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**School Improvement Plan, Mirror of Community's Participation**

*Sudarshan Sigdel, Krishana Malla/Rupendehi*

How should school be improved and managed? First, it is necessary to have a dream, not so ambitious but a simple one. It is necessary to have a plan to fulfill the dream. A simple implementable plan! For which School Improvement Plan (SIP) is required. SIP becomes only successful when it is prepared by participation of all school level stakeholders, the implementable plan prepared by small input. This is realized by Department of Education and JICA through the Support for Improvement of School Management Program Phase 2 (SISM2).

The project aims to improve access to and quality of basic education to all through the School Improvement Plan (SIP).

What should be considered for the formulation of better SIP? What are the roles and responsibilities of parents, School Management Committee (SMC), head teacher, teachers, students as well as local communities regarding this? Which methodology should be adopted and how to ensure the participation of all for the formulation? What are the necessities and priorities of a school? What are the roles and support of resource person? SISM2 supports to raise awareness regarding all through workshops. SISM2 has been conducting testing activities in Solukhumbu, Doti, Rupandehi and Jumala Districts. RC level and school level workshops were completed in all these districts. We have got the opportunities to visit Rupendehi and Doti Districts during April, May and June 2014 to observe what types of practice were going on and what changes occurred.

About half dozen of schools were visited in each district and following practices and changes are observed:

**Plan of School from Tiffin to River Embankment**

*Janpriy Secondary School, Devdah-9, Bhaluhi, Rupandehi*

SIP becomes a very useful tool for developing plan for school regardless of whether it is big or small. Janpriya Secondary School near Butwal Municipality is situated along the Bhaluhi River bank. Every year, the river becomes swollen during the rainy season which has been troubling the school. This was the reason why the river embankment should be constructed. Another prioritization which improves learning achievement is smoothly running at the higher secondary level. The school has succeeded to incorporate these plans with prioritization through their SIP. Mr. Keshavraj Sharma Prajuli, the chairperson of SMC expressed that the parents became more aware of their roles and started to unite the community for their active participation with their responsibilities in SIP formulation after the implementation of the SISM2 activity. The school has prepared the strategy to increase learning achievement and pulled out of students from a nearby boarding school at least by 50%. This strategy is also incorporated in SIP.

There are some communities having hand to mouth problem under the catchment of the school. Parents of Gandharva community of Gairigaun Tole are under poverty and their livelihood depended on selling firewood. The school has prepared a plan to provide day tiffin up to Grade 2 students for these children of this community by this educational year. The expense for the tiffin is NRs. 100 per student. The school is collecting support from the capable and interested parents. Mr. Jitu BK, a parent has born the 15 day tiffin expenses. Similarly, Ms. Nani Maiya Pahari will bear one month. She will make commitment to support NRs. 5,000 for the tiffin expenses to the school.

Parents of Janpriya Secondary School are very active, which was observed during the visit. Mr. Gayatri Prasad Kharel, head teacher says the school has succeeded to collect the total sum of NRs. 371,000 with active participation of the parents. According to him, 16 local communities have supported in cash maximally NRs. 100,000 and in kind like a whistle.

Parents are understanding that SIP is not only for release of budget and salary from the government for school, but it is for the participation of all the stakeholders for betterment of school; improving teaching and learning; nutrition support for the children; school development and parents having an affinity for the school; and achieving sustainable development by minimum input.

**Learning Achievement at One Side, Fisheries Another Side**

*Saraswati Secondary School, Rudrapur-4, Bargaduwa, Rupandehi*

This school is located along the highway of Rupendehi District, which has focused on two major activities. The first one is improving learning achievement and the second one is generating the resources. The school has formed 5-membered SIP formation committee and focused on prioritizing and listing different activities. It has made a plan to achieve average learning achievement within the five years which is 43.5% at present. Mr. Krishana Adhikar, head teacher shared that fish firming was an important activity of SIP for the sustainable economic resource management of the school in a long term. He added that school has leased out a part of school ground to the fish firming at the rate of NRs. 60,000 per year. Teachers believe that this fish firming also helps students for the practical knowledge of vocational education.

400 students are studying in this school with the total of 16 staffs including 6 local resource teachers. There is one early child development section at school and no any teacher at secondary level from the government.

What types of changes you found by the SISM2 training? Head teacher, Adhikari answered that a better plan of school was prepared, a financial audit was conducted, and there was no any dues.

Similarly, curriculum and teachers' guidelines are made available as much as possible during the training in a class room by a trained teacher. Mr. Ram Prasad Ghimire, the chairperson of SMC expressed that the SISM2 training was a few days, if the number of training days was increased and conducted, it would have been further supported for the formulation of SIP of school more effectively.

SIP of this school has focused on the utilization of local resources, management of environmental friendly physical facilities such as plantation of trees around the school periphery with priority.

**Rational Changes with View/Understanding of Parents**

*Shree Mahamaya Higher Secondary School, Kerabani, Bhanwanipur, Rupandehi*

This school has been preparing SIP since BS 2058/60 in a traditional way by filling and submitting the format of government with one activity in SIP. But, rational changes were found in perception of all the stakeholders towards SIP after the SISM2 training. According to Mr. Dina nath Aryal, head teacher, a strong feeling of ownership of SIP was evolved among all parents and teachers. They used to understand SIP as just filling data by a teacher and submitting. But he added that the SISM2 training capacitated them for creative planning, it taught that a lot of activities could be conducted without budget and they learnt how to collect resources as a lot of resources are lying at school.

Head teacher, Mr. Aryal expressed that SIP preparation orientation was given to about three dozen people including teachers, students, parents, members of SMC and PTA with the trained teacher who have received training from SISM2. SIP formulation committee was formed after that. Mainly, a school plan is prepared with involvement of local community, members of school management committee, PTA, students, parents sitting together at a same place. This occasion developed the system of sharing of problems and taking responsibilities.

**Easy for Prioritization**

*Yugjyoti Secondary School, Devdah-3, Rupandehi*

SMC members and teachers of this school are able to prioritize school activities after the SIP formulation training. Consensus was made which activities could be fulfilled or not after the discussion. The school has given the first priority for a toilet construction and installed of an 18,000 liter-water tank. It was difficult to fulfill the drinking water demand for 1,000 students by a 3,000 liter-water tank.

The students actively participated in the SIP formation workshop and putting forward their views and suggestions as well as their needs. Ms. Sandhya Malla and Mr. Suvash Bagle, students of Class-10 demanded for the improvement of physical infrastructure and more playing materials when they were asked for requirement of students during the SIP formation workshop.

Who prepares SIP? It s a common question, but very few people give attention. Generally, a head teacher or a teacher fills information in the format provided by District Education Office. It is the tradition of school. But, remarkable changes were observed after the training organized by the SISM2 activity. The school has prepared an annual work plan in more systematic by applying a picture. This working plan was found at Bhagdari Promary School, Mainhiya, Rependehi District. Mr. Sahaban Ali, a student of Class-4 demonstrated the school's annual working plan in front of the journalist.

At the present, not only information is filled in SIP, but also it is prepared with the involvement of all school stakeholders like teachers, members of SMC, PTA, students and community members. 5 to 7 members of the SIP formulation committee are formed for this. SIP is prepared for five year by this committee and annually updated too.

**View Box (left side at middle)**

**School Can Identify Resources**

*Thaneswor Gyawali, Assistant District Education Officer, DEO, Rupendehi*

Schools have started identification and collection of resources. Local participation should be necessary for implementation of the plan prepared by the school. Monitoring system should be developed to verify whether the SIP is a realistic plan or not.

**Support Should Be Based on SIP**

*Hari Prasad Gyawali, School Supervisor, DEO, Rupendehi*

It is a good aspect that educational quality can be improved through the school program. It is easy to implement the program if a simple and practical plan is developed. The program and activities should be provided to the school based on the SIP. If the school funds are released based on the SIP, it will be sustainable and effective.

**More Need of Capacity Enhancement**

*Narayan Prasad Paudyal, School Supervisor, Rudrapur Resource Centre, Rupendehi*

Participants of the SIP formulation training should give sufficient time with good aptitude. As the local capacity was enhanced regarding SIP formulation, it supports the implementation.

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**Mothers are enthusiastic to go to school**

*Education reporter, Maihiya, Rupandehi*

Ms. Mina Rahghar, an guardian (Mother) rushed to school along with 6 - 7 women after knowing that a monitoring team was visiting the school. Although she is not a member of any committee, she always has concerns about the school. She has two sons, out of which one has passed Class-5 and the other is studying at this school. Mina said that the SIP workshop has changed the belief of the community, and realized that the parents should involve in SIP process.

Similarly, Ms. Amrita Chaudhari, the head teacher of the school consults to parents whenever there are some problems at the school so as parents are always ready for the solution. The parents of Bhagdari Primary School of Mainahiya, Rupandehi District take great concerns towards the school. The workshop and the training of SIP formulation revitalized the SMC and formed a draft committee with 7 members. The committee held a regular meeting and discussed on school governance, fund allocation and its mobilization. As a result, the parents become more accountable towards the school and have strong feeling of ownership of the school. The community people raised funds for the school by selling wheat they have grown.

Mr. Chingat Tharu, the SMC chairperson, told that the parents monitored the teaching learning process whether teacher taught lessons properly or not. He added that the guardians regularly visited the school, and he even visited the school twice a day.

In fact, Mr. Malahu Kurmi, Ms. Ayodhya Tharu and Mr. Pradip Jaysawal along with other guardians were there at the school when the reporters visited the school. Interesting things are that mothers from the village are always ready to solve problems of the school. Mr. Shyma Lal Talwar, a parent said that 50 % of the participants was female in the SIP formulation workshop.

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**"SISM2 Enhances Participation"**

*Anooj Luintel /Doti*

In general, community schools prepare their plans i.e., School Improvement Plan (SIP) for 5 years. SIP is prepared as per the needs of the school. But it is noticed conventionally that SIP is prepared by head teacher with support from a teacher just to follow the process. In these circumstances, SISM2 has provided technical support to bring active participation of all stakeholders in formulation of SIP.

The successful result of SISM1 came from Rasuwa and Dhading as the pilot project districts. After that, it is expanded to Solukhumbu, Rupandehi, Jumla and Doti under SISM2. "SISM2 is trying to ensure active participation of parents. Although the chairperson of the School Management Committee (SMC) who is representing the parents was unable to give full time, he showed an interest in a new way of formulating SIP" said by Mr. Bishnu Bahadur Majhi, Ex RP of Dilpeshwor Higher Secondary School Resource Centre, Dipayal.

The students also realized that they had a big role in preparation of SIP. Mr. Majhi further added that all stakeholders of the school had to actively participate in preparation of SIP. He believes that the training and skill provided by SISM2 help in formulation of SIP and they are optimistic for developing SIP. He is quite sure that their SIP will improve the school.

Ms. Geeta Joshi, head teacher of Padma Public Muktinarayan Higher Secondary School has learnt many things from the training and workshop conducted by SISM2. In the past, it is prepared by head teacher only, but nowadays all stakeholders such as students, teachers, and parents are involved actively in SIP formulation. She realized that all stakeholders were very much concerned about the quality of education for their children. She is one of the committee members to prepare the SIP by the 1st half of June and submited to DEO accordingly. Indeed, SISM2 has played a pivotal role in spreading the message that was not only to the head teacher responsible for SIP formulation, but also an equal role of all stakeholders reflected by Mr. Shantosh Bohara, SMC chairperson. He further added, before SISM2 everybody thought that SIP formulation was responsibility of head teacher only, but that thinking was totally changed at the present.

It is realized that SIP is for implementation at school, not just for preparing and storing the document. Mr. Krishn Rai, SS of DEO said that the SISM2 made clear to head teacher the concept, its importance and procedures of SIP formulation. They also began to ask by when SIP should be submitted to DEO. Having said that, Mr. Laxmi Raj Ojha added a different opinion that all stakeholders were brought in SIP formulation process, however parents were still passive and not fully aware.

Ministry of Education, GoN has made the decision that the full budget would not be released to school unless and until MoE received SIP. The Mr. Ganesh Bahadur Singh, DEO, Doti planned to prepare SIP of all schools of Doti by the 1st half of May. As per SSRP, he said that principally budget released could be suspended, but it was not implemented properly. In Doti, the DEO is unable to achieve educational development as expected due to minimum school running days, lack of qualified teachers, student's absenteeism.

Radha Krishna Higher Secondary School in Gopghat is in process of completing the SIP. Mr. Harka Bahadur Balayar, SMC chairperson told that SIP would be prepared with active participation of all stakeholders. Earlier, they were unaware of the SIP. They are becoming familiar with SIP as DEO and other institutions providing trainings for this. Thus, participation of the stakeholders such as teachers, parents and students was increased in SIP formulation. Head teacher, Mr. Muralidhar Bhattta said that they have prepared SIP reflecting their school issues and problems. The draft SIP is ready and final SIP will be ready by 1st of June.

*(Supported by Prakash Bam, Journalist from Doti)*

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**New Model of SIP Enhances Learning Achievement**

Mr. Ramdatta Panta, Resource Person of Bhawani HSS, Lusakot, Toleni VDC of Doti District have noticed that the learning achievement of the students have been improved after the formulation of SIP.

At the beginning, it was believed that SIP was formed only for infrastructure development. But this belief is changed at present. He shared that SIP has improved and included student’s activities. For example, Bhawanisthan Secondary School of Saingaun from his RC is the best school as the learning achievement.

According to him, drum is played during pray time, students are participating in different activities, all teachers are regular at school and some SMC members are present at school every day since the morning time.

The school have already developed SIP format. According to the teacher, head counting of the students for the attendance record, regular health checking of the students etc. activities are incorporated in SIP. RP Pant shared that he always encouraged the school to develop low cost or no cost educational materials.

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**What We Have Noticed in Doti**

* Job assign to SMC is good while developing SIP.
* Junk foods are banned at school.
* The “Low or no cost activity” concept is adopted in development of teaching materials.
* The student’s involvement is given priority in SIP formulation process.
* SIP process is known well to all stakeholders.
* SIP is under the process of submission in all 388 schools in Doti

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**Practical Project for School Improvement**

**1) Please make clear on the rational of SISM2**

GoN with the technical assistance of JICA has implemented “the Support for the Improvement of Primary School Management (SISM1) Project” as a pilot project in Dhading and Rasuwa Districts from February 2008 to February 2011. By the study, it was found that SISM1 brought significant improvement in school management in the pilot districts. Building upon this achievement, GoN started SISM2 for the expansion of the model of school management improvement by revitalizing SIP to other districts.

**2) What is the status of the project till now?**

SISM2 is implementing its program to test the SISM model in four districts i.e., Solkumbu, Rupendehi, Jumala and Doti in the first year. The central level trainers’ training on SIP formulation and updating was conducted to improve the community based school management to the 31 officers of MoE, DoE, NCED, CDC, 5 RDO, 3 ETC and 6 districts (Including 2 follow-up districts of Rasuwa and Dhading). SISM2 conducted D-TOT, RC Training and school level workshop on SIP formulation and update strengthening capacity of the district officers, RP, SS, head teacher, SMC members, teachers, parents, students along with development partners. The follow-up and monitoring activities were carried out in Dhading and Rasuwa Districts during this period. In this way, all together about 1,891 community schools in 6 districts are preparing SIP.

**3) What will be the main outcomes of SISM2?**

SISM2’s expected outcomes are to improve access to and quality of basic education to all through the School Improvement Plan (SIP). Refined model to make school management more effective with improved SIP preparing and implementing process is developed. Effective and practical model for training and monitoring mechanism/contents is validated in the target area. Capacity of central and local education authorities to support school management through SIP process is strengthened. In conclusion, learning achievement of students is expected to be improved through SISM2.

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**What is in SISM2?**

* Schools are managed through school improvement plan (SIP) process for improving access to and quality of basic education.
* Updating of SIP Formulation process by targeting 1,200 schools
* Capacity development of major stakeholders through two-day school level workshop
* Provision of formation of 5 to 7 members of SIP committee
* Examples of activities that can be implemented by no or minimum budget are incorporated in "School Level Workshop Facilitation Manual". According to this manual, communities have been encouraged to focus on planning activities.