opportunity, social justice, human rights and democratic values and norms granted by the new Constitution of Nepal promulgated in 1991. This commission was also called the National Education Commission (NEC). Keeping in mind the expectations of the nation and the people as well as the changing international context, the NEC prepared and submitted its report in 1992. The report of the NEC had reviewed the existing drawbacks in the education system, set national education objectives, and presented policy recommendations to meet the objectives of national education.

The report of the NEC was comprehensive; it covered almost all aspects of the education system – national objectives of education, structure and policy, primary education, secondary and higher secondary education, Sanskrit education, Technical and vocational education, teacher education, special education, non-formal education, financial management of education, education management and supervision and others. As stated by this report the objectives of national education were to help the development of insight or inherent capacity of each person, to help to protect and preserve sovereign human values, national, social norms and beliefs of person, to strengthen social unity by socialization process of person, to help to maintain livelihood of person in modern age, to help the development of human resources for modernization of society, to assist the preservation and proper utilization of natural environment and national resources, and to help the deprived groups of society and to bring them in national main stream (NEC, 1992).

The NEC report has thrown light on many important issues of primary education such as equal opportunity and participation in education, internal efficiency of education system, quality of primary education, the condition of teaching learning, and educational management. The report has clearly pointed out inequities in primary education across gender, space, and social and economic strata. The issue of educational wastage due to large size of school dropout and repetition was raised. The report had presented the following recommendations for reforms in primary education (NEC, 1992):

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- NEC: (1992)
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- To develop the insight or inherent capacity of children by child centered education as fundamental objective of primary education,
- To develop skills of daily use such as reading, writing and basic mathematics, and
- To develop the civil, scientific and environmental consciousness by preserving useful social values, norms and beliefs in students.

Other major recommendations of the report are as follows:

- The primary education should be of five years’ duration and the entry age at grade one should be of 6 years old.
- Some structural change in present primary education should be done for universal primary education.
- The content of primary education should be matched with needs of real life and livelihood including environmental awareness.
- National curriculum of primary education should be developed and reformed.
- Mother tongue can be used as the medium of instruction in primary schools for children whose mother tongue is not Nepali.
- Children should be encouraged to read in local language in multilingual community, and
- School management and supervision should be improved.

The NEC report has addressed the problem of student dropout in primary education in general and recommended the provision of scholarship for poor students as a remedy.

**HLNEC: (1997)**

In order to reform education policies and strategies, the Government formed a high level national education commission (HLNEC) in 1997. The HLNEC focused on regional balance, social justice, and equitable access in primary education. The report of this commission which was submitted in 1998 listed the following as the national objectives of education:

- To produce qualified and skilled human resources for all round development of nation,
- To prepare the conscious citizen with feeling of national unity amidst lingual and communal diversity,
The report has recommended that primary education should be treated with the highest priority. On the one hand the report has put emphasis on enhancing access to education with a special focus on enrolment of children of socially and economically backward castes and communities, while, on the other, the need for improving the internal efficiency of the primary education system was highlighted. The problems of dropout, class repetition, and incompletion of primary education cycle by a large number of children enrolled in primary schools have been pointed out as crucial issues.

The report also talked about the quality of primary education. The report accepts degrading quality of learning achievement of students in primary schools due to lack of appropriate learning environment, lack of experience of preprimary education, lowly motivated teachers, lack of teacher training, lack of continuous assessment system, weak school management and lack of physical and educational facilities. In addition to these, the report has also raised such issues as lack of continuous assessment system, lack of provision of teaching in mother tongue, insufficient investment for physical infrastructure, lack of availability of textbooks on time, lack of participatory role of local bodies in school management and reforms.
The HLNEC report has defined the objectives of primary education as follows:

- To develop the essential basic skills of children,
- To develop essential life skill for livelihood,
- To develop insight or inherent capacity of children,
- To develop useful democratic and social values and norms, and
- To develop scientific and environmental awareness.

In pursuance of this, the report has recommended a three-fold strategy for primary education reforms such as universal enrolment of all 6-10 years old children in primary school by the year 2007, completion of primary cycle by all enrolled children, and enhancement in the level of students’ achievement. Thus the HLNEC report has shown great concerns for checking student dropout and raising quality in primary education. For this purpose policy measures like liberal promotion of students in grades 1 to 3, free distribution of textbooks to all students, decentralized management of schools involving local bodies (VDCs and municipalities) in primary education, formation and empowerment of School Management Committee in each and every primary school, gradual implementation of compulsory primary education scheme, and provision of mother language primary schools were recommended.

Nearing the close of the decade of 1990’s, there was a lot of concern shown regarding quality degeneration in public schools and uncontrolled growth and modus operandi of private schools. Therefore, the Government of Nepal formed a high-level task force headed by a member of the National Planning Commission to review and report on issues relating to the enhancement of quality in public schools and the ways of regulating the operation of private schools. This commission, in its report, presented a list of 29 policy measures along with an action plan for improving and better managing the school education system in the country (MOES, 2001). Among these policy measures, the following were more directly relevant to primary education reforms:

- All schools in Nepal will be classified into two types, namely community schools (formerly called public schools) and institutional schools (formerly called private schools).
Primary education will be made fully free. This means: no fee will be levied in public primary schools under any heading.

Teaching license system will be introduced to check the entry of unqualified teachers into schools. The Teacher Service Commission will be authorized to deal with matters relating to the issuance of teaching license.

In order to promote teacher-community interaction and relationship, parent-teacher association (PTA) will be formed in each and every school.

The decentralized management of primary education will be enhanced through formation and activation of Village Education Committees in the case of VDCs and Ward-level Education Committees in the case of municipalities.

The proportion of government expenditure spent on education will be raised to 17 percent of the total.

**DFA: (2000)**

In line with the commitment shown towards meeting the goals set by the DFA (2000), the Government of Nepal has formulated and enforced the **EFA National Plan of Action (2001-2015)**. According to the EFA vision set by this Action Plan, Nepal is fully committed to “ensure that all children in Nepal have quality basic primary education, in caring and joyful environment and to receive primary education especially in their mother tongue without having to feel prejudices in the form of cultural, ethnic or caste discrimination (MOES, 2003). Accordingly, the plan seeks to establish a sustainable mechanism to ensure that all children are enrolled in primary school at the appropriate age level and that they complete the primary education cycle with good learning achievement. The key time-bound targets set by the EFA Action Plan are as follows:

- The NER in primary education (grades 1-5) will be raised to 88 percent in 2005, 90 percent in 2007, 95 percent in 2012, and 100 percent by 2015.
- The proportion of qualified and fully trained teachers in primary schools will be increased to 50 percent in 2005 and 100 percent by 2007.
- The student survival rate up to grade five will be raised to 71 percent in 2005, 75 percent in 2007, 86 percent in 2012, and 90 percent in 2015.
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- The level of average learning achievement at grade 5 will be increased to 52 percent in 2005, 57 percent in 2007, 70 percent in 2012, and 80 percent in 2015.
- Adult literacy will be increased to 58 percent in 2005, 63 percent in 2007, 70 percent in 2012, and 75 percent in 2015.
- The GPI in Literacy will be raised to 0.7 in 2005, 0.8 in 2007, 0.9 in 2012, and 1.0 in 2015.

Accordingly, immediate, medium-term, and long term strategies to achieve the targets have been set and put into practice.

THREE YEAR INTERIM PLAN (2007/08-2009/10)

Since Nepal is entering into a great transformation in the system of polity and governance and drafting of the constitution of the republican Nepal is in the process, a new five year plan was not formulated to succeed the Tenth Plan which completed in 2007. Instead, a three-year Interim Plan (2007/08-2009/10) has been formulated and implemented. The education sector vision of this plan is to raise awareness, productivity, and efficiency of human resources in line with the national needs and the international opportunities so as to support the cultivation of the norms and values of inclusive democracy and create a basis for New Nepal by enhancing equity and quality in education.

The major objective of the primary education is to guarantee free and universal and quality primary education to all embracing all corners of the country and all groups of the society.

This plan has set up some targets regarding enrolment in primary level. It seeks to raise adult literacy rate from 52 percent to 60 percent with a Gender Parity Index raised from 0.7 to 0.9. Similarly Net Enrolment Rate (NER) in primary level has been planned to be raised from 87.4 percent to 96.0 percent. The plan has also set some important strategies for primary and basic education, which are as follows (NPC, 2007):

- To make primary and basic education free and compulsory to all,
- To guarantee opportunity of education to all people,
• To ensure quality primary education for all by identifying the minimum levels of skill, knowledge, learning achievement and standards for all students,
• To make and implement action plan for compulsory primary education to all,
• To conduct special programme for improvement of teacher’s efficiency,
• To improve efficiency in educational planning and management, and
• To provide child-friendly environment in school.

One significant programme of the Interim Plan is to conduct educational programme in 30 districts for pulling back the dropout children to school system. Regular measures like scholarships, midday meals, and other incentives to children for enhancing their retention in school have been continued but with a clear and improved focus on excluded and marginalized areas and communities.

DECLARATION: (2008)

The most recent policy development in school education is the declaration of the free education up to grade eight by the Government of Nepal on September 8, 2008 (Gorkhapatra, 2008).

REVIEWS OF LITERATURE RELATED WITH DEVELOPMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION IN NEPAL

Formal primary education in Nepal is considered to have been in existence for about a century. Prior to that, the religious institutions were providing educational service to the people. Both the Hindu and Buddhist religious establishments had reasonable component of educational services to be provided for the people. The temples and monasteries served as venues and priests served as teachers. Formal primary schools were first introduced by the Rana Prime minister Dev Shamsher in the year 1901. A Nepali primer, slates and pencils were freely provided to the students. One teacher was provided to a school for fifty students.

After the political change of 1951, there was huge public demand for schools across the country. While the Government responded by opening many more schools, people also began to establish schools even without regular government support. In hilly region literate groups started to run schools. In the Tarai region, the Indian teachers were invited to run schools. Primary school textbooks were mainly imported from India. However, there was no national system of primary education, as there was
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a lack of national vision and objective of education. Therefore, the Nepal National Educational Planning Commission (NEPC) was formed in 1954. The NEPC report presented broad suggestions to the government studying the different aspects of primary Education. It prepared a special plan for curriculum, teacher training, textbook and the expansion of the primary education. Accordingly, primary teacher training commenced in 1954 with the American financial and technical assistance. The five-years' duration of primary education was officially established. Curriculum of different subjects like Nepali Language, Social Studies, Mathematics, Art Education, Health & Physical Education, Science, Vocational Education and English Language were prepared. A government printing press was set up to publish textbooks based on the new curricula. A new administrative structure at the central, zonal and district levels was set up for the supervision and management of education. By 1961, about 4000 primary schools were in operation and 182,533 students enrolled in primary schools (Shrestha, 1982).

The report of the NEPC provided a blueprint for the development of education in Nepal including primary education, which influenced the broad pattern of Nepalese education till the advent of the National Education System Plan (NESP) in 1971. The development of education during the decade of the 1970’s was guided by the NESP, whereas beginning from 1981, the features of the NESP gradually began to disappear one after another. The popular movement of the 1990 ended with the restoration of the multi-party democracy in the country. And, a new National Education Commission was formed in 1992 which produced an outline of educational development in line with the democratic Nepal. Later in 1998, a High level National Education Commission was formed to further strengthen the education system in accordance with the needs of the country and to ensure universal access, equity, and quality in primary education. Over the years, many primary education development projects and programmes have been implemented in the country with increased financial and technical support from many and diverse donor agencies. Nepal is a signatory of the Jomtien Decalaration of Universal Primary Education and the Dakar Declaration of the Education for All (EFA). Nepal has also complied with the Eighth Millennium Goal (MDG) adopted by the UN system which seeks to "ensure that by 2015 AD, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full
course of Primary school (UNDP, 2000). A national action plan for this purpose has been prepared and implemented by the Government of Nepal.

Official statistics show that Nepal has recorded a tremendous growth in primary education. As compared to 1951, the number of schools, teachers, and students, and enrolment ratios of primary school age children have grown many folds. A huge amount of funds has already been spent for the development of primary education. However, the attainment of the goal of the universal primary education (UPE) still faces many formidable challenges. Many studies have been done in the area of issues and challenges of UPE in Nepal, and the prominent ones among these are reviewed here.

A World Bank Policy Paper on primary education (World Bank, 1990) has discussed the role and purpose of primary education and ways to promote effectiveness, equitable access, and financial support to primary education including international assistance. As highlighted in this paper, the central purpose of primary education is twofold: to produce a literate and numerate population and to lay the groundwork for further education. Regarding this the first priority for primary education is to increase the learning of children in school so that most children who enroll in school actually complete the primary cycle. A second aim is to provide all school-age children with access to school. The paper revealed that the improvement of primary education in developing countries requires effort on at least three fronts: enhancing the learning environment, improving the preparation and motivation of teachers, and strengthening educational management.

A UNESCO-APPEAL publication (1998) entitled Basic Education for Empowerment of the Poor shows that education still remains out of reach of many of the poor children particularly girls in the rural areas and in urban slums and in the ethnic minorities or communities. It is said that “those who enroll cannot continue for social and economic reasons as well as for the reasons of in-built inefficiency of the education system. The women from poor families and ethnic minorities groups, physically and cultural isolation and they do not enjoy equal opportunities in the society. …Of those children who are enrolled in the schools, significant portions leave completing primary schooling. This situation is particularly acute in the South Asian countries. In rural remote areas where the literacy rates and enrolment ratio are comparatively lower than the national average, dropout rates are high. The rates are
Among disadvantage groups such as tribal people, scheduled castes and among rural areas."

The Education Challenge was the theme of the South Asia Human Development Report of the year 1998 (Haq, 1998). This report states that there are 50 million children not attending primary school in South Asia and another 40 percent dropout of school in every year. Despite the fact that South Asia has emerged as the most illiterate region in the world, universal primary education for all in the next five years is not utopian vision but an achievable reality. The report says: “Two fifths children in South Asia who enter primary school never graduate from it.” This report focuses on three key shortcomings or challenges in South Asia education such as the lack of access to schooling for a large number of children, the low level of primary school completion due to dropout and repetition and the low learning achievement of many students who enroll and complete school. The report reveals that the problems of access, retention and quality are inter-related, and that measures that are effective in expanding access also contribute to improved retention and quality. Similarly, poor quality schooling reduced completion rate. As the report says, the task still focusing most countries in South Asia is to ensure that all children who enter grade one graduate from grade five in the allocated time period. For this reason, reducing dropout and improving repetition is essential for a number of reasons. First, a decrease in repetition is essential for reduces the place taken by over-age children. Second, a reduction in the dropouts and repeater rate increases the flow-efficiency of the primary education cycle. Third, reducing repetition and dropout rates result in a decrease in both the direct and opportunity costs of primary schooling, and therefore, increases enrolment. Repetition of grade, extra resources are required for them to complete the primary cycle. Low completion rates are linked with both low demand for enrolment and low achievement: together, these factors have a cumulative, reinforcing influence on worsening both the dropout and the repeater scenario. Fourth, reduction in dropouts and repeaters can increase literacy and numeracy, which is only attained and retained by primary school completers.

The report reveals that the main reasons for dropout are often household economic hardships, low learning achievement leading to repetition due to failure, and corporal punishment in school. This report has also pointed out the need of providing better teacher for quality education.
Baidya (2000) pointed out that the burning issues of primary education in Nepal are systemic inefficiency e.g. high dropout and repetition. Besides, access and equity, quality degeneration, lack of school community relationship and under-financing are other issues of Primary Education. An issue relating to systemic inefficiency, particular huge drop-out is a great barrier in the achievement of UPE. As explained by Baidya, the major issues and challenges of primary education in Nepal relate with poor access and equity particularly affecting the schooling of girls and children of remote places and backward communities; systemic inefficiencies reflected in low survival or huge dropout and repetition; quality degeneration; lack of school-community relationship; under-financing of quality inputs in schools; lack of teaching through mother-tongue; and growing public-private dichotomy in the primary school system. Against this, it is pointed out that the urgency is now to focus on participation of specific target groups and on their higher retention and cycle completion. In addition, it is also urged to ensure quality enhancement through adequate attention to classroom practices and student learning together with supply of quality inputs. It is also pointed out that teachers are critical factor of student’ learning and retention but mass of the untrained and politicized teachers will further distort the learning environment of schools.

In 2004, the District Education Offices of all 75 districts of Nepal formulated a five-year district education plan (DEP) for reforms in school education system. A brief review of two of these DEPs, of the districts covered by this study namely Doti and Rautahat, is presented here. The Doti-DEP has identified such constraints of primary education as poor physical facilities in schools including lack of drinking water and toilet facilities, lack of teaching aids and child-centred teaching methods, high teacher-pupil ratio, lack of female teachers, lack of trained teachers, problems of over-age children, low level of student achievement, and lack of effective monitoring and supervision of schools. The DEP prepared for the period 2004-2009 aimed to raise NER to 96 percent and survival rate to grade five to 90 percent by the year 2009. In pursuance of this, the plan has adopted such measures as promoting child-friendly teaching-learning environment at school, implementation of liberal promotion policy in grades one to three, introduction of continuous assessment system, control of dropout by incentive programmes such as scholarship for girls and disadvantaged students, conduct of short- and long-term teacher training, transfer of school
management authority to local bodies, and implementation of mother-tongue primary schools (DEO, Doti-DEP, 2004).

**The Rautahat-DEP** focused around lack of equitable access to schools, low attendance rate of both students and teachers, high Teacher-Pupil Ratio, lack of trained teachers, Nepali medium of instruction, and unattractive school environment as problems of primary education in the district. The targets set by the DEP include raising of NER from 62 percent to 87 percent and primary education completion rate from 45 percent to 70 percent by the year 2009. The strategic actions for reforms in primary education envisaged by the DEP are improvement in physical facilities in schools, introduction of alternate schooling, special incentives to enhance enrollment and retention of girls, use of supplementary reading materials, continuous assessment system, refresher training to teachers, and local capacity building for primary education planning (DEO, Rautahat-DEP, 2004).

**REVIEW OF DOCUMENTS ON ISSUES IN QUALITY PRIMARY EDUCATION FOR ALL**

Quality degeneration is a great issue in the primary education system in Nepal. It is observed that the general conditions of most of the community primary schools are not congenial for good learning. This is due to poor physical facilities and learning aids, or untrained and demotivated teachers, or lack of child-friendly environment in school, or poor school management, or all or any combination of these.

By quality education we mean learner-centered, developmentally appropriate, discovery-oriented, gender sensitive, flexible and adoptable education to local conditions and individual’s learning needs. Quality education employs inclusion of development of teachers and learning materials, improved classroom environment and learning process. So there is a need of some innovations to focus on the quality of education and in making sure that learning environments are supportive to children’s all-round development.

**Beeby (1979)** argued that two main factors determined development of any primary school system: the level of general education of its teachers, and the length and type of their professional training.
Buch and Sudame (1990) reported that large number of schools faced shortage of space; many of them were located in unhealthy surroundings, prone to heavy traffics and noise pollution and frequented by anti-social elements. Many schools lack their own buildings and are operated in rented houses, while some of them lack toilet, library and laboratory. Importance of infrastructure as a support system for quality education cannot be under-valued. It cannot be disputed that a favorable learning environment would have a beneficial effect on learner.

Inter-agency Commission and WCEFA (1990), final report of World Declaration on Education for All, stated that more than 100 million children, including at least 60 million girls, have no access to primary schooling and more than 100 million children and countless adults fail to complete basic education programmes; million more satisfy the attendance requirements but do not acquire essential knowledge and skills. The report has focused on meeting basic needs; shaping the vision; universalizing access and promoting equity; focusing on learning acquisition; broadening the means and scope of basic education; enhancing the environment for learning; strengthening partnership; developing a supporting policy context; mobilizing resources; and strengthening international solidarity. It is, therefore, necessary to define acceptable levels of learning acquisition for educational programmes and to improve and apply systems of assessing learning achievement.

Sujatha (1994) has stated that students’ progress and performance depend not only on their socio-economic background but also, to a large extent, on the quality of learning inputs. Some of the inputs determining the quality of teaching-learning process are teacher-people-ratio, provision of teaching aids, infrastructure facilities, library and reading materials, games and supports materials, etc.

A World Bank Study (1995) says that the issue of quality enhancement in the primary education system implies not only raising the level of average performance of students but also reducing variation across students and schools by making general improvement in the learning environments and performance at the worst schools. It has pointed out that students’ learning depends on five inputs: students’ capacity and motivation to learn, the subject to be learned, teachers who know the subject and can teach it, time allocated for learning, and tools for teaching and learning. It is also said that the amount of actual time devoted to learning is consistently related to
achievement; fewer hours of classroom instruction, unscheduled school closings, teacher and student absenteeism affect the quality of education.

Another World Bank study on primary education in India (World Bank, 1997) says that if all children are to complete a primary education of good quality, the Indian government (national, state, and local) must create accessible schools, increase the efficiency of student flows (by reducing repetition) and provide the resources needed to improve quality. It is suggested to encourage regular attendance of children in school through such measures as enforcement of compulsory attendance rules, midday meal programme, attendance-enhancement incentives, and awareness campaign. It recommended five actions as crucial for expanding access and improving in India’s primary schools. These are: providing more financing for primary education, improving teachers’ motivation, better deployment of teachers, improving the quality of text books and efficiency of their production, and strengthening management and institutional capacity.

Haq (1998) concluded that the problems of access, retention and quality of primary education are inter-related. The key need is not just to bring children to primary school but to improve the ability of these schools to teach children and help them learn effectively. Raising achievement levels requires both improving the school’s ability to teach effectively and the students’ capacity and motivation to learn. The household can play a key role in developing the child’s capacity and motivation to learn by providing a supportive home environment, encouraging regular school attendance, and providing complementary inputs. Therefore, raising school quality is probably the most important means to raising learning achievement. It is said that teachers are the most important resource for ensuring high-quality primary education. Therefore, the challenge is to provide an adequate number of teachers for all primary school children, and to improve the capability of these teachers to deliver high-quality education.

Little (2000) suggested improving the curriculum, increasing learning materials, increasing instructional time, improving teaching and increasing the learning capacity of the students as measures for the improvement of quality of education. According to her, the model of improvement for the quality of education comprises four strategies; (a) setting clear learning objectives and high performance
standards for core subjects, (b) supporting inputs known to improve achievement, (c) adopting flexible strategies for the acquisition and use of inputs, and (d) the monitoring of performance.

**Marope (2000)** has depicted that the defining components of education quality are really subservient to learning outcomes because they desire value from their effectiveness in enhancing learning. They constitute an enabling learning environment. This environment includes diverse inputs, and the processes through which they are mobilized to effect learning. Education inputs include among other things fiscal resources, physical resources such as classrooms, ablution facilities, desks, chairs, curricular materials and equipment, and human resources, especially learners, teachers, parents and communities.

**Baidya (2000)** found that the general condition of most of the primary schools in Nepal is not congenial to good learning. Poor physical facilities, lack of educational materials and teacher absenteeism have made school unattractive to students, leading to poor attendance and achievement. Students have not been able to comprehend most of the competencies stated in the curriculum due to many factors including the language barrier in classroom transactions but the plan for establishing mother tongue school has not yet been started. He says that, to ensure quality enhancement, it is necessary to pay adequate attention to classroom practices and student learning together with supply of quality inputs. He has mentioned that, teachers are the critical factor of student learning but mass of untrained and politicized teachers will further distort the learning environment of schools.

**The Dakar Framework for Action (DFA) (UNESCO, 2000)** has declared that the most important goal about basic education is “ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality.” In this context, improving and sustaining the quality of basic education is important in ensuring effective learning outcomes. In order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education system should respond flexibly, providing relevant content in an accessible and appealing format. The DFA states that quality is the heart of education, and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future.
well-being of children, young people and adults. In this context, EFA partners must work together to ensure quality of basic education for all, regardless of gender, wealth, location, language or ethnic origin. The education programmes such as healthy, well-nourished and motivated students; well trained teachers and active learning techniques; adequate learning facilities and learning materials; a relevant curriculum that can be taught and learn in local language and builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners; an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe; a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values; participatory governance and management; and respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures are required.

The Government of Sri Lanka in 2000 formulated and implemented a five-year plan for quality reforms in primary education. This plan has adopted four broad groups of actions to raise the levels of competency achieved by primary education completers, which include reforms in curriculum and learning materials, in teacher education and support, in support from the home, and in classroom and learning environment of school (Ministry of Education and Higher Education, 2000).

Patel (2000) revealed that the important components necessary for the creation of suitable classroom environment include a pressure free atmosphere, independent learning techniques, diversified activities, pupil’s individual input, pupil interaction, creative activities, self pace, self selection and management, and self evaluation and management. Further he concludes that better teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil relationships develop because of new roles that both assume in the subject rooms. If the teacher is more receptive to pupil’s initiative and resourcefulness and they find pupils opening up to each other.

Panigrahi (2000) revealed that a definition of quality has two dimensions; one is concerned with the removal of undesirable factors and dealing with problems associated with an expanding education system. The other, is concerned with what we wish our education system to become, what we consider to be the purpose of quality education. He further discussed about factors affecting the quality of primary education. General factors like policies and regulation guiding provision of education, changes of key bureaucrats, financial and material commitment, and home
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background and school factors such as physical plant of school, students, teachers, and administration are factors affecting the quality of primary education. Home background is a crucial factor which includes parents’ level of education, occupation, possessions in the home, number of people and language used under status variables. Likewise, process variables such as student’s home study activities- reading, listening, actual study, hours of home work, involvement of parents and others in the home study routine, reinforcement of good performance, parental appreciations for the educational attainment of their children, parents’ educational and occupational ambitions for the child, and frequency of parent-teacher conference are other important determinants of school quality.

He also focused on school factors which determine the school quality. Quality of the physical plant includes safe buildings which are conducive for teaching learning at all time, adequate desk, - bench, other furniture, and cupboard, cleanliness – classrooms, school compound, and optimal and educative use of space are another determinants of quality school. Likewise, high quality teacher like well-trained teacher, motivated teacher, satisfied- salary, appropriate attitude and values of training pupils for further education and for life, and hard working teacher are other important crucial factors which determine the quality of primary education. Adequate teaching learning materials such as teachers’ guide, availability and use of textbooks and other essential apparatus and equipment are essential to maintain a good quality primary education. He also added that high level of performance of pupils such as literate and numerate pupils, high interest and enjoyments in all subjects, like schools- regular attendance, desire to success in all school activities, cleanliness, good character (highly disciplined), value further education, and positive attitudes of living are also requirement for quality of primary education. Lastly, he emphasized that outstanding performance in school project, outstanding performance in extra-curricular activities, success in preparing students for life, cordial school community relationship, and school as a resource center are factors which affect the quality of primary education.

Prachi Report (2002), which is based on a study of the delivery of primary education in West Bengal, says that quality of primary education can be enhanced by such measures as comfortable pupil-teacher ratio, various intensive schemes like provision of mid-day meal, distribution of free textbooks and free uniforms for girl
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students, provision of instruction in mother tongue, frequent meeting of parents and
teachers, improved teaching materials, good school environment, motivation of
teachers and better school infrastructure (Kumar et al., 2002).

A comparative research study on the main barriers to education for the poorest
households in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Kenya, Uganda and Zambia says that
quality is seen predominantly by parents in terms of availability and competencies of
teachers (Siobhan, Boyel et al. 2002). From the perspective of the children, the issue
of quality is intimately related to violence in school-for boys, largely corporal
punishment, and for girls, mainly sexual harassment. The broadening of perspectives
on quality is important. Of particular note is the focus on the child: improving quality
should ensure that the actual learning experience of each child is at the heart of
education, there is an environment where all children feel safe and valued and that
there is respect for the fundamental rights of children. It is said that education
management and academic supervision has to focus on what is the child learning?
rather than what is the teacher teaching?

Little (2003) has discussed about key actions for reforms of primary education
in Sri Lanka. She has dealt with four areas of reforms such as educational opportunity,
quality improvement, the teaching profession, and management of education and
resource provisions. Key actions suggested for quality enhancement include
curriculum reforms, emphasis on people-centered learning, development and use of
continuous assessment system, and production of text books, work books, and
supplementary materials with a focus on gifted as well as average and slow learners.
Likewise, training of all untrained teachers, reforms of the pre-service and in-service
teacher education curricula, and more equitable teacher deployment between schools
are also suggested. She has also suggested the appointment of qualified and trained
principals or headteachers, establishment of primary education development
committees at school level, mechanism of supervision and monitoring, re-furishment
of physical environment of learning and school rationalization are aspects of quality
management of primary education.

Rao (2004) put forward the view that the most obvious cause of low
achievement are the shortage of essential inputs into the learning process and difficult
conditions under which schooling often takes place. So, many developing countries,
conscious of the urgent need to improve learning achievement, are taking a wide
range of measures aimed at upgrading the quality of teaching, the provision of learning materials and conditions of school buildings and facilities. These are obvious steps and ones that experience has proven to be effective in improving educational outcomes.

Salam (2004) explains that mere availability of schools does not guarantee the quality of schools. This should be supplemented by a number of other supports such as safe drinking water facility, electricity connection, toilet facilities, separate toilet for girls, operation blackboards, chalks and dusters, benches, desks, chairs, first aid kids, immunization facility, book banks and other teaching-learning materials specially for the elementary stage. He further states that availability of trained teachers and desirable teacher-people ratio are the crucial factors of quality education that influence learner’s achievement. He has also mentioned that quality of education is an important potential instrument to help achieve greater equality between those who start life with different sets of economic and social advantages. Striking diversities and sharp contrast in educational participation of different social groups by caste, tribe, gender, rural and urban remains one of India’s most alarming features.

Chugh (2004) has pointed out that poor quality of schools is a cause of students’ dropout from school. She says that quality of education depends on different components of schools characteristics such as good learning environment in school, good school infrastructure and resources (school building, space and class rooms, drinking water, toilet facilities, seating arrangement and library), educational aids (map, charts, science kits), student support mechanism (mid day meal), free text book, free uniform and scholarship and pupil teacher ratio, etc.

Mukhopadhyaya (2005) pleads that quality is a holistic concept. It is related with different aspects of education. He has pointed out that indicators of quality of school are concerned with three categories of stakeholders such as student, teacher and parents, which help to make an assessment of a school. Institution building is a foundation of quality education and roles of teacher and head teacher are crucial for building an educational institution. He has observed that commitment, confidence and competency are essential attributes to teacher and among them the commitment of teacher is the base for the development of other attributes. However, the realms of these attributes are interlinked. He has also discussed the role of the headteacher as a
leader of school. Process of decision-making is also an important factor to improve quality of an educational institution. Apart from this, he has suggested that pedagogical competency and capabilities of institution are important factors to enhance quality education. If an institution does not provide better teaching learning environment to students, it can plague two major maladies or bad consequences, i.e. massive quantum of dropouts and under-achievement. Therefore, he indicates that there is a close relationship between quality of education and dropout of students from school.

A study on Universalizing Elementary Education in India carried out by Mehrotra et.al. (2005) has identified the factors influencing the quality of primary education which include adequate number, qualification and training of teachers, good teaching learning environment at school, and availability and use of teaching-learning materials, etc.

Mathema and Bista (2006), in a study on student performance in School Leaving Certificate (SLC), has shown that poor performance of student is the function of the weak academic foundations of students, poor assessment and promotion practices, poor teacher management, lack of teacher and school accountability, weak institutional leadership, obsolete and heavily contents-driven curriculum, serious shortage of well-qualified teachers, lack of basic and physical and instructional facilities, untimely and inadequate supply of text books, huge class size, limited opportunities to learn in classrooms for girls, inability of students to understand the language of instruction especially for linguistic minorities, and absence of educational environment in school. All these points apply to primary education as well.

Lakin and Lavinia (2006) say that the quality of education depends on a number of factors including the availability of adequate and culturally relevant textbooks, suitable writing materials for pupils such as pencils and workbooks, teaching aids such as maps and blackboards, the physical environment of the school such as the climatic suitability of building, the adequacy and repair of the classrooms and other facilities, ventilation and lighting, the existence and condition of playground, separate toilets for boys and girls, and the supply of electricity and drinking water. The role of the home environment in the quality of education has also been explained.
Patel (2007) has evaluated the Sarve Siksha Abhiyan (SSA) in Sabarkantha district of Gujrat, India. He states that SSA is an effort to universalize elementary education by enhancing community-ownership of the school system. It is a response to the demand for quality basic education. This programme is also an attempt to provide an opportunity for improving human capabilities of all children. Patel found that the major block in achieving universal elementary education is the absence of quality education in schools. Most of the schools are plagued by child-unfriendly pedagogy, poor functioning, detention of children, corporal punishment, in-competency of teachers, teachers' absenteeism and shortage of teachers. Likewise, there are several equity issues that especially affect girl students. Apathy to girl’s education, inadequate female teachers, absence of girl’s toilet, early marriage, illness among family members and distance to school are some of the important reasons that keep girls away from school. He has also identified certain equity issues affecting socially disadvantaged groups and children with special needs, such as hostile school environment, discriminating attitude of teachers and un-intelligible language in classroom.

Jain (2008) has suggested that a minimum of physical facilities, in the form of building is good enough, but teaching aids to make the instructions interesting and scope for out of classroom activities tend to have a significant impact on attendance and dropouts from the school.

**REVIEW OF LITERATURE RELATED WITH PROBLEM OF DROPOUT AND RETENTION IN PRIMARY EDUCATION**

Important studies of direct relevance to the problem of dropout and retention in primary education have been reviewed under this study. These are reported below.

- **Research Studies related with Problem of Dropouts in the Context of Nepal**

  A study entitled Cost Sharing in Education was carried out in Nepal in the year 1999 (Baidya et al., 2000). This study is based on a survey of 180 poor households in three VDCs – one each from Achham, Kailali, and Rasuwa districts - and in one municipality of Kapilvastu district of Nepal. This study has mainly dealt with household perception and participation in education, household educational costs and decision making, household demand for education and willingness and ability to
pay for it, community and external support to education, views of teachers and community leaders regarding problems faced by poor parents in accessing education, problems of access and quality in education, cost sharing in education, etc. The study has also identified key obstacles in demand for and supply of education. This study contains a section on the causes of dropout, based on interaction with parents, teachers, dropout students, community leaders, and other stakeholders of the education system. As reported by this study a number of factors cause students’ dropout from school. These are lack of money to pay for school expenses, children needed to work at home and for earning livelihood, prolonged illness of children, distance to school (particularly affecting girls), lack of children’s interest in school, corporal punishment at school, and early marriage (especially affecting girls). Other causes of dropout reported by this study are certain changes in household circumstances causing hardship in the family e.g. death or chronic sickness of the main earner, continuous illness of mother, death rituals, etc., which further worsen the household economic situation resulting in drop out of children from school. Poor quality of education, may it be seen in the overall management of the school or in the way lessons are taught in the classroom, has also been identified as a depressant on the demand for education, even when access is not a problem. Alienation of parents and community from school management has also caused dropout of children.

The Community Owned Primary Education Programme (COPE/UNDP) has carried out studies in Gaur municipality to point out hindrances in access, equity, retention and quality in primary schools of municipalities. The reports of this study (Gaur Municipality, 2003) show that children dropout from school mainly due to their heavy occupation in housework, difficulty in paying education expenses and parental unawareness of value of education. However, many children have also dropped out because the school environment was not joyful for them.

An unpublished doctoral thesis prepared by Karki (2004) has examined previously identified antecedents and outcomes of dropout in Nepal and their association with subsequent activities of dropout cases. The study based on a conceptual model of perceived antecedents and subsequent activities of school dropout, where family background, school factors student characteristics as perceived antecedents and household chores, doing nothing by children, wage labour, etc. as subsequent activities. The purposes of this study are to examine the accuracy of
Nepal’s officially reported dropout rates, and to explore the perceived antecedents of dropout, the subsequent activities of dropout, and associations between two. This study adopted a descriptive cross-sectional tracer design to determine the perceived antecedents of primary school dropout in Nepal. Students who dropped from primary school were traced to their homes and interviewed their parents. Among 75 districts of Nepal, Kapilbastu, a terai district, was randomly selected and eight schools with primary grades also randomly selected in district. Dropouts were randomly selected from grade 1, 3, and 5 in each school. Altogether 44 dropouts, 47 parents of dropouts and 25 teachers were interviewed about the reasons for dropout and the activities in which the children were engaged after dropout. Karki has reported that the main perceived antecedents of primary school dropout are family poverty, household chores and irregularity in school. While over 45 percent of the dropouts were found engaged in household chores, 41 percent of dropouts were doing nothing and only 14 percent of dropouts were engaged in wage labour. He explored that association between the perceived antecedents and subsequent activities of dropouts are evident. Those children, who dropped from school, especially girls due to household chores, were usually found heavily engaged in such chores after dropout. Those who were reported dropping out due to irregular attendance in school, mostly boys, generally found doing nothing after dropout. He focuses on about half of the students did not dropout because of economic reason and 41 percent dropout children eventually playing with other dropout children. He concluded that there is a huge wastage in Nepal’s human resources and it could be reduced with policy responses. Finally, he recommended that for reducing Nepal’s dropout rate, attracting dropout children back to school by fund raising schemes in school, sports and recreation facilities and mobilization of teachers and community members and who do not want to back to school government should support the development of those students.

Karki (2005) has pointed out that primary school dropout and grade repetition are major hindrances to achieve basic literacy in Nepal. It is stated that over 15 percent of the total enrolments in grade one dropout every year and about 42 percent of them repeat the grade. He has pointed out household poverty, students’ engagement in housework, late entry into school, irregular school attendance, poor health conditions and adverse peer group influences as the main causes of dropout in primary education.
A study carried out by Plan Nepal in 2005 has presented a qualitative analysis of the causes of school dropout and the possible remedial measures. This study was based on in-depth interviews, FGD, and information sharing meetings with students, parents, teachers, School Management Committee (SMC) members, political workers, and NGO/CBO workers associated with 12 primary schools of Banke, Makwanpur, Bara-Rautahat and Sunsari-Morang districts of Nepal. This study has reported that dropout rate was critical, and it varied across the gender and ethnic groups. Dropout rate of boys is higher than girls in respect to all primary grades except grade 1 in schools. A number of household, socio-cultural and school-related causes of dropout were identified and their remedies suggested which include strong monitoring of schools, better school environment, child-centered teaching-learning methods, social mobilization, school-community partnership, etc. School environment, behavioral factors such as hierarchy, discrimination, fear, inadequate physical and educational facilities, teachers’ lack of care and commitment, language, physical distance to school, management inefficiency, lower community participation, ineffective monitoring and supervisions and inflexible school hours are school related causes of school dropout. Likewise, poverty, illiteracy, high cost of schooling, large family size, parental illness, migration and family breakdown are household related causes of dropout and poor performance or failures of students, lack of interest in studies, late enrolment and over age, peer influence and parental carelessness, illness and poor health of children’s as a student related causes and local political and power dynamics, early marriage concern with girls, dowry system, lack of social demand are socio-cultural related causes of school dropout. This report has suggested some remedial measures to reduce/check dropout which include strong monitoring of schools, better school environment, support to poor families through income generation activities, conducting literacy campaigns, child-centered teaching-learning methods, social mobilization, school-community partnership, etc (Plan Nepal, 2006).

Baidya (2006) has determined the magnitude of primary student dropouts in community primary schools of Bhaktapur Municipality, compared the incidence of dropout across grades, gender and selected social and economic strata of dropout children, identified causes of dropout in primary education; and suggested measures and actions for controlling primary school dropouts. Pointing out the alarming rate of dropout, she has warned that if the current rate of dropout is not checked, the
attainment of the goal of UPE and EFA would not be anything more than a **wishful thinking**. As reported by this study, there exists disparity in dropout across gender, grades, and social and economic strata of dropout children. Girls and children of the poor and disadvantaged families are more victimized by the tendency of dropout. If unchecked, such a disparity will mock the philosophy of social transformation through education. This will rather speckle the prospects of socio-economic equality and harmony. As stated in this study, the causes of student dropout in primary education are many and diverse; there are many economic and social reasons compelling students to dropout from school. Meanwhile, there are also a number of school-related, family-related and student-related causes of dropout. Therefore, the control of dropout must be given priority in policy, planning and programmes geared towards UPE and EFA. This study has recommended several measures to control dropout in primary education such as enhancing teacher quality through recurrent school-based training in child-friendly teaching method, additional funding for ensuring the supply of basic physical facilities and educational materials in school, providing incentives to poor and disadvantaged parents for the retention of their children in school, introducing compulsory primary education scheme, introducing alternative education provisions for dropout children, training headteachers in effective primary school management, making provision of using two languages (including mother tongue) as medium of instruction, enhancing responsible parenthood through awareness programmes, and assisting the local governing bodies (VDCs and municipalities) to develop and implement local primary education reform plan. This study has also recommended remedial actions to be undertaken by School Management Committee and schools, and by parents, community, and the Government.

**Khanal (2006)** examined the extent and causes of dropout in primary education based on school survey, interview with parents of dropout children and FGD with teachers. He found the rate of dropout in primary education was very high in the survey area (Govindapur VDC of Morang district) i.e. 19.6 percent as compared to the national rate of 9.8 percent. The dropout is found higher in lower grades of primary education than in upper grades. Likewise, the rate of dropout in indigenous community was also found relatively higher. The reported causes of dropout are low economic status of family, grade failure, parental unawareness about the value of
education, and Nepali medium of instruction in the case of children from non-Nepali speaking families. Most of the dropout students were found involved in income earning activities. The recommendations made by this study for reducing dropout are conducting educational awareness programme, providing incentive scheme, providing special tutorial classes for weak students, mobilizing social awareness programme, medium of instruction in mother tongue, improvement of learning environment, provision of appropriate physical facilities and provision of recreational and educational extra-curricular activities in the school.

➢ Research Studies related with Dropout and Retention (South Asia)

In a study of educational wastage in Assam, Barua (1971) found that the level of education wastage was affected by three factors, viz., dropouts, stagnated, and transfer cases. The effect of transfer cases was comparatively small; stagnation in classes was much important. But wastage was not uniform throughout the five years of the primary level. It was very high at the first year of schooling. Poverty, ignorance of parents, poor health of pupils, repeated failure, bad physical condition of the school, long absence from the school, family environment, attendance in social festivals, pupil’s attitude toward education, rough and unsympathetic behaviors of teachers, multiple class teaching, crowded classes, single-teacher schools, faulty admission policy, were the main causes of wastage. As reported by this study, one important cause of stagnation was pupil’s attitude towards examinations. Lack of teaching aids, lack of reading habit, no habit of study at home, irregular attendance etc. were other identified causes of dropout in primary school.

Chatterjee (1975) investigated to identify the different factors present in the family, school and communities that are responsible for high rates of school dropout among the Harijan children. The significant reasons of school dropout identified by this study are poverty and economic hardships of the families, domestic exigency like illness or death in the family, lack of interest in studies under home related factors. Likewise, behavior of the school teachers and school mates, physical distance between school and home under school related factors are another reasons of school dropout.
Prakash (1992) observed that Universal Elementary Education (UEE) has been one of the top priorities programmes of the Government of India for four decades and that although the number of primary schools and enrolment at the primary level increasing tremendously, but retention of children still remains a serious problem.

In a study on economics of wastage in primary education, Bhat and Yasmeen (1994) have pointed that the main causes of student dropout in primary education are parental illiteracy, household poverty, and heavy courses of study.

A World Bank publication on education (1995) discusses low primary completion rates as a result of high repetition and dropout rates and says that repetition and dropout are closely linked but their causes are usually different. On the supply side, the low completion rates may reflect problems with the quality of instruction and on the demand side, family may need children to work and may withdraw children, especially girls, from school temporarily- leading to grade repetition- or even permanently. Dropout clearly affects learning outcomes, but this may not be the case for repetition if students learn more by repeating a grade. It is said that when student repeats a grade more than once, repetition frequently leads to dropout.

Mehta (1995) defined that those who left the education system prematurely are termed as dropouts and causes of dropouts were grouped into six categories, namely, not interested in education/further studies and participated in household economic activities, other economic reasons, domestic chores, failures and other reasons. A large number of pupils join education system every year but since they do not find anything attractive and interesting in the classroom, they heavily dropped out from the system. Moreover, the dropout takes place because of the fact that the costs and efforts involved in primary education are not matched by the quality. He also explains that, at the primary level of education, the incidence of wastage on part of girls is higher than boys and more from one grade to another grade increases the incidence of drop-out. A large number of children dropout from the education system only because repetitive failures. It was found that, the dropout rates are high in grade one. He also reveals that, the majority of causes of dropouts from the education system due to economic activities at households and other economic reasons. It has also been revealed that pupils left the education system because they were not
interested in education itself and further studies. Repetitive failures also kept people out of the education system.

Malgavakar (1995) has stated that one of the reasons for dropouts is the detention of students in a class. The problem of retention of children in primary schools should be viewed by and large as a problem of retaining them in the first two standards. The study revealed that there were a higher percentage of girls dropouts than the boys because they were more serviceable at home in each of the house activities. By and large girls assisted their parents in domestic work in a greater measure and for longer hours than boys. It was observed that one out of every five dropouts was engaged in paid work in agriculture, farm labour or non-agricultural work. When there were many siblings the enrolment dropped since older children stayed home to take care of the younger ones. Five reasons appeared to be significant in the minds of parents for withdrawal of children from school: poverty, children needed to do household chores, needed to care of little ones, lack of interest in school among the children, and children needed to rear cattle. The other reasons mentioned were ill-health of parents, children needed to take care of house, school distant from home, children needed to support family financially, teacher beating, and children. Some school factors also affect dropout rate such as irregular attendance of teacher, higher pupil-teacher ratio, lack of class-rooms, facilities of drinking water.

Singh (1998) has shown that the main reasons for discontinuing their schooling by students of primary education were poverty, family irresponsibility, lack of interest in study, and failure in examination. In the case of girls, child marriage was also a reason for dropping out.

A study on the internal efficiency of the school system carried out by Gasper (1998) has explained school quality and internal efficiency on the basis of an analysis of dropout rate, the factors explaining differences in the educational attainment of the dropouts, and the analysis of the school quality and school effectiveness. First of all, the actual number of dropouts in each standard was identified. The dropout here refers to one whose name is removed from the school register but has not obtained transfer certificate. Secondly, the total enrolment in the given level of education is computed. It includes the enrolment in the initial year, new addition in the course of the given level of education, and repeaters of previous. From this total, the number of cases who had withdrawn transfer certificates from the school in the course of a given level of
education was excluded. Thus, the total enrolment in a given level of education was calculated. The study has stated that the length of schooling of girls’ student (dropout girls) can be assumed to be determined by variables such as their social background, family background, family’s economic position and the quality of schools where they studied. In the study, the female dropouts were considered as the dependent variables where as types of school (primary, middle and secondary), location of the school (rural and urban), management category of the school, father’s and mother’s education, father’s and mother’s occupation, number of children in the family, position of the girls child in the family, income of the family and land holding by the family are independent variables. Internal efficiency, in this study, refers to input-output relationship within the educational system. It is concerned with the allocative efficiency in planning, co-ordination and implementation of various activities of the school, such as teaching learning activities, and co-curricular activities, and extra-curricular activities. The School Evaluation Schedule used for this purpose, measures the organizational efficiency of the schools under five components such as adequacy of school infrastructure facilities, managerial efficiency at school, programme organization and evaluation, school supervision and school-community relationship. Based on an analysis of the data collected from a sample of schools drawn from the Dhenkanal district of Orissa, the study shows that about 30 percent of the girls who enroll in the first standard drop out before completing five years of schooling; and around 45 percent of the girls who enroll in the first standard, drop out before completing 10 years of schooling. The study has followed a comprehensive analysis of social, economic, family background and school related factors in order to identify the crucial variables associated with school dropouts. It reveals that the school-related variables are more important than students’ family background characteristics in educational attainment.

The report of the PROBE Team presented the situation of elementary education in India, based on a survey of all schools and a sample of 1376 households in 234 randomly-selected villages of five Indian states namely Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh (PROBE, 1999). This report contains a section on the causes of student dropout and out-of-school children in elementary education. The report has identified that the private cost of education has played a vital role in discouraging the poor families to send their children to school especially when quality of schooling is low. The report has also stated that a
large number of children are out of school due to their heavy engagement in 
housework, hostile environment or physical punishment at school, and lack of helping 
hands at home to help children do their homework even when parental interest in 
education is high. The report has recommended that measures like non-formal 
education, private schooling, involvement of NGO, ad hoc-campaigns and 
compulsory education programme should be undertaken to achieve Universal 
Elementary Education in India.

A number of studies on student dropout have been carried out in India. Dua 
(2000) published a comprehensive review of earlier research studies made by 
different researchers on school related variables causing the discontinuity of primary 
education by children. Synthesizing the findings of a good number of earlier studies, 
Dua identified a number of variables that influenced the dropout of students from 
school. To begin with, inappropriate, or overloaded, or ‘dull’, or irrelevant curriculum 
(Masavi, 1976; Rebello, 1978; Srivastava and Gupta, 1980; Shah, 1983; Shah, 
1991; and Asthana, 1993) was stated as a significant determinant of dropout. The 
second factor causing dropout so identified was subject difficulty and consequent 
grade failure (Schreiber, 1960; Adishiah and Ramanathan, 1974; Phadke and 
Shukla, 1980; Devi, 1983; Asthana, 1993). The distance from home to school was 
described as the third factor behind dropout, particularly among the girls (Mujovie, 
1968; Srivastava, 1970; Bhandari, 1974; Rebello, 1978; Srivastava and Gupta, 
1980; Shah, 1992; Asthana, 1993). Likewise, the fourth factor causing dropout was 
non-availability of basic facilities in schools (Pratap et.al, 1971; Das, 1974; Gopal, 
1984). Teacher behaviour such as rough and unsympathetic behaviour, discouraging 
attitude, discrimination in dealing with students, poor attentiveness to students, poor 
qualification and training leading to poor quality teaching have also been identified as 
one of the significant variables for school dropout (Alvi, 1965; Bihari, 1969, Barua 
(1971; Bose and Mukherjee, 1971, Agarwal, 1972; Pillani, 1977; Mehdi, 1978; 
Rebello, 1978; Gopal Singh, 1984; Punelkar, 1995). Similarly, low achievement of 
students and their lack of interest in study and school were also found causing dropout 
(Mehta, 1974; Bhandari, 1974; Saxena, 1982; Sharma, 1982; Singh, 1984). Dua 
has stated that poor educational status of parents, lack of encouragement at home, 
heavy homework, fear of punishment and humiliation at school, and difficulty in 
adjustment at school also caused children to dropout from school. Dua’s review has
Review of Literature

also made it clear that incentives like mid-day meals at school, free textbooks and school uniforms, and scholarships have improved students’ attendance at school and therefore could be a measure for checking dropouts (Rai and Rath, 1972; CARE, 1977; NIEPA, 1979; Sharma, 1982; Acharya, 1984). Mali (1984) found that the reasons for dropping out were failure in examination and poor economic conditions. Besides, the girls stayed away because of social and religious reasons. A study of dropouts and failures in primary classes carried out by SIE (1986) reported that the incidence of dropout was much higher among children coming from backward classes. The main causes of dropout were illiteracy of parents, poverty, lack of children’s interest in school, distance to school from home, unattractive environment of school, teachers’ attitude of indifference, irrelevant curriculum, and lack of physical facilities like water and sanitation in schools. It was suggested that the problem of dropout could be remedied by linking curriculum with pupil’s life situations, removing discrimination based on caste, religion, gender, and socio-economic status at school, providing adequate physical facilities, and improving learning environment at school (Dua, 2000).

The study by Mathur et al. (1982) showed that inconvenient time table is responsible for usual absence of students in school as well as for the withdrawal of the students from school. Similarly, Mehta (1974) has concluded that the reason for dropout is low achievement of pupils in school. Kilpatrick (1973) revealed that the dropout students had no convincing reason for remaining in school. A study of student dropout based on interviews with dropout children says that students left school because of their laziness and because they found school experiences ‘boring and uninteresting’ (Yeoman, 1985). This reason indicates that some school dynamics are perceived as unappealing regardless of gender. Among the uninteresting experiences dropouts faced in schools were the excessive time spent in sitting idle in the class room, the boring lesson and the fact that non-attending peers could engage in activities such as fishing, card playing, or social events.

It is also reported that due to poor educational background and lack of encouragement from parents, students fail to complete their homework. The fear of punishment by the teacher and humiliation by the classmates were found as important causes for leaving the school (Shah, 1983; Asthana, 1993). It is reported that student incentives like free distribution of books, school uniforms and food (mid-day meal)
had positive impact on students’ attendance in school.

A study on the problem of dropouts in primary schools was carried out by Devi (1983) who found that there was no uniformity in the rate of dropout for the whole primary course. At the lower primary course, girls dropped out more than the boys. The difference in rate between boys and girls was 14.8 percent, which was highly significant. This study has also shown that, as a whole, girls had a higher rate of dropout than boys. The difference between the mean rate of dropout of boys and girls was 6.3. The highest rate of dropout appeared in class I (48.5 percent) and the lowest in class VI (4.8 percent). The first four important causes, according to the combined results, were poverty, frequent transfer, repeated failure, and negligence of parents. The study has also found out that, the socio-economic causes were most important causes of dropout followed by educational and miscellaneous causes.

Prachi (2002) report was based on delivery of primary education in a study of West Bengal. It deals with critical aspects of school participation like enrolment, dropout and quality of education. The report shows that the incidence of primary school dropout is found high mainly among the schedule caste (SC), schedule tribe (ST) and Muslim households. The financial hardship of the family is the main reason behind dropping out but in some cases it is participated by the poor quality of teaching, excessive physical punishment of students and children failure in qualifying for higher classes. The study also found that the cases of dropout have been found in higher of early ages (6-11 years), which belongs to early classes of elementary school. This report has also highlighted to different factors of school dropout which leads to poor efficiency in school. Actual attendance of children in primary school is found to be uncompromisingly low. Main reason behind absenteeism are reported to be poor family and children’s engagement in domestic and agriculture-related work, hostile environment in school and lack of children’s interest in study. Even teachers who come to school they do not always take classes regularly (Kumar at. all. 2002).

Bruns et. al. (2003) show that the average primary education completion rate for the South Asian region is 70 percent which is the second lowest in the world, above only that of Africa. Two countries in the South Asia region such as Sri Lanka and the Maldives have achieved universal primary education completion. India shows encouraging effort to educational improvement since mid 1990s, but performance of girl is lower than boys. Primary completion rate of Afghanistan is the lowest among
the South Asian countries, followed by Bhutan and Pakistan. The primary education completion rate of India, Bangladesh, and Nepal is 76 percent in 1999, 70 percent and 65 percent in 2000, respectively.

Talking about the problem of primary education in India, Ramachandran (2003) points out that a significant proportion of children, especially girls and those from underprivileged backgrounds, either dropout from school at an early stage or they learn very little. The quality of education in government schools leaves a great deal to be desired. Introducing a collection of case studies of innovative educational programmes initiated by the voluntary sector in primary education which influence, support and strengthen basic education and their forward and backward linkages, she says that every child has a right to basic education. The case studies included in this work deal with in-school remedial courses which enhance learning and reduce dropouts, and also explore strategies and alternatives to keep children in education, reach out to those outside the school system, and improve the quality elementary education. It is said that social mobilization specially targeted towards child workers and accelerated educational programmes for out-of-school children have been able to provide older children an opportunity to complete primary education and help them acquire livelihood skills.

In a case study on access, relevance and quality of primary education in India, Ramachandran (2003) shows that despite close to 95 percent of age-group children theoretically enjoying access to a primary school within a kilometer from home, both enrolment and retention remain continuing problems. The lack of interest and need to participate in household or economic chores limit the access of children to school. However, she argues, “more distressing are the barriers created by non-functioning or poor quality primary schools.” It is pointed out that children who go through a few years of schooling without learning very much tend to dropout. When opportunity costs, particularly for poorer children, remain high, families are prone to pull them out. Making education free, providing textbooks and uniforms, and making provisions for midday meals do help, but only where such schemes are implemented on a socially significant scale. Yet, by themselves, they are insufficient to attract those facing other social and economic barriers that prevent them both from attending school and staying on.

Panchmukhi (2004), drawing from different studies, has discussed social and economic causes of dropout in school. Presenting the picture of school dropout in
India, he says that dropout rates are found to be fairly high among girls, among children living live in slum areas, among children belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes, and among children of poor families that live mainly on wage labour. He has identified parents’ perceptions, students’ perceptions and teachers' perception on the factors that cause dropout of students from school. As viewed by the teachers, the main causes of dropout are frequent transfer of teachers, large family size and parental illiteracy. It has been shown that students' absenteeism from school or regularity in school attendance greatly influence academic achievement of children, but these are closely associated with the socio-economic background and occupational preferences of children. Thus, Panchamukhi has tried to establish that economic compulsions are the causes that force children to drop out from school. It is highlighted that lack of proper non-formal education facilities, absence of female teachers and long distance to non-formal education centres are major factors that hinder students' retention in school.

Udai (2004) found that the great obstacle in the expansion of primary education in India is wastage and stagnation. Wastage means premature withdrawal of children from schools at any stage before completion of primary education. Stagnation means the retention of a child in a lower class for the period of more than one year. Both wastage and stagnation is major obstacle to achieve universal primary education of the country. The major causes of wastage and stagnation are vicious environment of school, ineffective method of teaching, defective curriculum, defective examination system, poor people’s health condition, illiteracy of guardians, financial handicaps, and social discrimination. Children left studies either after their failure in the examination or in order to assist their parents in earning their livelihood.

In a case study on Why children dropout? Chugh (2004) has assessed three critical issues of access, enrolment and retention in the specific context of urban slum areas for achieving the goal of Universal Elementary Education (UEE). This book attempts to inquire causes of dropout and non-enrolment of children and the situation of gender inequality. It is stated that the factors causing school dropout and non-enrolment are multidimensional and many of them relate to socio-economic phenomena also. She found that the dropout rate of girls was higher than that of boys in the study area and the highest percentage of children dropout occurred in earlier grades particularly in grade one. Chugh has identified that the causes of school dropout of the children are inability to pay for educational items like uniform, books,
etc, domestic problems (frequent quarrels at home), need to look after the younger siblings, lack of link between education and employment, insecurity of the child, continuous failure in schools, discriminatory attitude of teacher, lack of interest in studies, non-availability of incentive schemes and frequent break in studies. She also points out that the poor quality of schools that goes against the educational interest of the children is responsible for the ultimate dropout of children from school. Highlighting on the quality of education, this study has discussed different components of school quality such as good learning environment in school, good school infrastructure and resources (school building, space and class rooms, drinking water, toilet facilities, seating arrangement and library), educational aids (map, charts, science kits), student support mechanism (mid day meal), free text book, free uniform and scholarship and pupil teacher ratio, etc.

Pathania (2004) has presented an evaluative study of the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) in Sirmaur district of Himanchal Pradesh. In this study, using a pre-post research model, Pathania has made a performance assessment of DPEP on the basis of certain selected variables e.g. infrastructure facilities, standard of education, enrolment, attendance and dropout. The main objectives of this study were to present a snapshot view of primary education in India, to analyze and examine the perceptions of student, teachers, head teacher, parents, community leaders, and DPEP authorities’ regarding the impact of DPEP on primary education. This study was primarily based on a survey of 50 schools in 5 blocks of Sirmaur district which were selected through quota sampling. Ten students covering all primary grades (1-5) from each of these 50 schools (making of total 500 students) were selected randomly for in-depth study. Pathania found that the dropout rate in primary education was higher in the rural areas than in the urban areas, and the causes of dropout identified by this study were overcrowded classroom, inadequate number of teachers, students’ family condition, parental poverty, parental indifference to education, social habits and customs, students’ illness, mental retardation and social maladjustment. This study has reported that reform measures introduced by the DPEP such as mid-day meal schemes, incentive schemes including school uniforms, stipends, and special stipends for girls had helped to reduce dropout in primary schools. This study has suggested that teachers’ interaction with pupils and parents could be an important measure for reducing dropouts in primary education.
Mohsin et. al. (2004) shows that social and economic factor is responsible for low literacy in Pakistan. Among others, major cause of school dropouts at secondary level was weak primary education system, non availability of trained teachers, parent teacher relation the completion of secondary level.

A study on Universalizing Elementary Education in India (Mehrotra et.al., 2005) has discussed the problem of dropout and said that dropout is particularly high in the rural areas and in the entry grade and the upper primary stage for all the selected states of India. The causes of school dropout include low income, household poverty, economic value of children, children's need for a variety of household chores, irrelevant curriculum, distance to school, lack of motivation in school environment, lack of incentives, etc. Mehrotra has pointed out that improved attendance rate of children could be an important factor in facilitating the retention of children and minimizing wastage and stagnation in primary education. He has also discussed the positive relationship between the supply of female teachers and the enrolment and retention of girls particularly at the upper primary stage.

Hamid (2005) has undertaken a study to examine the impact of education voucher on girls' schooling in rural areas of Sherpur Upazila of Bogra district of Bangladesh. The impact assessment was done in terms of (a) enrolment, dropout and retention rates, (b) academic performance of the girl students, and (c) changes in school/Madrasah administration and management. The findings of the study showed that the introduction of education voucher increased enrolment and promotion rates and reduced repetition rates. However, it could not reduce dropouts convincingly. However, the level of academic performance of students improved.

Lakin and Lavinia (2006), in an article based on a study jointly conducted by FAO and UNESCO, show that the opportunity cost of schooling is one of the main obstacles of enrolment and retention of poor children in primary schools, as their families often count on their earning, and, for them, learning at school may appear irrelevant with respect to their more immediate survival needs. It is said that effective access to schooling involves more than initial enrolment. Regular attendance is required for retention and completion of schooling, but health problems, malnutrition, and domestic demands for child labour take their toll on attendance and therefore on learning achievement. Thus, disrupted learning often leads to grade repetition and dumping of over-age children in primary school classes. It is pointed out that grade repetition also leads to dropout from school.
This study has also stated that the quality of primary school inputs influence school enrolment, attendance, and completion rates. It is said that a good school ‘gains parents’ respect and tends to attract and retain pupils’.

**Lloyd et al. (2006)** report is based on panel data drawn from 12 rural villages in Pakistan. The collected data was based on household and school characteristics. The results provide evidence of the importance of both household and school factors as statistically significant of dropout rates. The study found that dropout rate for girls remain fairly high particularly at the end of primary school grade (grade five) at which point one third of girls who started have left. Lastly, report suggest that substantial improvement in schooling environment in rural Pakistan is required if universal primary completion is to be achieved by 2015.

**Mehta (2007)** has made a study on student flow at primary level based on District Information System for Education (DISE) data 2004-05 and 2005-06. It is said that this was the first attempt to analyze the indicators of internal efficiency covering the entire Indian nation. This report has provided insights into regional variations in the performance of primary schools. The report also acquires further significance in providing baseline performance indicators for the purpose of monitoring the third component of UEE in India i.e. universal retention. This study has attempted to develop important reference material for both research scholars and those who are engaged in planning and management of elementary education in India. The report talks about the programmes initiated to achieve the goal of UEE including Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), which is the most recent one. The main objectives of SSA are:

- All children are enrolled in school by 2005;
- All children complete five years of primary schooling by 2007;
- All children complete eight years of elementary schooling by 2010;
- Focus on elementary education of satisfactory quality with emphasis on education for life;
- Bridge all gender and social category gaps at primary stage by 2007 and at elementary education level by 2010; and
- Universal retention by 2010.

As reported by this study, the average dropout rate in primary grades in India is 9.96 percent and in many States, dropout rate in grade 1 is noted to be alarmingly high, which needs careful examination to be followed with appropriate remedial strategies.


.... Review of Literature

In a case study of school dropout in Meghalaya, Subudhi (2007) has reported that the dropout rate at the elementary level in India continues to be alarmingly high and this is disproportionately higher among girls, scheduled castes, and scheduled tribes. The problem is more alarming in the rural areas where there is low rate of literacy and backward socio-economic conditions. On the basis of the information collected from parents, teachers and dropout children, it is stated that there are many causes of school dropout like distance to school, poverty, illiteracy and unawareness of parents, jhum cultivation, inconvenient transportation, and large family size, need of children for work in farming, unhygienic and unhealthy atmosphere, and unattractive school facilities.

Bhattacharya (2008) has examined primary school dropout rate in Eastern Region of India. This study is an attempt to predict the percentage of districts with primary school dropout rate of less than 10 percent. For assessing rate of school dropout in this study, Bhattacharya has used a model based on Beta Binomial distribution. It is found that, despite extensive efforts made by the Government by India for the spread of primary education, the incidence of dropout remains high. Therefore, in order to ensure that a large number of districts record less than 0 percent dropout in primary education, Bhattacharya has pointed out an immediate need to review policy initiatives and reformulate appropriate strategies.

Recently, Jain, Lakshmi (2008) attempted to explore the diverse historical demographical, socio-psychological, educational as well as economic dimensions of women education. In this study, Jain says that the school dropout is a potent waste of human resources. It is stated that a large number of students are being faced to abandon studies at the primary school level to help augment their family incomes and look after household tasks. The efficiency of an education system is determined not only by enrolling more and more children but also by ensuring their retention in the system. Despite increase in outreach and coverage, the education system in India is characterized by the persistence of high dropouts. This not only erodes the gain from extended coverage but also leads to wastage of scarce resources. This also creates a sense of detachment from education among the dropouts and some of them become cynical about the value of education. It is generally held by illiterate people, that once a child remains in a school for a few years, he/she becomes unfit for agricultural work. In addition, poverty, gainful employment of children, and engagement of children in domestic work are also attributed to non-enrolment as well as heavy dropouts. As reported by this study, poverty continues to be the main reason for
children’s avoidance of school. While low income is the leading factor causing dropout from school, the educational level of the family members is also a crucial variable that has the most consistence relationship with the dropout behavior of girls in the family. The indirect cost in terms of the earnings foregone seems of some significance to the extent a sizeable number of household mention need to supplement family income as a reason for dropout and irregularity in attendance. Most of the dropout children are girls, who drop out also because they are needed to look after household work including care of younger brothers and sisters. This study has shown that apart from good physical facilities in school, the provision of teaching aids to make the instructions interesting and the scope for out of classroom activities tend to have a significant impact on raising attendance in and reducing dropout from school.

❖ RESUME OF REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Nepal does not have a very long history of formal primary education. The first formal primary schools, called Bhasha Pathashalas, were introduced by a Rana Prime minister in the year 1901. However, the growth of primary education was quite limited in scale prior to the political change of 1951. When the country ushered into a democratic era in 1951, there were only 321 primary schools in Nepal, enrolling 8,500 students.

Immediately after the political change of 1951, there was huge public demand for schools across the country. While the Government responded by opening many more schools, people also began to establish schools even without regular government support. The Nepal National Educational Planning Commission (NEPC), formed in 1954, was the first attempt to establish a national system of primary education in the country. This was followed by a number of other commissions and plans over the years such as ARNEC, 1961, NESP, 1971, NEC, 1992, and HLNEC, 1998. Over the years, many primary education development projects and programmes have been implemented in the country with increased financial and technical support from many and diverse donor agencies. Nepal has also complied with the Eighth Millennium Goal (MDG) adopted by the UN system which seeks to "ensure that by 2015 AD, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of Primary school (UNDP, 2000). A national action plan for this purpose has been prepared and implemented by the Government of Nepal.

Official statistics show that Nepal has recorded a tremendous growth in primary education. As compared to 1951, the number of schools, teachers, and students, and enrolment ratios of primary school age children have grown many folds.
A huge amount of funds has already been spent for the development of primary education. However, the attainment of the goal of the universal primary education (UPE) still faces many formidable challenges. On the one hand, more than 10 percent of the primary school age children, mostly the children belonging to remote places and disadvantaged socio-economic groups, are yet outside the school system, while, on the other, the primary education shows serious systemic inefficiencies as evident in huge grade repetition, high dropout, and low retention of enrolled children in school. The poor quality of education particularly in public primary schools is a matter of great concern.

As shown by the studies made in Nepal and in the neighbouring countries reviewed above, there are many causes of poor quality in public primary education system. The more prominent of these are inappropriate curriculum, poorly trained and demotivated teachers, lack of physical facilities, learning materials, and child-friendly environment at school, and weak management and leadership in primary schools. Likewise, the review of studies shows that the factors behind high dropout and low retention in primary education are many and diverse. Some of these are school-related while some others are related with the families the dropout students come from. Likewise, there are many causes of dropout related with students themselves as there are also the determinants of dropout in the neighbourhood and the community. The most prominent school-related causes of dropout are found in irrelevant or over-loaded curriculum, lowly trained and highly demotivated teachers, unattractive physical, academic and social environment at school, lack of contributive parent-teacher interactions and relationships, and many other factors as teachers’ absenteeism, poor management and leadership, discrimination against students from backward backgrounds, etc. The most critical family-related factors of student dropout are household poverty requiring children more at work than at school, children’s heavy preoccupation in housework particularly among the girls, high opportunity costs of children’s schooling, and parental unawareness of the value of education. Likewise, prolonged sickness, irregular attendance, poor achievement, grade repetition or failure, lack of encouragement at home and the neighborhood are the major student-related causes of dropout. Similarly, community’s attitude of indifference towards the school where their children study has also weakened parent-teacher contact and encouraged dropout.

A summary of the factors that influence the incidence of dropout and retention and the quality of school in primary education is presented in Chart II.1.
Review of Literature

Chart II.1
Factors Causing Dropout of Primary School Children

Family Related Factors
- Household poverty
- Household/Domestic Chores
- Economic hardship of family
- Economic value of Children
- High opportunity cost of children
- Engage in wage labour
- Lack of money to pay school expenses
- Illiteracy of parents (father/Mother)
- Poor educational status of family
- Ignorance/negligence of parent.
- Large family size
- Family breakdown
- Migration
- Care of younger siblings
- Parental sickness/illness
- Death of main earner of family
- Parental unawareness of value of Education
- Domestic demand for child labour
- Jhum cultivation
- Lack of encouragement at home

School Related Factors
- Lack of commitment of Teacher
- Inadequate physical and educational facilities
- Ineffective teaching method
- Corporal punishment at school
- Lack of joy-full school environment
- Irregular attendance of child
- Discrimination in school
- Lack of instruction through mother tongue
- Physical distance to school
- Student failure/ Poor performance
- Irrelevant / dull curriculum
- Unsympathetic behaviour of teacher
- Heavy home work
- Poor quality of teaching
- Repeated grade
- Single teacher school
- Boring/hostile school environment
- Inconvenient time of school
- Crowded class

Student Related Factors
- Prolonged illness of children
- Lack of children interest in study
- Early marriage ( specially for girls)
- Late entry in to school
- Poor health conditions of student
- Adverse peer group influence
- Over age
- Bad association
- Absenteeism

Socio-Cultural and Community Related Factors
- Local politics and power dynamics
- Dowry system
- Lack of social demand
- Social habits and Customs
- Social maladjustment
- Lack of community participation in school

DROPOUT CHILDREN
There have been some researchers on these issues in which investigators have tried to explore factors which cause dropouts and are determinants to quality of education. But most of these studies have been conducted in India and other neighbouring countries. Although cultural set of these Asian countries resemble in many aspects yet the causative factors have their own constellations and organizational patterns in a particular culture. Rigorous research attempts are required to analyze these issues in specific frame work of social, economic, political and cultural milieu of a country.

In a nutshell, the review of literature done in this chapter further justifies the significance and timeliness of this study, and also helps to sharpen the focus and study tools development and methods of research of this study.