

JBIC Sector Study

# **Bangladesh**

## **Education Sector Overview**

**Final Report**

**March 2002**

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This report is a product of the study commissioned by Japan Bank for International Cooperation, led by Professor Muzaffer Ahmad and Dr. Manzoor Ahmed as co-leaders with contributions from Bangladeshi researchers. Opinions and judgments made herein, however, do not necessarily reflect views of Japan Bank for International Cooperation.

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## PREFACE

*Education is the basic need for socio-economic transformation and advancement of a country. It is the prime ingredient of human resource development. (Fifth Five Year Plan.)*

Over the last 20 years, Bangladesh has made a significant progress in education. Primary school enrollment increased from 12 million to over 18 million during 1990-1998. Other parts of the education system also made an expansion. However, still one out of every five primary school-age children is out of school, nearly a half of new entrants to primary first grade are not of the official entrance age and of those enrolled, drop-out rate is high. Regional and gender equity issues and educational outcome problems (such as still high illiteracy) add to the challenge. The government, local community and non-governmental organizations are striving to improve the education sector performance with support from external agencies.

This study summarizes the current status, government policies, and progresses made in the Bangladesh's education sector in recent years; identify and explain major issues and constraints in the development of education and factors contributing to the issues; and summarize major activities of non-governmental and foreign donor organizations and main lessons learned.

Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), as one of implementing agencies for Japan's official development aid, is committed to contribute to the poverty reduction and promote welfare of the people living in developing countries. It has been providing assistance to various sectors in Bangladesh mainly to build economic infrastructure. But it also echoes the government of Bangladesh that for the country to unleash their potentials, human development is a high priority task. Good understanding of the Bangladesh education sector will enable JBIC to be better prepared for policy dialogue and more effective assistance to the country's development efforts in collaboration with other development partners. We would be pleased if this report provides useful overview of the education sector in Bangladesh and is read by wide range of stakeholders.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The study on the overview was undertaken under the auspices of the Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC). The outline of the report was suggested by Kazuhiro Yoshida on behalf of JBIC. He also provided helpful comments on the initial draft. As a study based on secondary sources, it depended on a large body of published and unpublished work. The report drew on recent research and studies with which team members were associated. Relevant information and data were collected from concerned government agencies. World Bank's three volume Education Sector Review for Bangladesh published in 2000 was a starting point for presentation on a number of issues. Consultation was undertaken with knowledgeable people on specific topics. The Team gratefully acknowledges its debt to all of these sources of help. The Co-Leaders, however, remain responsible for the content.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	: Asian Development Bank
ADP	: Annual Development Programme
AS	: Assistant Secretary
ATEO	: Assistant Thana Education Officer (Renamed as Assistant Upazila Education Officer)
AUEO	: Assistant Upazila Education Officer
BANBEIS	: Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics
BBS	: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BCAS	: Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies
BED	: Bachelor of Education
BISE	: Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education
BIT	: Bangladesh Institute of Technology
BMET	: Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training
BOU	: Bangladesh Open University
BRAC	: Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (A National NGO)
BUET	: Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology
C in ED	: Certificate in Education
CAMPE	: Campaign for Popular Education (A sectoral coalition of NGOs)
CBA	: Central Bargaining Agency
CIDA	: Canadian International Development Agency
CMC	: Centre Management Committee
CMES	: Centre for Mass Education in Science
CPD	: Centre for Policy Dialogue
CPE	: Compulsory Primary Education
CPEP	: Comprehensive Primary Education Project
DANIDA	: Danish International Development Agency
DFID	: Department for International Development (U.K.)
DIA	: Directorate of Inspection and Audit
DNFE	: Directorate of Non-formal Education
DPE	: Directorate of Primary Education
DPEO	: District Primary Education Officer
DPI	: Directorate of Public Instruction
DS	: Deputy Secretary
DSHE	: Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education
DTE	: Directorate of Technical Education
DU	: Dhaka University
EC	: European Commission
ECCE	: Early Childhood Care and Education
ECED	: Early Childhood Care, Education and Development
ECD	: Early Childhood Development
EFA	: Education For All
ERD	: External Resource Division
ESTEEM	: Effective School Through Enhanced Education Management

FFE	:	Food For Education
FFYP	:	Fifth Five-Year Plan
FREPD	:	Foundation for Research in Education and Participatory Development
FY	:	Financial Year
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
GNP	:	Gross National Product
GOB	:	Government of Bangladesh
GO-NGO	:	Government and Non-governmental Organisations
HDI	:	Human Development Index
HQ	:	Head Quarter
HSC	:	Higher Secondary Certificate
HSEP	:	Higher Secondary Education Project
IDA	:	International Development Association (An affiliate of the World Bank)
IDEAL	:	Intensive District Approach to Education for All
IMED	:	Inspection, Monitoring and Evaluation Division
INFEP	:	Integrated Non-formal Education Program
ICT	:	Information and Communication Technology
IT	:	Information Technology
LDC	:	Least Developed Country
JS	:	Jatiya Shangshad (National Parliament)
LCG	:	Local Consultative Group of Donors
MED	:	Masters of Education
MOE	:	Ministry of Education
NAEM	:	National Academy for Education Management
NANFE	:	National Academy for Non-Formal Education.
NAPE	:	National Academy for Primary Education
NCPME	:	National Council for Primary and Mass Education
NCSDT	:	National Council for Skill Development and Training
NCTB	:	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NEP	:	National Education Policy
NFE	:	Non-Formal education
NGO	:	Non-Government Organization
NU	:	National University
ODA	:	Overseas Development Administration
OPEC	:	Organisation for Petroleum Export Countries
PCC	:	Project Coordination Committee
PEDP	:	Primary Education Development Programme
PLCE	:	Post Literacy and Continuing Education
PMED	:	Primary and Mass Education Division
PPP	:	Purchasing Power Parity
PSPMP	:	Primary School Performance Monitoring Project
PTA	:	Parents Teachers Association
PTI	:	Primary Training Institute
RO	:	Regional Office
SDC	:	Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation
SEDP	:	Secondary Education Development Project
SESDP	:	Secondary Education Sector Development Project

SIDA	: Swedish International Development Agency
SMC	: School Management Committee
SSC	: Secondary school Certificate
TA	: Technical Assistance
TLM	: Total Literacy Movement
TTC	: Technical Training Centre
TTTC	: Technical Teacher Training College
TVET	: Technical and Vocational Education and Training
UCEP	: Under Privileged Children's Education Programme
UGC	: University Grants Commission.
UNDP	: United Nation's Development Program
UNESCO	: United Nation's Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	: United Nations Fund for Population Activities
UNICEF	: United Nations Children's Fund
UP	: Union Parishad ( A local government body)
UPE	: Universal Primary Education
UPL	: University Press Limited
URC	: Upazila Resource Centre
VTE	: Vocational and Technical Education
VTI	: Vocational Training Institute
VTTI	: Vocational Teacher Training Institute
WB	: World Bank

### ***Glossary***

Madrasah : Islamic religious schools. Madrasahs receiving government assistance also teach secular subjects. Different stages of the Madrasah are equivalent to secular education as follows: Ebtedayi-Primary, Dakhil- Secondary (Classes VI-X), Alim- Higher Secondary (Classes XI-XII), Fazil-Bachelors level, Kamil- Masters level.

Thana : A sub-district, renamed as upazila  
 Upazila : A sub-district, previously called Thana  
 Zila : District

### ***Currency***

Taka (Tk.)  
 US \$1 = Tk. 58 (February, 2002); Tk. 45 (February, 1995)

### ***Financial Year***

July 1 – June 30

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## Summary

The report presents an overview of the education sector in Bangladesh based on secondary material. It has been prepared by a team of national consultants. The objectives of this study are to (i) present the current status and government policies in education and progress made in the education sector in recent years; (ii) identify and explain major issues and constraints in the development of education; and (iii) summarize major activities of government, non-governmental organizations and external donor agencies and lessons learned from these regarding future development. It is expected that this review will help Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to be informed about and to assess the constraints, opportunities and choices for possible future support to development in the education sector in Bangladesh.

With 130 million people, Bangladesh is the eighth largest in the world in population. It is also one of the most densely populated countries and endowed with limited natural resources. Bangladesh has to rely, more than most developing countries, on its human resources for progress and prosperity.

The constitution of the Republic provides general directives for formulating the country's development goals, objectives and strategies. The Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002) document identified various strategies for reducing poverty, accelerating growth and building a strong base of human capital. Recent development trends show that the pace of economic growth has picked up, but not enough to make a significant dent on the income poverty situation. Inequality in the rural socio-economic structure appears to be on the rise. While education is seen as an instrument for achieving social and economic goals, per capita annual spending of about \$7.50 on education remains very low. This represents a 2 percent share of public expenditure in GNP, one of the lowest in the world. The structure of education provisions is characterized by discontinuities and disjunctions. The system is managed in a highly centralized manner without the essential involvement of beneficiaries and without accountability to them. Key organizational units of educational management and professional support lack professional capacity and educational decision-making is often without institutionalized professional involvement.

### Education policy

The need for a comprehensive statement of the national education policy has been felt and voiced repeatedly, but this goal has remained elusive. The latest attempt to develop a national education policy is the National Education Policy (NEP 2000) approved by the national Parliament in 2000. With a change of government following national election in October, 2001, the fate of NEP also appears to be uncertain. In the absence of basic educational laws and a comprehensive educational policy in effect, indication of policy choices can be derived from what is reflected in national development plans and programs for education. The current Fifth Five-Year Development Plan (FFYP) provides development priorities, objectives and strategies for the five-year period. The NEP document also, in spite of a degree of uncertainty about implementation of specific provisions in it, is based on consideration of important policy issues by professional circles. The content of the two documents comes closest to government policy statements on various sub-sectors of education.

*Early childhood development and pre-school education.* There is no formally stated government policy on early childhood development and pre-school education. Social demand, fulfilment of state obligation under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and preparation of the post-Dakar National Plan of Action for EFA put increasingly greater pressure on the government to articulate a policy on care and development of the young child from birth to entry into formal education.

*Primary education.* A high priority has been given by the government in the 1990s to the goal of achieving universal primary education. The government's major objectives and policy priorities in the medium term include: (a) rapid progress towards achieving universal access and participation, (b) improving quality of instruction, (c) enhance equity, (d) strengthen management and efficiency, (e) extend duration from the present 5 grades to 8 grades, (f) establish a common system of basic education,

(g) encourage community involvement, and (h) require minimum professional qualifications for teachers.

*Non-formal education.* Non-formal education efforts have been concentrated on literacy activities. It is characterized by a lack of appreciation for a broad vision to meet diverse learning needs of people and build a learning society. The government recognizes the need for post-literacy and continuing education programs in order to help learners consolidate basic skills and use these in improving their lives. Professional circles and external donors have urged the government to initiate a consultative process to help develop a consensus on vision and policy framework for non-formal education in the future.

*Secondary education.* Secondary education, beyond the compulsory stage of primary education, is provided through collaboration of government and non-government providers within a regulatory framework provided by the government. Key objectives and strategies indicated in the Five Year Plan and NEP 2000 include: (a) structural change to merge lower secondary (grades 6-8) with primary education and have a unified stage of secondary education for grades 9 to 12, (b) improve relevance of secondary curriculum, especially, for employment with mid-level skills, (c) strengthening management with decentralization, (d) and expansion of the narrow base of secondary education.

*Vocational and Technical Education.* A comprehensive statement of policy on vocational, occupational and technical education and training does not exist. The Fifth Five-Year Plan and NEP 2000 indicate priorities, but deal mostly with public sector provisions rather than provide for coordinated development and use of skills. Major recommendations include: (a) substantial expansion of enrolment in VTE for post-primary students, (b) involvement of private sector and better links of training with job market, (c) a new vocational stream in general secondary schools, (d) flexible, market-responsive non-formal training outside the structure of secondary education (emphasized in NEP) (d) a rationalized, graded structure of skills, and (e) an autonomous Vocational and Technical Education Council for coordination and standard-setting (also emphasized in NEP).

*Tertiary Education.* As in other areas of the education system, FFYP and NEP 2000 are main sources for government position and thinking on policy issues. FFYP priorities and strategies include: (a) Expanding the base of higher education with better balance among disciplines, (b) Improving quality, enforcing standards and developing centres of excellence, (c) Improving higher education governance and management, and (d) Financing aimed at quality and equity. NEP 2000 proposes a “complete reform” of higher education to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It emphasizes a restructuring of tertiary education programs – increasing the duration of the degree courses, supports expansion of engineering places and greater autonomy for BITs to open new courses, and gives a cautious support to private universities, calling for equivalent standards, curricula, and educational qualifications with public universities.

The policy objectives and priorities of the government reflected in development plans and policy statements, while fairly wide-ranging, do not address sufficiently some key issues which have figured prominently in discussion about educational problems in Bangladesh. Some of these concern the education system in general cutting across sub-sectors; others are specific to sub-sectors. The issues inadequately addressed include: Need for a system-wide view of priorities and policies, decentralization of educational management at all levels, partnership-building among all who can contribute to and benefit from education, and how to achieve “inclusive” education. In specific sub-sectors, some continuing policy concerns include: implications of a common system in primary education, implications of “vocalizing” secondary education, and politicization of educational management, especially, in higher education.

### **Major educational issues**

As the discussion of government education priorities and policies show, the major educational problems of Bangladesh, similar to neighbouring South Asian and other developing countries, can be categorized under the headings of (a) Access and equity, (b) Quality of education including its relevance to the

overarching development concern of poverty alleviation, (c) Governance and management of education, and (d) Adequacy of resources and their effective use.

#### *Access and equity*

Without the benefit of a government policy or position in this area, about 2 million children, out of a total of 9 million in the age-group 3-5 years in 2000, attended some form of preschool classes including unofficial “baby classes” in primary schools and private kindergartens. Access depends on parents’ ability to pay. Gross enrolment in primary education reached 96 percent in 2000; net is estimated to be around 80 percent. Of the enrolled 64 percent completed the five-year cycle. Average attendance in class is reported to be 70 percent. If the estimated numbers of 80 per cent net enrolment and 64 percent completion of the cycle are taken into account, about 49 per cent of the children in the primary age-group still do not participate in a full five-year cycle of primary education. Research indicates non-participation in primary education is related mostly to economic status of the children’s families and poor teaching-learning conditions in the classroom. In the area of non-formal education, the main effort has been in an adult literacy campaign targeting the 11-45 years age group. Some 17 million, or half of the targeted number, evenly divided in gender, have been reached by the program.

Gross enrolment ratio at the lower secondary and secondary stage (age-group 11-15 years) in 1999 was 41 per cent. The rate declines significantly to under 20 percent for the higher secondary stage. Some 80 percent of those completing primary school entered the secondary level. Gender gap has disappeared in general secondary school access. A very limited capacity exists in respect of formal vocational and technical skill training, adding up to around 5 percent of enrolment in post-primary education. With only a quarter of students being females, VTE remains a male domain. Less than 10 percent of students completing higher secondary education have at present access to different types of university programs. Approximately 50 percent of the rest can enter non-university tertiary education, mostly general degree colleges. Under a quarter of the students in universities are girls; in degree colleges the proportion is 35 percent.

Equity in the educational system and its contribution to social mobility and poverty reduction through equal opportunity for the poor in education are major concerns. A system that functions largely as a screening device for entry to the next higher level, and the chances for advancement through the stages dependent on parents’ ability to pay various costs, is essentially inequitable.

#### *Quality of Education*

Quality in educational programs is best reflected in learning achievements of students. It is the outcome of combined effects of a host of factors. These include inherent soundness of program objectives and program designs, adequacy of resources consistent with objectives, internal operations and management of programs, circumstances that affect learners’ ability to participate in learning effectively, and how quality indicators are defined and assessed.

A nationwide sample survey of primary school students completing class five carried out by Education Watch in 2000 showed that 1.6 percent of the children acquired all of 27 basic competencies tested in the survey. Half of the children failed to achieve 60 percent or more of the basic competencies. This finding is consistent with earlier results. Education Watch 1999 reported that under one-third of the children aged 11-12 years performed at a qualifying level in the test of basic competencies. There has been no independent and objective evaluation of internal efficiency and functionality and sustainability of learning outcome of literacy campaigns under non-formal education. There is widespread scepticism about the claimed achievement of 65 per cent literacy rate.

Six out of 100 entrants to secondary education survive to the end of the cycle. The quality challenge is: If 94 percent of those who enter secondary education are not going to have a place in higher education, how can secondary education become relevant for this vast majority who drop out or do not complete secondary education and the 50 percent or so of the completers who cannot go on to institutions of higher education?

The VTE sub-sector, more than any other, is expected to prove its worth by enabling students to cash in the benefits of education and training in the form of employment and income. The main issues in

respect of external effectiveness of VTE are the links of education and training with the job market and its impact on poverty reduction. The lack of links with job market results in poor job placement of graduates. The placement rate is reported to be 60 to 65 percent for TTCs and about 40 percent for VTIs. The impact of public sector VTE on poverty alleviation is minimized in two ways. It is almost exclusively directed at young males who have completed at least grade 8. This rules out those who do not survive in the education system up to grade 9, who are the majority of young people and even a larger majority of the poor. Secondly, failure to diversify its clientele and to make the program more flexible, adaptable to market needs, responsive to local circumstances, and geared to the informal economy means that VTE is failing to help the economically disadvantaged improve their economic status.

No one would dispute that there has been a serious depletion of quality in higher education, in different senses of the term, especially in recent decades; and that it is not caused just by the large growth of the system. The quality differential is reflected in the low percentage of students who obtain high grades/first division. Secondly, it is also seen from the results of examinations given by Public Service Commission for entry into government service and market employability of graduates. The average waiting period for first regular employment has increased from 1 year in the 70s to over 3 years in the 90s. The causes for deteriorating quality include political intrusion in academic management, lack of accountability at all levels, and inadequacy of necessary inputs and resources for maintaining acceptable quality.

#### *Governance and management*

The major issues in governance and management of education, some growing out of historical antecedents and some arising from more recent socio-economic and political developments, concern: (a) perception and practices regarding the role of the government in different levels and sub-sectors of education, (b) excessive centralization and bureaucratic control of the system, (c) poor internal efficiency throughout the system, and (d) an inordinately high degree of intrusion of partisan politics into educational management.

The government directly runs schools, which enrol over 60 percent of the primary school students, and pays 90 percent of staff costs and capital grants to the others. Free textbooks are provided to all of these schools. These public provisions represent a high level of government commitment to basic education. However, government funding brought in its wake the heavy hands of centralized and bureaucratic control. It has also weakened community involvement and ownership in primary education. Ironically, NGO-run non-formal primary education programs do not receive free textbooks or any salary support, although they serve the more disadvantaged children and show better performance than formal schools in respect of learning achievement

There is a broad consensus of professional views regarding a) the need for establishing greater accountability to parents and community for performance of students and teachers, and b) changing the current highly centralized and bureaucratic planning and decision-making in the vast and far-flung system of primary education to a more decentralized, professional expertise-based and participatory management approach.

Over 97 percent of all secondary schools are non-governmental, which are managed by local school managing committees, but receive substantial subvention from the government. In principle, this represents an ideal form of public-private partnership. In practice, the system is highly dysfunctional, manifested in high internal inefficiency indicated by 6 percent student survival rate to the end of the cycle. The most serious obstacles relate to weak management and chronic under-financing. There is inadequate coordination and articulation among at least five main central units sharing management tasks. The units are understaffed and professionally ill-equipped for the complex tasks affecting a large number of institutions, teachers and students. The attitudes and culture of extreme centralization permeate the whole system; so much so that minute and mundane details have to pass through the bureaucratic channels in the Ministry's secretariat before these end up at the desk of the Secretary and then the Minister for final decision.

In non-formal education, the committee structures for coordination and involvement at all levels (from the PMED to the literacy centre) are ineffective. Staff turnover is a serious problem that affects institutionalization of DNFE and raising its professional capacity. The criteria for selection of NGOs as implementing partners are inappropriately applied, leading to a selection of large numbers of ill-equipped organizations. As in other areas of education, high centralization and bureaucratic red-tapes also afflicted NFE. NGOs have been excluded from participation in the literacy campaign, although it is called the Total Literacy Movement.

The public sector management structure for vocational and technical education includes four key components: (a) the Technical Education Board, (b) Directorate of Technical Education, (c) National Council for Skill Development and Training (NCSDT), and (d) Training departments and units of other Ministries and agencies. These components of the organization and management structure for VTE and how they operate show an over-emphasis on the public sector for meeting middle-level skill development objectives, insufficient links with the employment market, little effort to develop public-private partnerships, and an over-centralized management system characterized by weak accountability. Major governance issues in higher education include establishing the balance between autonomy and accountability, giving priority to quality standards with mechanisms for enforcing them, and removing intrusion of partisan politics from academia. The politicization problem appears to thwart all reform initiatives. The Ministry of Education exerts inordinate control over tertiary education, true to the tradition of centralized governance in general. The Ministry, by controlling the purse-string for public universities and both government and non-government colleges (through subvention), gets involved in many decisions formally or informally, which should be or can be internal to each institution.

Professional opinion as well as the Local Consultative Group of Donors in education have stressed the importance of re-defining the role at various levels of government and the relationship between government and the non-government actors in education. It has been emphasized that the role of the central government needs to change vis-à-vis the lower level of administrative authorities, in the direction of less direct administration and more policy planning, information analysis, standard setting and system evaluation. They have also underscored the need for greater accountability regarding performance and results, by empowering communities and parents to hold schools accountable.

#### *Adequacy and use of resources*

Several key features of education financing in Bangladesh – mobilization of resources and their use – stand out. It is a low-cost and low-yield system. Educational financing is heavily dependent on public sector allocations. At the same time, significant household contribution is ignored in financing strategy. There is a serious mismatch between financing and objectives regarding quality, size and relevance of services. Total national education expenditure, especially public budget allocation, has to increase substantially in the medium term to meet national goals and priorities regarding expansion and quality improvement in education. However, increased expenditure is not enough, because additional resources alone will not yield the expected gains in respect of quality, unless existing weaknesses both in educational management and pedagogy are remedied. An incremental approach, rather than re-examining premises and customary practices, dominates the budget process.

There has been a shift in financing in proportional terms from primary to secondary education, which raises the issue of adequacy of resources for quality assurance at different levels. Staff compensation uses up almost all of operating budgets, starving out other essential inputs for quality. There is a relatively high cost incurred for what is regarded as incentive for participation in the form of stipends, free tuition and food-for-education ( now replaced by cash payment), raising the issues of their educational efficacy and sustainability. Finally, inequity in incidence of costs and benefits of education, especially in respect of vocational-technical and tertiary education, is a continuing concern.

#### **Responses and Lessons**

The government responses to the issues discussed above are considered in terms of interventions - as indicated by government resource allocation and major development projects undertaken with donor assistance.

### *Primary education*

Salient points about lessons based on the multi-purpose and multi-donor Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) experience in relation to issues raised include:

- a. A comprehensive and unified approach embracing the key elements of the sub-system is needed to achieve results in respect of major objectives of the development program, viz., greater access and equity, quality improvement reflected in learning achievement, strengthening management and accountability and capacity building in the constituent parts of the sub-sector.
- b. The contribution that NGOs can make, especially to reach and serve the populations who continue to be left out or neglected in the formal system, should be an integral part of the comprehensive approach to improving access and quality of primary education.
- c. The effort to improve quality of instruction, the dominant concern in primary education development, needs to be focused on outcome, critically examining the relationships between inputs and processes to measurable learning achievements of students.
- d. The District and the Upazila should become the pivotal tiers for planning and managing access, equity and quality improvement support to schools. This can happen when the tasks at these levels are clearly defined and linked to quality improvement and related objectives and their resources and capacities are enhanced for that purpose.
- e. An institutionalized process of decision-making with professional personnel leading the process in policy implementation and management need to be developed, with a simultaneous effort to strengthen professional capacities.
- f. The purpose of primary education and the teaching-learning model for it need to be re-considered to emphasize innate learning potential of children as well as building the foundation of basic literacy and numeracy skills.

### *Non-formal and mass education*

A synthesis of experience based on the four major public sector NFE projects attempts to draw lessons that would provide direction for future NFE activities. These include:

- a. An integrated and comprehensive approach for literacy and continuing education is the basis for sustainable programs. A “second chance” primary education for adolescents left out from primary education and the link of the second chance programs with skill development and formal education should be a high priority.
- b. The government needs to adopt strategies to ensure effective and meaningful participation of all implementing partners of projects such as NGOs, community organizations and the private sector.
- c. Marginal sections of the population should be targeted with strategies that address their specific needs. These strategies would include adapting program content and design to specific circumstances of the disadvantaged groups, combining education and training with ancillary support, such as links with credit and advice. A similar targeted approach is necessary for girls and women.
- d. Quality norms reflecting learning outcomes must be established and applied. A “culture of quality” needs to be promoted.
- e. Management of literacy and continuing education activities needs to be decentralized enough to make them responsive to local conditions and accountable to the community.
- f. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems with well-defined indicators and base-line data should be established from the outset to achieve literacy and other NFE outcome.
- g. A comprehensive institution-building plan based on institutional analysis of the major entities, such as, DNFE, the proposed Academy for Non-formal Education, and NGOs as implementation partners, is essential for building capacity of institutions.



- h. NFE in Bangladesh should contribute to building the learning society (where people throughout life participate and benefit from widely available learning opportunities) and the learning community (where creating abundant and relevant learning opportunities for people of all ages is a high community priority). A policy framework should help translate such a vision into implementable programs and actions.

#### *Secondary education*

- a. *Relevance.* A major emphasis in the reform in secondary education has to be on making the learning content and objectives relevant to the large majority of students who may not complete the full cycle up to 12<sup>th</sup> grade and even a larger majority who do not go on to formal tertiary education.
- b. *Equity.* Pronounced inequity in secondary education and its magnified effect in tertiary education and for opportunities in life needs to be addressed by greater equality in inputs among types of schools and general improvement in quality of instruction in classrooms.
- c. *Need for a holistic approach.* Problems in the sub-sector must be addressed in a holistic manner for reforms to be successful and sustainable. Unless related systems and supporting agencies are reformed in a complementary manner, intended changes will not succeed.
- d. *Need for a longer term view and involvement.* A long-term view needs to be taken to ensure sustainability and impact of government and donor investments. Institutional development, building professional strengths of personnel, and changing habits and mind-sets – all important conditions for sustainable change – take more time than allowed normally in a project.
- e. *Need for decentralization of management.* Another lesson, which is a systemic issue for the whole education sector, is the need to decentralize DSHE operations and increase authority and capacity at the zonal, district and upazila levels for effective planning, monitoring, inspection, audit, and academic supervision to improve the quality of secondary education.
- f. *Strengthening planning, monitoring and financial management.* Planning, monitoring and financial management capacity have to be improved considerably to see results from investments. Decentralization of authority and responsibility will work only with effective functioning of these operations.
- g. *A performance-based subvention system.* The leverage that the government has through subvention on the secondary school system, even though it is largely non-governmental, should be used to bring about necessary changes, especially in respect of learning outcome for students.
- h. *Professional development and specialization.* A long term commitment, extending to a period of at least 10 years, is needed to develop both professional capacities of personnel for key system management and pedagogic improvement functions as well as permanent institutional arrangements for continued professional development and upgrading.
- i. *A focus on results in the classroom and learning outcome.* Development projects need to focus on and monitor output and outcome at the classroom level. Along with attention to learning outcomes, indicators of assessing these outcomes and relating closely the inputs and the process to the outcomes need to be emphasized.
- j. *Institutionalization of interventions.* Components of assistance projects need to be institutionalized and budgets for operation and maintenance need to be provided from the regular budget after project completion. Integrating special project implementation units (PIU) with the regular structure continues to be a problem.

#### *Technical and vocational education*

The government policy and program response has been essentially expansion of VTE with some diversification of courses/programs and the range of skills to be acquired. The lessons from experience include:

- a. *Re-thinking the role of public sector in skill training.* With an emphasis on poverty reduction and greater equality of opportunities in skill development, the public sector policy and programs need to find its spheres of comparative advantages.

- b. *Links with the job market.* More than in any other area, vocational and technical education and training has to be alert and responsive to signals from the job market. This responsiveness requires a change in mindset to move from a focus on supply to attention to demand.
- c. *Impact on poverty reduction by targeting new clientele.* Further diversification of clientele and programs beyond the limited efforts made so far is necessary. Particular attention is needed to those who do not make it to grade 8 or the SSC and ways of supporting skill development in the informal sector through collaboration with NGOs and small entrepreneurs
- d. *Improving efficiency of programs.* Improving efficiency of programs and ensuring better value for money in the public sector would require maintaining quality and credibility of skill training, accountability of each institution for use of the resources, and providing well-targeted government support to non-governmental institutions and organizations.
- e. *Implementing the pragmatic recommendations of NEP 2000.* A number of pragmatic policy measures suggested in NEP 2000 regarding a greater emphasis on non-formal skill training should be given serious consideration. An integrated approach to implementing these should be taken, instead of piece-meal action.
- f. *A long-term policy framework.* It is vitally important to move from *ad hoc* and fragmented responses to emerging problems to a policy and strategy framework as the guide to determining priorities and mutually complementary actions over a period of 10 to 15 years.

### *Tertiary Education*

- a. *Increasing external effectiveness of higher education.* As a sub-sector that represents high public subsidy to a relatively privileged clientele, it is essential that higher education performs the functions expected of it. Measures in this respect will include making higher education planning responsive to market signals, an integrated approach for development of professional skills and, applying incentives and cost-sharing to relate higher education output to needs of the economy and society.
- b. *More effective governance and management.* Governance and administration in the higher education sub-system including universities, colleges and professional and specialized institutions are in need of a fundamental overhaul. Cautious and gradual steps will be necessary, guided by an overall vision of change over a decade or longer.
- c. *A strategy of development encompassing public and private institutions.* The private universities, professional colleges and other institutions should be regarded as important and valuable components of the national higher education network. Government policies and strategies need to encourage and facilitate their development and promote complementarity with public institutions.
- d. *Investing resources in new technologies.* A high priority should be given and resources invested for taking advantage of new information and communication technologies for making learning resources available, improving quality of instruction, and increasing flexibility of academic offerings in higher education institutions. Easy internet access should be the norm.
- e. *Resource constraint, quality and equity.* Adequate resources for quality assurance must be a central concern in future development of higher education. Expansion of capacity should be contingent upon availability of necessary resources for acceptable quality, rather than more of the same “low cost low outcome” provisions.
- f. *A long-term and comprehensive vision of higher education.* An overall vision for development of higher education in the next two decades should guide priorities and objectives for development in the sub-sector in the context of a vision for the education system and the nation in the longer term.
- g. *Campus politics and unrest.* Restoring academic autonomy and mission of the university and other higher education institutions without political and government intrusion should be a high priority. The government in cooperation with public leaders and respected citizens has to take the initiative to build a consensus among political parties backed by a strong civil society mobilization on key issues identified in public discussion as necessary for de-politicization of

education.

### *Some Systemic Lessons*

A number of systemic issues have emerged from the present review.

- a. *Increased public resources for education.* The serious under-resourcing of education, below the threshold of per capita expenditure needed at different levels to maintain a minimum acceptable standard of performance, must be overcome by raising substantially public allocation by more than doubling share of GNP for education to 5 percent in five years.
- b. *Greater decentralization at all levels.* Practical steps should be taken to translate the frequent rhetoric about greater decentralization of educational management into reality on a system-wide basis. The responsibility for primary, secondary and general non-formal education should be vested at the district and upazila levels. The move towards decentralization has to be taken initially on a trial basis, with caution and determination.
- c. *Redefining the government role.* A conscious political choice has to be made regarding the balance between direct control of the government for the provision of education services versus a regulatory, standard-setting and overall policy and priority-defining role of the government.
- d. *Production and distribution of textbook.* Government role regarding textbooks should be confined to curriculum development, establishing criteria for evaluating content and standards, approval of books through independent review, and overseeing policy regarding subsidized or free distribution. Production and distribution of textbooks should be transferred to private companies.
- e. *Professionalization of educational management.* A plan needs to be developed with a sense of urgency for developing institutions and a system for professional development of personnel in management, planning, administration and supervision and other specialized technical tasks (such as, curriculum development, assessment of learning, and teacher training).
- f. *A greater voice of stakeholders at all levels.* In the education system, more than in all other social enterprises, the participatory approach, transparency in decision-making and a high degree of accountability should become the norm. Students, teachers, parents, community, and employers of graduates should be involved in appropriate ways at institutional and system levels in policy development, broader management decisions, and evaluation of performance.
- g. *Organizational structure for a systemic view of educational priorities.* Organizational structures and processes need to be developed for linking the purposes and functions of education to the larger imperatives of society. An organizational mechanism that could be considered for this purpose would be a Ministry of Human Resource Development with a broader coordinating and policy-setting role than of the existing Ministry structure. This could be complemented by an independent and permanent National Human Resource Commission, supported by a professional staff, which would be a forum for public discourse, would review system performance, guide government action, and be answerable to the national parliament.

### **Conclusion and Scope for International Cooperation**

In conclusion, various recent discussions about development plans, strategies and outcomes, that have suggested strengths and weaknesses of the Bangladesh society and the economy, are summarized, applying a framework of strength-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) analysis. The characteristics of recent economic growth trends are noted. The mixed record in poverty alleviation and the government's ambivalence about NGO effort in this area are described. The opportunities for relating the education system and its sub-sectors to the goals of growth with equity and the broader aims of human development are recapitulated. Finally, the following areas for international cooperation in educational development have been identified:

*First*, a sector-wide review, collaboratively with government and other national stakeholders, can be undertaken with the intent of identifying gaps and mismatches and their remedies in policies, strategies and programs, especially in relation to equity, efficiency and quality in the education system.

*Second*, support can be provided to piloting models of effective decentralization in a few districts in the sub-sectors of primary, secondary, and general non-formal education through establishing district education authorities and effective functioning of upazila and school level planning and management

*Third*, professional and institutional capacity building can be supported with the development and implementation of a ten-year plan in phases for creating a system and institutions for training and deploying a cadre of professional managers, especially in primary, secondary and non-formal education.

*Fourth*, because of Japan's own excellence in this respect and also because of current deficiencies in TVE including IT education, middle-level skill development at the post-primary stage and for secondary level students is a promising area. A related area is systematic and extensive use of IT for education quality improvement at different levels.

*Fifth*, Capacity development in and support for research linked with development, implementation and assessment of policy would be an important area of cooperation.

*Sixth*, another neglected area is teacher education in which a systemic approach – combining pre-service, in-service and self-learning activities as well as creating necessary conditions and incentives for putting teachers' skills to best use in the classroom - is of vital importance.

*Seventh*, science education remains another area of weakness. An approach that could be taken is to develop a program for improving education in basic sciences at the tertiary level with a follow-up at the secondary and primary levels.

*Eighth*, the area of professional education has not been discussed in this report and that by itself indicates its peripheral existence. How university and specialized institution-based formal programs can be complemented and supplemented by other non-institutional forms of acquiring professional credentials call for studies and a development program.

## A Tabular Summary: Selected Issues, Responses and Lessons

<b>Early Childhood Development and Pre-Primary Education</b>	
<b>Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2m children of 4-5 year old attend infant classes of primary schools, private nurseries, kindergarten and Islamic schools.</li> <li>• All forms of institutions are run on fees and parental contributions.</li> </ul>
<b>Responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad hoc and short-lived interventions by government and NGOs</li> <li>• NEP2000 acknowledges importance of ECD and proposes options for formal preschool courses and public financing support.</li> </ul>
<b>Primary Education</b>	
<b>Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government schools in 2000 served 61% of students (others: registered non-gov. schools:24%, Islamic schools:9% and others:6%), Gov. subventions for 90% of staff costs and capital grants to other formal schools; free textbooks to all formal schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GER: &gt;96% but NER is 80%, the gap due to prevalence of late enrolment</li> <li>• Low efficiency: low attendance (70%) and low completion (2/3) caused by poverty, child labor, and low quality of instruction.</li> <li>• A study is needed on who are out of school, absent and drop out.</li> <li>• Lower access and participation for the disabled and minorities</li> <li>• Half the children failed to achieve 60% or more of basic competencies. [Scores favored non-formal than government school pupils, urban than rural children, no significant difference by gender.]</li> <li>• Low instructional time due to low/irregular attendance of students and teachers</li> <li>• Formal schools are characterized by: no lesson plan, teacher-centered instruction, memorization and rote learning, weak continuous assessment, rare remedial measures and use of teaching aid, late arrival of textbook.</li> <li>• Pre-service trainers and local supervisors (AUEO) in charge of in-service training both have no primary school experiences.</li> <li>• Schools are overcrowded with sanitation and security problems due to lack of adequate resource plan.</li> <li>• Centrally managed system weakens community involvement and ownership.</li> </ul>
<b>Responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Efforts of social mobilization, stipends, recruiting female teachers and Food-For-Education worked for achieving equity (gender and poverty)</li> <li>• Upazila resource centers to bolster in-service training being constructed, but faces problems with physical space, staffing and their unclear roles.</li> <li>• Moving to decentralized district management talked about but no effective steps.</li> <li>• Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-I) - a multi-donor program with multiple projects addresses: Access through social mobilization for demand stimulus, physical facilities and maintenance, community schools for equity; Quality through curriculum, textbooks and teaching aids, Thana/Upazila Resource Centers, upgrading teacher training, training ATEO for academic supervision; and Management through staffing norm and community involvement. A better coordinated PEDP-II preparatory work is under way.</li> </ul>

<b>Lessons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BRAC and other non-formal primary education produce better learning achievements with higher attendance and completion rates, through effective in-service training, regular supervision, measures to compensate for family-related disadvantages.</li> <li>• Parents' involvement in school affairs, a reasonable class size, younger and well- trained teachers and regular supervision lead to better learning outcome.</li> <li>• PEDP-I offers lessons: i) a comprehensive and unified approach is needed rather than basket of overlapping projects to achieve complementarity and synergy; ii) strength of NGOs should be incorporated in the program; iii) coordinated inputs should focus on learning outcomes accompanied by assessment of learning achievement; iv) more cost-effective measures should be geared toward minimizing family-related deficiencies; v) district and Upazila should be focal point for access, equity and quality support to schools, while roles of DPE and PMED be redefined away from direct control; vi) professional capacity is underutilized; and absence of primary education management cadre discourages professional development.</li> </ul>
<b>Non-Formal Education</b>	
<b>Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Government NFE programs mainly through literacy campaign; NGOs offer non-formal primary education and limited skill training for youth.</li> </ul>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official data claim 65% adult literacy, but objective verification of achievement does not exist.</li> <li>• Overly centralized management: DNFE responsible for most of diverse programs; central NFE council/committee not functioning;</li> <li>• High turnover of experienced and trained DNFE staff at center/local.</li> <li>• Criteria of selecting NGOs as implementing agency not properly applied; many contracted NGOs are with weak implementing capacity.</li> </ul>
<b>Responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Total Literacy Movement (TLM), a publicly-run basic literacy program, has reached 17 million of 11-45 aged, but without independent assessment, scepticism about its achievement.</li> <li>• DNFE provided a 2-year basic education to 0.3 m urban working children. High dropout rate (1/3), low completion and passing rate (1/2).</li> <li>• Non-formal primary education programs are mostly provided by NGOs.</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management by separate directorates, absence of legal framework and ad hoc interventions reduce sub-sector effectiveness.</li> <li>• NGOs' contributions to NFE not adequately acknowledged by government.</li> <li>• Needs for opportunities for continued learning and use of acquired skills point to importance of linking NFE to formal education and skills development programs.</li> <li>• An agreed program framework is required that (1) ensures participation of key partners including NGOs, community organizations and private sector; (2) targets marginalized people and women; (3) follows quality norms for learning outcomes; (4) with effective monitoring and evaluation system.</li> </ul>
<b>Secondary Education</b>	
<b>Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 97% of schools run by non-government providers and who receive</li> </ul>

	<p>substantial public funds.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promotion rate from primary-secondary has improved from 60 ('90) to 80% ('97).</li> <li>• GER: 41% ('99) at Lower Secondary &amp; Secondary; &lt; 20% at Higher secondary.</li> </ul>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very high drop out rates (LS+S:21%, HS:52%) and repetition rates (LS+S:10%, HS:15%), leading to survival rate from grade VI to HS Certificate of just 6%.</li> <li>• Though gender gap is closing thanks to incentives, the rural poor, urban slum residents and ethnic minorities are still disadvantaged.</li> <li>• Curriculum oriented toward higher education, not practical skills.</li> <li>• Exams do not test reasoning and analysis but promote rote memorization.</li> <li>• Limited physical capacity, large class size and high student teacher ratio (60:1)</li> <li>• No incentive system to attract good young teachers. A small share of teachers receives professional training; academic supervision is inadequate.</li> <li>• Benefits of new vocational/technical streams in formal school are questionable.</li> <li>• Local managing committees do not work to enforce accountability or raise additional resources.</li> <li>• Implications of proclaimed new 8-year primary education and the integration of Secondary and H-Secondary education not seriously considered.</li> </ul>
<b>Responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADB supported 4 SE projects over the 1990s that strengthened laboratories and teachers for science education; funded stipends for female students; helped curriculum revision; supported reform in evaluation system, textbook, teacher training and strengthening academic supervision.</li> <li>• ADB's new 10-year project is underway that emphasizes management capacity and decentralization.</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Although the 4 projects were successful in increasing inputs, impacts have been limited due to: non-involvement of training institutions during the planning, standardized and inflexible design of intervention and failure to internalize required change, management weakness, absence of systemic reform (of this segmented subsector) and isolated activities that were not accompanied by other necessary change actions to enhance synergy.</li> <li>• These lessons implies future directions toward: a holistic approach, decentralized management, strengthening planning, monitoring and financial management, performance-based subvention(resource allocation), focus on results in the classroom and learning outcome.</li> </ul>

<b>Technical &amp; Vocational Education</b>	
<b>Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intake capacity of VTE institutions too small: some 113 thousand enrolled including vocational courses in secondary education</li> </ul>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeting mostly men above grade 8, majority of age-group are excluded hence limited effect on poverty reduction.</li> <li>• Informal apprenticeship exists, but no detail information is available.</li> <li>• Centrally managed courses do not respond to local business needs nor encourage their participation.</li> <li>• Heavy subsidy versus low exam-passing rate (2/3) and job placement (40-65%).</li> <li>• Overlapping responsibilities, absence of coordination (among e.g. DTE, TEB, non-functioning NCSDT, BMET) and lack of comprehensive skills development policy.</li> </ul>
<b>Responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several donors supported engineering and textile colleges, polytechnics, establishing new polytechnics including one for women.</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need wider private sector participation in policymaking and service delivery for more market-responsive VTE.</li> <li>• Consider targeting the underprivileged (for poverty reduction effect) and support for informal sector through collaboration with NGOs and small businesses.</li> <li>• VTE institutions should be more accountable in resource use and seek ways of generating resources by being responsive to local markets.</li> </ul>
<b>Tertiary Education</b>	
<b>Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• GER: 6% (95)</li> <li>• Of about 0.4m who passed HS exam, universities and colleges (mostly general, fewer professional and mostly non-govt.) absorb 10% and 50% respectively.</li> </ul>
<b>Issues</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplines are skewed toward arts and humanities</li> <li>• General colleges are overcrowded, very low quality.</li> <li>• Only a few institutions and a few departments with quality learning.</li> <li>• Average waiting time for graduates to be employed is 3 years, getting longer.</li> <li>• Teaching staff: recruitment and promotion politicized, not competency - based. Low commitment including moonlighting.</li> <li>• Little emphasis on research, lack of academic supervision, lack of textbooks, reference materials.</li> <li>• Weak institutional accountability: lack of evaluation system, virtual tuition-free public sector discourages community pressure for accountability.</li> <li>• Meagre non-salary recurrent expenditure by public universities.</li> <li>• Excessive involvement of MoE interferes university autonomy and intermediary functions of University Grants Commission.</li> <li>• Weak staff capacity and resources of the National University, an accreditation and regulative body for degree colleges, and of UGC.</li> <li>• Govt. planning further public sector expansion without remedying serious existing problems.</li> </ul>



<b>Responses</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Over a dozen donor-supported sporadic projects built new TE institutions.</li> </ul>
<b>Lessons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to use public resources and modify legal basis to promote effective autonomy and accountability by institutions and limit politicization of management.</li> <li>• Strengthen roles of UGC and the National University.</li> <li>• Take measures for cost-recovery/sharing and enforcing campus discipline.</li> <li>• Use new information and communication technologies to widen learning resources and opportunities and improve quality of instruction.</li> </ul>
<b>Education Finance and Systemic Issues</b>	
<b>Status</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public education spending 2.2% of GDP (FY00), 15% of govt. expenditure, one of the lowest in low-income countries.</li> </ul>
<b>Issues and lessons</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Absence of coherent and comprehensive policy framework with clear priorities.</li> <li>• Low unit costs (\$13/primary pupil, \$16/non-govt secondary student) for low quality.</li> <li>• High public financing (including for non-govt. institutions) without effective regulatory and supervisory systems and without correcting inefficiencies in staffing and management.</li> <li>• Significant household expenditures rising from \$11/ male primary pupil to \$79/female HS student, but not accounted for in finance policies.</li> <li>• Need to increase public education allocation substantially while addressing weakness in education management and teaching-learning processes.</li> <li>• Need to compare cost-effectiveness between massive incentive spending (FFE, stipends) and spending for quality improvement in general.</li> <li>• Public finance, at all levels, is not benefiting the poor equitably, nor used to effectively support quality primary education to serve the poor.</li> <li>• For decentralization to become reality, roles of district/upazila should be clarified, autonomy of professional bodies enhanced and central roles redefined.</li> </ul>

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. Background

Education has been recognized as an investment not only for creating human capital, but also for inducing social change and promoting overall development. This vision of education as a proactive intervention for desired change got grudging recognition over time in development thinking; although, the case for emphasizing labor productivity for creating surplus for investment has been advocated by Adam Smith and others since the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Bangladesh Development Plans followed the constitutional directive principles about education which recognized the responsibility of the state in establishing a uniform, mass oriented universal system of education which would relate education to the needs of society and promote values including patriotism, humanism and an urge to perform in a competitive world without losing compassion and caring virtues.

Bangladesh has come a long way in terms of human development. According to Human Development Report 2000, the Human Development Index (HDI) for Bangladesh has increased from 0.318 in 1975 to 0.461 in 1998. By 2000, adult literacy rate increased from 24 percent in 1970 to 64 percent; and primary education enrolment rate (gross) increased from 54 percent in 1970 to 96 percent. Secondary education enrolment rate increased from 18 percent in 1980 to 25 percent in 1999. Public expenditure on education increased from 1.1 percent of GNP in 1980 to 2.2 percent in 2000. The success, however, is limited in many dimensions. Expected years of schooling of the population remain low, participation in science and technical education remains limited and rapid expansion in enrolment has created issues related to quality, relevance, gender parity beyond the secondary stage, and high dropout rates. The issues of appropriate input, process and output and their relationships are drawing attention of the policymakers and the donors.

Development in the education sector has been strongly supported by the donor community. Donors have given a high priority to primary education and increasing access to it by the girl child. Besides EC countries, multilateral institutions like ADB, WB and UNICEF have helped funding and redefining the orientation of the education sector programs. Japan so far has provided assistance for building economic infrastructure and is yet to get extensively involved in the social sector. Cooperation with external development partners will continue to be a key element in educational progress in Bangladesh.

## 1.2 Objectives

The objectives of this study are as follows:

1. Present the current status, government policies, and progress made in Bangladesh's education sector in recent years;
2. Identify and explain major issues and constraints in the development of education and factors related to the issues; and
3. Summarize major responses to the issues by government, non-governmental

organizations and external donor agencies and main lessons learned.

It is expected that this review will help Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC) to be informed about and to assess the constraints, opportunities and choices for possible future support to development in the education sector in Bangladesh.

### **1.3 Scope**

The Report covers primary, secondary, tertiary, vocational and non-formal education. It discusses government policies as they exist and new policy direction that has emerged in recent years. In doing so, an attempt has been made to place educational effort within the country's overall development strategy with particular emphasis on human poverty reduction. The report places emphasis on the issues of efficiency and effectiveness in the overall context of equity, outcome, relevance and quality. The report looks into the nature and quality of foreign assistance in order to identify issues about making donor assistance an effective tool of support for positive and proactive change.

### **1.4 Methodology**

The report is entirely based on secondary material. The consultants have reviewed the development plans, laws and regulations, available studies and statistical reports. The consultants have interacted with a number of present and retired education sector policy makers and administrators. Active involvement of a dozen researchers professionally engaged in and committed to educational development in Bangladesh has enriched the study and has brought an indigenous professional perspective to the study.

### **1.5 Limitations**

This report is aptly described as an overview of the education sector rather than a sector review, which would usually entail more detailed description and analysis than presented here and would preferably be prepared in close collaboration with responsible government authorities in different sub-sectors. This presentation is primarily descriptive with analysis and judgment incorporated as appropriate. The report does not prescribe a policy package or an investment program, though policy options have been discussed and lessons relevant for developing policies and programs are indicated on the basis of available information.

## **2 DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY AND EDUCATION SYSTEM OVERVIEW**

With 130 million people, Bangladesh is the eighth largest in the world in population. It is also one of the most densely populated countries and endowed with limited natural resources. Bangladesh has to rely, more than most developing countries, on its human resources for progress and prosperity.

### **2.1 Development priorities and education**

The constitution of the Republic provided general directives for formulating the country's development goals, objectives and strategies. Fundamental principles of the state policy, as enshrined in the constitution, vest on the state responsibility of meeting the basic needs of the people through planned economic growth and increase of productivity. The constitution emphasized the importance of provisions for food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care for all citizens of Bangladesh. Furthermore, the constitution notes the right to social security particularly for the disabled, widows, orphans and the unemployed. Thus, Bangladesh's constitutional guidelines aim at raising the quality of life of citizens through access to productive resources, quality health care and education.

The core objectives and development strategies of the Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) are aimed at reducing the poverty level in Bangladesh. The plan also saw educational objectives and strategies as a means to accelerating economic development. The plan emphasized the use of local government institutions to design, formulate and implement development programs and projects. (Government of Bangladesh 1998)

### **2.2 Overall development strategies of the Fifth Plan (1997-2002)**

The Fifth Five Year Plan document identified eight strategies in order to achieve the plan's goals and objectives. These include: (i) poverty alleviation and rural development; (ii) widening and deepening the production and technological base of the rural economy; (iii) expanding public services, such as, primary education and health services. (iv) acceleration of diversified agricultural production with a special focus on oil-seeds, pulses, fruits and vegetables, fish, live stock, poultry and dairy products and high value cash crops; (v) modernization of agriculture through the provision of extension services, training, requisite inputs and credit to farmers; (vi) institutional changes to cope with market forces; (vii) increased irrigation coverage, better water management and variety improvement of rice and wheat; and (viii) developing and maintaining appropriate incentive prices for important agricultural commodities through market mechanism and policy instruments.

### **2.3 Facets of poverty in Bangladesh**

In a broader sense, poverty refers to forms of economic, social and psychological deprivation occurring among people arising from the lack of ownership and access to resources needed for

a minimum level of living. The poverty situation in Bangladesh can be gleaned from the following facts: 147th position of Bangladesh in UNDP Human Development Index in 1998; 47.5 percent and 76.9 percent people income poor and capability poor, respectively; and 50 percent of the rural population living in poverty. The Fifth Five-Year Plan envisaged reduction of poverty from 51 percent to 32 percent (1997-2002). Stark realities of poverty led the government to adopt a “pro-poor” plan for reduction of poverty. The specific objectives of the “pro-poor” plan include human resources development through education and health care, small-scale and informal sector production, increased use of technology, access to resources for the poor through micro-credit, capital formation by the poor, and special attention to the development of the hard-core rural poor.

The key strategies of the plan to achieve the “pro-poor” objectives include increased allocation to social sectors, implementing labor-intensive and new technology-based employment generating projects, allocation of 10 percent of the total public expenditures for reduction of poverty, and production and employment programs for land-less people (with land-holdings up to 1.5 acres).

At the beginning of 2002, the last year of the Fifth Plan, it is obvious that many of the poverty reduction goals for the plan period will not be achieved. The most pronounced shortfall will be in respect of income poverty reduction. However, progress in the broad area of human development (i.e., expansion of human capabilities), emphasized throughout the decade of the 1990s and sustained during the Fifth Plan, has been more encouraging. First, Bangladesh has achieved the demographic transition from a “high-mortality and high-fertility” regime to a “low-mortality-low fertility” regime. Between 1990 and 1997, Bangladesh had an average annual population growth rate of 1.6 percent, compared to the average of 2.1 percent for the low income countries. Second, the pace of reduction in under-five mortality rate has been higher than the average for South Asia and the least developed countries. By 1998, this rate was 94 per thousand live births compared to 106 for South Asia and 162 in LDCs. Third, as noted above, impressive progress has been recorded in expanding enrolment in primary education and improving the adult literacy rate.

The main challenges in respect of the goals of poverty reduction and the broader human development priorities are in three areas. First, it is essential to accelerate and sustain the effort in the income dimension of poverty. The strategies that have failed to lift up almost half of the population from below the poverty line must be re-examined. Second, despite the progress in the broader dimensions of human development, it remains uneven in its reach and deficient in several aspects. The incidence of child malnutrition remains high compared to the developing countries average. Other notable failures are in respect of maternal health, violence against women, and exploitation and trafficking of women and children. Despite somewhat faster progress in income poverty reduction, the urban poor remain more vulnerable than their rural counterparts in respect of various facets of human poverty. Third, the trend of growing social and economic disparity has to be reversed; and the distribution of income and social opportunities have to become more equitable and democratic. Effective investment in human capital – education, health and nutrition – is essential for meeting these challenges. (BIDS 2001, pp. 8-10)

The Fifth Five Year Plan education objectives provided for compulsory primary education for all children, attaining 70 percent literacy rate, introducing functional technical-vocational education with effective linkage with the job market, maintaining regional balance with respect

to educational development, encouraging private sector and community participation in education, expanding management and professional education, and providing cost-effective and merit-based higher education. (For details on objectives and strategies see annex 2.1.) The planners recognise that the medium term development plan has to be seen in the context of a longer term vision. Such a vision for the future does not formally exist. The Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies in cooperation with the World Bank undertook an exercise of projecting the course of development up to the year 2020. ( World Bank and BCAS 1999.) Based on this overall development perspective, a vision for educational development by 2020 was presented in the World Bank’s Education Sector Review for Bangladesh. (Box 2.1)

**Box 2.1**

**A VISION FOR EDUCATION IN 2020**

- A clear vision for education and training in 2020 flows from an overall vision for Bangladesh in twenty years. The benefits of reduced population growth can be foreseen in declining school-age population projections. By 2020 there will be over 5 million fewer children in the primary and lower secondary school (6-13) age group than in 1998. Only in the higher education (18-22) age group increase will be seen (of about 3 million). Bangladesh will have achieved universal primary enrollment by 2010 for primary education with virtually all eligible children attending primary school. By 2020, basic education will have been extended to incorporate classes 6-8.
- Bangladesh by 2020 should have achieved a strong system of non-formal basic education for those previously by-passed by the formal system. The emphasis for non-formal education will shift to continuing education, equivalence programs, life skills and skills for income-generation.
- One of the biggest changes to be seen in education over the next two decades will be the move from an elitist system of general secondary education to a system of mass secondary education. Enrollments at each level of secondary education will have doubled, adding a total 6-7 million additional student places and 120,000 teachers. Equitable distribution of resources and access will have been reached. The content of secondary system will provide relevant and practical preparation for the majority of students for whom it is terminal education.
- For the most part the Government will have gotten itself out of the business of delivering vocational skills training. Employers will have formed an organization to take over the direction, financing and delivery of skills training closely linked to employment opportunities in the formal sector. Instead of providing training directly, the government will concentrate on the functions and activities not easily done by non government providers, such as development of policies, standards, curricula, teaching materials, instructor training and information systems. Public financing of training for the non-formal sector will have expanded substantially, delivered for the most part through cost-sharing arrangements with non-governmental providers.
- Government will have promoted substantial growth in private higher education so that by 2020 at least one-third of university education is provided by private institutions. The Government will have concentrated its resources increasingly in the critical areas for national development that cannot easily be taken up by the private sector, namely, science and technology education, graduate studies and research. In the interest of both equity and resource mobilization, higher education will be financed increasingly through greater cost sharing with beneficiaries, thereby also making it less dependent on public sources. Higher education will also have ended its isolation by establishing better linkages to markets and the world. Information technology will make independent study much more the norm: the general population will have ready access to continuing education or alternative degree programs through the auspices of the Bangladesh Open University. Well before 2020, violence spawned by criminal activities will have been eliminated from campuses.

*Source: Based on World Bank: Education Sector Review, Vol. 1, P. 10-11, 2000*

Facts presented above testify that the government attached a great deal of importance to education in Bangladesh's development and poverty reduction strategies. Public expenditures on education increased more than three-fold from Tk. 16.9 billion to Tk. 52.4 billion from FY1991 to FY1999. The government adopted various programs to attain gender parity in school education. Access to primary and secondary education increased remarkably. In comparison to educational access, quality of education has lagged in terms of inputs, process and outcome.

The development trends show that GDP growth rate (around 5 percent in the latter of the 1990s) has increased but not to an extent to make a dent on income poverty situation. Micro-credit and food assistance programs made moderate contribution to the quality of life. Unfortunately, on the other hand, inequality in the rural socio-economic structure is on the rise. Despite increased allocation, per capita annual spending of about 7.50 on education is still low for achieving quality education.

#### **2.4 Structure of the education system in Bangladesh**

The present education system of Bangladesh may be broadly divided into three major stages, viz. primary, secondary and higher education. Primary education is imparted basically by primary level institutions. Secondary education is imparted by junior secondary/secondary and higher secondary institutions. Higher education is imparted by degree colleges, universities and other higher level institutions for specialized and professional education. Primary education (Grade I-V) and general non-formal education are managed by the Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED), currently under the supervision of the Prime Minister. Other post-primary and tertiary education programs are the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education (MOE) headed by the Minister of Education. The post-primary level of education is divided into four streams in terms of curriculum: general education, madrasah education, technical-vocational education and professional education. Chart A2.2.1 in annex shows the structure of the present education system in Bangladesh.

#### **2.5 Legal Structures of Bangladesh Education**

The celebrated Wood's Educational Dispatch of 1854, resulting from an enquiry about education in India by the Select Committee of the British House of Commons, provided the legal foundation for modern public education in Bengal. A provincial department of education was established and thus began the process of centralization and bureaucratization of education. The enactment of the Bengal Education Code in 1930 was a landmark legislation that created the District School Board as the administrative body for primary education. This act also intended to introduce compulsory, universal primary education, but the implementation of this goal had to wait another six decades.

Since the birth of Bangladesh in 1971, successive Bangladesh governments passed various laws regarding primary education including Primary Schools (Taking Over) Act 1974, the Primary Education Act 1981, Executive Order 1983, and the Compulsory Primary Education Act, 1990. The Act of 1974 provided for free primary education all over the country. The teachers of the schools became central government servants. The Act imposed upon the

government the onus of bringing the primary school system under a centralized administration from the previous district based management. The Act of 1981 made provisions for the establishment of Local Education Authorities at the subdivisions (present district). The Act also provided for school based management and the formation of the school management committee. The Primary Education Act of 1981, however, was not implemented; it was promulgated as a decree by the then military ruler, but was not followed up with necessary administrative steps for implementation. The compulsory primary education act was enacted in 1990 in order to implement the constitutional provision for free, universal and compulsory education. The act empowered the government to undertake legal and administrative measures to implement the CPE act. The whole country was brought under CPE program in 1993.(Hossain 1997)

Secondary education is regulated by the Bengal Education Code of 1930, with subsequent amendments and modernization. This law continues to be the overall legal framework for secondary education. The East Pakistan Intermediate and Secondary Education Ordinance of 1961 spelt out the law regarding establishment of managing committees for secondary schools. Based on this ordinance, regulations were framed at various times on such matters as student fees, admission and registration, and terms of teachers' service. The Public Examinations (Offences) Act of 1980 was passed to ensure orderly conduct of secondary and higher secondary public examinations.

The large majority of the institutions (98 percent) of secondary and higher secondary education are non-governmental. The management is vested in the management committee for each institution. The non-government schools and colleges depend largely on government grants to meet their necessary expenses. At present, 90 percent of the initial basic pay is paid by the government to teachers and non-teaching staff. The remaining 10 percent of the pay plus annual increments are paid by the institutions. The subvention policy covers all types of private institutions; for example, registered non-government primary, secondary, higher secondary, college and madrasah and technical institutions. The subvention policy came into effect in 1980 with payment at that time of 50 percent of basic salary by the government.(FREPD 1999)

The institutions of higher education include a variety of educational enterprises. At present there are 12 public and 16 private teaching universities and over 900 degree colleges in operation. Universities are governed by acts, orders and ordinances. For example, Dhaka University was established through the DU Act of 1920. The act underwent several changes, such as the ordinance of 1961, and Dhaka University Order 1973 and its amendments in 1997. The Order of 1973 revived the concept of autonomy of universities, restored the senate and established the principle of collective leadership of the vice-chancellor in the Syndicate.

In 1992, higher education witnessed enactment of legal frameworks in three vital areas: establishment of private universities, distance education through Open University, control of the college education system through National University. Acts for setting up 12 new universities of science and technology was passed in the Parliament in 2001.



The University Grants Commission serves as an intermediary between the government and universities in respect of financial allocations. It also approves and monitors academic programs of all universities including the private ones.

## **2.6 Management Structure of the Education Sector**

The macro-level management structure of Bangladesh education sector consists of Ministry of Education, Primary and Mass Education Division, Directorates of Education, sixty four District Education offices, and about 500 Thana (now called upazila) Education Offices. Besides, there are staff level educational organizations, which help line organizations to function effectively in order to achieve the goals of education. These organizations include Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB), Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), and National Academy for Education Management (NAEM) etc. These are briefly described below. Charts in annex 2.2 show the overall structure of the education system in Bangladesh and the organograms of various management and administrative bodies of education. (FREPD 199)

### *Ministry of Education*

The Ministry of Education is the apex body for educational administration, management and planning except for primary and adult education. It is responsible for educational planning with the Directorates of Education and the education section of the Planning Commission. The MOE takes the initiative to formulate the national education policy. Functions of MOE include recruitment, selection, promotion, transfer, dismissal and disciplinary actions regarding teachers of the government-run high schools and colleges; selection of teachers for training abroad; preparation and distribution of job descriptions for the educational managers at the directorates down to the district education officers. (Chart A2.2.2)

### *Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED)*

GOB created ministry level Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) in 1992, which was under direct administrative control of the Prime Minister. Normally, a state minister of education remains in-charge of PMED. PMED is the apex administrative structure which determines policy and implements development programs of the primary and general adult education (called mass education or non-formal education) sub-sectors. The administrative head of PMED is a secretary of the government. It has 76 officers and staff. This new division has been entrusted with full responsibility in respect of primary and general non-formal education in order to emphasize the priority of the government to these areas. (Chart A2.2.3)

### *Directorates of Education*

Directorates of Education have key roles in the administration and management of Bangladesh education system. The three directorates described below, in principle, are the bodies where the main responsibilities for implementing policies and managing each sub-sector of education lie. These bodies, staffed with senior professionals also are supposed to play the lead role in initiating and formulating policy changes, although formal administrative and political approval of policies is the MOE and PMED responsibility. In practice, however, there has been an erosion of the authority of the professional personnel and expansion of control of the Ministry civil service cadres over time even in operational matters, much beyond the realms of policy

and overall planning. A carry-over from the past of practices and organizational structures appropriate for a much smaller education system, the bureaucratic culture of a unitary state, and the desire for political control over educational decisions have strengthened this trend.

#### *Directorate of Primary Education (DPE)*

The entire education system excluding universities and most of the professional institutions used to be managed by the Directorate of Public Instruction (DPI). An independent Directorate of Primary Education was established in 1981. This step was taken to strengthen the administrative set-up of Primary education. The Directorate is headed by a Director General with functional sections headed by Directors at the headquarters. In different tiers of administrative units, such as, Division, District and Thana, the directorate has field officers such as Deputy Director, District Primary Education Officer, and Thana Education Officer (now renamed Upazila Education Officer) respectively. Each Thana has a number of Assistant Thana (Upazila) Education officers (ATEOS), each supervising 15-20 schools. The responsibility of construction, repair and supply of furniture has been given to the Facility Department in the Directorate of Primary Education and Local Government Engineering Bureau under the Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. (Chart A2.2.4)

#### *The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education*

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education is responsible for the implementation of government policies and development programs in secondary education. It, however, has limited capacity in sub-sector planning and academic management. The DSHE has 208 administrative and supervisory staff, 40 at the HQ, 40 at the Zonal level and 128 at the district level. It is involved largely in project level planning. It is overburdened with the payment of salary subvention to over 250,000 teachers and employees of the non-government secondary schools and higher secondary institutions. Since January 1994, BANBEIS ( The Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics) has been assisting in subvention payment. (FREPD 1999) The DSHE has also specific responsibility for the enforcement of academic standards of secondary and higher education. It is also involved with the recruitment of teachers and non-teaching employees of the government schools, although decision-making lies with MOE. (Chart A2.2.5)

#### *Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE)*

In line with the government's commitment to Education for All, an Integrated Non-Formal Education Program (INFEP) was initiated in 1991 to address the needs of the illiterate population outside the formal system. INFEP, and subsequently DNFE, supported three different types of NFE Programs:

- (1) Centre-based literacy programs implemented by the government and non-government institutions.
- (2) The Total Literacy Movement (TLM), a "campaign" approach administered by the District Administration.
- (3) Distribution of free primers for literacy activities by philanthropic and voluntary organizations.

In 1996, INFEP was replaced by the Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE). It has a total of 33 officials and a supporting staff of 55 at its headquarters. At the district level, it has 64 district coordinators and a supporting staff of 128. (Chart A2.2.6)

#### *Directorate of Technical Education (DTE)*

The Directorate of Technical Education is responsible for planning, development, coordination and supervision of technical and vocational education under the Ministry of Education. Its main functions are to:

- Assess the needs of skilled manpower at all levels,
- Prepare policy guidelines for the Ministry of Education on consolidation, improvement and expansion of technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and
- Prepare annual budget proposal for the DTE and TVET institutions under its purview and allocate funds from the approved budget.

The Directorate oversees several types of institutions: Technical Teacher Training College (TTTC), Polytechnic and Monotechnic Institutes, Vocational Teacher Training Institute (VTTI), and Vocational Institute. (Chart A2.2.7)

## **2.7. Staff Organizations in Education**

**NCTB:** The National Curriculum and Textbook Board is responsible for developing curricula and publishing textbooks. The management of NCTB includes a chairman and members for Finance, Curriculum Development for primary and secondary schools, and Textbooks (Chart A2.2.9). Its main functions are to:(a) review curricula and introduce changes,(b) evaluate curricula and textbooks, (c) prepare textbook manuscripts;(d) approve textbooks and (e) publish and ensure distribution of textbooks. NCTB produces some 55 million primary textbooks and 26 million secondary textbooks each year. (GOB 1999)

**BISEs:** Six geographically based Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) as well as a separate Madrasah Education Board exist. BISEs are mainly responsible for two functions (1) accreditation of non-government secondary education institutions; and (2) administration of the SSC and HSC examinations. BISEs are autonomous, self-regulating and financed completely from fee income. (Chart A2.2.10)

**NAPE:** The National Academy for Primary Education NAPE has the role of training the Primary Training Institute (PTI) instructors, officials of different levels and conducting PTI examinations and related research activities as an apex training and research institute of primary education. The academy has a director, two deputy directors and eleven specialists. It operates under the supervision of the Director General of Primary Education.

**NAEM:** The National Academy of Education Management (NAEM) is the principal institution for training educational administrators and managers. NAEM has two divisions (a) Management and Administration, (b) Extension Training. Its capacity is about 1,600 trainees per year. Almost half the trainees receive foundation training for civil service positions, and the remainder, mostly heads of institutions, receive management training. Evaluation studies on NAEM show that the training imparted by it has little impact on management changes on the

ground. NAEM plans to re-design its training programs to achieve better results. (WB 2000, Education Sector Review, vol. III)

Educational administration, in general, is characterized by excessive centralization of power and authority in the capital. Administrative reform and restructuring in 1980s and 1990s have the effect of further centralization through the creation of the Primary and Mass Education Division, establishment of a separate Directorate of Non-Formal Education, and setting up of a unified National Curriculum and Textbook Board, because of the way the functions and roles of these bodies have been defined and because of the prevalent bureaucratic culture. The local government units such as districts, thanas and unions essentially have the task of implementing instructions and directives from above and carrying out routine supervision. The educational management philosophy and structure are driven by a preoccupation with exercising control and authority from the top.

## **2.8. Educational Finance in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh spent on average 0.9 percent of its GNP on education during 1973-1980. By 2000, the proportion of education spending rose to 2.2 percent of GNP. (Annex Table A2.3.1)

Bangladesh's successive five year plans allocated 3.54 percent to 7.1 percent to education (Annex Table A2.3.2) Intra-sectoral allocation for education in the fifth five-year plan revealed that primary and mass education received 64.18 percent of the plan allocation followed by 24.24 percent for secondary, madrasah and college education. Universities received only 4.26 percent while technical education received 3.95 percent (Annex Table A2.3.3)

Government expenditure on education consistently increased up to a peak of 2.4 percent in 1995 of GDP, which since then slid down to 2.2 percent in 2000, primarily due to a fall in development expenditure in education. Revenue expenditure increased from 1973-1980 average of 0.63 percent of GDP to 1.37 percent in 2000. Education sector's share in total government expenditures increased from 11.8 percent in FY 1990 to 14.75 percent in FY 2000. From FY 1997 through FY 1999, education sector's share remained stable, at around 15 percent of total government expenditures. (Appendix 4, Tables D15-D17)

Primary, non-formal and secondary education together accounted for 88 and 89 percent of total revenue and development expenditures respectively of the education sector in FY1999, registering an increase over their combined shares of 85 percent and 74 percent of revenue and development expenditures respectively in FY1991. The share of primary education in revenue budget however declined from 48.5 percent in 1991-92 to 39.5 in 1999-00, while secondary education sector's share increased from 36.8 percent to 48.4 percent. (Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review, 2001) Real public spending per student per annum declined in primary education in this period, while the opposite trend can be observed in the case of secondary education.

Technical education received a small share in the revenue budget hovering around 2 percent of total revenue expenditure on education during the nineties. Its share in the development budget fluctuated from 3.3 percent in 1991/1992 to 0.4 percent in 1994/95 and then went up to 5.1 percent in 1999-00. In recent years, an increase reflecting higher priority attached to the sector is being observed.

The share of universities in the revenue budget for education remained around 7-8 percent during the nineties. In terms of allocation of development expenditures to this sector, wide fluctuations were observed, ranging from 10.1 percent in 1991-92 to 0.7 percent in 1994/95 and then up to 5.9 percent in 1999-00.

There is a consensus among professional groups in education that the transformation of 130 million people of Bangladesh into productive human resources needs substantially more investment in education than the current level. Different education commissions and expert opinions have suggested a public sector investment of 5-7 percent of GDP to education compared to around 2 percent at present. A combination of higher budget allocations and external assistance has to be relied upon within the framework of a comprehensive resource mobilization strategy which will include household and other non-government contribution as well as effective public-private partnership.

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## ANNEX A2.1: FFYP OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

<b>Objectives and Strategies of FFYP, Pro-Poor “Plan” of FFYP and Education under FFYP</b>	
<p><b>1. Objectives of the FFYP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alleviation of poverty through accelerated growth (7 percent per annum).</li> <li>• Generation of substantial employment and increased productivity through an optimal choice of traditional labour intensive and new capital intensive technologies.</li> <li>• Improvement in the quality of life of the rural population through mobilisation of the rural masses and channeling of increased invisible resources</li> <li>• Transformation of the rural socio-economic structure into a more equitable, just and productive one.</li> <li>• Attainment of food production beyond the self sufficiency level in the shortest possible time.</li> <li>• Human resources development with emphasis on compulsory primary education and vocational training.</li> <li>• Development of necessary infrastructure, utilities and other services needed promote growth, particularly in the private sector and in the development of rural infrastructure.</li> <li>• Development of industries essentially based on comparative advantage of the country</li> <li>• Development of neglected areas like the North-west region, Chittagong Hill, Tracts and coastal areas.</li> <li>• Achievement of a lower population growth rate (1.32 percent), coupled with provision of necessary health care and improved nutrition of mother and child.</li> <li>• Strengthening of the country’s scientific and technological base with emphasis on research and development of new generation technologies.</li> <li>• Protection and preservation of environment by adequate regulatory regimes and effective institutions.</li> <li>• Closing the gender gap, giving priority to women’s education, training and employment and special support for education of the girl child.</li> <li>• Establishment of social justice through equitable distribution of income, resources and opportunities, and creation of effective safety nets for the socially and economically disadvantaged sections of the population and by strengthening the law and order and the rule of law.</li> <li>• Putting in place effective local government institutions, at the union, thana and zilla levels, and vesting on them the power and responsibilities for design, formulation and implementation of local level development programmes and projects, with active participation of the people belonging to all strata of the rural society as well as through effective co-operation between the local government organisation.</li> </ul>	<p><b>1. Strategies of the FFYP</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poverty alleviation and rural development;</li> <li>• widening and deepening the production and technological base of the rural economy;</li> <li>• expanding public services, such as, primary education, health services and clean water;</li> <li>• Accelerated diversified agricultural production with a special focus on oil-seeds, pulses, fruits and vegetables, eggs, fish, live stock, poultry and dairy products, high value cash crops;</li> <li>• Modernisation of agriculture through the provision of extension services, training, requisite inputs and credit to farmers;</li> <li>• Institutional changes to cope with market forces;</li> <li>• Increased irrigation coverage, better water management and variety improvement of rice and wheat;</li> <li>• Develop and maintain appropriate incentive prices for important agricultural commodities through market mechanism and policy instruments.</li> </ul>

## 2. Objectives of “pro-poor” components FFYP

- Develop democratically elected local govt. bodies with due representations of women.
- Develop human resources with proper education and health care.
- Link the rural people with basic social services and institutions such as education and health.
- Increase gainful income generating activities and employment opportunities on a sustained basis for the rural poor.
- Strengthen small scale and informal sector production.
- .Building organizations for the poor at grass-roots level to enable them identify their problems and make their own development decisions.
- Improve technology and skill as significant elements of human resource development.
- Upgrade technical skills to enable workers to adapt to rapidly changing international conditions
- Access to resources such as micro-credit.
- Raise savings / capital formation by the poor
- Attention to the development of hard-core rural people and poverty depressed rural areas.
- Development of the poor and disadvantaged women and female-headed households along with males.
- Empowerment of the poor through affirmative activities and participation in the local government institutions.
- Efficient delivery system for the poor.
- Review policies and regulations that effect the poor and reform the same.

## 2. Strategies of pro-poor plan

- Human resources development through increased allocation to social sectors. Along with general education, technical education and skill training received special attention. Export oriented industries will be set up in rural areas to pen up employment opportunities.
- Economic development of the poor through designing labor intensive and new technology based employment generating projects. (see table Employment projection for Fifth Plan).
- Targeted production and employment programmes through rural infrastructure building and maintenance.
- More than 10 percent of the total public sector outlay allocated for the reduction of rural poverty putting emphasis on production on farm and non-farm sectors, employment opportunities, human resource development through training.
- Land less people (owning not more than 0.5 acre of land) and small formers owing land up to 1.5 acres will be the target groups under the production and employment programme.
- Education for income generation will be stressed as the key to poverty alleviation.
- A dynamic process of capital accumulation will be adopted (e.g. Grameen Bank’s experience) more resources will be diverted to the poor.
- Successful targeted poverty alleviation projects will be continued and expanded.
- Reform action of safety net programme of Food for works.
- New targeted pro-poor production and employment projects will be taken up. These will include animal husbandry, fisheries, poultry and horticulture.
- Local resources such as govt. Khas land, jal mahals etc. will be made accessible to the poor for productive purposes.
- Nutrition supplement for malnourished children and women in distressed areas.
- Some projects will address the issue of risk insurance.
- Dissemination of available technologies with necessary training.
- NGOs will continue to expand their pro-poor and rural development projects. GOB-NGO Collaboration will be enhanced.
- Comprehensive modernization programme on land administration and revenue system will be undertake.

### **3. Objectives of Education under FFYP**

- About 70 percent literacy rate by the year 2002.
- Formal primary education for all children of the age group 6-10.
- Technical and vocational education at the thana level.
- Foundation of a knowledge based society through upgraded general science, technical and vocational education.
- Make the functional character of technical vocational education and establish effective linkage with the job market.
- Develop universities of all kinds as centers of excellence.
- Maintain regional balance in respect of the development of educational facilities.
- Enhance participation of women in every sphere of education.
- Encourage private sector and community participation in setting up educational institutions.
- Improve management of educational institutions through involvement of local bodies.
- Modernize and improve religious /madrasha education with science and technology.
- Improve physical and health education at primary and secondary the levels.
- Make admission in the higher education merit based and cost affective.
- Expand specialised and professional education and training.

### **3. Strategies of Education under FFYP**

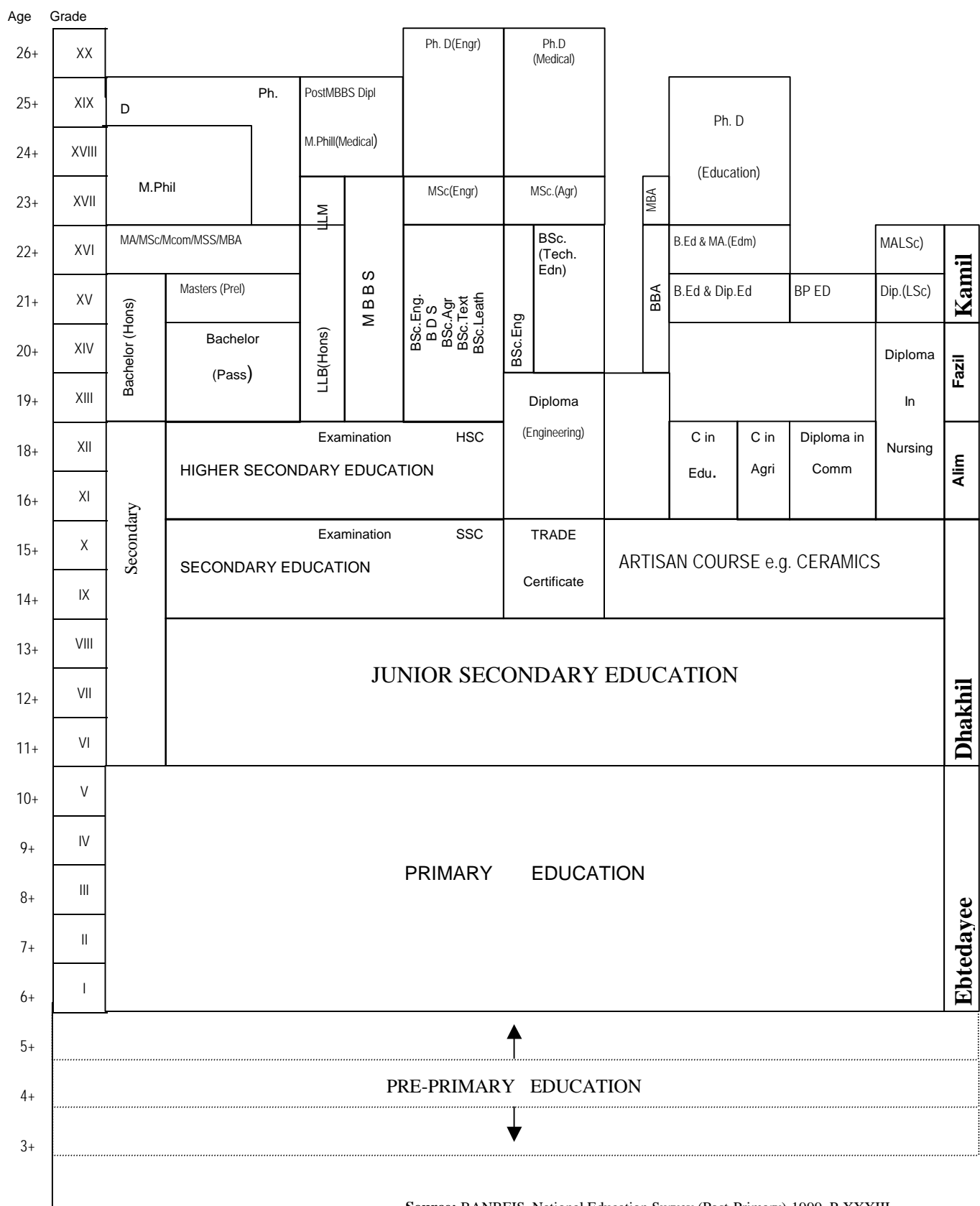
- Compulsory primary education for all
- Mass literacy through effective Total Literacy Movement and role of NGOs will be increased.
- Continuous training for primary and secondary teachers.
- Professional development courses /seminars for the NCTB personnel enabling them to update secondary and higher secondary curricula.
- Management training courses for educational administrators.
- Universities to be developed as fundamental and applied research centers.
- Six new universities for the advancement of science and technology in the country.
- Increased professional education and training programmes including computer be introduced.
- Performance of institutions and teachers will be evaluated and liked to govt.'s financial support.
- Colleges based in the greater districts will have more science and technology course offerings.

Source: Government of Bangladesh, Planning Commission, Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002).



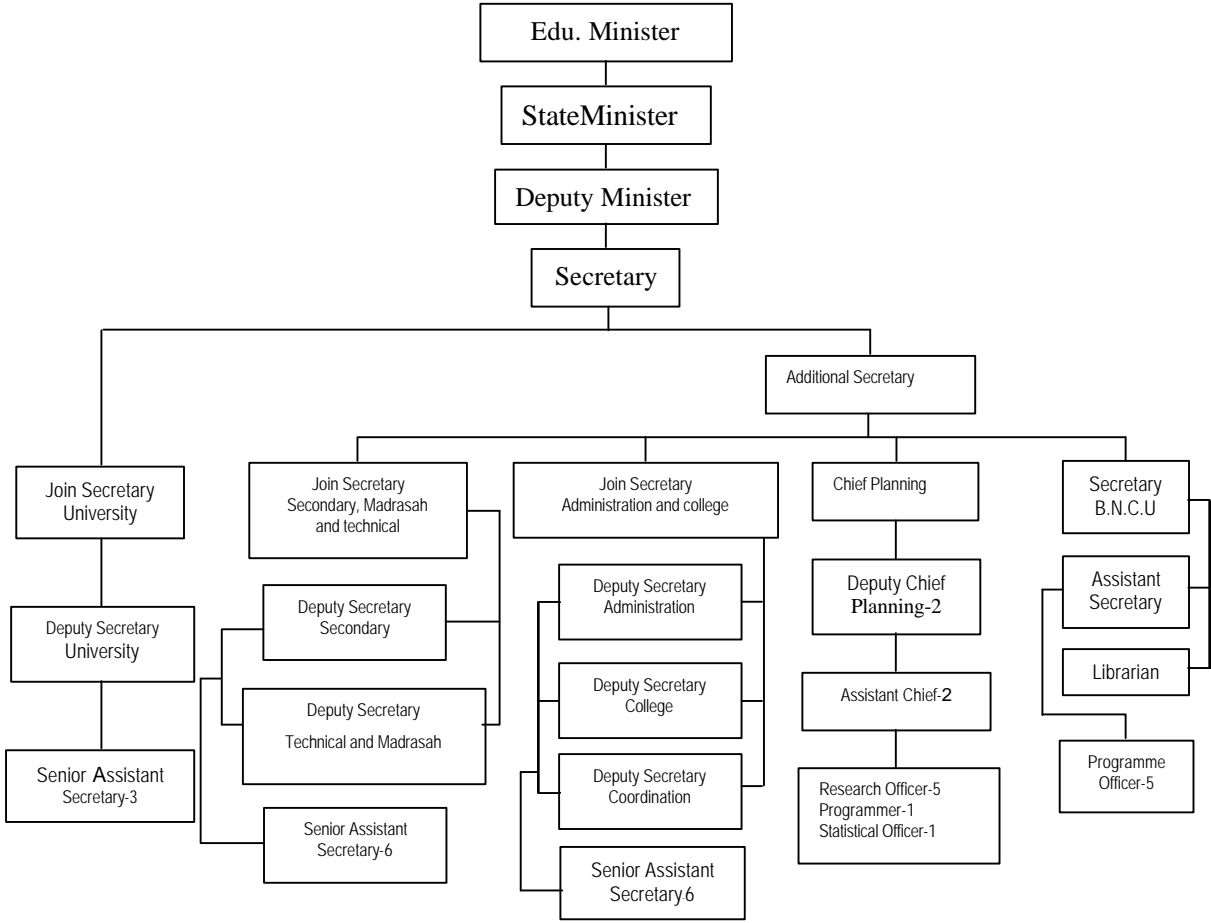
## ANNEX A2.2: ORGANISATION CHARTS (A2.2.1 TO A2.2.10)

### Chart A2.2.1 EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BANGLADESH



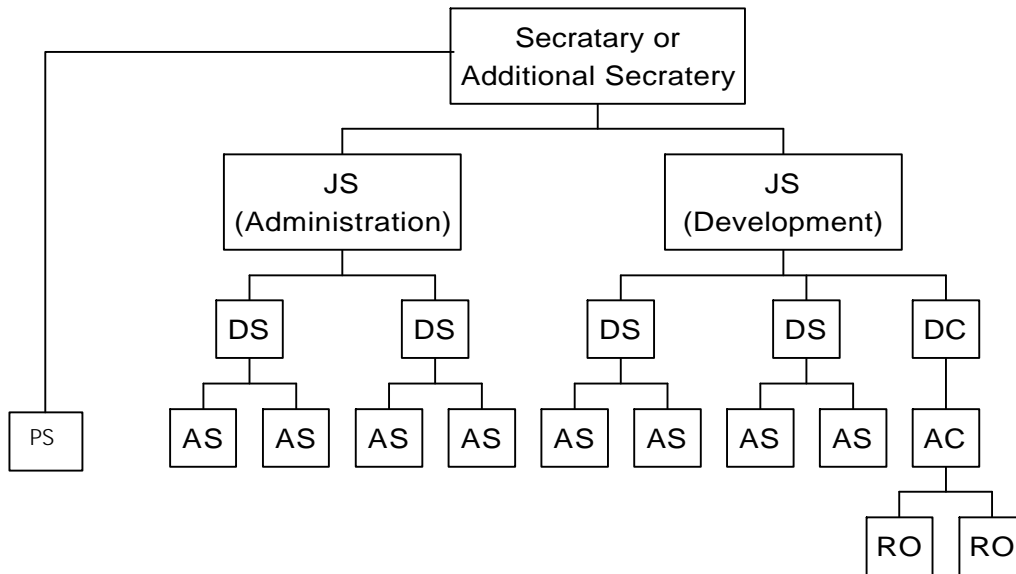
Source: BANBEIS, National Education Survey (Post-Primary)-1999, P-XXXIII

Chart A2.2.2 Organogram of the Ministry of Education



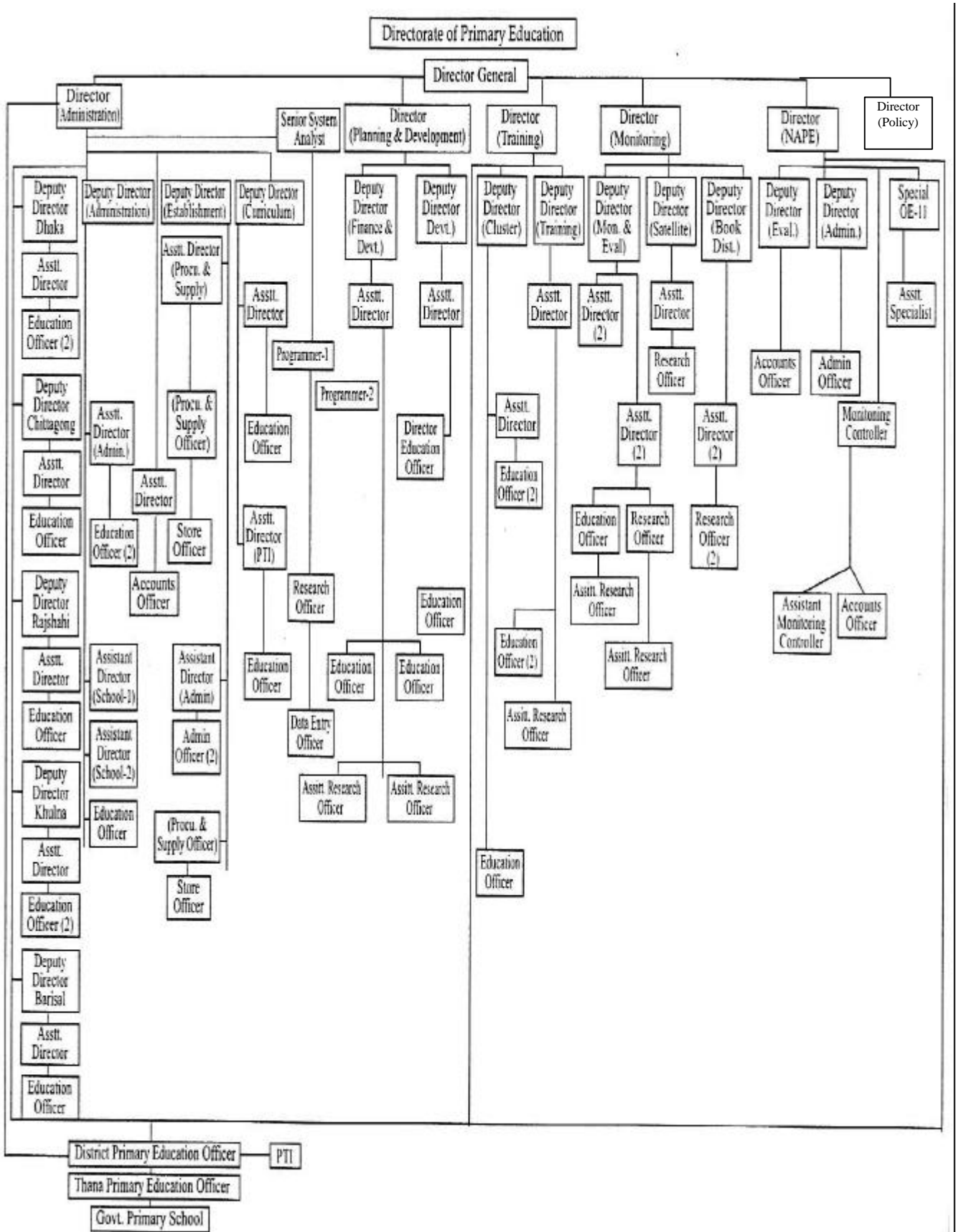
Source: Ministry of Education

**Chart A2.2. 3 ORGANOGRAM OF THE PRIMARY AND MASS EDUCATION DIVISION**

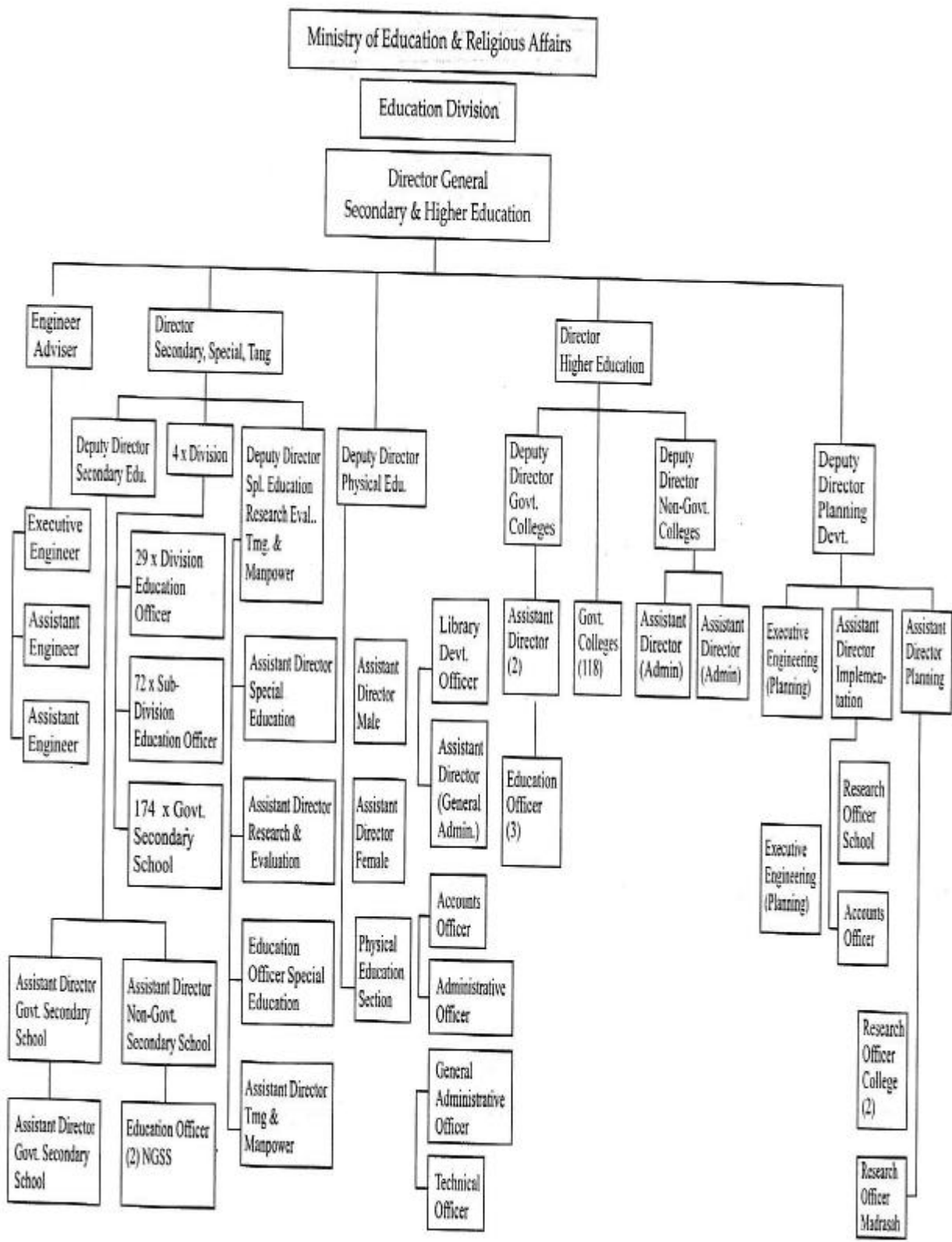


*Source: World Bank, The state of education in Bangladesh 1993 p.76*

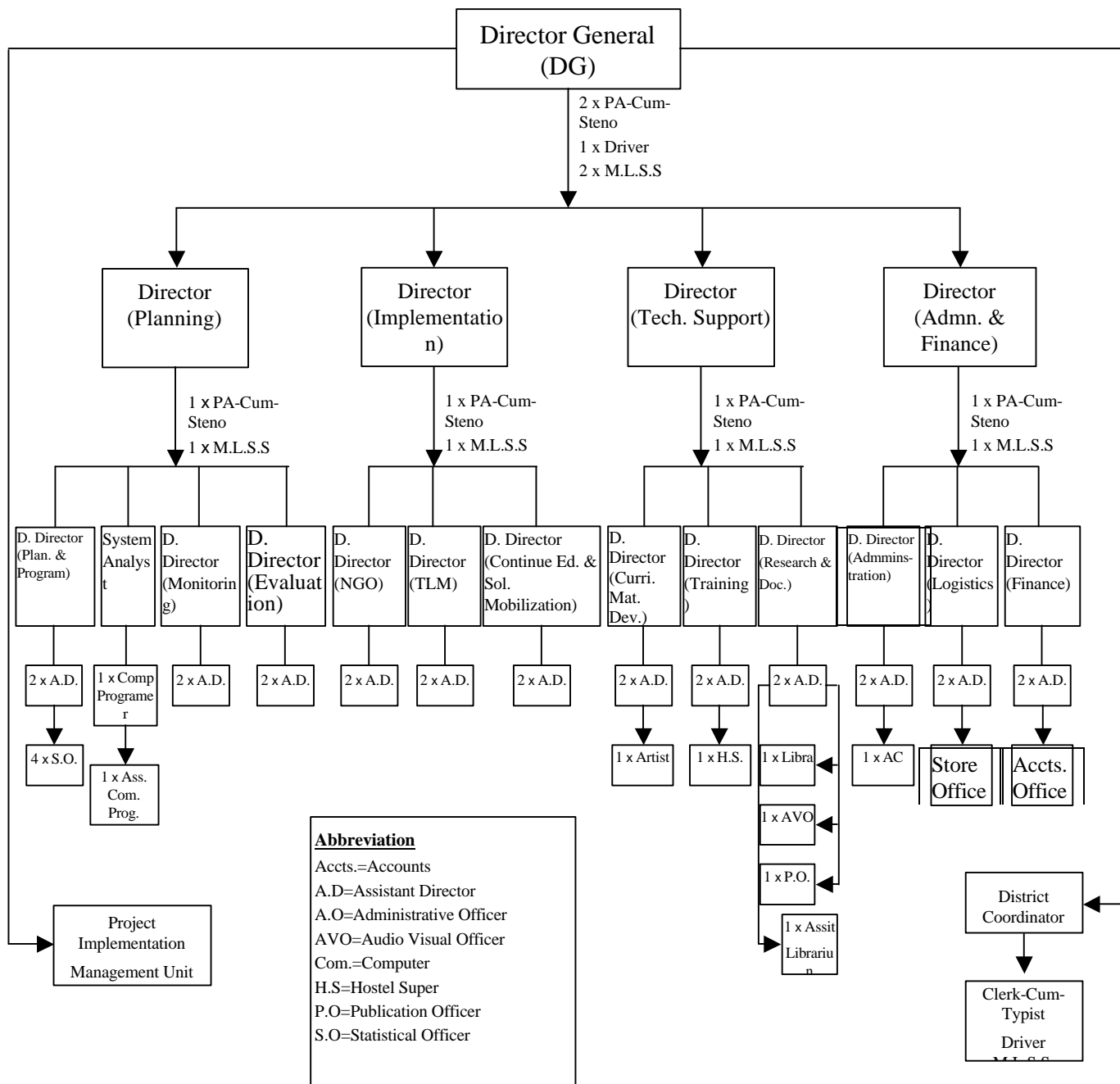
Chart A2.2.4 Organogram of the Management of Primary Education



**Chart A2.2..5 Organogram of the Management of Secondary & Higher Education**

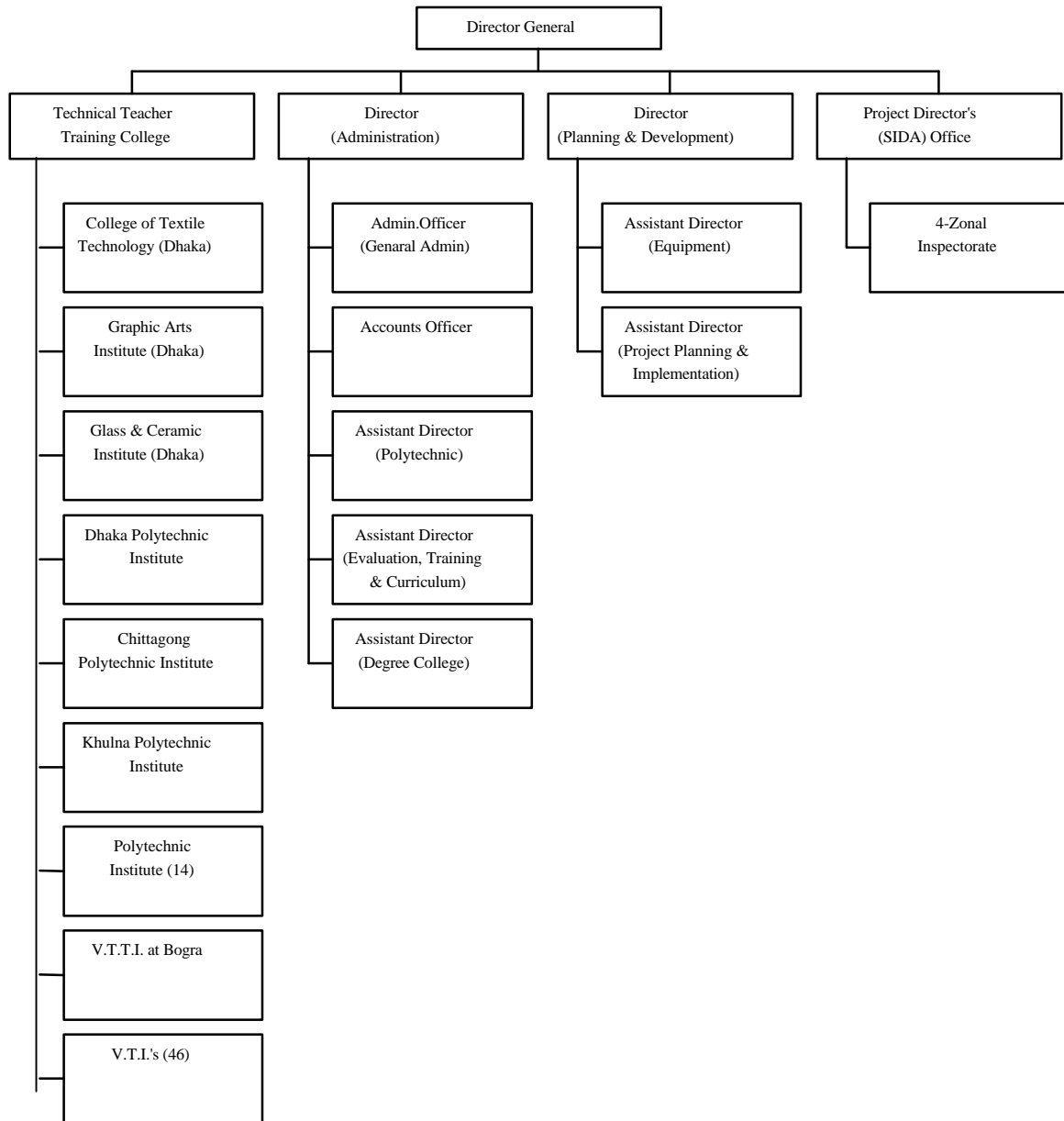


**Chart A2.2.6 Directorate of Non-Formal Education**



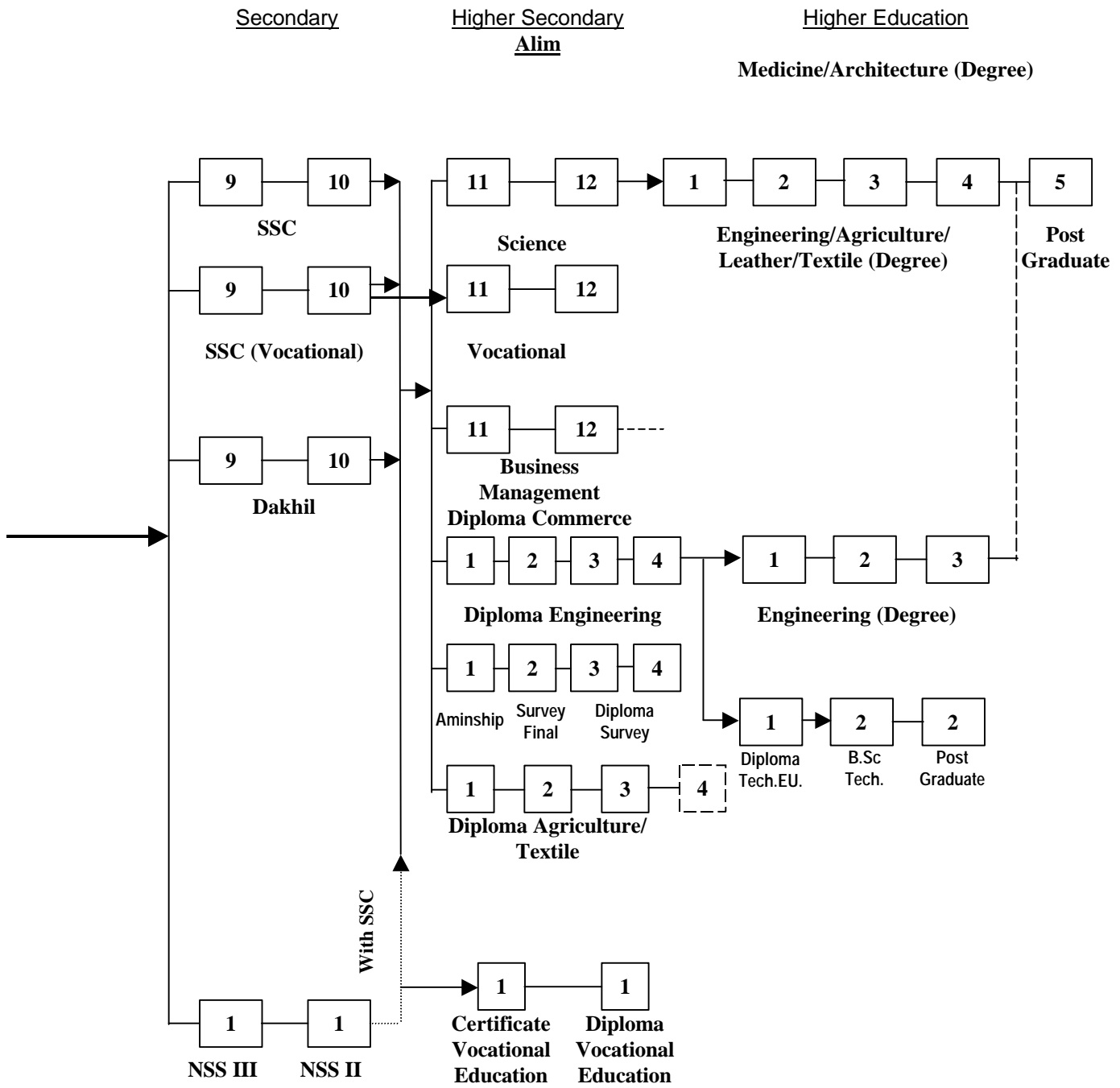
Source: Directorate of Non-Formal Education

**Chart A2.2.7 Organogram of Directorate of Technical Education**



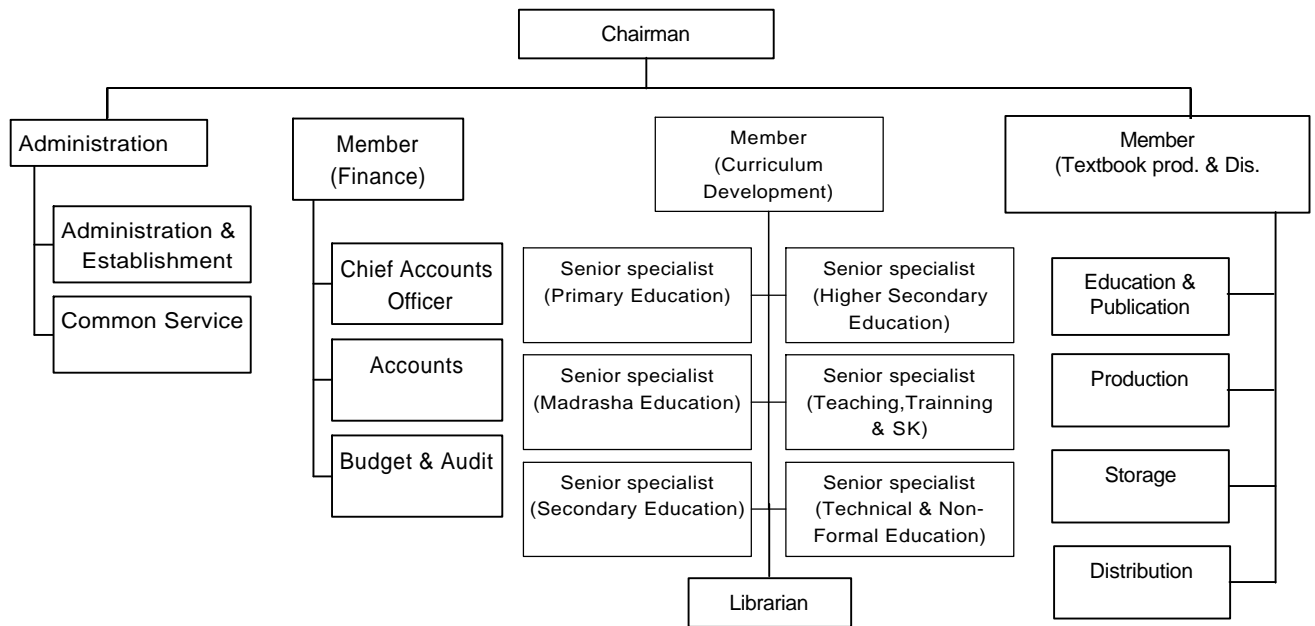
Source: Directorate of Technical Education

Chart A2.2.8 Technical Education Structure (2001)



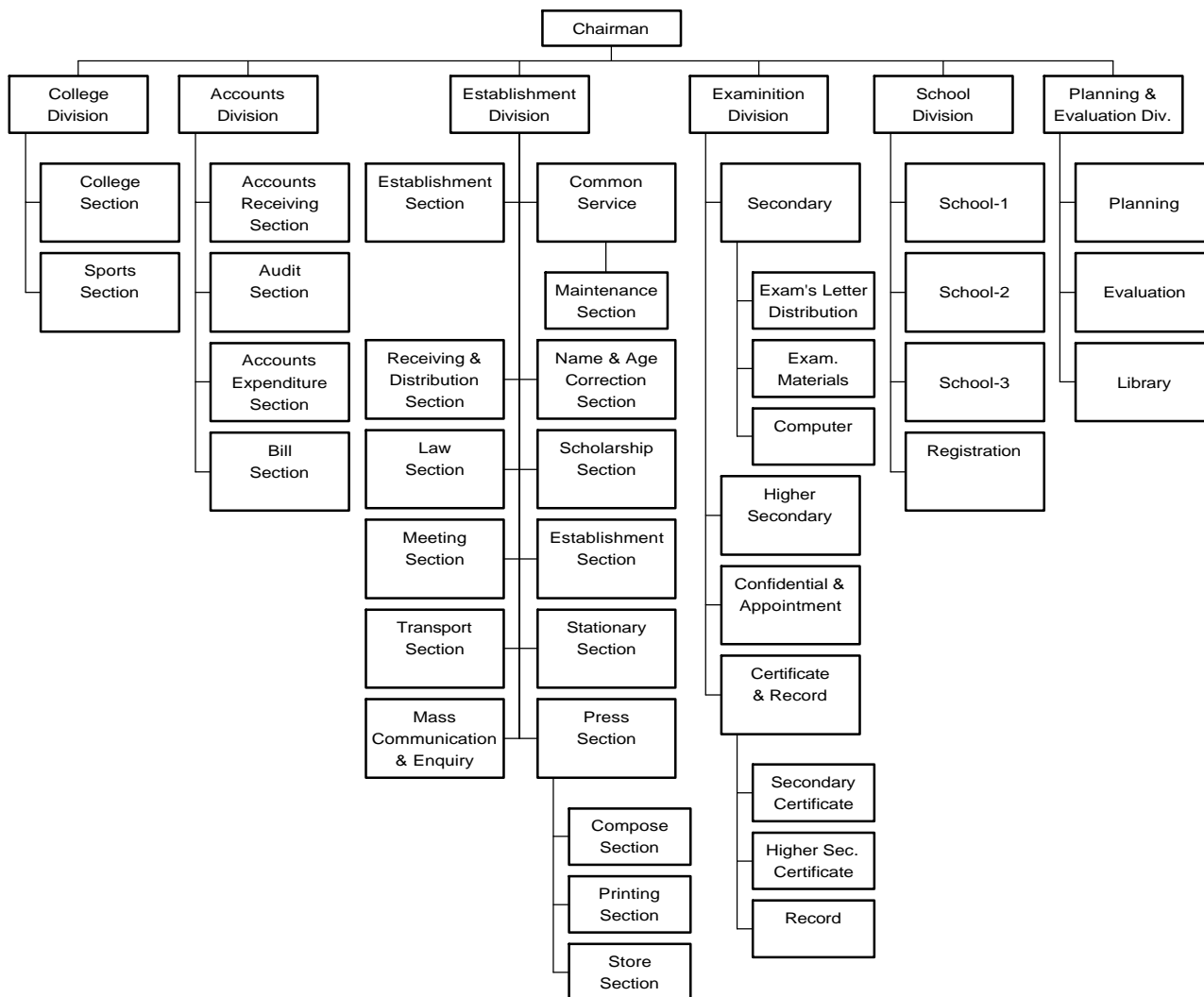


**Chart A2.2.9 Organogram of the National Curriculum And Textbook Board**



Source: National Curriculum and Textbook Board

Chart A2.2.10: ORGANOGRAM OF BOARD OF INTERMEDIATE AND SECONDARY



Source: Ministry of Education

## Annex A2.3: Statistical Tables

**Table A2.3.1: Trends in the Level of Central Government Expenditure on Education (% of GDP\*).**

Fiscal Year	Revenue Expenditure	Development Expenditure	Total Expenditure
1973-1980 aveage	0.63	0.27	0.9
1981-1985 aveage	0.73	0.23	1.0
1986-1990 aveage	1.03	0.30	1.3
1991	1.06	0.16	1.2
1992	1.14	0.21	1.4
1993	1.34	0.47	1.8
1994	1.36	0.66	2.0
1995	1.30	1.06	2.4
1996	1.30	0.83	2.1
1997	1.30	0.90	2.2
1998	1.34	0.73	2.1
1999	1.35	0.80	2.1
2000	1.37	0.84	2.2

*Soruce: Ministry of Finance*

**Table A2.3.2: Allocations in the Five year Plans and Education sector**

Plans	(In crore Tk)		
	Total allocation	Allocation to Education	% Allocation to Education
First 5-year Plan (1973-78)	4 455	316	7.1
Two-Years Plan (1978-80)	3 861	186	4.81
Second Five Year Plan (1980-85)	16 060	836	5.20
Third Five-Year Plan (1985-1990)	38 600	1 370	3.54
Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95)	67 230	3 289	4.89
Fifth Five Year Plan) (1997-2002)	203 422.9	128 68.15	6.32

*Soruce: Five Year Plans of Bangladesh.*

**Table A2.3.3: Intra-sector Allocation for Education and Religion in the Fifth Five year Plan (1997-2002)**

Sub-Sector	Total Allocation (Million Tk).	Allocation in Percentage (%)
1 Primary Education	74 635.00	57.99
2 Mass Education	7 959.20	6.18
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8 259.20</b>	<b>64.18</b>
3 Secondary Education + Madrasha & College	31 204.40	24.24
4 University Education	5 494.40	4.26
5 BITS	900.00	0.69
6 Education Ministry	628.40	0.48
7 Technical Education	5 088.30	3.95
8 Technical Assistance	321.00	0.24
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>43 636.50</b>	<b>33.91</b>
9 Cadet college and Cantonment Public schools and College	791.50	0.61
10 Religious affairs	1 659.30	1.28
<b>Total</b>	<b>128 681.50</b>	<b>100</b>

*Soruce: Planning Commision*

### 3 EDUCATION POLICIES IN SUB-SECTORS

In the generic sense of the word, education policy can be both overarching principles and objectives as well as detailed and formal statements of general goals and procedures that guide decisions regarding educational programme choices and strategies.

The Constitution of the Republic is the source of overall principles and objectives for educational development in the country. (Box 3.1) The Fundamental Principles of the State Policy vest on the state the responsibility for meeting basic needs of the people and protecting their fundamental rights. Article 17 of the Constitution stipulates that effective measures will be taken to:

- a. establish a common system of universal and people oriented education and offer free and compulsory education to all boys and girls up to a stage prescribed by law;
- b. develop education that is consistent with the needs of society and to create a citizenry, educated and motivated to fulfill those needs; and
- c. eliminate illiteracy within a time-table determined by law.

Other provisions of the Constitution, while not specifically related to education, are also relevant as guiding principles. Especially pertinent are article 19 on equal opportunity for all citizens; article 27 on equality before law; article 28 on prohibiting discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth; and article 29 on equal opportunity for public employment.

The Fundamental Principles and Objectives enshrined in the Constitution have not been translated into a basic law for education as is the case in some countries. (A recent example is the National Education Act of Thailand adopted in 1999.) It has been noted in the previous chapter that legal and regulatory provisions exist for operational and administrative aspects of various sub-sectors of education. These are means of implementing educational programs rather than the basis for making choices about what to implement.

The need for a comprehensive statement of the national education policy has been felt and voiced repeatedly. The first attempt to formulate an educational policy soon after the establishment of Bangladesh as an independent country was the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report of 1974. Political change through military coup in 1975 put on hold any action on this report. Various regimes that followed set up bodies to make recommendations on educational policy reforms. The common feature of some half a dozen of these initiatives in the last three decades are that few of the substantive recommendations were fully implemented.

The latest attempt to develop a national education policy is the National Education Policy (NEP 2000) approved by the national Parliament in 2000. With a change of government following national election in 2001, the fate of NEP also appears to be uncertain. The new regime has indicated its intention to review the content of NEP before deciding on its course of action in different sub-sectors of education. In the mean time, NEP may be regarded as an official statement of intentions regarding general objectives and strategies in education.

The urge to establish a new education reform body and to have a new policy statement of its own by each political regime and the subsequent failure to implement the recommendations are symptomatic of deeper structural characteristics of society and the relative lack of capacity of the state to respond to these structural problems. The degree of success in educational development and policy implementation will depend on how these characteristics of society and polity are taken into account in the process of developing and implementing policy. These signal characteristics, shared in varying degree with other developing countries, include: (a) extreme political fractiousness and immaturity of institutions that prevent consensus-building and continuity of policy and lead government action to assume a partisan character, (b) political and economic power structure dominated by an elite that impedes honest effort to implement benign policy rhetoric championing the interest of the excluded and the disadvantaged, (c) inherent complexity and sensitivity of the educational system in a society burdened by a colonial and feudal history – illustrated by such fault lines as the elite and the common schools and the madrasahs and the secular schools, and (d) limitations of material and human resources and capacities in one of the U.N. designated least developed countries, which limitations ironically impose special constraints on efforts to overcome these very constraints through educational development.

The history of educational policy statements not acted upon and almost a counter-productive nature of the initiatives to formulate *the education policy* that aggravates political divisiveness have given rise to scepticism about policy exercises. A civil society policy brief before the 2001 national election recommended that the new government, after the election, should forego the impulse to initiate another education policy formulation exercise. The Task Force that prepared the brief counselled “ a pragmatic approach to solving problems based on experience and relevant international lessons, without the fanfare of a new policy, with ample dialogue and participation.” (Centre for Policy Dialogue, “Policy Brief on Education,” CPD Task Force Report, August 2001)

In the absence of basic educational laws and a comprehensive educational policy statement that is taken as a serious and systematic guide to action, indication of policy choices and steps can be derived from what is reflected in national development plans and programs for education. The current Fifth Five-Year Development Plan for the years 1997-2002 (FFYP) provides educational development priorities, objectives and strategies for the five-year period. Allocation of resources for realizing the objectives is also indicated. The NEP document also, in spite of a degree of uncertainty about implementation of specific provisions in it, is based on consideration of important policy issues by professional circles. The content of the two documents comes closest to government policy statements on various sub-sectors of education. Highlights of these are presented below.

A National EFA Plan of Action (NPA), following the 1990 Jomtien World Conference on Education for All was prepared in 1995, outlining plans for EFA up to year 2000. The NPA presented objectives, targets and strategies for primary and non-formal education. Although called a plan, NPA was an expression of ambitions, based partially on specific government targets rather than a plan that was followed through for implementation. (Government of Bangladesh, PMED 1995) A similar document (NPA2) is currently under preparation, following the Dakar World Education Forum 2000, for the period 2002 to 2015.

### Box 3.1

#### ARTICLES OF THE BANGLADESH CONSTITUTION RELEVANT FOR EDUCATION

17. The State shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of-
- (1) establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law;
  - (2) Relating education to the needs of society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to serve those needs;
  - (3) removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law.
19. (1) The state shall endeavour to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens.
- (2) The State shall adopt effective measures to remove social and economic inequality between man and man and to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among citizens, and of opportunities in order to attain a uniform level of economic development throughout the Republic.
27. All citizens are equal before law and are entitled to equal protection of law.
28. (1) The State shall not discriminate against any citizen on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth
- (2) Women shall have equal rights with men in all spheres of the state and of public life.
- (3) No citizen shall, on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth be subjected to any disability, liability, restriction or condition with regard to access to any place of public entertainment or resort, or admission to any educational institution.
- (4) Nothing in this article shall prevent the State from making special provision in favour of women or children or for the advancement of any backward section of citizens.
29. (1) There shall be equality of opportunity for all citizens in respect of employment or office in the service of the Republic.
- (2) No citizen shall on grounds only of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth, be ineligible for, or discriminated against in respect of any employment of office in the service of the Republic.

*Source: Constitution of the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh*

### 3.1 Early Childhood Development and Pre-school Education

There is no formally stated government policy on early childhood development and pre-school education. The global Education for All (EFA) initiative launched in 1990 which emphasized the importance of care and education of the young child generated interest in Bangladesh in this neglected area. The ratification by Bangladesh of the Convention on the Rights of the Child soon after its adoption by the United Nations in 1989 imposed an obligation on the government to pay attention to proper care of the young child including social, mental and intellectual development of the child from birth to the stage when the child begins formal primary education. The World Education Forum, setting new EFA target up to 2015, identified Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) as one of the six priority program areas.

The Fifth Five-Year Development Plan and the New Education Policy of 2000 do not specifically address the question of policy or objectives regarding early childhood development. There has been no attempt by the government to define a concept of holistic development of the young child and develop approaches to providing for this need. In practice, through spontaneous efforts of communities and parents, an unofficial system of preschool education, known as baby or infant class attached to the primary school, has developed widely. Some 70 percent of the primary schools are reported to conduct baby/infant classes. (WB, Education Sector Review, vol. II, p. 29). This class enrolls children in the 4-5 year age group, runs for the usual duration of one academic year, and its purpose is to prepare children for formal enrolment into the first year of the primary school.

In recognition of the widespread existence of the baby class, NEP 2000 has noted the importance of school preparedness for children, especially for the majority of children who are “the first generation of learners.” Options suggested in NEP 2000 are:

- a) Pre-primary classes for children of age 5+ should be opened in phases as resources such as teachers and classrooms become available.
- b) Preschool classes may be opened initially for six months and extended to a full year with progressively more schools opening these classes by the year 2005.

Several non-governmental organizations active in education have taken a broader view of early childhood care and education and have supported exploratory activities embracing needs of the young child before the pre-school phase as well as empowerment of parents and care-givers with knowledge and skills about care and development of the young child. (See Position Paper on ECD and Pre-school Education). Fulfilment of state obligation under the Convention on the Rights of the Child and preparation of the post-Dakar National Plan of Action for EFA put increasingly greater pressure on the government to articulate a policy on care and development of the young child from birth to entry into formal education. It will also be necessary to clarify the roles and mechanism for coordination among concerned government agencies, because the developmental needs of the young child cannot be addressed by the education authorities alone.

### **3.2 Primary Education**

A high priority has been accorded by the government in the 1990s to the goal of achieving universal primary education. Allocation of public resources has increased significantly to this sub-sector; organizational and administrative measures have been taken to strengthen program implementation; and incentives have been introduced to encourage parents to send their children to school.

Important measures taken to expand and improve primary education in the decade of the 1990s include:

- Introduction of the law on free and compulsory primary education;
- Free textbooks for all children in primary school;
- Free tuition for girls in the secondary school up to class 10 and stipends for girls enrolled in rural secondary schools, which serve as incentive for girls to complete primary education;

- Food-for education that provides a food ration to 20 percent of the poor primary school children in rural areas; and
- Establishment of a separate Primary and Mass Education Division to enhance management support for primary and non-formal education.

The government's major objectives and policy priorities in the medium term are reflected in FFYP. Some key policy goals without a specific time-frame are indicated in NEP 2000. These are summarized below.

- a) Make rapid progress towards achieving universal access and participation in primary education. Specific steps towards achieving this goal include targets by 2002 of –
  - increasing gross enrolment around 110 percent and net enrolment to 95 percent with particular attention to girls' enrolment;
  - increasing completion rate of 5 years of primary education to at least 75 percent;
  - expanding system capacity through renovation of existing government schools and increase of community-based non-government primary schools which would receive government subvention for teachers' salary.
  
- b) Improve quality of primary education by –
  - improving quality of teachers' training, supervision, management and monitoring system including establishment of Upazila Resource Centres and a Distance Education Unit in DPE;
  - revising curricula to make them relevant to learners' needs;
  - raising social consciousness of children about responsibilities of good citizens;
  - undertaking innovative programs and conducting research and evaluation;
  - NEP proposes a teacher-student ratio in primary schools of 1:40 ( further explanation regarding school shifts, contact hours, and differences in habitation pattern is not given).
  
- c) Enhance equity in primary education by -
  - reducing gender gap and regional imbalances;
  - establishing a school in every village within easy walking distance of children;
  - distributing textbooks to all children and providing learning materials and extending "food for education" to larger numbers of needy children in a phased manner;
  - expanding programs for children with disabilities and special needs.
  
- d) Strengthen management and efficiency of primary education by –
  - enhancing the capability of the National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE), Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED);



- improving accountability by effective inspection and supervision and involvement of local government bodies, especially the Upazila Parishad;
  - Developing an effective information system in each Upazila, district and division.
- e) Extend the duration of primary education from five to eight years in a phased manner.
- NEP 2000 proposes that the duration of primary education should be extended by one year by 2003, two years by 2006 and full 8 years of primary education should be introduced by 2010;
  - Eight years of primary education should be compulsory and universal by 2010;
  - At the completion of eight years of primary education, students should appear in a public examination.
- f) Take measures to establish a common system of basic education for all as stipulated in the Constitution.
- NEP recognizes the existence of various forms of institutions and provisions at the primary level. It accepts the continuation of English medium private schools, but proposes that “uniform standards” of education through mother tongue should be practiced in all other primary schools including government, non-government and NGO-run primary schools.
  - The madrasahs should institute eight years of primary education and follow the “new coordinated education programme” with a common curriculum at the primary level.
- g) Encourage participation of the community in the development of primary education. NEP emphasizes –
- Active parent-teacher associations;
  - Involvement of teachers, school heads, local leaders and local government bodies in assessment of the quality of primary education, including the option of conducting annual examination under their auspices in the local school at the end of class 5.
- h) Enforce minimum educational and professional training requirements for primary teachers. NEP propose that –
- Teachers for classes up to class 5 should have higher secondary qualifications, and for classes 6 to 8, should be college graduates. Their promotion should be conditional on obtaining teacher certification training.
  - A separate teachers’ selection commission should select and appoint teachers for government and government aided primary schools and madrasahs throughout the country.

The policies proposed by NEP in respect of primary education have been the subject of professional discussion for some time. The first 56 member committee formed to work on the policy in 1997 had a series of consultation and public discussion in the course of

preparing the policy recommendations. A smaller committee was set up by the government in 1999 to review the recommendations and suggest proposals for implementation. The latter, which differed in some respects from the first report, was accepted by the government and approved by the Parliament. There has been some debate in the media and in professional circles about overall policy objectives and specific aspects. (See below the section on continuing policy concerns). In the area of primary education, the key objectives of NEP 2000 regarding improvement of learning outcome for all children and extending primary education up to class eight conform to mainstream professional and official priorities, although there are different views about how these goals can be achieved effectively. The implementation issues relating to these objectives are also a matter of resources and time-table. The new government that came to power in 2001 has not announced its intentions about when and how various proposals, such as the one on extension of compulsory primary education up to class 8, will be put into effect. Whether there will be further modifications in these policies remain unclear.

### **3.3 Secondary Education**

Secondary education, beyond the compulsory stage of primary education, is provided through collaboration of government and non-government providers within a regulatory framework provided by the government. Development of secondary education underway during FFYP reflects government priority to expanding the narrow base of secondary education and improving its quality. NEP 2000 has made important recommendations regarding structural change in secondary education which are under consideration and are likely to guide future development of secondary education. Key objectives and strategies indicated in the Five Year Plan and NEP 2000 are presented below.

#### **a) Structural change**

NEP 2000 proposes a structural change that affects both primary and secondary education. The proposal is to amalgamate the current lower secondary stage of grades 6 to 8 with an extended primary education cycle and merge secondary and higher secondary stages in to an integrated 4-year secondary cycle.

#### **b) Relevant secondary curriculum**

NEP 2000 proposes curriculum reforms to respond to social and personal needs related to preparation for mid-level employment, self-employment and further education, including the following -

- There will be three streams at the secondary level, namely, general, madrasah and vocational/technical education.
- A general core of common required subjects with identical syllabus will apply to all three streams. Vocational subjects in varying proportions will be included in all three streams.
- Public examination at the end of class ten (SSC) will be eliminated and replaced by certification by the school and public examination at the end of the secondary stage after class 12. A scholarship examination is proposed at the end of class 10.

c) Management of secondary education

NEP 2000 envisages the administration of secondary education to be “decentralized to divisional, district and Thana levels.” What this means in specific terms and how this should be achieved is not indicated. Present policy of subvention to non-government schools to cover most of teachers’ salary is proposed to be continued. Teachers in both government and non-government schools are expected to be appointed by a Teacher Selection Commission as proposed for Primary Education also.

d) Expansion of the base of secondary education

FFYP anticipates addition of classrooms to 7000 secondary schools and introduction of double shifts in urban and selected rural areas. The gap in facilities between urban and rural areas is expected to be reduced. Stipend and free tuition for girls in classes 6 to 10 is planned to be continued and extended to classes 11 and 12. Courses in agriculture and computer science in classes 9 and 10 are planned to be introduced to make secondary education job-oriented and attractive to young people.

### **3.4 Non-Formal Education**

Government commitment to battling the high adult illiteracy rate in Bangladesh has led to a major non-formal education programme in the 1990s focused on basic literacy. Priority has been given to achieving universal coverage of youth and young adults in the age range of 11 to 45 years.

The government has chosen to concentrate on a narrowly conceived non-formal education programme confined to basic literacy courses carried out through a campaign approach (called the Total Literacy Movement) managed by the government administrative machinery in each district.

A broadly conceived non-formal education programme serving diverse learning needs of the population known as the Integrated Non-formal Education Programme (INFEP) begun in the early 1990s envisaged extensive involvement of non-governmental organizations. The shift in the later half of the decade to a restrictive view of NFE confined to basic literacy also was accompanied by the government decision to exclude NGOs from direct involvement in TLM.

A degree of diversity in non-formal education has been maintained through NGO initiatives. Non-formal primary education on a substantial scale has been carried out by NGOs. Other activities by NGOs include basic education combined with skill training for adolescents and youth who dropped out from school or never enrolled as well as exploratory efforts in early childhood education. These activities have attracted external assistance, but have not been the beneficiary of any explicit policy of support or financial encouragement from the government.

The government recognizes the need for post-literacy and continuing education programmes in order to help learners consolidate basic skills and use these in improving their lives. External assistance has been mobilized to launch post-literacy and continuing education programmes emphasizing training in income-earning skills.

A comprehensive vision for non-formal education as a major component of the effort to build a learning society and a policy framework to guide action towards this end do not exist. A recent workshop organized by the Directorate of Non-formal Education (DNFE) in cooperation with external donors in NFE has urged the government to initiate a consultative process to help develop a consensus on vision and policy framework for non-formal education in the future. (M. Ahmed and S. Lohani 2001)

NEP 2000 uses mass education as an umbrella concept which branches out into a) adult education, seen essentially as basic literacy for adults, and b) non-formal education, a label assigned to alternative primary or basic education for out-of-school children. The Fifth Five-Year Plan refers to mass education and non-formal education synonymously, both of which are then equated with basic literacy programs. It is necessary to clarify the terminologies and have a common understanding and usage of the terms, since the scope, objectives and range of activities to be offered under the rubric of non-formal education are still a matter of discussion and debate in Bangladesh. So far in government plans and programs, non-formal education has been defined in a very restrictive way.

### **3.5 Vocational and Technical Education and Training**

Vocational and technical education and training is available through formal, non-formal and informal means in government and non-government institutions and by private sector arrangements. Informal on-the-job self-learning constitutes a major vehicle for skill development.

A comprehensive statement of policy on vocational, occupational and technical education and training does not exist. The Fifth Five-Year Plan and NEP 2000 indicate priorities and direction in this area. They, however, deal essentially with public sector provisions rather than provide an overall approach for coordinated development and use of skills. Major recommendations with policy implications in these documents include the following.

- FFYP calls for increase in enrollment in vocational and technical education at the secondary level from 3 percent in mid-1990s to 20 percent by 2002.
- The Plan provides for enrollment increase in basic trade training, polytechnic training and other areas of vocational training from a total of 20,000 to about 100,000 in five years.
- The Plan proposes expansion of training institutions including polytechnics, Vocational Training Institutes (VTI) and Technical Training Centres (TTC) offering training in existing and new skills in line with emerging technologies and demands of the economy.
- Involvement of the private sector is encouraged in vocational and technical training provisions.
- Labour market analysis; better links between training and local market; research on training content, method and impact; and better staff development are anticipated to improve effectiveness of vocational and technical training.
- NEP 2000, as noted in the section on secondary education, has recommended a new stream of vocational/technical education in secondary schools and madrasahs at the level of classes 9 to 12. The performance of formal vocational and technical institutions

in the public sector and the well-documented cost-effectiveness problems of “vocationalizing” secondary education have apparently not been a deterrent to this proposal.

- In contrast to its preference for a formal approach to vocational/technical education within the secondary education sub-sector, NEP 2000 foresees a flexible and market-responsive vocational/technical training outside the structure of secondary education. It emphasizes the following characteristics in skill training carried out by institutions with a specific responsibility for such training: i) greater linkages with employers and industries, ii) short and variable duration skill up-dating and upgrading training, iii) non-formal training for school dropouts by using existing facilities, iv) training of master craftsmen through sandwich courses alternating between training and work experience, v) attention to entrepreneurship and self-employment in training courses, vi) accumulation of credit and credit transfer in place of present rigid structure, vii) sharing of cost of training with industries and trainees themselves when feasible, and viii) mandatory practical industrial experience of teachers.
- A rationalized structure of skill levels is proposed with technicians categorized into three grades of skills which can be acquired in a variety of ways. (i) Semi-skilled technician grade 1 will have one year vocational training or equivalent apprenticeship in an industrial establishment after eight years of general education; (ii) Skilled technician grade 2 will have two years of vocational training or one year training for those who qualify as technician grade 1; and (iii) technician grade 3 will have four years of vocational training or two years’ training if they qualify as technician grade 2. Training for these qualifications would be given mostly by government or non-government institutions at thana level.
- NEP 2000 proposes an autonomous and self-financing Vocational and Technical Education Council to coordinate, set common standards, and make policy regarding vocational and technical education and training working and liaising with concerned Ministries, agencies, private businesses, and NGOs. The Council is also expected to conduct and encourage relevant research and analysis in respect of skill development and effectiveness of programmes.
- NEP 2000 supports a major expansion of vocational and technical education and Training, proposing a shift of “the major portion of the education budget” to this sub-sector. It also proposes the establishment of a fund for providing lump-sum grants to training institutions for expansion and quality improvement.

### **3.6 Tertiary Education**

Main components of the network of tertiary education include 11 public general and specialized universities, over 900 four-year colleges affiliated with the National University (NU), 5 degree-level institutes of technology (BIT) under the academic supervision of the BIT Council, professional colleges in law and medicine, the distance education programme offered by the Bangladesh Open University (BOU), and a recent proliferation of private universities (16 are in operation.). The University Grants Commission (UGC) is the regulatory

body for university level institutions. It is also supposed to serve as the intermediary between the government and the universities, protecting the latter from direct government control. As in other areas of the education system, FFYP and NEP 2000 are important sources for government position and thinking on policy issues, priorities and directions in respect of tertiary education. The Fifth Five-Year Plan emphasizes the following priorities and strategies.

- Expanding the base of higher education with better balance among disciplines. With less than 4 percent of the usual age-group for higher education enrolled, expanding participation rate is a priority. However, three quarters of the students enroll in non-science and non-technology subjects, and many fail to find employment in their areas of study or in any area at all. The Fifth Plan, therefore, envisages expansion in higher education, but mainly in science and technology disciplines. Six new science and technology universities are planned to be established in the public sector during the plan period.
- Improving quality, enforcing standards and developing centres of excellence. Low rate of pass in the degree colleges, indiscipline and unrest on campuses leading to frequent closures of institutions and “session jam” ( piling up of successive cohorts of students not able to take end-of-term or end-of course examinations) , absence and non-enforcement of accountability of teachers and institutions, insufficient textbooks and reference materials are some of the manifestations of poor quality cited often. The strategies indicated are increased overseas training for faculty, stronger supervision of colleges, linking government financial support to performance , and developing universities and colleges in district centres as “centres of excellence.”
- Improving higher education governance and management. The functions of UGC are proposed to be reviewed and its capacity strengthened to allocate resources and implement quality criteria. Similarly, the relatively new National University will be given support to enhance its capacity to better serve and supervise the affiliated colleges.
- Financing aimed at quality and equity. Policy for resource mobilization will emphasize adequacy of resources for improving quality and equity. Establishment of private universities will help relieve pressure on subsidized public institutions. Private endowments will be encouraged for public institutions. Students fees are to be raised along with provision for financial support for the needy.

NEP 2000 proposes a “complete reform” of higher education to meet the needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

- It emphasizes a restructuring of tertiary education programs – increasing the duration of the degree courses to four years from current two years ( regular course) and three years (honours course). This would be followed generally by one-year master’s course. For general colleges other than universities, a three years’ degree followed by two years’ masters program is proposed.
- NEP also supports expansion of engineering places and greater autonomy for BITs to open new courses.

- NEP gives a cautious support to private universities and calls for equivalent standards, curricula, and educational qualifications with public universities. An accreditation council is proposed for monitoring academic provisions and standards of private universities.

### **3.7 Continuing Policy Concerns**

The policy objectives and priorities of the government reflected in development plans and policy statements, while fairly wide-ranging, do not address sufficiently some key issues which have figured prominently in discussion about educational problems in Bangladesh. Some of these concern the education system in general cutting across sub-sectors; others are specific to sub-sectors.

*Need for a system-wide view of priorities and policies.* An important common issue is how the education system as a whole functions to make its contribution to meeting key social goals as well as the individual goals of personal fulfilment. It is an issue of horizontal and vertical linkages and articulation among sub-sectors of education and the possibility of taking a systemic view in the organizational structures and roles in the system and the subsystems. The overall organization and management structure of education described in chapter 2 shows critical disjunctions and discontinuities, which have not been adequately addressed in the policy objectives indicated or under consideration. For example, at the primary level, the four major streams – the regular government and non-government primary schools, the madrasahs, non-formal primary education of NGOs, and the private English-medium schools – operate with differing learning objectives and academic standards, little opportunity for horizontal mobility of students, and no interaction among the organizational authorities running these different streams. The same applies to the secondary level in respect of the parallel streams in general secondary education and in post-primary vocational and technical education. At the tertiary level, a system-wide view - embracing colleges, universities, professional and specialized education; institutions in all these categories under public and non-government management; and the potential of specialized training by professional bodies; and how all of these provisions together match the needs for high level skills – does not exist. A mechanism for developing such an overview and applying it in policy review and policy implementation also does not exist.

Notwithstanding the good intentions behind separating the primary and mass education division from the Ministry of Education, various problems of articulation arise. Issues in primary education regarding curriculum development, training of teachers and management personnel, and transition from primary to post-primary level of education cannot be resolved in isolation from other levels of education. The objective of incorporating present lower secondary level into primary education lends new urgency to this problem. The role of non-formal education in complementing and supplementing formal institutions to expand opportunities at all levels and reaching out to those who are not served by formal provisions have not received due attention in policy discourse.

A critical concern is that the education system serves essentially as a screening device at each level for selecting students for the next level; and, in effect, “disqualifies” a large proportion of students at each level, branding them as “failures” in terms of their own self-esteem and

perception of society. Screening and limiting entrance at the post-basic levels itself is not an issue. The systemic challenge is how to design and implement programs so that each level has a valid rationale and purpose besides being a means of screening and the programs serve those purposes well.

All of these concerns about horizontal and vertical links among sub-systems point to the need for rethinking about organizational structures, functions and roles in the education system. A systemic approach has to contribute to overall education system goals defined by society's overarching priorities. The system view will have to address the broader human resource development issues, going beyond the parochial concerns of education sub-sectors. Experience in a number of countries indicates alternative possibilities. India, for example, have opted for a super-ministry for human resource development which coordinates the work of different ministry and department level agencies and organizations involved in various aspects of human resource development. China has a state education commission headed by a vice premier which oversees the development of broad policies and priorities and guides the work of different concerned ministries and agencies.

*Decentralization.* Another common issue is decentralization of educational management at different levels. Support for decentralization has been expressed in NEP2000 as well as in other official statements, especially in respect of primary education. But it is not clear what form it should take and how it is to be achieved. The centralized and bureaucratic management of the public sector institutions, which has been identified as one of the main causes of their poor performance, is not challenged in respect of vocational and technical education and tertiary education. The possibility of individual institutions taking responsibility for assessing and responding to skill demand in the local economy, adapting to specific circumstances and being accountable for its performance is not considered.

*Partnership-building.* A third common issue is partnership-building for mobilizing resources, but more importantly, for improving performance of educational programs and their responsiveness to specific conditions and circumstances. (Box 3.2) In primary education, although non-formal primary education by NGOs serves over 8 percent of the children who are particularly disadvantaged, a policy of benign neglect has been followed by the government, instead of offering a hand of support and cooperation. Need for collaboration with and contribution from private sector in public sector training are noted in respect of vocational and technical education, but how this will happen and what incentives there may be for private sector is not indicated. The evidence of effective programs by NGOs such as UCEP and the private sector response to demand for IT training has not been given due attention. How much of skill training should be non-government responsibility? How can government maintain an overview, provide a regulatory framework, and facilitate and encourage private sector provisions? The policy statements do not give sufficient attention to these questions and focus mainly on public sector programs. Similarly, an appreciation of the potential of private universities and a comprehensive strategy for higher education development with complementarity and cooperation between private and public provisions are missing.

**Box 3.2**



## PARTNERSHIPS

### *The Spectrum of Relationships*

A range of relationships and interaction between the public and private actors is possible and exist in reality. This can be placed in a spectrum from no relationship or interaction between the public and private actors to a very close and multifaceted relationship of collaboration as shown below.

*Parallel activities:* Public and private activities are carried out without any contact with each other or acknowledgement of the existence of each other.

*Competitive activities:* The activities in the public and the private sector are carried out with same or similar objectives, targeting common clientele and competing with each other, which may mean either wasteful duplication of activities or enlargement of choices for the beneficiaries.

*Complementary activities:* Activities or services from the public and the private sectors complement each other in terms of nature and content of services or geographical and population coverage, either by design or incidentally.

*Contractual services:* The government contracts private sector for providing specified services for agreed fees, with the contractor being accountable to the government authority.

*Cooperation and collaboration:* Public and private actors work together on the basis of shared objectives, strategies and agreed criteria regarding assessing process and outcome; the partners also cooperate in developing common objectives and strategies and criteria for assessment of activities.

The above are not necessarily mutually exclusive categories. A collaborative relationship may include elements of contractual, complementary or even parallel arrangements when such a combination is mutually agreed for advancing the shared objectives. No value judgement is implied in these categories. Parallel activities by different actors are not a model of partnership, but this may be appropriate and efficient in certain circumstances.

*Source: M. Ahmed "Public-Private Partnership in Education and Health in Bangladesh" in Yidan Wang., (ed.). Public-Private Partnership in the Social Sector, Tokyo, Asian Development Bank Institute, 2000, p. 222.*

*"Inclusive" education.* A fourth common issue is equity and promoting "inclusive" education in a broad sense. Enhancing equality of opportunities by responding to specific disadvantages of ethnic and linguistic minorities has not been a policy priority. Policy measures for learners with disabilities and those with special education needs have received inadequate attention. The problem of inherent inequity of the highly subsidized and selective higher education, especially public universities, is hinted at but policy options have not been presented; nor is there an explicit recognition of this issue as a serious problem deserving policy consideration and decisions about a course of action.

*Implications of a common system in primary education.* One of the key policy issues in primary education, related to the need for system view noted above, that requires further consideration and clarification is the question of equal access and participation in a common system of primary education by all children. What does unified (or uniform, as it is often put) primary education for all children means in practical terms? How is it to be achieved? Part of the problem is the Madrassah / Secular Education divide and English Medium Private Schools that do not follow national curriculum. Role of Non-formal and second chance primary education and the issues of equivalence between formal and non-formal programs both in primary and secondary education have been by-passed in policy statements and thinking of the government.

*Implications of “vocationalizing” secondary education.* In secondary education, a complex issue is “vocationalization.” The move taken by the government to have a “vocational stream” in general secondary education appears to be a “leap of faith”, given the high per student cost of such a program, the quality issues that plague secondary schools, and generally poor international experience in such programs. Is introduction of the vocational-technical stream and streaming in general beginning at class 9 in secondary schools the right and cost-effective choice? How can students be attracted to these streams with the prevailing low esteem of vocational education? What would be the relationship between secondary schools and vocational/technical institutions? A related question is whether the strategy is adequate to make secondary education a self-sufficient level of education rather than only a screening device for higher education? What about non-formal secondary education for drop-out, working children, and others who cannot attend a regular school – a question given scant attention.

These issues related to secondary education also affect vocational and technical education.

*Politicisation of education management.* Rampant indiscipline, student unrest, and the adverse influence of politicization on education, particularly visible in institutions of higher education, have not been addressed as a policy concern and subject for policy measures. The related problems of corruption and mismanagement, spawned and nurtured by partisan politics, have barely received mention in statements of policies and program priorities. On the other hand, a major expansion of public universities is foreseen without tackling basic deficiencies of existing public universities.

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## 4 MAJOR EDUCATION ISSUES

As the discussion of government education priorities and policies show, the major educational problems of Bangladesh, similar to neighbouring South Asian and other developing countries, can be categorized under the headings of (a) Access and equity, (b) Quality of education including its relevance to the overarching development concern of poverty alleviation, (c) Governance and management of education, and (d) Adequacy of resources and their effective use.

### 4.1 Access and equity

The question of access has to be viewed differently for the basic and compulsory level of education and other levels for which there is no legal, social or moral obligation of the state to provide for universal access. Virtually universal access to primary education for children and literacy courses for youth and adults is regarded in Bangladesh as a question of citizen's right under the Constitution and under international human rights treaties as well as a national development imperative. Beyond this core obligation at the basic level of education, access at secondary and tertiary levels is a question of what is affordable and what is necessary for meeting the developmental priorities of the country. It has to be noted, however, that various characteristics of today's world relentlessly demand expanded access to increasingly higher levels of education. These characteristics include rising expectations of people, need for an increasingly broader and higher base of knowledge and skills of the population in today's technology and information-driven economy, and the concern about being and remaining competitive in the globalized market.

The concept of equity in terms of opportunity to participate in education and learning outcomes, on the other hand, is relevant for all levels of education, especially the provisions in the public sector. Apart from the right of citizens to benefit equitably from a public good, equity in education is intimately related to the development objectives of education including poverty alleviation and building a democratic society. Access and equity issues in the main sub-sectors of education are presented below.

#### *Early Childhood Development and Pre-School Education*

A policy or program of the government does not exist in respect of needs for psycho-social and intellectual development of young children. Preschool activities for the age group 4-5 years exist in practice, without the benefit of a well-articulated government position for this area. About 2 million children, out of a total of 9 million in the age-group 3-5 years in 2000, attended these and other preschool classes. Among these, a little over 1 million children attended 42,000 "baby" or infant classes attached to primary schools. Close to 500,000 children attended about 9,000 private nurseries and kindergartens in the urban areas. Some 12,000 maktabas and madrasahs also have preschool classes and serve an average of 25 children in each. Under 50,000 children are enrolled in 1,875 *para* (neighbourhood) centres in the Chittagong Hill districts.

(See Position Paper on ECD and Preschool Education for details.)

Access to preschool classes is determined by parent's interest and willingness to pay for this service. Even the baby classes attached to government primary schools are managed by the community and the School Management Committee with financial contribution and fees paid by parents. The private, mostly English medium, kindergartens are affordable only to parents in the higher income brackets. The equity criteria clearly does not apply to the existing preschool program. Yet, it can be argued, as has been done in NEP2000, that a properly designed preschool program, especially for children coming from an "illiterate" home environment, can help them prepare better for formal primary school and prevent their poor performance in school and early drop out.

#### *Primary Education*

Available data indicate that gross enrolment in primary education reached over 96 per cent in 2000. Net enrolment is estimated to be around 80 per cent. Of those enrolled in the first grade, 64 per cent are reported to have completed the five-year cycle in 1999. While this is still short of universal access, these numbers represent remarkable progress in the last decade. Introduction of compulsory primary education and various other measures to expand access have borne fruit. (Table: 4.1)

**Table: 4.1 Primary Level Institutions, Enrolment and Teachers, 1996 and 2000**

Types of Institutions	No. of Institutions		Enrolment (In million)		Gross Enrolment Ratio		No. of Teachers	
	1996	2000	1996	2000	1996	2000	1996	2000
<b>Primary Schools</b>								
Government Primary School	37700	37700	11.7	10.8			161400	158200
Reg. Non-govt. Primary School	19700	19200	3.5	4.0			78700	76200
Madrasah	12200	7100	0.8	0.8			49300	29000
Others <sup>a</sup>	11200	12600	1.4	1.8			35300	45400
<b>Total</b>	<b>80800</b>	<b>76600</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>17.4</b>	<b>95.0</b>	<b>96.6</b>	<b>324700</b>	<b>308800</b>

Source: Directorate of Primary Education

<sup>a</sup> Includes non-government non-registered primary schools (2,100), Primary schools attached to High schools (1200), Community-run schools (3,100), Satellite schools for classes 1 and 2 (3,900) and Private kindergartens (2,300). The members in parentheses refer to number of these institutions in 2000. DPE statistics do not include BRAC-run 34,000 Non-formal Primary Education Centers serving 1.2 million children in 2000.

Official statistics do not appear to have taken account of non-formal primary education run by NGOs, which serve 1.5 million children or 8 per cent of the number in the primary age-group. Education Watch 1999, based on a sample survey of households, and counting all children attending any type of primary education, reported a gross enrolment of 107 per cent. Net enrolment, however, was not higher in the Education Watch survey, indicating a 30 per cent spread between net and gross enrolment rather than the officially reported 15 to 16 per cent. (CAMPE, Education Watch Report, 1999).

The gap between the gross and net enrolment as well the completion rate and attendance rate indicate access problems that persist. Average attendance is reported in school records to be under 70 per cent but actual observed attendance has been found to be around 50 percent. (Education Watch, 1999) Enrolment data, especially the calculation of ratios, are confusing because a system of birth registration is not universal. The wide gap between gross and net rates suggest that the culture of school attendance has yet to take root in many communities and there are other barriers to attendance such as the direct and indirect costs to families and the accessibility of schools, especially for young children. Villages without a school are considered to be insignificant in number, but the terrain and road condition in the monsoon in many parts of the country and in such areas as the Chittagong Hill Tracts can be real obstacles. Low attendance is partly a question of the barriers to access and partly a question of the quality of instruction.

Plans and strategies for universalizing primary education have taken a general approach of expanding access with a recognition that special efforts are needed to reach the poor and overcome gender disparities. As the discussion below on equity notes, interventions that are very broadly targeted to attract enrolment in general of girls and children from poor families have been undertaken, but this has not been preceded or accompanied by systematic investigation of who precisely are being left out, what their characteristics are and why.

If the estimated numbers of 80 per cent net enrolment and 64 percent completion rate of the cycle are taken into account, about 49 per cent of the children in the primary age-group still do not participate in a full five-year cycle of primary education.

The question of equity has received attention in planning and program strategies to some extent. In the case of gender disparity in enrolment, social mobilization efforts backed up by measures such as stipends and free tuition for rural girls in secondary schools as well as mandatory recruitment of a higher proportion of women teachers have helped bring primary school enrolment of boys and girls almost to parity. Food-for-education, in the form of distribution of grains to 20 percent of the primary school children belonging to poor families in selected upazilas is reported to have raised enrolment and attendance, although reliable quantitative assessment of impact is not available. Some observers have asked whether direct spending on qualitative improvement of teaching-learning would not yield a better pay-off than incentive to families to send their children to school. (See discussion on quality issues below.) Apart from what may be considered a “populist” move of distributing food and stipend, there has not been a serious effort to ask such questions as: Which children constitute the 20 per cent who fail to enrol in school? Which one-third is not completing the cycle? What are the characteristics of the children who are enrolled but frequently absent? What should be done to reach them and help them? What kind of support do they need? Are the obstacles for these unserved and underserved children related to circumstances of their families or related to teaching-learning condition in the school? Or both?

Available data show no substantial difference in net enrolment between urban and rural areas, among districts, and between boys and girls. An important exception to this general situation is the low enrolment rate as a group for children in the urban slums. A UNICEF sample survey shows that in the slums of the metropolitan cities of Dhaka and Chittagong, the net

enrolment rate was 55.8 percent for boys and 60 percent for girls compares to national averages of 80.7 and 82.8 percent respectively. (UNICEF 2000, Progotir Pathy, pp.51-52) Sample survey for Education Watch 1999 indicate that primary education deprivation is largely related to economic status of families. Education of mothers, which is also related to economic status of families, also makes a difference.(Table: 4.2).

**Table:4.2 Age specific enrolment rates in primary school of boys and girls by self-rated economic status of families and mothers' education, 1998**

<u>Percentage of children age 6-10 enrolled in school</u>			
	Girls	Boys	Total
Economic Status			
Always in deficit	68.9	64.0	66.3
Sometimes in deficit	80.4	77.6	79.0
Balanced	85.6	83.2	84.4
Surplus	87.3	88.7	88.0
Mother's Education			
None	72.7	68.9	70.8
Primary	89.5	87.9	88.7
Secondary+	95.1	94.0	94.5

*Source: Education Watch 1999*

It is very likely that there is an overlap between non-enrollees and non-completers and the 6.3 million children estimated to be engaged in harmful child labour. It is also likely that a combination of interventions addressing school and family-related factors will be needed to reach the working children and achieve better equity in primary education in terms of both participation and learning outcomes. (Education Watch 2000).

Non-formal primary education program of BRAC is an effort on a substantial scale to address specifically the situation of children not served by formal primary education.

(Since this program is designed as an alternative approach to serving the target group of primary schools, this is presented here as part of the discussion on access to primary education.) It enrolls children of age 8 and above, who have already passed the entry age for primary school. It achieves high completion rate in its three-year course, high attendance, and better learning achievement than formal schools at costs that are comparable to those of formal schools. (Education Watch 1999). Recently, BRAC has added a fourth year to its three-year course in order to offer full equivalency of the five-year formal primary education cycle. A growing number of the BRAC schools are expected to offer the complete cycle. The BRAC approach deliberately deals with both the school-related pedagogic and organizational as well as family-related socio-economic barriers to children's participation in education. Government program strategies have not so far looked at how some features of the non-formal program could be applied in primary schools and how both could interact in improving equity and effectiveness in primary education. With 34, 000 primary education centres serving 1.2 million children, BRAC's primary education program is by far the largest of its kind anywhere in the world. Similar programs on a much smaller scale are run by a number of other NGOs in Bangladesh.

A comprehensive approach to access and equity in primary education needs to deal with the question of educational opportunities for children with disabilities. According to 1991 census, 0.17 per cent of children of 0-4 years age had physical or mental disabilities. (BBS, Statistical Pocketbook of Bangladesh, 1998). The definition used for counting disabilities perhaps has been stringent, because a proportion of 10 per cent of all children is considered internationally as requiring special attention in education programs because of some form of disability. In any event, educational provisions for children with disability are very limited either in the public or the private sector. Universal and equitable access to primary education cannot be achieved without a strategy for expanding these provisions both through “inclusive” education in regular schools and special programs for those who cannot be integrated into the regular program.

The ethnic and linguistic minority groups in Bangladesh constitute 1 percent of the population ( according to 1991 census). About 50 per cent of them live in Chittagong Hill Tracts and a quarter is concentrated in Rajshahi division. Access and participation in education of children of these groups are estimated to be lower than the average for the total population. Apart from their generally marginalized socio-economic situation, the children have difficulty in participating in the regular schools because their mother tongue is not Bangla and Bangla is not used at home. The learning materials and teaching methods for these children need to recognize this reality and adopt a strategy for transition into Bangla after the use of the mother tongue in the initial grades in the primary school.

#### *Non-Formal Education*

In non-formal education, the main government effort in the 1990s has been concentrated on combating the high rate of adult illiteracy. Although a broadly conceived programme of non-formal education with the aim of learning needs of various age-groups and sectors of society was envisaged under the Integrated Non-Formal Education Programme (INFEP), attention shifted in the latter half of the decade to basic literacy for youth and adults in the age-group of 11 to 45 years. The target was to achieve an overall adult literacy rate of 62 per cent by 2000 from 35 per cent in 1990. According to official statistics, the target has been exceeded; literacy rate increased to 64 per cent in 2000 and 65 per cent by September, 2001. Literacy programs have reached over 17 million youth and adults since 1990. The government plan is to bring another 17 million participants into the basic literacy program, known as the Total Literacy Movement (TLM), by 2004 and thus “eradicate illiteracy.”

The exception to the current focus of the Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE), the principal NFE agency of the government, on literacy is a two-year basic education course for “hard-to-reach” urban working children. A total of 351,000 working children in six urban areas is the target of this project. Activities of non-governmental organizations make for some diversity in the NFE scene. In addition, non-formal programs in primary education are wholly the domain of NGOs. The largest of these programs, as noted earlier, is offered by BRAC serving over 1 million children between the ages of 8 to 14 years. Others such as Under Privileged Children’s Education Program (UCEP) and Centre for Mass Education and Science (CMES) are carrying out programs for adolescents and youth, who have not been able to

participate in formal education. Their coverage, however, is relatively small; these two organizations, for instance, serve some 20,000 young people.

The important question concerning access to NFE, particularly the literacy program, which forms the bulk of the government NFE effort, is the significance and value of this access in terms of benefits to the participants themselves and the larger society. While a large number of people have participated in TLM and other similar literacy activities, and on the strength of these activities, a major increase in literacy rate has been reported, TLM has not been subjected to rigorous assessment. Knowledgeable observers have expressed scepticism about its reported achievements. The World Bank Education Sector Review put it cautiously:

“ Much more research is needed on learning levels and retention, as the available evidence is mixed. Achievement through basic literacy course, however, is probably not high enough for learners to maintain their literacy skills over an extended period without additional instruction.” (World Bank, Bangladesh Education Sector Review, 2000, vol. II, part II, p.42)

Leaving aside the question of the relevance and value of non-formal education projects of the government run by DNFE, it can be said that these projects, by and large, attempts to serve the poorest section of the population, majority of whom are girls and women. One study, however, reported that the criteria for selection of upazila for projects appear to be ad hoc; 73 upazilas classified as “distressed with food insecurity” were not included in DNFE projects. (SDC, 1998). NFE project 3 on working children intended to serve deprived children in urban slums, “but there are questions whether the most deprived of the urban children according to the stated criteria of selection of beneficiaries are being served.” (Ahmed and Lohani, 2001).

Two-thirds of the illiterates in Bangladesh are girls and women; the majority of NFE clientele, therefore, are females. Separate centres were established for women and 57 per cent of the literacy program participants and the majority of teachers were women. However, women constituted a small proportion of the supervisors and an even smaller ratio among Centre Management Committee members. (Ahmed and Lohani, 2001, p. 8.)

Despite progress in respect of equal participation, traditional cultural factors persist as barriers to achieving the goal of true gender equality. The Sector Study of NFE (2001, p. 18) noted that illiterate women (and men) working as day labourers and domestic servants had problems in joining literacy programs or maintaining attendance because of their work. The average dropout rate was higher among women and girls (34 percent) compared to male learners (25 percent). Married women also faced oppositions from husbands and had problem due to lack of help to look after the children. (Ahmed and Lohani 2001, pp. 8-9.)

The lesson from NFE experience with regard to equity clearly is that it would be necessary to target the marginal sections of the population with strategies that address their specific needs and circumstances rather than apply a standard campaign approach to all.

### *Secondary Education*

*Only 540,000 students - under 3 percent of 11-15 year age-group – graduated from secondary schools in Bangladesh in 1999. For a country of 130 million people, this proportion of the population with secondary education qualifications has to be regarded as too low.*

Secondary education is currently divided into three stages – junior or lower secondary (classes 6 to 8), secondary (classes 9-10), and higher secondary (classes 11-12). A typical secondary



school consists of classes 6 to 10. The higher secondary stage often is part of a degree college, a relic of the past when secondary stage ended at class 10. Secondary level education is also offered by the madrasah system ; the five-year *dakhil* course corresponds to lower secondary and secondary stage and the two-year *alim* course is equivalent to the higher secondary stage (Box 4.1).

#### Box 4.1

### MADRASAH EDUCATION

Madrasah Education has been a matter of controversy. Religious education remained a private sector initiative for centuries. During the British period recognition was provided to a few ‘apex’ institutions (e.g. Alia Madrasah). This old scheme Madrasah education was introduced in 1780. The new scheme for modernisation of madrasah education was introduced to create equivalent learning competence amongst the graduates of mainstream school and new scheme Madrasah. However, a policy of benign neglect continued till the government proceeded to provide subvention to Madrasah and recognize academic credentials offered by Madrasahs as equivalent to those from the secular schools. This has resulted in large expansion of the Madrasah sector in the 1980s. This brought forth the issue of making Madrasah education relevant and productive. The debate on the issue is on-going. Creation of a stream of education for building up “the learners to be servants and protectors of Islam” is incongruous with the constitutional provision for a unified system of learning. It is also widely recognized that Madrasah education as it exists *per se* does not produce employable graduates for modern-day vocations.

In the Madrasah system, primary education is provided by ‘Ebtedayee’ institutions (equivalent to five grades in primary schools) and secondary education by Dakhil (equivalent to five grades of lower secondary and secondary schools) and higher secondary by Alim (two years) level institutions. Recently, humanities, science, and business education have been introduced at dakhil and Alim stages. Then there is a two-year Fazil level education and a two-year year Kamil level education. Madrasah Education Board oversees the system and conducts terminal examinations (dakhil to kamil). Besides this stream, there exists a non-formal stream of Madrasah education e.g. *hafizia*, *qiratia*, *quaumi*, *nizamia* under the *kharizia* system which survive on private donation made for religious purposes.

At the Post-Ebtedayee level there are 7,122 institutions constituting 26 percent of all post-primary educational (PPE) institution. The enrolment at PPE level in the Madrasah is 1.5m out of a total of 10.6million which is 15 percent of total PPE enrolment. The girl students at PPE level is 5.1m of which 0.6m are in Madrasah, which is 12.6 percent of the total girl enrolment. Most of the Madrasahs are in rural locations; rural learners account for 91percent of Madrasah enrolment as against about 77 percent in the main stream. Madrasah system (at PPE level) employs 76,000 teachers (23 percent of total) while they account for only 15 percent of total enrolment. Madrasah income structure indicates that 71 percent of income is received as grant from government, 4 percent is collected as student fee, 7.5 percent is received as public donation and 3 percent come from property income. The expenditure pattern shows that 77 percent is spent on salary, about the same as in the general institutions. The dropout rate at junior secondary and secondary level is 16 percent and 43 percent respectively, which are lower than in general education.

Corresponding repetition rates are 12 percent and 8.5 percent which are also lower than the other stream; completion rates are around 90 percent which are higher than the rates in the general education stream.

Average number of students per Madrasah is lower and teacher-student ratio is also more favourable. These statistics related to internal efficiency do not necessarily indicate better performance by the Madrasah system as the terminal examination results (which are not much different from regular secondary schools) and questions about external productivity show.

In 1999, there were some 22, 500 institutions offering partial or full secondary courses. Their enrolment was 9.3 million with girls accounting for just over 50 percent of the total enrolment. (See Table: 4.3 and Position Paper on Secondary Education in Appendices)

**Table: 4.3 Secondary Institutions and Enrolment, 1999**

Type of Institutions	Number of Institutions	Total Number of Students	Number of Girls
Junior Secondary	2 846	616 094	349 095
Secondary	12 614	6 620 845	3 409 728
Higher Secondary	1 097	952 850	385 115
Dakhil Madrasah	4 890	864 717	429 193
Alim Madrasah	1 074	288 194	107 655
Total	22 521	9 342 700	4 680 78 6

Source: BANBEIS, *National Education Survey (Post-Primary), Final report, 1999, pp. 36,38,40.*

Gross enrolment ratio at the lower secondary and secondary stage (age-group 11-15 years) in 1999 was 41.2 per cent. The rate declines significantly to under 20 percent for the higher secondary stage.

The absolute number of those enrolled and proportion of the age-group achieving secondary school qualifications, as noted above, is much lower than the gross enrolment rate may suggest. Rate of dropout is high throughout this stage. In 1999, dropout rates at lower secondary and secondary levels were 21.3 per cent and 52.1 per cent respectively. Repetition rates were 10.5 percent and 15.1 percent respectively at these two levels. (CPD Task Force, Policy Brief on Education, 2001, p.13)

Public examinations held at the end of class 10 and 12 (SSC or Secondary School Certificate and HSC or Higher Secondary Certificate examinations) weed out drastically the number of claimants of secondary education qualifications. Less than half of the students taking the SSC and HSC examinations during the period 1988-2000 passed the examinations. The situation of the Madrasahs, for whom separate public examinations are conducted by the Madrasah Education Board is similar to secondary schools. (Position Paper on Secondary Education.)

The transition rate of students who complete primary education and enrol in secondary school has improved steadily from just over 60 percent in 1990 to close to 80 percent in 1997. (Position Paper on Secondary Education) It should be remembered that only about half of the primary school age-group manage to complete primary education. Discounting all those who don't qualify to seek a place in secondary school, the transition rate, the dropout in secondary school years, and the rate of failure in public examinations, the result is the low level of secondary education attainment of the population and low effective participation noted at the beginning of the section. A World Bank estimate indicates the survival rate in secondary education as shown below (Table: 4.4).

A system that rules out entry to a very large number of potential participants and then allows a very small minority to reach the final destination is inherently inequitable. The elimination of the poor and the disadvantaged from the race to enter secondary school begins in the primary school. Poverty still remains a deterrent to secondary school access because, in addition to tuition, there are high additional costs for transportation, uniforms, books and materials and private tutoring. UNDP reports that "the bottom 20 percent [of the families] receive only six percent of the benefits of secondary education [in terms of participation in it];

**Table: 4.4 Survival through the Secondary School Gauntlet**

Stage	Coefficient %	Cumul. Survival Rate (%)
Percent entering grade VI	100	100
Percent completing grade X	60	60

Percent passing SSC	52	31
Percent entering grade XI	80	25
Percent completing grade XII	62	15
Percent passing HSC	32	6

Source: World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. II, Table 3.6, p.70

the top 20 percent receives 35 percent of the benefits.” (GOB-UNDP 1992) A UNDP-GOB survey in five thanas in 1992 showed that recurrent expenditures in urban secondary schools were twice (TK.1660 per student) that of rural schools (Tk. 842), mainly because of higher salary levels in urban schools. (Government of Bangladesh, UNDP and World Bank, 1994) Entry into a good secondary school and a strong HSC credential is the passport to the potential high private return from higher education. Unequal access to and unequal outcome from secondary education serves as a reinforcing agent for prevailing disparities and inequalities in society.

A positive development, in spite of overall inequities, is the closing of the gender gap in secondary school participation. Incentives such as stipends and elimination of tuition for girls in rural areas have made a difference. Although this is a desirable outcome in its own right, this does not compensate for the structure of inequity that characterizes the system. More girls, in absolute numbers, are benefiting from education, but girls from the poorest families, from remote rural areas, from urban slums, and from ethnic minorities remain vulnerable and deprived as do their male counterparts.

#### *Vocational and technical education*

Very limited opportunities for organized vocational and technical skill development ( in contrast to informal skill development through on-the job experience) for the size of the population is the defining characteristic of this sub-sector. The intake capacity of the vocational and technical training facilities in the public sector is only about 30, 000. If all of the private sector institutions and the vocational courses in secondary schools are included, the number will still be barely 80,000 compared to 9 million enrolment in secondary education. Vocational and technical institutions and their enrolment capacity in 2000 are shown below (Table: 4.5).

Short duration courses related to income-earning opportunities are provided by Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Women affairs and the Ministry of Social Welfare.

The Department of Youth in the Ministry of Youth and Sports run over 200 centres in which training of 1 to 6 month’s duration is offered with the aim of helping trainees engage in self-employment. Trainees are also offered small credits. The Department also offers mobile courses of duration shorter than a month. The Ministry of Women’s Affairs provides short courses for women in such areas as poultry, dairy, livestock, food processing, plumbing, and electronics which have local demand. Ministry of Social Welfare also runs short courses especially for women.

**Table: 4.5 Vocational- technical institutions and their intake, c.1999**

<b>Vocational Institutions</b>	<b>No. of Institutions</b>	<b>Intake Capacity</b>	<b>Responsible Agency</b>
<b><u>Diploma level</u></b>			
Polytechnic	20	4 360	Min. of Education
Monotechnic	5	430	Min. of Education

Ag. Training Inst.	11	2 000	Min. of Agriculture
Textile Institute	6	360	Min. of Education
Forestry Institute	1	50	Min. of Forestry
Inst. of Marine Technology	1	50	Min. of Education
Military Eng. Centre	2	400	Min. of Defence
Private Engineering Inst	41	3 720	Private Sector
Private Agric Institutes	10	1 640	Private Sector
Commercial Institutes	23	2 500	Edn. Min.& Priv. Sector
Inst. of Multimedia Tech.	1	80	Private Sector
HSC (Business Management)	473	17 200	Private Sector
HSC (Vocational)	3	120	Private Sector
Vocational Institutions	33	1 200	Priv. Sector/ Min. of Edn.
Survey	2	120	Min. of Edn./Local Govt.

***(Total intake capacity in post-10<sup>th</sup> grade diploma courses adds up to 33 000)***

**Certificate Level**

Vocational Training Inst.	59	--	Min. of Edn
Technical Training Centre	11	--	Min. of Labour & Empl.
Textile Voc. Inst.	30	--	Min. of Industry
Inst. of Glass and Ceramics	1	--	Min. of Education
NGO-run Voc. Institutes	176	--	NGOs
Voc. Stream in Sec. School	500	--	Min. of Edn.

***(Total intake capacity for post-grade 8, certificate level courses, including vocational streams in secondary schools, is 48 000)***

*Source: Estimate based on Position Paper on Vocational and Technical Education*

Enrolment statistics in vocational and technical education and training by the categories of institutions listed in (Table: 4.5) are not available from a central source such as DTE, in spite of the centralized management structure of the sub-sector. Data by types of courses (Table:4.6) indicate a reasonable matching of total intake capacity and enrolment. In 2000-2001 academic year, about 114,000 students were enrolled in the major formal programs of vocational and technical education according to DTE. This number is almost double of enrolment in the same categories four years earlier in 1997-1998.

**Table: 4.6 VTE Enrolment by courses in 2000-2001 and 1997-1998**

VTE Courses	2000-2001	1997-1998
Diploma-in-Engineering	17 793	17 713
SSC (Voc)	53 291	16 092
HSC (BM)	24 005	7 172
Diploma-in-Agriculture	4 513	6 814
Basic Trade (Self Financed)	2 779	-
Secondary School-Linked Course	8 562	10 044
Diploma-in-Commerce	1 059	986
Diploma-in-Textile	809	641
Diploma-in-Ceramics, Graphic Arts, Marine Technology and Surveying	766	680
<b>Total</b>	<b>113 577</b>	<b>60 142</b>

*Source: DTE*

A prominent and innovative NGO program is of Under Privileged Children's Education Program (UCEP), which provides basic education for adolescents who are unable to participate in formal schools, followed by training in skills which are in demand in the employment market. UCEP supports their trainees to find placement and through follow-up

on the job. UCEP enrolls over 18,000 adolescents in the basic education programme in 30 schools and 1,400 trainees in three training centres. Each of these institutions run multiple shifts.

Export of workers overseas in recent years have created a demand for skill training which are catered to by private enterprises. On an average, over 200,000 semi-skilled and skilled workers have found employment overseas each year in the last decade. The non-standard, unregulated and short courses are of uncertain quality in the absence of registration and accreditation by any training agency. (Asian Development Bank, “Vocational Training for the People’s republic of Bangladesh,” September 1955, pp 77-82)

Informal and traditional apprenticeship and on-the-job experience are the means for creating most of the skills that keep the bulk of the economy and production of the country running. A master craftsmen training his assistants in exchange for free labour or reduced compensation produces such skills as welding, turning, bricklaying, carpentry, furniture-making, electrical maintenance, plumbing, bicycle repair, motor mechanics and so on. Not enough is known about the system including its strengths and weaknesses. An attempt to bring the system under official regulation and control would not be a good idea. However, maintaining an overview of the system and considering how the more formal training programs of the government and the private sector can complement and supplement the informal system could enhance the effectiveness of the total nationwide skill generation capacity.

The equity effect of vocational and technical education is linked to three inter-connected questions – (a) the extent the clientele of the programs is the relatively disadvantaged and poor segments of the population;(b) how effective the programs are in imparting sellable skills; and (c) whether there is an impact of the training programs on poverty alleviation.

The formal programs in the public sector is geared largely to young males who have acquired at least lower secondary or higher levels of formal education. A wider clientele including the more disadvantaged can be served to the extent skill development efforts support effectively more non-formal, flexible and variable duration activities with eligibility criteria not strictly tied to formal education. There are many questions about internal efficiency and external effectiveness of programs including their contribution to poverty alleviation, which are discussed below under the heading of quality of education programs.

#### *Tertiary Education*

Less than 10 percent students completing higher secondary education have at present access to different types of university programs. Approximately 50 percent of the rest can enter non-university tertiary education, mostly general degree colleges. Types of institutions and their enrolment are indicated below (Table: 4.7).

**Table: 4.7 Tertiary Education System, 1999**

<b>Institutions</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Enrolment</b>	<b>Females(%)</b>
<u>Universities</u>			
Public Universities	9	70 355	24

Private Universities	16	12 521	20
<u>Colleges</u>			
General Colleges	915	1 252 000	35
(Honours Colleges)	(66)	(147 000)	
(Masters' Colleges)	(81)	(54 000)	
<u>Professional Colleges</u>			
Institute of Technology (BIT)	5	3 000	5
Medical Colleges	22	14 000	-
Other Med. Institutions	52	21 000	-
Colleges of Law	59	18 000	-
Sec. Teacher Training Colleges	53	13 000	-
<u>Other Universities</u>			
Bangladesh Open University	1	36 000*	-
National University (Affiliating)	1	-	-
Bangabandhu Agric.Univ.	1	219	-
Bangabandhu Med.Univ.	1	466	-
Islamic University	1	6 300	-

Source: BANBEIS, 1999

\* Enrolment for 1997

The annual intake capacity of universities in 1999 was 21,000 . Of these 17,000 were in public universities and 4,000 in private universities. Over 900 degree colleges affiliated with the National University can enroll each year about 200,000 students including the small numbers admitted to professional colleges. The number of potential candidates for tertiary education in 1999 was 424,000 who passed higher secondary examination (including 33,000 from Alim Madrasahs).

Bangladesh Open University (BOU), established in 1992, offers a variety of courses in the distance education mode including degree courses in business and education and diplomas and certificates in various fields. The open university (as well as the open school, which does not exist at present) has the potential of broadening access to higher education and meet both social and market demand for it. The number registered in 1997 was reported to be 36,000 in different courses. Less than a quarter of those registered complete courses and take the examination and about half of them receive the diploma. However, the equivalency of these with formal education and their acceptance in the job market have not been established.

*Equity:* The main issues regarding access to tertiary education are two-fold: (a) equity of access to universities and prestigious institutions leading to potentially high private return from higher education; and (b) the balance of enrolment in different fields.

Public subsidy in higher education is significantly high compared to basic education, partly because higher education *per se* is expensive and provides system input for basic education. The question is frequently raised about the level and extent of the subsidy. This certainly flags the issue of equity in respect of different levels of education. Further, there is inequity within the higher education stage between various streams. The question justifiably raised is that public subsidy is neither related to ability to pay nor is it related to social return or to academic excellence. This is again a systemic issue. The ability to compete on the basis of equal opportunities and teaching-learning input at basic education level is not ensured; and this inequality is compounded progressively through various stages of the educational system,

manifesting a selectivity which is urban and wealth biased. This is more so because the need for private expenditure increases with progression along the education ladder. The budgetary practices in the universities also does not promote equity, efficiency and excellence because of the budget allocation process and the way resources are used in a tradition-bound way. Education policy has not addressed this concern.

There is intense competition for a place in the university and public professional colleges. As noted, less than one in ten of the potential candidates can enter these institutions, which at least opens the door for high pay-off, even if they do not guarantee the rewards for every one. The screening process of secondary education that allows a very small proportion to complete the secondary stage and diversion of the large majority of higher education aspirants to generally low quality degree colleges (see discussion on quality later) make for a highly inequitable system of tertiary education. Selectivity based on merit for admission to higher education is not the issue; the problem arises from looking upon general colleges as merely an expedient way of meeting social and political demand for higher education rather than as the means for offering credible educational programs.

Although progress has been made in primary and secondary education in respect of gender balance in access, at the tertiary level disparity persists. About a third of the students in degree colleges are girls and under a quarter are girls in universities. (See Box 4.2)

Balance among disciplines in public universities remains tilted towards arts and humanities at the cost of science, technology and applied subjects (Table 4.8). In the degree colleges, it is even more skewed in favour of arts and humanities, mainly because of the low cost of these courses. The distribution of enrolment in public universities in different fields are shown below. A formula cannot be prescribed for distribution among disciplines, but over 80 percent in general studies is widely regarded as inappropriate.

**Table: 4.8 Enrolment in Different Fields in Public Universities, 1999**

<b>Fields</b>	<b>Percentage of Total Enrolment</b>
Arts	18.6
Social Sciences	21.3
Science	20.0
Commerce	12.0
Law	2.0
University Institutes	6.3
Special Programs (M.Phil., Phd.)	2.0
Agric., Engin., Medicine, others	18.0

*Source: Calculation from BANBEIS data*

**Box 4.2**  
**FEMALE EDUCATION**

The constitution of Bangladesh has provided for non-discrimination in all matters including education. Even though this intent has been recognized in plans and policies, and progress has been made in educational access at primary and secondary levels, gender equity has remained elusive in many respects. Human Development Report 2000 reported the Gender Development Index (GDI) value for Bangladesh to be 0.441 with a rank of 121 amongst 174 countries. Female literacy in 1998 was reported to be 24.6 for female as against 51.1 for male. The combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrolment ratio was shown to be 30 for female and 40 for male. The GDP per capita in PPP US \$ for female was estimated to be 744 as against 1949 for male. NEP 2000 devoted a special section on women's education for removal of social and economic barriers to their right to education; to make them aware of their social, political, civic and economic rights; and to make them skilled to achieve equal participation in work place. The strategies for achieving these goals included (a) special allocations and other measures for inclusion of women in the education system (b) special efforts for their retention including making curriculum girl-friendly and cognizant of women's needs, and (c) expansion of opportunities for girls in skill training. By 1999, in primary and post-primary general education the percentage of girls were 49.4, in Madrasah education 40.2 percent, in technical education 23.9 percent, and in professional education 32.5 percent of enrolment. Barriers still discourage girls from enrolling into physical and natural science and applied science courses, e.g., engineering. The obstacles include cultural influence, stereotyping gender-role at home and at school, absence of women role models, misperception about non-traditional occupations, erosion of self-esteem amongst girls in their teens, particularly in poor families and non-urban areas, under-representation of women issues in text books, and myths based on a masculine view of excellence. The approach for widening and deepening of educational opportunities for girls and encouraging them for accessing such opportunities for achievement require more than expansion of facilities. An enabling learning environment; teaching methods and co-curricular activities which are gender sensitive; women and girl-friendly physical facilities; relating learning to societal realities; and career profiling for women in non-traditional jobs are some of the measures that can help produce gender-equity in education. To raise awareness about female education issues, public and academic discourses are necessary not merely on access but also on relevance, not merely on equity but also on excellence, and not merely on easy progression but also on attainment of excellence. Female education has to be viewed as a means to achieving broader change in the education system and in society.

## 4.2 Quality of Education

Quality in educational programs is best reflected in learning achievements of students. It is the outcome of combined effects of a host of factors. These include inherent soundness of program objectives and program designs, adequacy of resources consistent with objectives, internal operations and management of programs, circumstances that affect learners' ability to participate in learning effectively, and how quality indicators are defined and assessed.

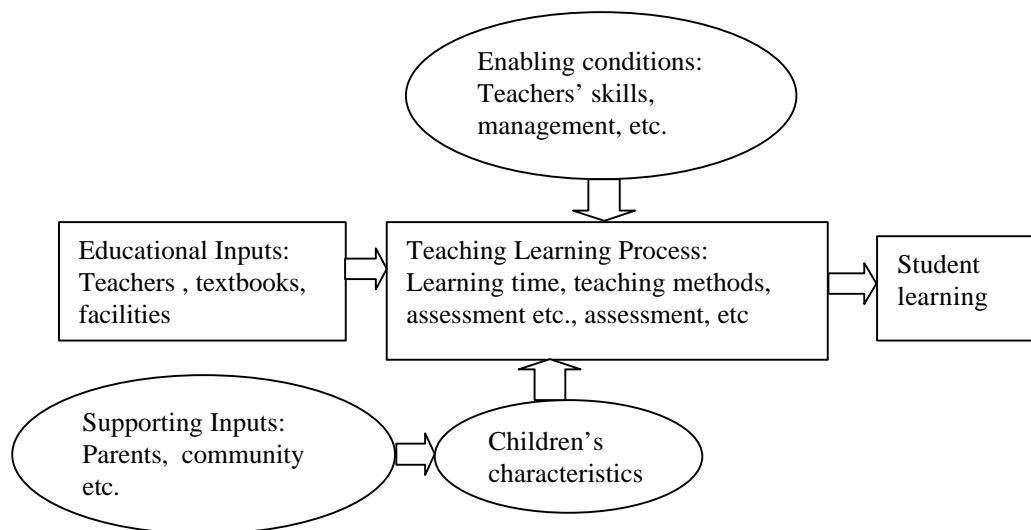
A useful analytical approach to look at educational quality is to apply a system approach of input, process and outcome. In an educational system, the major inputs, besides students, include teachers, curricula and learning materials, and the physical facilities. These inputs, brought together in the right manner and the right combination, make the teaching-learning process happen. The outcome of this transaction is the learning achievement – knowledge, skills and attitudes intended to be acquired by learners. (Figure 4.1)

Conceiving the educational program as a self-contained system makes the analytical task somewhat simpler at the cost of failing to capture the full complexity of education as a social institution. Characterization and assessment of "quality" of the educational phenomenon cannot be detached from the question of who the learners are and what their circumstances are, considered in part above in discussing access and equity issues. It is also linked with governance and management issues that go beyond how an individual institution operates.



(See diagram below.) Quality, of course, is dependent on financial provisions and how effectively financial resources are used to ensure that the human and physical resources are in place. Keeping in mind that quality in education is connected in a complex web with elements beyond the usual pedagogical inputs, (and major categories of these elements are addressed in other parts of this report) quality in terms of learning achievement and the status of the pedagogic inputs (teachers , learning materials and physical learning environment) in the main education sub-sectors are discussed in this section.

Figure 4.1



*Interconnection of Educational Quality Factors. ( Similar schematic views have been suggested by others, such as, in Ward Heneveld, Planning and Monitoring for Quality of Primary Education, AFTHR Technical Note No. 14, World Bank, Washington, 1994.)*

#### Primary Education

A nationwide sample survey of primary school students completing class five carried out by Education Watch in 2000 showed that 1.6 percent of the children acquired all of 27 basic competencies tested in the survey and required to be achieved by children in primary school. (A.M.R. Chowdhury et al. 2001 ). Subject-wise achievements are shown in Table-4.9.

**Table:4.9 Achievement of required competencies by primary school students**

Subject	Percentage achieving competencies
Bangla	36.5
Social Studies	19.2
General Science	17.3
Mathematics	11.6
English	9.4
All 27 competencies	1.6

*Source: Education Watch 2000.*

On an average (instead of the performance of individual children), it was found that children achieved 16.1 competencies or 60 percent of the competencies tested. The median score was also 16. This meant that half of the children failed to achieve 60 percent or more of the basic competencies. (See Annex 4.1)

This latest assessment of quality reflected in learning achievement is consistent with earlier results. An assessment in reading, writing and mathematics skills of 10-11 year old children in 1992 indicated that 22 percent had minimum skills in these areas. (V. Greaney et al.1999). Education Watch 1999 reports the results of a test on “basic education” consisting of items on reading, writing, arithmetic and “life skills.” It was found that under one-third of the children aged 11-12 years performed at a qualifying level in this test of elementary skills. (A.M.R.Chowdhury, et al. 1999). (See Annex 4.2)

Education Watch 2000 findings also showed that:

- Non-formal primary education programs did better ( achievement of all 27 competencies by 6 percent of the students) than government primary schools (by 1 percent) and government-aided registered primary schools ( by 0.9 percent), although overall performance in all categories was low.(See Box- 4.3)
- Urban children did better than their rural counterparts (achievement of all competencies by 3.2 percent and 1.2 percent of the students respectively).
- Boys did somewhat better than girls in Bangla, Mathematics Religious Studies; girls did better than boys in English; the difference in Social Studies and Science was statistically not significant; overall scores for girls and boys were not significantly different. (achievement by 1.8 percent and 1.5 percent).

Another significant finding was that, while overall performance was low, students did even worse in those competencies which depended on thinking and reasoning, rather than only recall. (Education Watch 2000, p. xxv.)

A number of essential conditions necessary for maintaining acceptable quality is generally absent in primary schools. Effective instructional time for students is one of the lowest by international comparison. Official instruction hours are 2.5 hours per day for classes 1 and 2 (444 hours in a year compared to 1100 hours in Indonesia and 1235 hours in China). But in reality, it may be less than a hour a day (A.H.M. Karim 1992). With average low attendance of students, noted earlier, and reported “irregular presence” of teachers, instructional time is further depleted and academic discipline and accountability are eroded. Observation of classroom practices as a part of the Education Watch 2000 sheds light on some likely causes of poor learning achievement:

- No lesson plan is followed, particularly in formal schools. The teachers in non-formal schools were more likely to use lesson plans.
- The teaching-learning process in the formal school was “teacher-centred.” There was an effort to make it “learner-centred” in the non-formal programs.
- Formal schools (both government and private ones) emphasized memorization and rote learning; the non-formal programs generally gave greater attention to activity-based instruction.
- In formal schools, assessment of student learning was casual and “oral”, in non-formal schools a somewhat more structured oral and written assessment was undertaken. Remedial measures for slow learners as a result of assessment were rarely seen.

Assessment was directed more towards better students usually sitting in the front of the class in formal schools.

- Use of teaching aid was almost non-existent, especially in formal schools.
- Teachers are not consciously aware about the 53 listed competencies for primary education and hence no special effort is made to ensure that students master these.

#### **Box 4.3**

##### **THE FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION DIVIDE**

Among the primary schools covered in the (Education Watch 2000) survey – government primary schools, non-government registered primary schools and non-formal primary education centers – the last category has come out consistently superior to the others in respect of pupil performance. In all of the six domains of competencies tested, non-formal centers recorded a difference over both government and non-government formal primary schools. This difference is largely consistent for urban and rural children and genders.

The sample of non-formal centers was drawn only from the BRAC program, which is the dominant provider of non-formal primary education in terms of total number of facilities. The key elements behind the comparatively better performance of non-formal centers, indicated by various studies and supported by the findings of the survey, are the following:

- There is strict accountability and a strong system of supervision regarding teacher performance. Teachers are on the job, every day, on time, which upholds the discipline of the school schedule and encourages regular student attendance. This would be regarded as a minimal condition for any institution to function properly, but which is not the norm in formal primary schools.
- The two-week pre-service training for teachers is followed by regular monthly refresher training focusing on practical classroom and pedagogic issues; teachers follow a strict routine of daily lesson plan which lays out detailed steps and activities leading to the defined outcome for each day.
- The essential learning materials and text books are provided to all children; these are made available on time and in sufficient quantity; parents are spared any direct costs in fees or for buying learning materials, which is especially important when the target is poor families.
- A close involvement of even illiterate parents in their children's education is encouraged by teachers; the small centers of 33 children in each serve a neighbourhood establishing a rapport between the community and the school.

The policy question is how the advantages of the non-formal centers can be incorporated into formal schools, even when the differences in the circumstances of the two are recognized. There are no simple answers, but establishing a stronger performance accountability of teachers and schools specifically focusing on learning outcome, re-examining the effectiveness of teacher training and supervision, ensuring that learning materials and textbooks are available on time to all children, meaningful involvement of parents in school and better communication between parents and teachers of their children have to be important items on any quality improvement agenda. Another important move would be to promote local-level comprehensive planning (at the village, union and upazila level) for educational services of acceptable quality for all children, involving in the process all stakeholders including NGOs, government and government-assisted institutions, community leaders and the local government structure. The aim would be to identify and implement essential quality improvement measures in all primary education institutions in the area.

Source: Education Watch 2000, pp. 48-49.

*Teachers.* It is estimated that there are 360,000 teachers in primary education (including government and registered non-government schools, non-formal centers and Madrasahs). The respective percentages out of the total number of teachers in the four types of institutions are 43, 24, 13 and 12. Most teachers in primary education are receiving pedagogic training. There are two prevailing models of training : a) a year-long certificate of education course offered at

Primary Teacher Training Institutes (PTI), and b) the NGO model consisting of an intensive two-week initial orientation followed by monthly one-day refresher and regular classroom supervision. Education Watch 2000 survey shows that the non-formal method is associated with better achievement in competencies by students. The teacher education part of the education Watch 2000 survey points to many problems in the training of teachers in the formal system which caters to over 80 percent of children in primary education. These include the fact that the trainers themselves have no first-hand experience of teaching primary school children, large class sizes in training institutes that encourage lectures as the only teaching method, too heavy a work-load of trainers, curriculum and learning materials that do not relate to real-life classroom problems, and no linkage between pre-service and in-service training and supervision. (Education Watch 2000, pp.33-39.) A recent assessment of the major externally assisted Primary Education Development Program, corroborates these weaknesses of teacher education. (“Assessment of the PEDP, draft, December 2001).

The inadequate pre-service training of teachers is not compensated for by effective in-service training in the formal system, in contrast to the non-formal programs. The Assistant Upazila Education Officers (AUEO) are expected to promote better teaching-learning in schools by academic supervision and in-service training sessions in “sub-clusters” of nearby schools. However, AUEOs are recruited directly from universities and have little knowledge or understanding of primary education. The training given to AUEOs by the National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) is considered “insufficient to equip them for all their duties and to compensate for their lack of practical knowledge of primary education.” (Assessment of the PEDP, draft, p. 20)

A project of establishing Upazila Resource Centers (URC), designed to bolster in-service professional development of primary school teachers is underway. Currently 95 URCs are in operation. The concept and role of the URC seem to be unclear. Should it just replace or institutionalize the “sub-cluster” training offered by AUEOs, or it should be a true resource center, a professional home for teachers where they can get help and advice in respect of teaching methods, leaning materials and aids, and any assistance they need to do a better job in the classroom and the school. In any event, implementation of the project is hobbled as much by lack of clarity about its function as by logistical problems of physical establishment of the centers, deployment of personnel for them, and relationship with Upazila staff such as AUEO and Upazila Education Officers. (Assessment of the PEDP, draft, p. 20)

*Curriculum and learning materials.* In the course of developing a test of competencies in primary education, researchers for Education Watch 2000 found that only 27 of the 53 competencies listed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) could be considered as measurable competencies that conform to usual meaning of the term. They also relate to lower cognitive skills involving factual knowledge and recall, rather than critical thinking and problem-solving. Many of the other listed skills concern values and faith, rather than actual skills. Continuous and periodic formative and summative assessment of children’s learning is expected to be undertaken , but the definition of competency, absence of criteria and assessment tools for judging progress have made the job difficult. Consequently, there is little assessment of learning progress in the classroom as a key element of pedagogy.

Education Watch 2000 has found that the competencies are “reflected” in the textbooks and teachers’ guides in the sense of inclusion of content related to the competencies. However, lack of clarity about the concept of competency and inadequacy of criteria and tools for assessing progress in learning have made it difficult to incorporate the competencies in learning materials in a pedagogically effective manner. (Assessment of the PEDP, draft, p. 23).

Education Watch 2000, in drawing policy implications from its findings, suggests that in various components of the teaching-learning process - the curriculum, definition of competencies and learning objectives, preparation of learning materials and textbooks, teacher training (especially in respect of teaching language and mathematics to young children) and supervision, and assessment of learning outcome - a high priority be accorded to equipping children with the basic tools of literacy and numeracy. It is necessary to reconsider the list of competencies and the relative emphases on them in order to ensure that necessary time and effort are directed to acquiring the core literacy and numeracy competencies by students. (Education Watch 2000 p.49.)

Mismanagement, delays and corruption have plagued production, printing and distribution of textbooks. For a large part of the academic year students, especially in rural areas, go without textbooks, which is the only learning aid most students have to rely on. Supplementary reading material and other teaching aids are virtually non-existent in formal schools. Such basic items as paper, pencils, crayons, pictures, and maps are in short supply, especially for children from poor families, since these have to be bought by them with scarce cash.

*Physical facilities.* Growing enrolments have increased overcrowding in over half of the schools. Sanitation and security of facilities are frequently a problem, which is a disincentive, especially, to girls. PEDP assessment notes that there remains a shortage of physical facilities that will be necessary to address to reduce class size and increase contact hours by phasing out shifts. (Assessment of the PEDP, draft, p.15) Dismal physical environment in most schools is a problem because there is usually little recurrent budget allocation for routine maintenance. This is attempted to be compensated by major repair from development budget allocation every ten years or so, which is wasteful and makes the school always look shabby and in disrepair. A school maintenance programme with recurrent budget allocation has been decided upon, but is yet to be in effect. (Assessment of the PEDP, draft, p. 15). The problem is compounded by the practice of requiring the central Facilities Department of the Directorate of Primary Education to manage and supervise renovation and construction work.

*Other quality determinants.* Education Watch 2000 has identified from its survey of households and interviews with school and education officials a number family and school-related actors influencing learning achievement in primary education. As noted earlier, children’s ability to participate in the learning process is in part determined by the circumstances of the family and home environment they come from. For example, a child from a home where parents are illiterate is at a distinct disadvantage compared to one whose parents can help and guide the child. The school has to demonstrate awareness of this situation and take this into account, as far as possible, in creating the environment for effective learning. The objective of improved

learning outcome can be achieved only to the extent policies and programs can address major impediments to learning both at school and at home.

*Family-related factors.* Favorable family circumstances of children – a combination of factors including education of parents, parents' ability to spend on private tutoring, parents keeping in contact with teachers about their children's education, and the economic status of the family – have a positive impact on the child's learning achievement. The child's relative young age, which probably reflects parents' interest in a child's education, has also been found to be associated with better learning performance.

The action implication, from the point of view of national and state obligation to provide quality basic education to all children, is that the school program needs to be designed and other ancillary measures taken to compensate for serious family-related deficiencies impeding children's learning. NGOs, targeting specifically disadvantaged groups, have applied this approach with positive results. Among the measures that can be contemplated are: providing learning materials to students and eliminating direct and indirect, official and informal, costs to poor parents; eliminating the need for paid private tutoring; flexibility in school program and routine to suit seasonal agricultural workload for families and situations of working children and so on.

*School-related factors.* School-related factors contributing to positive learning outcome include parents' involvement in school affairs, a reasonable class size, teachers younger in age and professionally trained, school close to the local education office and supervised more often, and an active managing committee. These findings reinforce the importance of establishing a system of accountability for school's and teachers' performance to parents and the community. The community, in turn, needs to be encouraged to be involved in creating the condition for the school and the teachers to function properly. (Education Watch 2000, p.50)

#### *Non-Formal Education*

The basic literacy program, mainly carried out through government-managed Total Literacy Movement, constitutes the bulk of non-formal education in the country. Quality issues in respect of non-governmental NFE activity in primary education has been commented upon earlier in the section on primary education.

An overview of the NFE projects carried out in the later half of the 1990s by the Directorate of Non-Formal Education (and some still on-going) presents at best a mixed picture about quality of the educational activities as it is manifested in learning outcome. The campaign approach of TLM itself presents difficult quality challenges. As project overview of TLM (Project 4) noted, "The focus on quantitative target, a rigid time-table for completion of course, a narrow emphasis on the mechanics of literacy, and the imperatives of declaring districts 'illiteracy-free' raise basic issues about the concept of quality applied in the project and how quality should be and is being ensured in it." (Ahmed and Lohani 2001, p.30) It can be argued that these characteristics of TLM represent a necessary management discipline for any large-scale program. It is a question of balance between a quantitative target orientation and attention to quality and the essential measures to maintain acceptable quality in the program. It is remarkable that there has been no independent and objective evaluation of

internal efficiency and external effectiveness of a program of the magnitude and of national importance as TLM.

Routine management and supervisory information, observation by knowledgeable observers, a rapid assessment report, and the findings of a formative evaluation carried out by independent consultants indicated the following about the project of basic education for hard-to-reach urban working children:

- Less than a quarter of the learners achieved sustainable basic skills. A simple test on reading, writing, numeracy and life-skills administered to a sample of 7000 students showed that of those completing the two-year course, 49 percent scored a passing grade of 70 out of 100 marks. Taking dropout, replacement learners and non-attendance (see below), it is a generous estimate that only about a quarter of the learners had functionally useful learning achievement that would enable learners to continue further learning.
- Around one-third of the learners dropped out and they were replaced by new learners to maintain enrolment of 30 learners in a center. Only about half of the learners attended the class on an average day. According to teachers' reports from sample centers included in the formative evaluation, 23.5 percent of the initial learners dropped out before completing the course. According to students in the sample, 21 percent said they had been in the course from the beginning; in other words, a high proportion was replacement of initial enrollees. The evaluation, based on focus group discussion, estimated that one-third of the initially enrolled students dropped out. The evaluation found an average attendance rate, on the day of visit by the evaluators, of 52 percent.

These data about quality did not apparently surface from regular monitoring and management information system. The quality problems arose in part from the inherent difficulty of serving an extremely disadvantaged group, applying the rule of 30 learners per center too rigidly (not recognizing that a proportion of learners, especially in the prevailing circumstances of the learners, inevitably would drop out), and the varied performance of the implementing NGOs. (Ahmed and Lohani 2001, p.57)

Program monitoring mechanism and capacity - including collection of relevant quantitative and qualitative information; reporting, analyzing, consolidating and sharing the information with concerned parties; and most importantly, use of the management information system for corrective measures – are similarly deficient in all of the NFE projects.

It is essential to build a “culture of quality” into the vision of non-formal education, emphasize quality assurance principles and measures in the policy frame work, and not be satisfied with the prevailing norm of somehow “making do.” Particular attention must be given to: a) incorporating quality objectives and means of achieving these objectives in the scope, objectives and designs of programs; b) establishing quality and performance standards and indicators in respect of learning outcome as well as program inputs and implementation process; c) mechanisms and capacities for applying and enforcing performance and quality standards including effective monitoring and use of monitoring and information system for better management; d) building internal and external, formative and summative evaluation into the program design and implementing these with seriousness; and e) building and utilizing technical and professional capacities and skills for quality assurance including monitoring and evaluation. (Ahmed and Lohani 2001, p. 31)

### *Secondary Education*

It has been noted earlier that six out of 100 entrants to secondary education survive to the end of the cycle. It essentially serves as a screening device for disqualifying and selecting candidates for tertiary education rather than a purpose of its own. If 95 percent of those who enter secondary education are not going to have a place in higher education, how can secondary education become relevant for this vast majority who drop out or do not complete secondary education and the 50 percent or so of the completers who cannot go on to institutions of higher education ?

As an ADB review in 1998 found the curriculum and teaching are geared to preparation for higher education, which only a fraction of the students can aspire for. It does not even remotely relate to prospects for gainful employment in local businesses, entrepreneurship and practical skills. (Asian Development Bank, Secondary Education Sector Development Plan 2000-2010, 1998).

Examinations, including public examinations, SSC and HSC, “do not attempt to measure the wide range of learning outcomes adequately...[they] mostly test knowledge or ability to recall facts and information and hardly any attention is given to the higher abilities of reasoning, understanding, application, analysis and synthesis.” (GOB, UNDP and UNESCO 1992, p.38)

The nationwide secondary public examinations, SSC and HSC, are intended to serve as a means of maintaining quality standards and credibility of secondary education provided through a motley collection of institutions with unequal resources and facilities. This is an important function of public examinations. How well is this function performed? Apart from the dominance of rote memorization and recall of facts, the examinations have been fraught with mismanagement, cheating and indiscipline, which compromise their integrity.

Recent expansion in enrollment in secondary education has not been matched by increase in physical capacity and human resources, which already had been under pressure. Schools typically lack sufficient classrooms, libraries, laboratories, sports grounds, teachers’ offices and sanitary facilities. Students per class and per teacher have more than doubled to an untenable level of around 60 in ten years since 1990. (BANBEIS data).

A small proportion of teachers, about a third, in non-government schools, which constitute over 95 percent of secondary schools, has professional teacher training. But the large class size, the curriculum focus on factual knowledge, and the generally dispiriting environment in school perhaps render professional training by itself irrelevant. Academic supervision does little to mitigate the problems. “Academic supervision has been one of the weakest areas of secondary education. The present inspection system, established long ago, has not been able to add to the quality of education or to be a source of guidance to the teachers.... It has been centred around checking routine administrative and financial details directed toward maintaining the status quo.” (GOB, UNDP and UNESCO, 1992, p.44) ( See Box 4.4 on Teacher Education.)

A vocational–technical stream recently has been introduced at the secondary level after grade 8. This runs counter to the general experience in this respect that shows that “vocationalizing”

#### **Box 4.4**

#### **TEACHER EDUCATION**

Teacher education in Bangladesh according to NEP 2000 is “simple, conventional, incomplete, certificate oriented, heavy with theories and light in practice, dependent on rote learning and an imitation of old



examination system”.

There are ten Teachers Training Colleges, one Technical Teachers Training College, and one Institute of Education and Research in the public sector and 5 Teachers Training Colleges in the private sector. The Bangladesh Open University offers B.Ed through distance mode of learning. These cater to secondary sector. For the primary sector, there are 53 government and 2 non-government Primary Teachers Training Institutes offering Certificate in Education course. The NGOs have their own model for training of teachers which are non-formal in character.

The Education Watch 2000 Report on the state of primary education indicate that 95.8% of government primary school teachers received basic training while only 32.5% of non-government primary school teachers had such training in 2000. At the secondary level, 43.6% of all teachers had received teacher education; over 90% in public sector schools while it is around 40% for private sector schools. At the college level such teacher education has not been required, nor is it required for other tertiary level institutions. The percentage of trained teacher in the Madrasah system is only 7.3%.

*Access:* The existing arrangement for teacher education is considered inadequate. The demand, especially from the private sector institutions, has not received sufficient attention. To encourage private sector participation in teacher education, it is important to devise individual and institutional motivation and incentive.

*Quality:* Quality of teacher education has been questioned in NEP and by researchers. Conventional orientation does not create quality nor does it create consciousness about creative quality. Theoretical and didactic methods used in teacher training do not prepare teachers for creative and interactive practices in the classroom. Inadequacy of learning inputs and facilities, while real impediment, is too often used an excuse for accepting poor quality and not making an effort to apply quality criteria.

*Relevance:* It raises many issues. One is adaptation of the theories to the local surrounding. Second is opportunity for practice and evolution of creative alternatives. Third is balance between grounding on subject content and pedagogic skills as well as between subject specificity and general orientation. Fourth is creating awareness about commitment to education and social development. The present training curricula need changes not only for upgrading learning but also for creating consciousness about purpose and use of learning. Madrasah teachers should not need separate teacher training institutions; they should be integrated within the system except for the religion component of their training, if the aim is to move towards better integration of the two systems.

*Effectiveness:* Not much research has been done on teacher education. There are two contrasting schools of thought. One is that no one would join or benefit much from prevailing modes of teacher education except for the compulsion created by government subvention requirements. The other is that teacher education creates sensitivities which mature with age and opportunity, but which is often constrained by resource availability and management environment in schools.

*Efficiency:* Efficiency of teacher education both at C-in-Ed and BED/MED levels are high if the passing out ratio is considered. External effectiveness, in a narrow sense, is also high in the sense that trained teachers are mostly employed. But if effectiveness is to be judged by impact on the system; adoption of relevant techniques, tools and knowledge; and improvement of the quality of education; then the outcome remains questionable. The explanation of the poor or ineffective outcome lies, most people believe, in the rigidity of the system that does not encourage creativity and insufficient resources for essential inputs, such as, learning aids and books and classes that are too large in the training courses. Another factor affecting outcome is the lack of hands-on teaching experience with children of teacher-trainers themselves.

secondary schools raises the cost of the sub-sector without corresponding benefit in terms of developing skills and enhancing employability of graduates. This move is undoubtedly a response to the need for making secondary education relevant for those not expected to qualify for higher education. And a redeeming feature of the project is that it uses unused capacity in VTIs and TTCs rather than investing in new facilities in secondary schools. International experience, however, suggests that the most useful vocational/occupational preparation at the secondary level is a sound foundation of communication skills, mathematics,

and basic science that would enable the graduates to take advantage of a range of skill development and training opportunities according to market demands, instead of pursuing a formal course in the secondary school itself. It would be, therefore, important to watch how cost-effective and efficient the vocationalization initiative turns out to be before expanding it further.

#### *Vocational and Technical Education*

This sub-sector, more than any other, is expected to prove its worth by enabling students to cash in the benefits of education and training in the form of employment and income. Quality of VTE, therefore, can be looked at from the point of view of external effectiveness. The main issues in respect of external effectiveness of VTE are the links of education and training with the job market and its impact on poverty reduction.

An ADB review observed in 1995 that "... the present intake and training programs [in VTE] are more admissions-oriented than based on real industrial demand." (ADB, Vocational Training for the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Utah University, Final report, September 25, 1995, p.110.) The system is regarded as disconnected from the formal and informal employment market. The centralized management of the institutions throughout the country in the public sector from the capital and based on standard curricula, courses, and organizational arrangements do not allow for interaction with local entrepreneurs and employers. This top-down management does not allow for assessment of local job demands and prospects leading to adjustments and adaptations in training provisions. Nor is there participation of employers and entrepreneur at the central level in policy-making or setting priorities.

The lack of links with job market results in poor job placement of graduates. The placement rate is reported to be 60 to 65 percent for TTCs, about 40 percent for VTIs, and "unemployment is also common among graduates of polytechnics." (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. III, p. 9.) VTE in government institutions is heavily subsidized. Most students receive stipends and subsidized hostel accommodation. Yet one-third of those who finish the courses fail to pass the final examinations.

The impact of public sector VTE on poverty alleviation is minimized in two ways. It is almost exclusively directed at young males who have completed at least grade 8. This rules out the benefits of VTE for those who do not survive in the education system up to grade 9, which is the majority of young people and even a larger majority of the poor. Moreover, many of the current participants of VTE use it to bide time rather than to enter the occupation in which they take the training; typically only one third of the actual employees in middle level occupations are those with formal training in these occupations. (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. III, p. 12). Secondly, failure to diversify its clientele and to make the program more flexible, adaptable to market needs, responsive to local circumstances, and geared to the informal economy means that VTE is failing to help the prospective economically disadvantaged clientele improve its economic status and thus failing to make a contribution to creating employment and income. Non-governmental organizations such as UCEP appear to be confronting this challenge more effectively. (Box 4.5)

#### **Box: 4.5 Comparison of Public and UCEP-administered Vocational Training\***

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\* Main programs, excluding short-term training, e.g., afternoon and evening programs

Criterion	VII/TTC	UCEP
• Labor-market information	Surveys rarely done	Surveys of labor market done regularly by separate cell
• Linkages with industry	Few, but some employer involvement in curriculum development and through internships	Intensive, including Industrial Advisory Committee, sectoral committees and frequent contacts with employers through mandatory shop-floor assignments, organized by separate UCEP office
• Entrance requirements	Class VIII of formal education	Class 7 or 8 equivalent of non-formal education
• Aspiration of students	Majority wants to go on to further education	Virtually all want to enter blue collar occupations
• Length of training program	2 years	1-2 years
• Length of supervised industry practice	3 months, but only done sporadically	3-12 months, done systematically
• Number of hours per day	5-6 hours	3.5 hours
• Number of days per year	<192	270
• Average attendance rate	60-70 percent	90 percent
• Average students per teacher	12	18
• Average working hours per week of instructors	35	>50
• Degree of supervision of students and instructors	Loose supervision; frequent instructor absences reported for some institutions	Intense supervision of students by instructors and of instructors by management
• Percent practical work of total hours	60	80
• Assessment of student work	Assessment at end of each year and end of the cycle	Continuous assessment
• Instruction and teaching	Theory, demonstration; preparation to pass terminal examination; occasional use of job sheets, especially in TTCs	Focus on practical competencies, and attitudes to work; highly structured daily lesson plans and job sheets
• Student stipends and boarding	Tk. 100/ month	None
• Commercial work contracts for supplemental income and practice	Not permitted	Yes, e.g., auto repair, armature rewinding
• Operating cost/student	Tk. 16,000-30,000/p.a.	Tk. 12,000/p.a.
• Average internal success rate **	<50 percent	95 percent
• Focus on exit examination	Strong emphasis on credentials, SSC (Voc)	Basic Skills Test I & II
• Average employment rate	40 percent	95 percent
• Use of tracer studies	None	Information kept on all graduates, including type of employment, salaries and career progression

Source: Bangladesh Education Sector Review, Volume III, World Bank, University Press Ltd., 2000

### Tertiary Education

Historically, tertiary education in Bengal, although serving a small clientele, was generally regarded to be of high quality. University of Dhaka and degree colleges in the district centres of the eastern part of Bengal had earned a reputation for academic standards and as centres of intellectual pursuit. A massive expansion of the system and demands of time have altered the character of higher education over the last half century. Virtually no one would dispute that there has been a serious depletion of quality in higher education, in different senses of the term, especially in recent decades; and that it is not caused just by the large growth of the system.

\*\* Proportion of students who complete the final year of studies and pass the final examination. (In the case of TTCs/VTIs, 80 percent completion x 60 percent pass rate = <50 percent)

The issue of quality in tertiary education can be looked at from the point of view of the question of reconciling the tension between quality and quantity and, adequacy and use of resources and inputs.

*Quality and quantity* The quality differentials of the graduates from various different post-secondary educational institutions are high as are variations between graduates within the same university. This is reflected in the low percentage of students that obtain high grades/first division and the high percentage of students that obtain low second class/third class in the terminal examination, not to mention of the highly variable quality and time-table of examinations. Secondly, the quality differential is also seen from the results of examinations taken by Public Service Commission for entry into government service and market employability of graduates. The annual reports of the Public Service Commission indicate gradual decline in competency, increasing concentration of graduates from fewer institutions which make the grade-- and within institutions, a few departments and disciplines that demonstrate acquired quality and competence. In the market, it is graduates of a few disciplines who enjoy the privilege of early employment offers. The average waiting period for first regular employment has increased from 1 year in the 70s to over 3 years in the 90s. This is a reflection of available employment opportunities, excess supply of graduates as well as mismatch of learning and competency required for employment.

One of the basic issues with respect to quality is the quality of teaching staff. In the public universities, on average 49 percent of teachers have a doctorate degree and another 28 percent have a second master's degree from abroad. Thus in terms of qualification, this seems to be satisfactory. In terms of professional progression, nearly half the faculty are Professors or Associate Professors. The age profile is quite young indicating that they are at the prime of their creative age. The teacher student ratio varies between 1:11 to 1:18. This is quite favorable. This, however, increases somewhat as 15 percent of teachers are on leave for various reasons, but the overall teacher-student ratio remains favorable. This positive element is not reflected in the quality of the teaching-learning process.

The explanation for poor quality output has to be sought in other inter-connected factors. *First*, the recruitment and promotion process has been diluted by undue political influence often to favor the less competent. *Second*, academic supervision by the departmental seniors has been negated by taking away from the Department Chair the critical role of supervision, leadership and responsibility. *Third*, inadequate attention to quality research has been a disincentive to inter-disciplinary work and has made methods of teaching and content of courses stagnant. *Fourth*, there has been severe dilution of institutional accountabilities in the absence of a proper student, peer and external evaluation system. *Fifth*, on the demand side, excellence of professional preparation and ethical delivery of service have not received due recognition and reward. *Sixth*, on the supply side, the opportunity for moonlighting has increased the cost of sincere professional commitment and has become an incentive for professional irresponsibility; *Seventh*, the misconception of academic autonomy by the faculty and supporting staff have produced a chaotic system of management of academic endeavors. *Eighth*, the compensation package does not reflect the variation in competence and commitment of the faculty. *Ninth*, a virtual tuition free system in the public sector has discouraged students and the community

from demanding accountability in the higher education system. *Tenth*, politicization of a minority of students and the teaching community has created an environment which is destructive for the academic mission of the university.

In number of institutions and enrolment, higher education has recorded over five-fold growth since independence in 1971. But it has been argued that 5 persons per 1000 people in higher education is not sufficient in today's world of "knowledge economy" and "information society" even for a low-income developing country like Bangladesh. The size and growth of higher education *per se* is not the issue. It is not a simple choice of quality over quantity. The question is what shape and character the expansion should take and what kind of compromises in quality is acceptable. Or, to put it in another way, how the conventional notion of quality based primarily on selectivity in an elitist system should be redefined in a developing and modernizing society. There are choices to be made about how and at what pace expansion should be achieved, because the capacity in higher education has to continue to grow. There are options about how much of the growth should be in public and how much in private sectors. Choice has to be exercised regarding balance among academic disciplines, among "applied" and "basic" fields, and the extent professional and specialized qualifications should rely on university or college-based formal courses (as opposed to training and certification by professional associations and credit for on-the-job experience). It is sometimes argued that "there is really only one standard of quality – the global one." (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. 1, p.27.) This argument ignores that "one standard of quality" for any field of study or profession has not been universally established and perhaps cannot be established, that criteria and concept of quality are not static and immutable, and that a standard of quality aspired for is not achieved instantaneously. For a developing country, the critical need is to establish acceptable criteria of quality, making the appropriate choices, and to strive hard with systematic plans and time-tables to move forward. This is where Bangladesh shows signs of failure. An expansionist approach has been followed, particularly in the sphere of degree colleges under the National University, often without applying existing criteria and requirements about staff resources and facilities and without applying fully procedures for academic recognition.

The Fifth Plan proposes to apply a similar expansionist approach in respect of universities without sufficient attention to enforcing quality criteria, when it provides for establishment of 12 new universities of science and technology in the public sector, including six during the current plan period ending in 2002. This becomes a matter of extra concern when one observes that there are no indications that progress is being made in dealing with serious problems of management, student discipline, resources and internal efficiency in general in existing public universities. A major expansion of public universities without at least beginning to reverse the erosion of academic discipline and governance in the existing ones appears to be a recipe for multiplying the problems.

*Resources and inputs.* UNDP indicated several causes of low quality in tertiary education: (a) inadequate professional preparation of teachers in both subject matters and teaching methods, (b) lack of academic supervision, (c) little encouragement and resources for research, (d) lack of teacher and institutional accountability, and (e) lack of sufficient textbooks and

reference material. These problems identified in the early 1990s still remain largely valid. (UNDP, Post-Primary Education Sector Strategy Review, 1994)

There is no regular staff upgrading system either in the subject content or in teaching methods. In government colleges, there are long delays in recruitment for vacancies undertaken centrally by the public service commission. Private colleges and universities have problems in recruiting qualified full-time staff for the remuneration they offer. Virtual open admission to non-government degree colleges has led to overcrowding in most of these institutions. Class size averages at 70, whereas neither the facilities nor the staff strength and teaching practices are adequate to handle such numbers. (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. III, p.68).

Actually, the situation is worse for government degree colleges, which have a reputation for having relatively better qualified staff and better facilities, and are more in demand.

A very high proportion of the university budget is devoted to salaries, leaving little for non-salary inputs such as teaching equipment, supplies, reference materials and research. For these latter categories, proportion of recurrent expenditures spent at Dhaka University in 1996 was 6.1 percent, 3.7 percent at Rajshahi University, 3.2 percent at Bangladesh Agricultural University, and 9.5 percent at Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology. (University Grants Commission, Annual Report, 1997) Overall, in public universities, salaries account for three quarters of the recurrent budget, a very high proportion by international comparison, starving out other necessary inputs.

### **4.3. Governance and Management of Education**

Governance and management issues encapsulate the problems of the educational system. All of the weaknesses and deficiencies—be they in respect of the pedagogic process, resources and inputs, access and participation issues, teaching personnel, and curricula and learning materials—can be attributed ultimately to governance and management of the system. Yet, the administration and management process and procedures are ruled by regulations and practices based on tradition, custom and precedence rather than responsiveness to changing needs and conditions. On the whole, there is no recognition of the need for specialized and professional skills, and the importance of building a professional cadre for managing such complex and large systems as primary and secondary education. This is particularly evident in South Asia including Bangladesh, where the education system and its management have evolved during the colonial period and have been carried over into the post-independence era.

The major issues in governance and management of education, some growing out of historical antecedents and some arising from more recent socio-economic and political developments, concern: (a) perception and practices regarding the role of the government in different levels and sub-sectors of education, (b) excessive centralization and bureaucratic control of the system, (c) poor internal efficiency throughout the system, and (d) an inordinately high degree of intrusion of partisan politics into educational management. How these key issues are manifested in the main sub-sectors of education are briefly presented below.

#### *Primary Education*

The government directly manages schools which enrol 60 percent of the primary school students and pays for 90 percent of staff costs and provides capital grants to the others. Free textbooks are provided to all of these schools. A stipend program and food-for-education distribution for some 20 percent of the children are in effect. (According to a recent government decision, food distribution will be replaced by cash payment.) These public provisions represent a high level of government commitment to basic education. The negative side of it is that government funding brought in its wake the heavy hands of centralized bureaucratic control. It has also weakened community involvement and ownership in primary education. In fact, historically, primary education was managed by district education boards, which received government subventions, but planned and managed schools in the district. The government “nationalized” all primary schools in 1973, as an expression of state commitment to universal primary education, and thus created one of the largest centralized systems of primary education in the world.

The sense of state obligation for primary education does not extend to NGO-run non-formal primary education programs, which do not receive free textbooks or any salary support, although they serve the more disadvantaged groups of children and show better performance than formal schools in respect of learning achievement. (Education Watch 1999 and 2000)

There is a broad consensus of professional views regarding a) the need for establishing greater accountability to parents and community for performance of students and teachers, and b) changing the current highly centralized and bureaucratic planning and decision-making in the vast and far-flung system of primary education to a more decentralized, professional expertise-based and participatory management approach. These views have been expressed, among others, in the new education policy statement (approved during the tenure of the previous political regime) and the recommendations of the Education Task Force of the Centre for Policy Dialogue. (Centre for Policy Dialogue 2001)

The CPD Task Force, echoing widely held professional views, proposes that autonomous district education authorities should become the pivotal entity for overall planning and management of primary and secondary education. The district authorities should manage educational resources provided by the government and other locally generated resources and support community and school-based plans and programs for quality basic education for all. It is also suggested that the decentralization process and district-based management should be initiated on a trial basis in a few districts to help capacity-building and to learn how the decentralized system can be protected from corruption and politicization, two major problems in the education system, which have crippled various reform efforts. Whether policy reforms will move in this direction remains uncertain in the face of formidable political resistance and bureaucratic inertia.

As the discussion on access and quality has shown, primary education is characterized by huge wastage. Although some progress has been made in reducing dropout, and improving retention and completion, on average, it takes 8.7 years of instruction for each graduate from the five year school cycle. (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. II, p.16.)

Extremely low learning achievement further indicates the weakness in performance standards and accountability throughout the system.

### *Non-Formal Education*

A recent synthesis of experience of major NFE projects under the Directorate of Non-Formal Education has noted several organizational and management weaknesses in the no-formal education sub-sector. (Ahmed and Lohani 2001)

*Committee structures for management:* In general, the committees at all levels (from the PMED to the literacy centre) were ineffective. The National Council for Primary and Mass education (NCPME), established in 1996 and chaired by the Prime Minister met only once in five years. Similarly, the Project Coordination Committee (PCC), headed by the Secretary, PMED, also met only once. The effectiveness of committees at the district, upazila, union, block and centre level depended mainly on the commitment and interest of the Deputy Commissioner in the case of TLM.

*Professional development:* Staff turnover is a serious problem that affects institutionalization of DNFE and raising its professional capacity. The role of external technical assistance in strengthening the capability of DNFE both at headquarter and district levels was undermined by high turnover of staff. The contract staff employed in projects, who had gained useful experience, was not retained after the end of the project as the decision about establishing the National Academy for Non-Formal Education (NANFE) as a technical and professional support centre could not be finalized. A project-based approach for technical assistance in DNFE did not facilitate a coordinated and optimal utilization of TA resources. DNFE is yet to be transformed into a genuine "learning organization", which is able to learn and apply lessons as it implements activities.

*NGO capacity.* Observers and external development partners have pointed out the weak management capacity and lack of experience in running educational programs by implementing NGOs as a major cause of poor performance by learners. For example, according to the formative evaluation of NFE-3 on urban working children, about two-thirds of the NGOs, contracted as implementing organizations, fell short of meeting performance criteria satisfactorily, and half of them did not have previous experience in running education programs. The criteria of effectiveness applied to NGOs were their ability to enrol and retain targeted children in the course and to help them attain acceptable learning achievement. The emphasis seems to have been on meeting the numerical target of enrolment and retention, on which depended disbursement of funds to NGOs. This issue is linked with the question of criteria of selection of NGOs and the application of the criteria, which have led to the selection of a large number of NGOs as implementing organizations. All of them are not necessarily experienced and capable. External development partners have argued for a small number of NGOs with demonstrated management capacity and educational program performance to be given the implementation responsibility. They have emphasized the importance of quality control, creativity and responsiveness to learners' situation, experience in community mobilization and bringing additional pedagogic and other resources for clientele, for all of which only a limited number of NGOs could be relied upon. Dealing with a much smaller number would also reduce the management burden of DNFE.

The option of a comprehensive network of non-formal learning serving a wide clientele would require commensurate rethinking of organizational and management structures and functions.



Major elements of such a rethinking would include various aspects of organizational arrangements, management roles and functions at different levels and the relationships between the principal government non-formal education agency and all other stakeholders and potential partners and their respective roles.

*Decentralization.* In line with the overly centralized structure of public administration and the educational system, NFE in the public sector is also highly centralized. DNFE is the executing agency for all the major projects and has the responsibility for planning and designing programs, providing the finances, designing curricula and supplying learning materials, and exercising overall monitoring and supervision. In TLM, district administration is given the task of implementing the project as designed by DNFE, without any authority to modify or adapt project to local conditions. A broader range of activities serving various learner groups will multiply the complexity and difficulty of management tasks many-fold. An option would be to decentralize management to the district level in the form of a District Non-formal Education Council as a registered society. This Council would receive government finances and technical support for projects designed and managed by the Council (or by NGOs and community organizations on behalf of the Council) for communities and learner groups in the district. DNFE, in this scenario, would become a facilitator and provider of financial and technical support rather than direct and manage programs.

*Partnership-building.* Almost in all NFE activities other than TLM, NGOs have played an important role. There are whole sectors of NFE such as non-formal primary education or early childhood education which are left to non-governmental organizations. Partnerships, rather than a contractual relationship between DNFE and NGOs, should be the norm, at least in respect of organizations with demonstrated interest and capacity in education. In a decentralized system, the locus of the partnership would be the district and the local level. Partnerships and collaboration would be important between providers of education and training and business and trade bodies, employers, providers of credit, and those who can help in entrepreneurship development and marketing of products. This is facilitated when educational activities are locally designed, flexible, and adaptable to changing market signals. The lack of appreciation of the importance of partnership and lack of enthusiasm for it on the part of the government are evident from the decision to exclude NGOs from TLM, which is purported to be a social movement, but managed by the government administrative machinery.

*Technical and professional support mechanism.* For the management of a matrix of varied programs and clientele, adequate technical and professional capacity at central and sub-national levels providing planning, implementation and capacity-building support is of paramount importance. The idea of a national academy for non-formal education needs to be re-examined in the context of a broader program menu and possible decentralized management of programs. It should be seen as an autonomous research, training, technical support organization staffed by well-qualified professionals and a repository of knowledge and technical resources for NFE. A related issue is the professionalization of DNFE personnel,

especially at the senior level and deployment of senior officials based on interest and commitment and for a sufficient length of tenure.

### *Secondary Education*

A unique feature of the secondary education system in Bangladesh is that 98 percent of all schools are non-governmental, which are managed by local school managing committees, but receive substantial subvention from the government. Secondary Education Boards conduct public examinations at the end of grades ten and twelve. The system managed by local managing committees, but receiving government funds, and school performance validated by public examinations, in principle, represent an ideal form of public-private partnership. In practice, the system is highly dysfunctional, characterized by poor quality of instruction. The dysfunctionality is manifested in high internal inefficiency indicated by a very low student survival rate to the end of the cycle. (See above, section 4.1) Apart from overcrowded classrooms, inadequate physical facilities, and scarce learning materials, the recruitment and remuneration system of teachers attract poor academic performers into teaching. The most serious obstacles relate to weak management and chronic under-financing.

In all developed countries and many developing countries, secondary education is largely a public sector enterprise and is recognized as a public good that should be widely and equitably accessible. However, regardless of the practices elsewhere, a shift to government take-over of the system is unrealistic, given the large additional public spending and a possible shift of resources from other areas of education this would entail. Moreover, the performance of the existing public sector institutions does not inspire much confidence in such a move. The challenge in secondary education management, therefore, is how the present arrangement can be turned into strength and the potential of the public-private partnership that exists in the system can be fully realized. (M. Ahmed 2000, p. 219-291).

Five key central government actors are involved in secondary education management:

1. The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), which administers government subventions, manages teacher training and offers general supervision;
2. The five Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education, which administer public examinations and oversee accreditation of schools;
3. The national Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB), which sets the curricula and approves textbooks;
4. The Directorate of Inspection and Audit (DIA), responsible for ensuring compliance with procedures and financial rules; and
5. The Secretariat of the Ministry of Education, which has overall policy and planning responsibilities.

There is inadequate coordination and articulation in carrying out respective tasks of the various units, which are related to each other. The units are understaffed and professionally ill-equipped for the complex tasks affecting a large number of institutions, teachers and students. The attitudes and culture of extreme centralization permeate the whole system; so much so that minute and mundane details regarding projects originating from the professional staff of DSHE has to pass through the bureaucratic channels in the Ministry's secretariat. These then end up at the desk of the Secretary and then the Minister for final decision. The distribution of

government subventions becomes the rationale for wide-ranging requirements of compliance to procedures, rules, and formalities; but accountability and incentives for outcome in terms of performance and learning achievement by students are largely neglected. (M. Ahmed, 2000) Chronic under-financing exacerbates the management problems. Although most schools are privately managed, the public service norms of low tuition irrespective of ability to pay prevail. The managing committees, often headed by the ruling party politician or the administrative chief of the area, and members selected on the basis of political influence rather than their concern for education, have failed to enforce performance standards and accountability in schools or help mobilize adequate resources for them.

The Secondary Education Sector Development Project assisted by ADB (2000-2005) emphasizes strengthening management of secondary education, performance standards and accountability in the context of the proposed structural shift due to the extension of primary education to eighth grade and integration of secondary and higher secondary stages. (ADB 1999) It does not explicitly address the issues of transition to the new structure and the implications for partnership of this transition among the principal actors. The neglect of this aspect can seriously impede the management reform and quality improvement envisaged in the sub-sector development project.

#### *Vocational and Technical Education*

The public sector management structure for vocational and technical education includes four key components. Their role and management issues each raise are described briefly.

1. The Technical Education Board. Its functions are to (a) prescribe courses of instruction, (b) arrange development of learning materials, (c) grant affiliation/approval to non-governmental institutions, (c) set regulations for admissions and transfer of students, (d) monitor teaching-learning activities of institutions, (e) arrange for distance learning, (f) conduct and regulate examinations and grant diploma. Its responsibilities cover training activities of other Ministries such as Labour besides Education.

The Board has two main sections: Directorate of Curriculum and Textbooks and Directorate of Examinations. The Board is financially self-sufficient, relying for its income on examination fees. Examinations conducted by the Board have broad acceptance and credibility. Its main weakness is that it has insufficient contact with the employment market and follows a centralized process and approach in developing curricula, courses and training content, allowing few flexibilities at the local level for institutions. (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. III. p. 20-21.)

2. Directorate of Technical Education (DTE). It is responsible for planning, coordinating and supervising the vocational and technical education activities of the Ministry of Education. Its main functions include (a) assess needs of skilled manpower, (b) prepare policies for Ministry of Education on VTE, (c) plan and supervise development projects in VTE, (d) prepare budgets and

allocate funds for Ministry of Education VTE. One of the current priorities of DTE is to increase the number and ratio of students in VTE. How this can be made responsive to market signals and cost-effective, overcoming quality and efficiency problems faced by existing training activities is the major issue for DTE.

3. The National Council for Skill Development and Training (NCSDT). This is supposed to be a high level inter-ministerial committee to provide overall policy direction. But it remains inactive, has not met since 1984, and is not a statutory body. NEP2000 has proposed an autonomous and self-financing vocational and technical education council to make policy, set standards, coordinate among different Ministries and agencies as well as NGOs and the private sector, and undertake research. This Council would presumably incorporate functions of the Technical Education Board. Whether this structure would function any more effectively than the current arrangement would depend on government priority to developing a coordinated approach with participation of all stakeholders and making VTE more responsive to the market.
4. Other Ministries. Training Departments of the Bureau of Manpower, Employment and Training (BMET) in the Ministry of Labour runs the Technical Training Centres (TTC) comparable to VTIs under the Directorate of Technical Education of Ministry of Education. BMET also organizes a small and not very effective apprenticeship program.

Other relatively small programs of different Ministries, as noted earlier, include those of the Youth Department of the Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Women's Affairs, the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture, and those of Bangladesh Small and Cottage Industries Corporation. All these, and activities of NGOs and the private sector, point to a large number of organizational entities involved in vocational and technical training with overlapping responsibilities, absence of coordination, and the lack of a comprehensive approach to skill development and utilization.

The components of the organization and management structure for VTE described above and how they operate show an over-emphasis on the public sector for meeting middle-level skill development objectives, insufficient links with the employment market, little effort to develop public-private partnerships, and an over-centralized management system characterized by weak accountability.

#### *Tertiary Education*

Most observers are of the view that higher education in Bangladesh calls for a fundamental change in governance in order to achieve necessary improvement in efficiency and quality. Major governance issues include establishing the balance between autonomy and accountability, giving priority to quality standards with mechanisms for enforcing them, and removing intrusion of partisan politics from academia. The politicization problem appears to thwart all reform initiatives. The public university system, particularly, has become a hotbed of partisan politics; manifested routinely in violence, rowdy demonstrations, frequent and

extended shutdowns, financial and administrative corruption, and mismanagement of academic and administrative affairs.

The Ministry of Education exerts inordinate control over tertiary education, true to the tradition of centralized control of governance in general. The Ministry, by controlling the purse-string for public universities and both government and non-government colleges (through subvention), gets involved in many decisions formally or informally, which should be or can be internal to each institution. This involvement (or interference) is in part prompted by politicization of educational management. In this atmosphere, a system of electing university functionaries, introduced by the Universities Act of 1973, instead of promoting academic autonomy, has produced perverse consequences.

The University Grants Commission, set up to coordinate, plan, allocate resources, promote quality, and protect university autonomy by serving as an intermediary between the government and universities, is in reality subject to control of the government, especially in respect of resource allocation. It also does not have the professional strength or authority to perform its other functions effectively.

The National University, which has the responsibility for setting the curriculum, approving accreditation, and conducting degree-granting examinations for degree colleges, also does not have the professional staff capacity and resources to offer professional support, or monitor and enforce quality standards in almost a thousand colleges. The National University's weakness is the result of inadequate resources provided by the government and the government's general disinclination to promote academic and professional autonomy. But the weakness of the National University is then seen as a justification for stronger Ministry of Education control over allocation of finances, appointments of personnel and other management decisions. The exercise of centralized control, however, has not contributed to improvement in educational quality and enforcement of academic standards.

#### *Role of the Government in Education Governance and Management*

Dealing with the problems of accountability of the education system, its sub-sectors and individual institutions; introducing workable quality improvement mechanisms in terms of process and outcome; and mobilization and effective use of resources – some major system issues identified in the discussion above – have been influenced in important ways by perceived and actual role of the state and the government in Bangladesh in the social sectors including education.

The public sector - in the form of government policies, priorities, programs, and allocation and management of resources – creates the environment and sets the tone for the total national effort in education. The roles and tasks the public sector assumes for itself define to a large degree the limits and possibilities of the non-government actors.

The Local Consultative Group of donors, in its note to the Bangladesh Development Forum (an annual meeting between Bangladesh and its international development partners that reviews performance and needs in development cooperation underscored the importance of re-defining the role of various levels of government and the relationship between government and the non-government actors in education. It says:

The role of the central government needs to change vis-à-vis the lower level of administrative authorities, in the direction of less direct administration and more policy planning, information analysis, standard setting and system evaluation. Far too many decisions clog the top levels of the administration when they could be handed down for greater effectiveness....

The role of the state has to be changed fundamentally from the exclusive provider of education to one of partnership with the private sector. In particular, delivery of services for skill training should be radically changed over the next decade so that the government effectively ceases to function as a direct training provider and instead finances service provision through NGOs, the private sector, and community-based institutions. (Local Consultative Group, "Bangladesh Education Sector Strategy Note, March, 1999)

Whether the government "effectively ceases" to provide skill training can be a matter of debate. The government is far from the sole provider of education, as the discussion of provisions and their financing shows. The problem arises when the government behaves as if it is the sole provider or as if only what it does counts. This behaviour is manifested when the government performs poorly in its policy, standard-setting and facilitative role, and when it fails to recognize fully and to encourage the potential of non-government actors. The problem is compounded when the government manages its own programs in a highly centralized and bureaucratic way that results in poor quality. The main issue, therefore, is not how much services it provides, but whether what the government does is of acceptable quality and whether the government would not serve public interest better by promoting and supporting effective partnership and participation of all actors.

Education is an area of public service that affects the welfare and development of people in critical ways. In many countries, this is regarded as an area for which local authorities can take major responsibilities. However, a comprehensive legislative framework for decentralization of governance has yet to be put into effect. As of now, district level bodies have not been elected. The coordination and management roles at different levels have not been defined on the basis of statutory provisions, and local bodies have little authority to raise and use revenue independently. One consequence or perhaps a symptom, of the lack of legal and administrative framework for decentralized governance and partnership is the absence of accountability in public services. "The absence of accountability of public officials either to their superior or to the community that they serve remains a universal phenomenon in Bangladesh...Service providers at the local level are at the end of the service hierarchy of a national cadre service of health care providers, school teachers...whose career prospects are determined by a parent Ministry situated at the capital in Dhaka" ( R. Sobhan 1999)

Accountability regarding performance and results in social services, including education, has not received the attention one might expect in government policy statements. FFYP and NEP2000 make only passing reference to the accountability issue and do not offer ideas regarding strategies for enhancing accountability. In contrast, national critiques ( as those of Rehman Sobhan) and those of international donors point to this as a serious concern. The Local Consultative Group of Donors, for example, wrote:

Communities and parents should be empowered to hold schools accountable, while greater authority should be devolved to school managers and those in local headquarters so that available resources can be adjusted to local demands and circumstances. This is true of primary and secondary school directors. But it is particularly true for managers of public vocational training institutions, who must be given freedom to find their own markets and be held accountable for results. Higher education institutions, in theory autonomous, are in fact subject to overbearing regulation by the state.” (LCG, 1999, p.12)

Clearly, greater dialogue and better understanding need to be promoted regarding the nature of decentralization, the balance between the government’s role as regulator and facilitator and as direct provider of services, and building public-private partnership in education.

#### 4.4 Adequacy and use of resources

Several key features of education financing in Bangladesh – mobilization of resources and their use – stand out.

1. *A low-cost and low-yield system.* Bangladesh has one of the lowest cost education systems, even compared to other least developed countries. This is reflected in the fairly extensive coverage of basic education including primary education and literacy programs achieved with the lowest ratio of GNP devoted to education in the South Asia region and one of the lowest among all developing countries(2.2 percent in 2000). Per student primary education expenditure is under \$13. The same figure for non-government secondary education (which caters to 90 percent of secondary students) is \$16. The low per capita and total cost is no reason for satisfaction, because, educational quality - measured in terms of learning outcome, the pedagogic process and essential inputs – is clearly the victim of this situation.

**Table: 4.10 Unit Costs in Education by Level (c. 1999)**

Level	Annual cost per student (\$)	Cost per student as percent of GNP per capita (percent)	No. of student years to produce a graduate	Cost per graduate (\$)
Primary	12.7	3.6	8.7	110.5
Secondary				
Government	67.9	19.4	13	882.7
Non-Government	16.3	4.7	13	211.9
Madrasah (Govt.)	161.6	46.2	18	2 909.0
Govt. College	88.6	25.3	3.3	292.0
Technical	300.0	85.7	Na	Na
Degree College	93.0	26.5	Na	Na
University	731.1	210.0	Na	Na

Source: Estimated by World Bank based on BANBEIS data, World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol.1, p.68

Note: Above cost calculation includes only costs incurred in institutions, excluding other household costs, such as, private tutoring, learning materials, etc.

2. *Dominance of public financing.* Educational financing is heavily dependent on public sector allocations. In primary education, which account for almost half of total education expenditure, the government has *de fact* stopped establishing new institutions for a decade and has relied on expansion in the non-government sector to meet the goal of universal access to primary education. However, 90 per cent of the teachers' salary in registered non-government schools is paid by the government. The non-government schools also receive grants for school building construction and repair and their students receive free textbooks, with the important exclusion of NGO non-formal programs. At the secondary school and degree college levels, the large majority of the institutions are non-government, but again these are beneficiaries of substantial government subventions for teachers' salary. Only in respect of private universities and private vocational-technical training institutions, the subvention system does not apply. In principle, the generous system of subvention should be used by the government as an important leverage for maintaining and enforcing quality standards in the non-government institutions. In practice, it fails to work this way because of the weak capacity of the regulatory and supervisory organizations in the government, the way these bodies perceive their role, and intrusion of partisan politics in educational management. Nonetheless, the potential of the subvention system as a policy leverage exists and how this leverage can be used effectively for educational development remains an important challenge.
  
3. *Significant household contribution ignored in financing strategy.* Despite the heavy reliance on the government for educational financing, there is a substantial private direct cost borne by beneficiaries, which is underestimated and is generally not taken into account in considering educational finance policy options. Data from household expenditure survey of 1996 show that primary education is far from free and access to other levels of education depends on how much the family can spend for their children's education. Annual average household expenditure was found to range from Tk. 502 for a male student in primary school to Tk 3,670 for a girl in a higher secondary institution (approximately \$11 to \$79 at the time of the survey). (Table: 4.11)

**Table: 4.11 Average Household Expenditure by Gender and level of Education (Taka per annum)**

Level of Education	Male	Female
Primary	502	540
Lower secondary	1483	1464
Secondary	2451	2503
Higher Secondary	3395	3670

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, Household Expenditure Survey, 1996, cited in World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. 1, 2000.



**Table: 4.12 Percentages of Household Expenditure on Education.**

<i>Level</i>	<b>Private tutoring</b>	<b>Admission</b>	<b>Uni-forms</b>	<b>Books</b>	<b>Tuition</b>	<b>Trans-port</b>	<b>Others</b>
<i>Primary</i>							
Male	39.6	4.9	12.4	13.2	10.6	6.2	13.1
Female	39.5	5.6	11.1	12.1	11.7	5.8	14.2
<i>Lower Secondary</i>							
Male	34.2	6.7	10.4	16.8	11.7	7.9	12.3
Female	37.4	5.5	10.3	17.4	10.9	6.5	12.0
<i>Secondary</i>							
Male	36.3	5.5	8.2	18.4	10.4	7.9	14.3
Female	36.0	5.3	8.3	18.4	9.7	8.0	14.3
<i>Higher Secondary</i>							
Male	26.3	7.2	6.0	16.2	8.6	12.8	22.9
Female	27.5	6.9	6.4	15.7	8.6	14.1	20.8

Source : BBS, Household Expenditure Survey, 1996.

Table: 4.12 shows the items on which household spending for education is made including children's uniform, books, examination fees, tuition, transport and private tutoring. Private tutoring is the largest item. The ratio of expenditure on private tutoring to total private expenditure on education is the highest at all levels of education. At the same time, 21 percent of the households with a monthly income under Tk. 1,250 can hardly spend anything on education. Government measures to assist poor families to send their children to school include Food for Education Project and the Girls' Stipend Program.

Household expenditures amount to over 60 per cent of the per student public expenditure in primary education. At the secondary level, non-government expenditure is of the order of two-thirds of the total national expenditure. In the case of degree colleges, most institutions being privately managed with government salary subvention, non-government contribution surpasses government expenditure. Only in the highly subsidized public universities, government expenditure exceeds private costs. In the case of private universities, which are financed fully from tuition and fees, households cover the costs. In the case of relatively small sub-sector of public vocational and technical education, high government subsidy reduces private contribution to total costs. The picture, however, would change if the extensive informal apprenticeship and on-the-job training activities were taken into account, although reliable quantification of the size and costs of these efforts are not available. (M. Ahmed 2000)

The size of household expenditures in different sub-sectors of education points to several policy implications regarding mobilization and effective use of resources. These include the potential of mobilizing non-government resources, cost-sharing and at least partial cost-recovery; the need for developing resource mobilization and utilization strategies, keeping in view the potential of non-government sources; combining public and other resources to promote equity in education; and promoting public-private

partnerships on policy and programme development and in providing educational services.

4. *Mismatch of financing and objectives.* Total national education expenditure, especially public budget allocation, has to increase substantially in the medium term to meet national goals and priorities regarding expansion and quality improvement in education. World Bank estimates (based on assumptions about likely scenarios for GDP growth and revenue share of GDP) indicate that achieving universal elementary education up to eighth grade and participation of 50 percent of the eligible age-group in secondary education by 2008 will require public allocation to education to be raised to 4 percent of GDP. (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. I, 2000, pp. 58-108.) Quality improvement, desperately needed at all levels of education, will require additional resources. The share of government budget for the education sector would rise under this scenario from under 15 per cent in 2000 to 26 per cent in 2008. It is in this context that the demand has been raised in professional circles to increase the share of GDP for education allocated in the government budget to 5 percent in the next five years.
5. *Increased expenditure is not enough.* A truism that needs to be underscored is that the availability of additional resources alone will not yield the expected gains, especially in respect of quality, unless existing weaknesses both in educational management and the teaching-learning process are seriously addressed and remedied. While chronic under-resourcing of the system is a generic problem that spawns many other problems, everything cannot be solved with additional funds. Along with effective management of resources, decision-making and implementation of decisions regarding learning objectives and priorities, the pedagogic process and establishing accountability at all levels have to be improved.
6. *Incremental budgeting based on precedence.* The standard practice of making financial allocations in the recurrent budget is to do it on an incremental basis, i.e., taking the current status as the baseline and adding annual increments in the budget. At the university, for example, allocation of the preceding year and the bargaining power of an institution based on political links and personalities are the most important determinant of what budget increase an institution will get. The rule of thumb appears to be to grant 70 percent of what is requested. Given widespread inefficiencies and questions about external effectiveness of programmes and institutions, it is necessary to require justification of what exists and assess alternatives and options in budget decisions. It is necessary to establish performance criteria and apply them so that managers have incentives to perform and prevent wastes and inefficiency.
7. *A shift of emphasis to secondary education.* The pattern of development and recurrent expenditure in the 1990s has moved from the dominance of primary education to a greater balance between primary and secondary education. Between FY90 to FY 98, the share of primary education in education sector revenue budget has dropped from 48.5 percent to 40.4 percent, and it has increased for secondary education from 36.8 percent to 47.6 percent. In development expenditure, primary education saw a reduction from 62.1 percent to 46.7 percent, whereas in secondary education

development expenditure increased from 10.7 percent to 29.5 percent. Non-formal education, which does not have any revenue budget allocation, also had an increase in development expenditure during the same period from 1.5 percent to 9.2 percent. Despite the emphasis put on vocational-technical education in policy statements, it saw a reduction from its already low level of expenditure. The university sub-sector had a pronounced decline in development expenditure. Budgetary allocations and expenditures, especially the development part of it, appear to be influenced by exigencies of availability of external assistance, instead of being based on overall strategic planning for the sector.

The shift of resources to secondary education in proportional terms itself is not a problem; in fact, larger allocations for this sub-sector is overdue. The important consideration is adequacy of resources for pursuing the important objectives including quality assurance in each sub-sector, and not increasing budgets in one area at the cost of another.

**Table: 4.13 Sub-sectoral expenditure trend ( % share of total education sector expenditure, 1990-91 to 1998-99)**

Sub-sectors	Revenue (FY90)	Revenue (FY98)	Dev.(FY90)	Dev.(FY98)
Primary	48.5	40.4	62.1	46.7
Secondary	36.8	47.6	10.7	29.5
Voc.-Tech.	2.4	1.4	3.3	3.1
University	8.5	7.0	10.1	1.7
Non-Formal	--	--	1.5	9.2

*Source: Ministry of Finance, cited in World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol.1, Table 2.2, p.63, Dhaka, 2000.*

8. *Dominance of Staff compensation.* Staff compensation accounted for 97 percent of the recurrent budget in FY 98 for primary education, which represents the normal pattern. This included salary in government schools and salary subvention for non-government primary schools. Out of the total recurrent expenditure for secondary education in FY98, 79 percent was spent on salary subvention for government assisted schools. Most of the rest is spent for administrative costs. Government grants have the effect of maintaining the pattern of school costs dominated heavily by staff salaries with little funding for other quality inputs. In vocational and technical institutions, 74 per cent of the recurrent budget was for salaries – a very high proportion for this type of institutions which need to have consumable items for effective training. At the university level, 67 percent of the recurrent expenditures were for staff costs in 1997. (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. I, pp.65-66) At the vocational-technical and tertiary stages of education, these ratios are high by international standards. This pattern in the operating budget of all levels of institutions, leaving little resources for non-salary inputs in educational programs, has a serious adverse effect on the quality of education and learning outcomes.
9. *High incentive expenditures in primary education.* Development expenditure in primary education is dominated by two incentive items – food for education (FFE) and stipends for poor students -- rather than direct expenditures in improving the low quality of instruction and learning. The large size of FFE expenditure can give a distorted picture

of the primary education budget as well as the total education budget if break-downs including this item are not examined. For example, the proportion of development expenditure for primary education in FY98 in total education sector development expenditure is reduced exactly by half from 46.8 percent to 23.4 percent if FFE expenditure is excluded. Similarly, expenditures for stipends in both primary schools and for girls in secondary schools and free tuition for girls add up to one-third of development expenditure in the education sector. (World Bank, Education Sector Review, vol. I, pp.64 and 86.)

Questions have been raised (in ADB and World Bank supported public expenditure review and by others) about the efficacy of the incentive expenditures on three counts: (a) whether they are sustainable as the claim on them rises backed by political pressures, (b) whether they can be administered efficiently and without being distorted by corruption, and (c) whether the benefits in terms of participation, equity and quality improvement would not be better achieved by spending directly on improving inputs and performance in school. ( Knowles 2001)

10. *Equity and educational financing.* Education finance arrangements reinforce the pattern of inequity in the education system. A World Bank public expenditure review in the education sector undertaken in 1996 concluded that the share of benefits for households from public spending in education rises with income levels of households at all stages of education, but especially in secondary and tertiary education. (World Bank, Bangladesh: From Counting the Poor to Making the Poor Count, 1998.) The same review found that poor households, 54 percent of total households, received 15 percent of public spending on higher education, while 85 percent went to non-poor households.(Table A4.3, p.63). In primary education, the benefits roughly corresponded with income distribution of the population. But this means that primary education is not able to contribute to tackling existing economic disparities and disadvantages. Inequality arising from the present pattern of higher education participation and benefits is exacerbated by very low cost recovery in the highly subsidized public university system. Tuition fees in public universities cover less than 1 percent of the university budget. Cost-sharing and cost recovery as approaches for promoting equity in the system have to be considered in programs where both private benefits and public subsidies are relatively high, such as, in most tertiary level institutions and some vocational and technical education programs.

Making education finance mechanism and decisions effective vehicles for serving educational objectives and priorities will require clear articulation and delineation of the objectives in both qualitative and quantitative terms. Equally important is better understanding of the strategies and instruments, including the ones concerned with provisions for resources and their use, to be applied to achieving the objectives. Paucity of systematic research and analysis in education finance is a major obstacle to effective educational planning and management. There is a great need for research, particularly, in the form of micro-economic studies at the level of households, schools and communities; analysis of private costs and expenditures; and probing internal efficiency of different types of institutions in the same sub-sector.

Government and donor response to education needs and issues related to them, including resources allocated and their utilization, are presented in the next chapter.

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## Annex 4.1

### Summary of Findings:

#### Education Watch Report 2000: Quality of Primary Education in Bangladesh

In October- November 1999 CAMPE (2001) conducted a survey of 2,509 randomly selected students in Grade V from 186 government, private (non-government registered) and non-formal (NGO) primary schools in 60 randomly selected thanas (30 urban and 30 rural).<sup>3</sup> The survey assesses student performance in 27<sup>4</sup> of the 53 terminal competencies that are identified in the Government's primary school competency-based curriculum, which was introduced during 1992-96. Students correctly answering one-half (in some cases two thirds) of the questions pertaining to a given competency (there were 64 questions in all) were considered to have achieved that competency. The survey instruments were developed in several workshops involving teachers and other education specialists, and they were carefully prototyped. In addition to the testing of students, the survey included a questionnaire on the socio-economic characteristics of the students (administered to the child's parents in the child's home), and a school questionnaire (generally administered to head teachers). The survey also included in-depth classroom observations in two each of the above three categories of schools and an evaluation of the textbooks used in primary education. The main findings of the 1999 survey are as follows:

- Only 1.6 percent of the surveyed students achieved all 27 competencies, with the highest proportion in NGO-run non-formal schools (6%), followed by government schools (1.0%) and private schools (0.9%)<sup>5</sup>.
- On average, the students achieved 16.4 competencies (Table B-1), with significant<sup>6</sup> variation by school type (students from non-formal NGO-run schools performed better in rural areas, but not in urban areas), urban-rural residence (urban students generally example, students in schools with fewer than 40 students per teacher had higher learning achievement in rural areas (Table B-3), as did students whose teachers had increased educational qualifications and professional training. On the other hand, learning achievement was inversely related to the distance between a child's school and the school's supervisor.
- The significant relationships between learning achievement and both socio-economic and school characteristics referred to above were generally observed as well in multivariate regression analysis.
- The in-depth classroom observations revealed that poor physical facilities, inadequate teaching materials (including textbooks), memory-based teaching style and lack of remedial measures in the classroom are the main reasons for poor performance. Such inadequacies are most prevalent in private non-government primary schools and least prevalent in non-formal NGO-run schools. A particularly disturbing feature of the instruction observed in the government and private schools is that it tends to focus only on the better students (who tend to sit on benches in the front of the classroom), with the weaker students neglected or even physically and/or verbally abused. There was also typically little opportunity for writing in the government and private schools.
- The examination of Grade V textbooks concluded that the textbooks and teachers' guides were well structured, detailed, lesson-based and generally covered all 53 competencies.

This second CAMPE study also appears to have been carefully designed and implemented. There are some problems with the multivariate regression analysis and with the way some of the variables were measured, but they do not affect the report's general conclusions.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately, and unlike the 1998 CAMPE survey, the 1999 survey did not include Ebtedayee Madrasahs.

<sup>4</sup> Only 29 of the 53 terminal competencies were cognitive; two-vocabulary in Bangla and English-were dropped due to difficulties in testing. The competencies tested in the survey covered the following areas: Bangla (3 competencies), English (3 competencies), mathematics (5 competencies), social studies (6 competencies), general science (9 competencies), and religious studies (one competency).

<sup>5</sup> There is almost certainly a positive bias in the results, given that many of the weaker students would have dropped out before reaching Grade V. Unlike the 1998 survey, the 1999 survey did not test children who had dropped out of school.

<sup>6</sup> There is no discussion of how sampling errors were estimated in either the 1998 or 1999 CAMPE reports, but presumably they were correctly estimated taking into account the clustered nature of the sample.

<sup>7</sup> For example, a single variable referring to school type is specified in the regression (1 = government schools, 2 = private schools, 3 = non-formal school) instead of using two qualitative variables; and a child's "access to printed media" was measured by ascertaining whether the child had read a newspaper during the past week (which obviously implies a degree of learning achievement).

## Annex 4.2

### Summary of Findings:

#### Education Watch Report 1999: State of Primary Education in Bangladesh

The 1998 Education Watch Survey (CAMPE 1999) was a carefully designed and implemented nationwide survey conducted in November 1998 in a randomly selected nationally representative sample of 312 villages in all 64 districts of the country. Three survey instruments were used. A household questionnaire was administered to 42,548 households. A school questionnaire was administered to 885 primary schools attended by the children enumerated in the household survey. An achievement test was administered to 3,360 children ages 11-12 enumerated in the household survey, regardless of whether or not they were currently attending school. The survey's major findings are as follows:

- According to the household survey, the primary gross enrolment ratio was found to be 107 for all children, 104 among boys and 109 among girls.
- Two-thirds (67.7%) of primary school students were enrolment in government schools, 12.1% in registered non-government schools and 8.5% in NGO informal schools.
- 23% of children ages 6-10 were not in school; main reasons given for children being out of school were “child too young to attend school” (36.9%) and “scarcity of money” (31.6%).
- Children with more educated parents and from better-off households were more likely to be enrolled in school.
- Increases in enrollment compared to an earlier survey (1993) were limited to girls.
- Only one-third of students received their government-supplied textbooks during the first month of school; 75% received them by the end of February; and only 4% never received books.
- Household respondents indicated that many primary students had to pay something for their books; this percentage varied from 9.2% in non-government schools, 15.7% in government schools, 17.6% in Ebtedayee madrasahs, and 59.0% in non-formal NGO-run primary schools (NGO-run informal schools do not receive books from the government).
- Nearly 45% of urban students received help from private tutors, compared to only 18% in rural areas; among boys, 22.8% had help from tutors, compared to 19.8% of girls.
- According to the school survey, only 62% of registered students were attending school on the day of the survey (girls 64%, boys 61%).
- There were significant differences in attendance rates by type of school (Table A4.2.1), with informal NGO-run schools registering the highest attendance rates).
- Although the schools visited had seating for only 66% of registered students, this was not generally a problem, due to the low attendance rates.
- There was no significant difference to schools not in the program.<sup>1</sup>
- Drop-out rates varied from 4 to 7 percent among classes, while repeater rates varied from 4 to 11 percent.
- The total primary dropout rate (for a synthetic cohort) was 26.2% for girls and 28.4% for boys, corroborating government data indicating that primary drop-out rates have been decreasing in recent years.
- Absenteeism among teachers was over 20% in registered and unregistered non-government schools, 12.7% in government schools, and 5.3% in NGO-run informal schools
- Most teachers had formal teacher training in government and NGO-run informal schools; but less than one-third (32.5%) of teachers in registered and unregistered non-government schools and 17.5% of teachers in Madrasahs had formal training.
- Teachers in government and other formal schools had an average of 12 years of schooling, compared to only 10 years for teachers in NGO-run informal schools.

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<sup>1</sup> This finding does not suggest that the FFE program has no effect, however, since attendance might have been lower in the FFE schools in the absence of the program. FFE schools are located in relatively disadvantaged communities (Ahmed et al 2000).

- NGO-run informal schools were visited much more frequently by supervisors than were other types of schools.
- Most schools had School Management Committees (SMCs) with an average size of 10 members (with 2 on average being female-however, more than one-half of SMC members in NGO-run informal schools were female).

Table:A4.2.1 Attendance rates by type of school, 1998

Type of school	Girls	Boys	Total
Government Primary	59.3	56.9	58.1
Non-government primary	52.4	51.7	52.1
Non-formal Primary	82.6	78.0	80.7
Madrasah	49.1	46.4	77.4
Kindergarten	80.4	78.7	79.4
Secondary attached	74.5	68.1	71.3
All students	60.5	57.6	59.0

Source: 1998 Education Watch Survey (CAMPE 1998)

- SMCs were reported to have held an average of 8 meetings during 1998 with three-quarters of the members present (however, the information on SMC activities reported by schools was found not to be very reliable).
- According to the achievement test-“Assessment of Basic Competency” (ABC)<sup>2</sup> administered to children ages 11-12, 29.6% satisfied the minimum levels in all four competency areas (i.e., reading, writing, numeracy, life skills), with urban children (48.4%) doing significantly better than rural children (26.5%) and boys (31.3%) doing better than girls (27.9%).
- Compared to 1993, when a similar test was administered, basic achievement had improved significantly (but not dramatically), i.e., from 26.7% to 29.7%.
- Children currently in school had higher basic achievement (34.2%), compared to children who had dropped out (16.5%); however, many of the currently enrolled children tested were already attending secondary school.
- Basic achievement was 56.9% among children who had completed 5 years of schooling, compared to only 20.8% among children with only 3 years completed and 7.5% with only one year of schooling completed.
- Achievement was significantly higher among children having a private tutor (49.6%) as compared to those without a tutor (27.5%).
- Achievement of both girls and boys varied sharply with parents’ education and according to self-perceived economic status (Table A4.2.2).
- Achievement in terms of “literacy” (i.e., excluding the life skills area) was higher (42.5%), but with differentials similar to those for basic competency.
- Achievement varied significantly by type of school (see Table A4.2.3), with informal NGO-run schools registering the highest achievement levels (despite having proportionately more rural poor students).

Table:A4.2.2 Basic achievement by parents’ schooling and self perceived economic status, 1998

	Percent of children age 11-12 achieving basic education competency		
	Girls	Boys	Total
Mother’s education			
None	19.4	22.7	21.1
Primary	37.9	40.3	39.0
Secondary +	59.7	59.9	59.8
Father’s education			
None	17.0	20.2	18.6
Primary	31.6	33.1	32.4
Tertiary +	76.0	76.5	76.3
Economic status			
Always in deficit	20.4	21.9	21.1
Sometimes in deficit	26.2	30.2	28.2
Balanced	32.9	38.5	35.7
Surplus	42.1	42.0	42.1

Source: 1998 Education Watch Survey (CAMPE 1998)

<sup>2</sup> The ABC test was not based on the national curriculum but was instead a general competency test that had been used in some neighboring countries.



*Table:A4.2.3 Basic achievement and literacy by children age 11-12 currently enrolled in class 5 by type of school attended, 1998*

	Percentage of children currently enrolled in class 5 achieving:	
	Basic Education (4 areas)	Literacy (3 areas)
Government Primary	37.7	59.0
Non-government Primary	34.7	53.4
Non-formal Primary	66.3	76.8
Madrasah	25.8	66.0

*Source: James C. Knowles, Bangladesh: Public Expenditure Review-Education Sector, Prepared under the auspices of the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank, November 2001*

## **5 RESPONSES AND LESSONS**

The government responses to the issues discussed above are considered in terms of interventions - as indicated by government resource allocation and major development projects undertaken with donor assistance.

### **5.1 The Primary Education Development Program**

The Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) is the Government of Bangladesh's overall development program for primary education. PEDP aims to address problems of poor quality, inequity and internal inefficiency in primary education. It is a five year program supported by six external development partners. Different projects within the program have different starting dates but most are expected to be completed by 2003. The total cost of PEDP is estimated to be \$2.7 billion including \$1.5 billion from the revenue budget and \$1.2 billion from the development budget. The development part of the cost is funded by six external donors – IDA, ADB, UNICEF, UK, Norway, Germany, and Sweden. The six donor-assisted PEDP projects are:

- ADB assisted Second Primary Education Sector Project (SPESP)
- IDA assisted Primary Education Development Project
- Royal Norwegian Embassy assisted Primary Education Development Project for Quality Improvement (PEDPQI)
- UNICEF, ADB, WB, and SIDA assisted Intensive District Approach to Education for All (IDEAL)
- KfW/GTZ of Germany assisted Comprehensive Primary Education Project (CPEP)
- DFID(UK) assisted Effective Schools through Enhanced Education Management (ESTEEM)

ADB is also funding the Primary School Performance Monitoring Project (PSPMP) with contribution from Norway. Apart from these major projects, Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) currently has ten other projects in the area of primary education, some funded by other partners such as the Islamic Development Bank, and some entirely by GOB.

Main objectives of PEDP can be summarized as the following:

1. Improving the quality of primary education and its system efficiency;
2. Strengthening institutional and management capacity; and
3. Further increasing access to primary education, in particular, for girls and children from poor families.

The components of PEDP related to above objectives are: strengthening teacher education; curriculum development and academic supervision; improving and extending school physical facilities and their maintenance; development of learning materials; improving primary education management, including planning, MIS, monitoring and communications; developing the institutional capacity of key institutions such as NAPE and NCTB; and increasing equity.

Information collected from government sources about implementation of PEDP activities included in the Annual development Program (ADP) of the government and implemented in 1999 indicate the types of intervention made to achieve PEDP objectives.

(i) *Access*: a) Targeted social mobilization for improved enrolment growth and retention of children in school; b) Improved physical facility of schools up to a required standard and supervision to reduce dropout rate; c) Quality improvement to reduce repetition rate.

(ii) *Staffing Quality* : a) Sanctioned posts to be adjusted in response to student population; b) Appointment of trained teachers with proper qualification; c) Continue with subvention to non-government school.

(iii) *Physical Facility and Teaching Aids*: a) Provide textbook support; b) All schools to have a minimum standard of physical facilities, teaching materials and teaching aids.

(iv) *Equity*: (a) For equity, community schools will be established at selected locations; under-schooled and under-served areas will get priority and over-crowded schools will get additional classrooms; (b) Emphasis will be given on keeping children in school.

(v) *Quality and Coordination*: Thana (Upazila) Resource Centers will serve as training and coordination centers for upgrading teacher's skills and better classroom performance.

(vi) *Teacher Training*: a) NAPE to be developed as an effective organization for providing teacher training in methods of teaching and of evaluation; b) PTI's to be upgraded in terms of facility, staff and skill development for providing training to all untrained teachers.

(vii) *Supervision*: Training of ATEOs for academic supervision and in-service training of teachers.

(viii) *Curriculum*: a) NCTB to have a separate primary education wing, systemic approach for development of curricula, and improving professional expertise in developing curricular material along with research in this respect; b) All textbooks to be redesigned to ensure that content is current, accurate, educative, well-presented, interesting and attractive; c) curricular specifications for teaching/learning aids will be prepared and measures will be undertaken to ensure their availability.

(ix) *Community Participation* : SMC, PTA, Ward Committee member, and UP chairman and members will receive orientation at Upazila Resource Centers for increasing awareness of and participation in primary education.

The financial allocation under revised ADP was utilized up to 95 percent in 1999 which resulted in the establishment of 2,920 satellite schools, training of 4,200 teachers and another 3,773 teachers in c-in-ed program, distribution of 162.2m new text books, reconstruction of 4,655 schools, completion of 434 additional classrooms, and Food-for-Education continued in 1,243 unions. The impact is seen in improved enrolment rate, increase in the number of female teachers and girl children in school and improvement in completion rate even though competency level of the completers remained low.

Evidently, PEDP is a multi-faceted and complex program designed to support quality improvement and expansion of access in one of the largest primary education systems in the world. A critical dilemma of this program is that with so many disparate initiatives and projects subsumed under this label and each being carried out with its own implementation and management mechanism, calling all these diverse activities as one program is a misnomer. This confusion about the link between objectives and strategies and how various projects and

initiatives should contribute in a unified and coordinated way towards achievement of key objectives stand as a major obstacle to PEDP's progress. A recent assessment carried out by participating donor agencies and the government has pointed out the problems and the lessons. ("Assessment of the PEDP," draft, December 2001)

### *Lessons*

Salient points about lessons based on PEDP experience and discussion of issues in chapter 4 about future development of primary education are presented here.

***Need for a comprehensive and unified approach.*** A comprehensive and unified approach embracing the key elements of the sub-system is needed to achieve results in respect of major objectives of the development program, viz., greater access and equity, quality improvement reflected in learning achievement, strengthening management and accountability and capacity building in the constituent parts of the sub-sector. PEDP, although billed as "a program", illustrates the pitfalls of being concerned with different parts of the total primary education system through discrete projects, allowing divergence of provision and activities to continue and become more entrenched. The "basket of overlapping projects" and the "projectization" approach, as the PEDP assessment put it, give rise to difficult problems of coordination, coherence and efficiency. "Projectization" is the culture of seeing the education system in terms of the component projects, neglecting the necessary synergy and complementarity to achieve the key objectives of the system.

PMED's lack of enthusiasm for a "sector" or "program" approach, mainly because of its weak capacity to develop and guide such an endeavor, has contributed to a fragmented effort. Whatever the concerns or skepticism about the reality or semantics of a sector or a program approach, the performance of external assistance-supported development activities in primary education shows that a unified or at least adequately coordinated planning, implementation and assessment of development activities is essential to achieve results that are relevant to desired impact. The donors - including World Bank, ADB and the bilateral agencies - also need to look at their own assistance and mode of operation critically, make a special effort to adjust to the needs of operating within a unified approach, and make a reasonably long term commitment to build national capacities in institutions and human resources to pursue a comprehensive development approach.

***The role of NGOs.*** The contribution that NGOs can make, especially to reach and serve the populations who continue to be left out or neglected in the formal system, should be an integral part of the comprehensive approach to improving access and quality of primary education. A special role of NGOs can be in providing a "second chance" for primary education or its equivalent to those who will continue to miss out or drop out from primary education in spite of the efforts to improve primary education performance. NGOs have demonstrated their capacity by serving over eight percent of the most disadvantaged children without any help from the government. The role of NGOs and how to establish a complementary and cooperative relationship with them has not been so far on the agenda of the government or PEDP.

*Quality.* The effort to improve quality of instruction, the dominant concern in primary education development, needs to be focused on outcome, critically examining the relationships between inputs and processes to measurable learning achievements of students. Quality improvement inputs, such as training and materials, will not be effective until teachers apply them in their classes. The obstacles are not just limitations of resources and training, but resistance to change and innovation by key actors. Ensuring on-going support to teachers linked with learning outcomes and developing a system of assessment of progress in learning achievement remain important challenges. Applying standards of performance and quality to non-government primary schools, which are expected to take the onus of expanding access, and Madrasahs, remain a major problem area. Various components of PEDP have provided all types of inputs for improving classroom practices: training, facilities, textbooks, management and supervision, bringing their different perceptions of quality and their different measures of success. The synergy of these inputs under the control of different projects have been difficult to achieve in terms of classroom behavior and learning outcome.

To provide quality basic education to all children, the school program needs to be designed and other ancillary measures taken to compensate for serious family-related deficiencies impeding children's learning. NGOs, targeting specifically disadvantaged groups, have applied this approach with positive results. Among the measures that can be contemplated are: providing learning materials to students and eliminating direct and indirect, official and informal, costs to poor parents; eliminating the need for paid private tutoring; flexibility in school program and routine to suit seasonal agricultural workload for families and situations of working children and so on. A pertinent policy issue is whether the substantial government spending on "food-for-education" would not be better spent on providing learning materials and supporting volunteer tutors for children who need extra help in their lessons. Equally important is to establish a system of accountability of school's and teachers' performance to parents and the community. The community, in turn, needs to be encouraged to be involved in creating the condition for the school and the teachers to function properly.

In respect of teacher's skills and performance, the premises and assumptions of the current teacher training regarding training objectives, training methods and conditions for use of training in classroom – in other words, why training is not making the expected contribution to better learning outcome – have to be probed rigorously. The aim of this investigation would be to initiate a fundamental rethinking about effective teacher training and creating the conditions for use of the training in classroom. The non-formal teacher training method, which appears to produce better classroom results, is not necessarily the model to be replicated for all schools, if only because the better student performance of non-formal primary education still falls short of an acceptable national norm for achievement in primary education competencies. However, a serious rethinking of teacher training will have to take into account many relevant lessons from the approach followed by NGOs in training their teachers.

*Organization and management.* The District and the Upazila should become the pivotal tiers for planning and managing access, equity and quality improvement support to schools. This can happen when the tasks at these levels are clearly defined and linked to quality improvement and related objectives and its resources and capacities are enhanced for that purpose.

DPE and PMED roles at the central level need to be redefined for them to concentrate on policy development, overall monitoring, facilitating the work in planning and management at

the district and Upazila levels, and providing technical support to these; instead of the present role of managing and controlling the nationwide system themselves. Ways of reorganizing and developing capacities of PMED for the new roles will have to be examined. In doing so, resistance to changing customary ways has to be dealt with. Centralization has not decreased in the course of PEDP implementation. Constraints imposed by central bureaucracy and financial control regulations on field level responses have been exposed by PEDP implementation experience. For example, the school level block grant modality for use at the school level planned to be introduced in PEDP remain untested. The field level staff are pre-occupied with servicing central information requests, which are of little value to themselves and of limited value even at the central level.

***Development and use of professional capacity.*** An institutionalized process of decision-making with professional personnel leading the process in policy implementation and management need to be developed, with a simultaneous effort to strengthen professional capacities. The management structure and decision-making process at present allow little room for development and effective use of professional capacity in primary education. Career structure in primary education does not encourage professional development and professional staff to rise to management and decision-making level. Personnel recruitment and deployment policy and practice hinder development of centers for professional and technical expertise in the sector in institutions such as DPE, NAPE and NCTB.

***The concept of primary education.*** The purpose of primary education and the teaching-learning model for it need to be re-considered to emphasize innate learning potential of children as well as building the foundation of basic literacy and numeracy skills. The model of primary education in the minds of those planning and managing it is one that parallels secondary and higher education academic structure. A large number of academic discipline-based subjects; curriculum, learning objectives and textbooks developed on that basis; teaching methods and classes also organized under the same premises ( e.g., didactic teaching and fixed 35 minute class periods) leave out stimulation of creativity, curiosity and joy of learning for children in the primary school. Children also have been short-changed in respect of developing essential language and numeracy skills, as various studies have shown.

## **5.2 Non-Formal and Mass Education**

The advent of non-formal education (NFE) to complement the formal system to improve literacy rate, to provide a second chance to the school leavers and to help adults to access education has required policy support and financial support from donors. A separate directorate now oversees the program. However, this operation is not guided by a legal framework and all NFE activities are funded on an *ad hoc* basis from the development budget. This is so despite the fact that its importance has received attention of planners and social activists for a long time.

Four NFE projects were developed and implemented during the later half of the 1990s on the basis of acquired experiences from Integrated Non-Formal Education Program (INFEP) implemented in the country during 1991-97. Table 5.1 presents basic information about these

projects. These projects were initiated to assist the Government in achieving the Education For All (EFA) goals identified in the National Plan of Actions (1992) by improving and expanding NFE to reach illiterate adults.

**Table: 5.1 Salient features of four DNFE projects**

Particulars	NFE-1	NFE-2	NFE-3	NFE-4
Clientele age group	15-24 years	11-45 years	8-14 years	11-45 years
Coverage	50 upazilas in 32 districts	42 upazilas of 33 districts	6 divisional cities	448 upazilas of 62 districts
Delivery approach	CBA, TLM, PDA	CBA, TLM, PDA	CBA	TLM
Financiers	GOB, ADB, IDA, SDC	GOB, PL480, Norad, Sida	GOB, DFID, SIDA, Unicef	GOB
Current status	Completed on June 30, 2001	Extended up to December 2002	Extended up to June 2003	Expected to be extended up to June 2004

*Source: Ahmed and Lohani, NFE in Bangladesh: Synthesis of Experience and Future Directions, 2001, Annexes 1-4.*

Note: CBA: The Centre Based Approach in which literacy courses are offered by NGOs in learning centers; TLM: Total Literacy Movement, a six-month long literacy campaign carried out district by district managed by each district administration; PDA: Primer Distribution Approach in which primers are distributed to philanthropic and voluntary organisations offering their own literacy courses.

NFE-1 contributed to strengthening institutional structure and capacity of DNFE and extending literacy opportunities to young adults (15-24 years). NFE-2 has covered a larger age bracket (11-45 years) of illiterate population and has supported also the TLM efforts of the government to provide basic literacy services to eligible population in the target upazila. It included a component on piloting post-literacy and continuing education to gain experience in sustaining literacy skills and linking literacy with raising living standard of poor people. NFE-3 project has offered access to basic education to 8-14 years old out-of-school working children through CBA. NFE-4 is exclusively a total literacy movement (TLM) program funded entirely from government resources.

A critical issue widely debated in Bangladesh in recent years is the role of government and NGO in NFE. For example, TLM has been carried out under NFE-4 without direct involvement and a substantial role for NGOs, though NGOs have undertaken and continue to undertake major NFE activities. Apart from involvement in the relatively small NFE-3 project, the government has not contributed to the education of out of school children through the non-formal primary education alternatives, leaving the entire responsibility to NGOs. The logic of this strategy is not self-evident. Perhaps the conceptualization of TLM as a time-bound and highly structured activity, with a narrow and simple learning objective that could be efficiently implemented by the government machinery, has influenced the government decision. It may be noted, however, that the initial examples of TLM in Lalmonirhat and Chuadanga districts, which served as the model for the national project, did offer a substantial role to local NGOs even though the projects were initiated and guided by highly committed and dedicated Deputy Commissioners of the two districts. In Lalmonirhat, the implementing agency formally was a District Literacy Committee, registered as a voluntary society, which included NGO and community representatives.

The major NFE projects have focused on providing the basic literacy skills. The underlying assumption of these projects is that literacy skills open the door for acquiring skills, information and knowledge for better productivity, income and quality of life. Noticeable development impact in economic terms can be realized if (a) the quality of teaching learning and management of the project ensure that the large majority of learners attain a basic level of sustainable skills, and (b) there are opportunities for further relevant education and skill development and their use. Regarding (a), the assumption about learners acquiring sustainable basic skills, the extent of it in reality is not clear from information generated by the project monitoring system. Regarding (b), the new post-literacy and continuing education projects being initiated are expected to address it. So far literacy programs have separated basic literacy, post-literacy and continuing education in compartments.

Similarly, NFE-3 mentions skill orientation and help in job placement but does not include any activities in these areas. It does not include provisions to address the need of working children for protection from exploitation and from being placed in hazardous circumstances, guidance and counseling, social support, and help in restoring a positive outlook about life. The coverage of the program (about 351,000 children) is also small in view of the frequently cited estimate of 6.3 million children under 15 years (2.5 million in urban areas) engaged in harmful child labor that prevents children from attending school.

### ***Lessons***

A synthesis of experience based on the four major public sector NFE projects attempts to draw lessons that would provide direction for future NFE activities. These lessons are summarized below. (Ahmed and Lohani, *Non-Formal Education In Bangladesh: Synthesis of Experience and Future Directions*, November, 2001, “Executive Summary”, pp. iv-v):

***Integrated approach.*** An integrated and comprehensive approach for literacy and continuing education is the basis for sustainable programs that respond to needs of individual fulfillment and socio-economic development. Relapsing back into illiteracy would continue to be a serious problem if the acquired basic skills are not consolidated through opportunities for further learning and use of the skills in daily life. The role of NFE in offering a “second chance” primary education for adolescents who continue to miss or drop out from primary education and the link of the second chance programs with skill development and formal education deserves serious attention.

An agreed broad program framework would be required to allow individual projects and activities to fit in and contribute to overall NFE and development objectives. The emerging learning needs of people in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the importance of moving progressively towards life-long learning opportunities add a new dimension to this task. Effective donor coordination mechanism at the operational level would allow sharing of experiences, help avoid duplication of efforts and save scarce human and financial resources.

***Participation and partnership.*** The government needs to adopt strategies to ensure effective and meaningful participation of all implementing partners of projects such as NGOs, community organizations and the private sector. Encouraging greater self-reliance and helping build



capacities of implementing partners, especially NGOs, should be a specific concern. Targeted social mobilization is required to seek active support and participation of stakeholders.

**Attention to marginal groups.** It would be necessary to target marginal sections of the population with strategies that address their specific needs. These strategies would include adapting program content and design to specific circumstances of the disadvantaged groups, combining education and training with ancillary support, such as links with credit and advice to enable the intended beneficiaries to participate and maximize benefits from programs, and making extra efforts to involve beneficiaries in planning and managing programs. Gender issues are to be addressed by promoting greater representation of women in management and subjecting the teaching content and process to “gender audit.” Social mobilization efforts need to be directed specifically at overcoming traditional gender attitudes.

**Quality based on learning achievement.** Quality norms reflecting learning outcomes must be established and applied. Proper selection, motivation, training and retraining of teachers and supervisors; review and improvement of learning materials; and effective monitoring to maintain quality and performance standards are necessary for improving learning achievements of learners. A “culture of quality” needs to be promoted.

**Organization and management.** Management of literacy and continuing education activities needs to be decentralized enough to make them responsive to local conditions and accountable to the community. The organizational structure, composition, size and role of DNFE and its relationship with PMED (in respect of decision-making authorities) need to be reviewed. Decisions about re-organization of DNFE should take into account, specifically, (a) decentralization of authority and responsibility needed at different levels, (b) future forms and scope of NFE in the country; and (c) relationship and division of roles with partner organizations. NGOs as implementing organizations must be those, which have demonstrated capacity in management of complex projects, a record in education, and experience in community involvement.

The Centre Management Committees (CMC) should be constituted to represent the community. They should be supported with training and advice and given greater role and responsibilities in identifying needs, planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluating NFE activities, not only because they can be instrumental in implementing the program successfully, but also in improving its sustainability. Effective monitoring and evaluation systems with well-defined indicators and base-line data should be established from the outset to achieve literacy outcome; analysis and use of MIS data is required to demonstrate that this is happening. Third party involvement in monitoring and evaluation is necessary to establish credible estimates of quality indicators including dropout and pass rates and achievement of core competencies among NFE learners. Studies should be undertaken systematically for assessing impact. There should be a mechanism and a commitment to learn from experience and improve programs.

**Institution building.** A comprehensive institution building plan based on institutional analysis of the major entities, such as, DNFE, the proposed Academy for Non-formal Education, and NGOs as implementation partners, is essential for building capacity of institutions. TA teams supported by donors can contribute effectively to this effort with the development of a vision

and a policy framework for a comprehensive NFE program. Lasting capacity building is facilitated by a program approach, rather than project-based *ad hoc* interventions.

To sum up, NFE in Bangladesh should contribute to building the learning society ( where people throughout life participate and benefit from widely available learning opportunities ) and the learning community (where creating abundant and relevant learning opportunities for people of all ages is a high community priority). NFE must also address national aspirations and priorities, particularly, poverty alleviation and improving quality of life of people. A policy framework should help translate such a vision into implementable programs and actions.

### **5.3 Secondary Education**

Built on a system of primary education with serious quality deficiencies, the multiple streams of secondary education also face serious problems of access and poor quality. Wastage of the system, in the form of low survival of learners to the end of the cycle, is particularly high at this level. Policy and strategy response, or lack thereof, and lessons from these experiences are presented below.

#### *Government response and donor assistance*

The Asia development Bank has been the most active donor to government's development program in secondary education with several loan projects supported in the past two decades.

(i) Prior to 1993 the Asian Development Bank implemented the Secondary Science Education Project. The basic intent was to supply laboratory equipment to selected non-government institutions including Madrasah, to construct a laboratory room wherever needed, to train teachers in science education and to improve the science curricula. The project was conceived well and implemented well to the extent of construction and procurement. The training program was implemented but was not found to be effective enough to match the requirement of improved curricula and applied laboratory guidance. Thus the impact was limited. The fault lay in non-involvement of institutions in conceptualizing the intervention, standardized intervention across the board for all targeted institutions, and absence of internalization of the required change by the selected change-agents.

(ii) Asian Development Bank also funded a stipend program for female students in secondary schools. This has resulted in increased enrolment, retention and somewhat increased completion of secondary education cycle by the girls. This has resulted in increasing the age at marriage, improving knowledge about life skills, and increasing social awareness of the girls and their families. However, sustainability of the assistance program remains in question, due to increasing costs and because the concomitant objectives of improved management capacity of institutions and community participation was not achieved. An implementation process largely based on instructions and directives from the central level rather than active involvement of people at different levels in designing and managing implementation has caused this failure.

(iii) The Higher Secondary Education Project (HSEP) completed in 1998 aimed at facilitating the restructuring of HSE institutions offering 11-12 grade instruction, institutionalizing continuous upgrading of curricula, reformulating the evaluation system and improving

academic supervision. The construction work has proceeded well, curricular changes have also been done, and the examination system has been revised to some extent. Academic supervision, however, continues to remain weak. The main constraint was that without prior remedial action to improve education at the lower level, much effective restructuring and tangible results from it was difficult to achieve at the higher level.

(iv) The Secondary Education Development Project (SEDP), completed in 1999 and aimed at 6-10 grades, has provided assistance for (a) curriculum reform, (b) instructional materials management including privatization of textbook production, (c) teacher training, (d) improvement of physical facilities and (e) training of supervisory staff. Again, construction, consultancy, and training components have been largely achieved, but the objective of improved quality of instruction has not been achieved due to management weaknesses at institution and system levels. These weaknesses have led to the failure of all the components to come together to produce the results. Another factor is that the low level of motivation and commitment of people involved in implementation has not been addressed.

Thus the intervention by ADB has been sustained over two decades and its impact is seen in improvement of certain physical facilities, increased participation of girls in secondary education, increase in the number of 'trained' teachers and in the improvement of curricula. These are means towards an end, namely, improved educational output. This remains elusive largely due to absence of systemic reform and activities undertaken in isolation from each other.

(v) A new Secondary Education Sector Development Project (SESDP), 2000-2010, supported by ADB is now getting underway, which attempts to take account of the lessons and be engaged with the issues in the sub-sector over a longer period of time. The 11-year project is estimated to cost \$1.2 billion with a major part going to expansion and upgrading of educational facilities, provision of schools in underserved areas, and secondary school stipends for girls. The first phase of the project (2000-2005) will (i) help strengthen institutional capacity of the Ministry of Education in policy support and strategic planning, (ii) support decentralized planning and management, (iii) promote performance-based management, (iv) assist privatizing textbook production, (v) help improve teacher education, and (vi) strengthen school management. The cost of the first phase is \$86 million including \$60 million loan from ADB, by far the largest assistance project in secondary education.

### ***Lessons***

ADB's own evaluation of its assistance indicates several major lessons. (ADB 1999) The following lessons are based on ADB's experience and discussion of issues in the previous chapters.

***Relevance:*** A major emphasis in the reform in secondary education has to be on making the learning content and objectives relevant to the large majority of students who may not complete the full cycle up to 12<sup>th</sup> grade and even a larger majority who will not go on to formal tertiary education. Screening out the overwhelming majority who do not make the grades for university and college entrance is a necessary function but this negative aspect of the schools' role should not be the *raison d'être* for secondary schools. How the attempt to

introduce vocational courses and to entice students to this stream will work has to be observed. International experience suggests that communication skills, basic knowledge of mathematics and science, and currently, functional IT skills are the most useful preparation for the world of work. The general expression of intent in the Five-Year Plan and NEP2000 to undertake changes in curricula, instruction and evaluation needs to be translated into effective action by trial, action research, assessment of national and international experience and collaborative work involving education authorities, the private sector and NGOs who have demonstrated capacity to implement educational innovation.

**Equity:** Pronounced inequity in secondary education and its magnified effect in tertiary education and for opportunities in life needs to be addressed by redressing great inequality in inputs among types of schools and general improvement in quality of instruction in classrooms. To eliminate the need to rely on private commercial coaching, an important source of inequality, resource provisions according to needs of schools and students' economic status, enforcement of performance standards of schools and teachers, and codes of professional conduct should be considered. The NEP and FFYP have not strongly come out either with strategy statement or resource allocation ideas in this respect. The strategy of subvention to non-government schools should have specific equity criteria to encourage access and participation by the disadvantaged groups, besides promoting minimum quality and performance standards for all schools.

**Need for a holistic approach.** Problems in the sub-sector must be addressed in a holistic manner for reforms to be successful and sustainable. Unless related systems and supporting agencies are reformed in a complementary manner, intended changes will be inhibited. For example, under SEDP, one important reason for lack of progress in privatization of textbooks was that no parallel reform took place in the management structure of NCTB re-defining its role in curriculum development versus publication and printing of textbooks. Secondary education, (being managed in effect through three separate structures, for lower secondary grades of 6 to 8 until the proposed extension of primary education takes place, secondary stage of grades 9 and 10, and the higher secondary level of grades 11 and 12) cannot be reformed unless all of the parallel structures are reformed. There are also the parallel streams beyond the regular secondary schools (e.g., government assisted Madrasahs and vocational schools). It is a valid argument that everything cannot be handled all at once with the same degree of priority. What is important is that all of the key components of a defined system are given attention and a strategy to deal with them within a reasonable timeframe is in place.

**Need for a longer term view and involvement.** A long-term view needs to be taken to ensure sustainability and impact of government and donor investments. Closely related to the question of a holistic view is the need for commitment to change beyond the usual time span of assistance projects. Institutional development, building professional strengths of personnel, and changing habits and mind-sets – all-important conditions for sustainable and meaningful change – take more time than allowed for a project. Based on this premise, the new SEDP project of ADB is envisaged to be carried out in two phases over 11 years – a departure from usual practice and worth observing for lessons it may offer.

**Need for decentralization of management.** Another lesson, which is a systemic issue for the whole

education sector, is the need to decentralize DSHE operations and increase authority and capacity at the zonal, district and upazila levels for effective planning, monitoring, inspection, audit, and academic supervision to improve the quality of secondary education. A related need is to redefine the division of roles and responsibilities between the secretariat of the Ministry of education and the Directorate – ceding more of the planning, initiating policy reforms and overseeing policy implementation responsibilities to the professional staff of the Directorate. This has to be achieved over a period of time with professional strengthening of the Directorate in respect of the roles foreseen.

Since DSHE has only a skeleton staff at zonal/district offices and nothing at present in Upazilas, decentralization has to be carefully planned and implemented in phases.

Decentralization needs to be initiated selectively in some Districts and Upazilas first on a pilot basis to learn how the many inevitable pitfalls and risks can be averted and overcome, before it is applied more widely.

The potential of mobilizing community participation should be fully utilized in the largely non-government system through strengthening School Managing Committees. To empower SMCs, their role and responsibilities should be clearly defined in the context of devolution of greater management authority to schools. Managing committee members should be given orientation and training in specific aspects of school management related to SMC's role, in association with academic supervisors and other field personnel. Particular attention is needed in the context of decentralization trial to protect managing committees from undue political and bureaucratic pressures harmful to the cause of education.

***Strengthening planning, monitoring and financial management.*** Planning, monitoring and financial management capacity has to be improved considerably to see results from investments. Decentralization of authority and responsibility will work only with effectively functioning systems of monitoring, evaluation and audit in place at various tiers, with appropriate complementarity of tasks in these areas. A large stipend program with attendant application of criteria and record keeping at school and other levels is an example where a decentralized approach with necessary accountability has to be devised.

Another area where improved management and decentralization need to go together is maintenance of facilities in a far-flung system, for which government funds are the main source of finance. A large number of individual contracts in scattered locations, managed from the central level need to be replaced by transparent and accountable decision-making and supervision at the local level with greater involvement of the school managing committee in integrated plans for both new construction and routine maintenance. There is strong resistance from various interested parties to change in the current system which has spawned widespread corruption, shoddy work and inappropriate design. To overcome entrenched resistance and demonstrate good results, the system of local responsibility and accountability should be introduced on a trial basis.

***A performance-based subvention system.*** The leverage that the government has through subvention on the secondary school system, even though it is largely non-governmental, should be used to bring about necessary changes, especially in respect of learning outcome for students. Transparent methods should be devised to link the amount and disbursement of

subventions to performance of schools. Appropriate performance indicators and standards have to be clearly defined in a participatory way with concerned parties and their implications widely disseminated to communities, SMCs and other stakeholders to create a receptive environment. Performance-based subvention will be perceived as threatening to many accustomed to the current order. It, therefore, has to be piloted carefully to develop a system that is well understood and perceived as fair to all types of schools and serves as an incentive to improve performance.

***Professional development and specialization.*** A long term commitment, extending to a period of at least 10 years, is needed to develop both professional capacities of personnel for key system management and pedagogic improvement functions as well as permanent institutional arrangements for continued professional development and upgrading. Sustainable improvement in secondary education cannot be achieved unless the serious deficiencies in professional staff strength in terms of numbers and relevant skills can be overcome. Regulations are needed for core professional staffing of various units and agencies and to ensure continued contribution of dedicated professionals, enhanced by interchange of experience through rotation between field and central offices.

Advance planning and a rationalized system is needed in respect of personnel recruitment and posting, e.g., in Teachers' Training Colleges, where a 30 percent vacancy rate was reported. The present practice of looking upon all members of the educational cadre as one homogeneous group and their deployment interchangeably to pedagogic and management jobs do not recognize the specialized and technical nature of either function. The route to promotion only through transfer of senior teachers to management positions has not served the system well. One approach to deal with this problem is to bifurcate the education cadre to create sub-cadres for management and teaching, allowing equivalent promotion and a professional recognition in either sub-cadre.

***A focus on results in the classroom and learning outcome.*** Development projects need to focus on and monitor output and outcome at the classroom level. The practice of emphasizing mostly the inputs and sometimes the process outputs in externally assisted projects need to be re-examined in order to pay greater attention to learning outcomes, indicators of assessing these outcomes and relating closely the inputs and the process to the outcomes. Moving from a large numbers of narrowly conceived discrete projects to a more comprehensive development approach with a broader sector perspective and the commitment to be engaged over a longer period in two or three phases of implementation is needed. This can help to shift the focus of interventions to policy objectives, learning outcomes and development impacts of educational programs.

Strengthening learning assessment, both within schools and through public examinations, is an essential element of making the system focused on learning achievement and outcome. Public examinations and internal assessment should be mutually complementary and more oriented towards diagnosis of weaknesses of individual learners, institutions and the system and taking remedial measures rather than branding a large number of students as failures.

***Institutionalization of interventions.*** Components of assistance projects need to be institutionalized and budgets for operation and maintenance need to be provided from the

regular budget after project completion. One prominent example of the institutionalization issue is the common practice of establishing special project implementation units (PIU), justified by the weakness of the regular management and implementation machinery. The PIUs, which often fail to be integrated within the regular structure at the end of the project, while they also let the regular management structure continue with its deficiencies during their lifetime, since the latter is not challenged to undertake new tasks. The concept of PIUs and their relationship to the existing management structure during and after the life of an assistance project need to be re-examined with a focus on strengthening management in a sustainable manner.

#### **5.4 Technical and Vocational Education**

The story of technical and vocational education is that it has remained largely a supply-driven endeavor. As noted in chapter 4, lack of job market orientation, non-flexibility of the system with centralized control, difficulty with respect to horizontal mobility, and inadequate budgets for equipment and consumables are some of the major problems in this sub-sector. The government policy and program response has been essentially expansion of VTE with some diversification of courses/programs and the range of skills to be acquired.

##### *Donor Response*

The development and expansion of vocational and technical education has received some attention from the donors for establishment of new institutions or improvement of facilities in existing institutions. The donor response seems to be routine in nature and not based on investigation of the needs for relevant human and social capital formation in a medium-term time perspective.

(1) IDA, ODA and UNDP had funded a Technical Education Project starting in 1984 involving improvement of physical infrastructure, supply of tools and laboratory equipment and training of teachers in the BIT and Technical Teacher Training Centre (TTTC). These were accomplished, but their impact in terms of market-responsive output is not perceptible despite improvement in institutional capacity.

(2) France has provided assistance to college of textile technology involving construction, renovation, supply of laboratory equipment and teacher training. Textile is indeed an important sector in the economy. The upgrading of capacity and quality of instruction has not been sufficiently geared to the job market as indicated by employer preference for “expatriate” personnel for some of the skilled jobs in this export-driven sector.

(3) Islamic Development Bank Funded establishment of a women’s polytechnic to provide access to technical education to girl students from the H.S.C stream. This was intended to expand opportunities in a location outside Dhaka.

(4) Italy provided assistance for setting up two polytechnics of the generic variety without taking into account the problems of existing institutions in respect of market response. However the locations of these institutions would increase access to students in remote areas.

(5) OPEC has funded renovation of VTIs and reconstruction of BITs. These are in response to government persuasion.

### *Lessons*

***Re-thinking the role of public sector skill training.*** With an emphasis on poverty reduction and greater equality of opportunities in skill development, the public sector policy and programs need to find its spheres of comparative advantages. Experience in many developing countries has shown that the public sector finds it difficult to provide market-responsive and cost-effective skill training. In the longer term, a much greater role has to be accorded to the private sector and various ways of public-private collaboration. Direct public effort, in addition to overall policy-making and general system oversight, need to be directed mainly to two areas: (a) programs of skill development that have a direct impact on poverty reduction and greater equality of opportunities including for women by targeting new clientele (see below.), and (b) support to collaborative programs with the private sector and non-governmental organizations including development of new modes of collaboration based on relevant international experience. These broad areas call for a variety of measures indicated below.

***Links with the job market.*** More than in any other area, vocational and technical education and training has to be alert and responsive to signals from the job market. This responsiveness requires a change in mindset to move from essentially a focus on supply to attention to demand. Several inter-connected measures are needed including: (a) opportunity for employers and entrepreneurs to influence policies and programs, (b) capacity and authority of individual institutions to assess local job markets and adjust programs including short and part-time courses, (c) possibility of public institutions to be at least partially self-supporting through providing appropriate commercial services and products that also offer hands-on experience to trainees, and (d) a strategy of skill development that promotes complementarity of public and private training activities.

***Impact on poverty reduction by targeting new clientele.*** Further diversification of clientele and programs beyond the limited efforts made so far is necessary. Measures that need to be considered are: (a) more attention to underprivileged groups who do not make it to grade 8 or the SSC level by offering modular courses in income generating and self-employment skills linked to local market prospects, (b) exploring ways of supporting skill development in the informal sector through collaboration with NGOs and small entrepreneurs, (c) more emphasis in technical education to upgrading of employed technicians and entrepreneurial training, information and advice to graduates.

***Improving efficiency of programs.*** Improving efficiency of programs and ensuring better value for money in the public sector would require: (a) recognizing that maintaining quality and credibility of skill training must be a high priority; and necessary resources have to be provided for equipment, skilled staff and consumable items for this purpose; (b) each institution to be made accountable for use of the resources including mobilization of at least some of the



resources and for results based on agreed indicators; and (c) providing government support to non-governmental institutions and organizations. This support can take the form of paying for training on per trainee basis in effective non-government programs, training instructors and helping with teaching materials and equipment, and development of policies conducive to complementarity and cooperation of government and non-government activities.

***Implementing the pragmatic recommendations of NEP 2000.*** A number of pragmatic policy objectives and measures suggested in NEP 2000 regarding a greater emphasis on non-formal skill training should be given serious consideration. An integrated approach to implementing these should be taken, instead of piece-meal action. These recommendations include those concerned with flexible and market-responsive vocational/technical training outside the structure of secondary education. (See chapter 3)

***A long term policy framework.*** It is vitally important to move from *ad hoc* and fragmented responses to emerging problems to a policy and strategy framework as the guide to determining priorities and mutually complementary actions over a period of 10 to 15 years. For this purpose, one necessary step would be to have an active oversight body with professionally competent and experienced members representing government and the private and non-government sectors, who can take the lead in developing a long term vision along with guiding interim changes. A second step will be to begin several key trial/pilot activities in strategic areas, such as, (i) funding and providing incentives for establishing and expanding private sector training capacities, (ii) supporting non-formal programs through NGOs for disadvantaged groups, (iii) encouraging public institutions to generate resources and provide hands-on training through profit-making activities, and (iv) working with informal sector skill development. A third area of action is research to fill critical knowledge gaps. The World Bank Education Sector Review has identified several issues for research: (i) cost and outcomes of the SSC vocational courses, (ii) operations of the traditional apprenticeship system in the informal sector, (iii) pros and cons of proprietary vocational training and in-service occupational training in enterprises, (iv) costs and effectiveness of Ministry of Youth's rural training, (v) feasibility study for enterprise associations to take over existing specialized institutions (e.g., leather and textile technology institutes). (World Bank 2000, Education Sector Review, vol. III, pp. 18-19.)

## **5.5 Tertiary Education**

Tertiary education has been subject to changes due to demographic pressure and increased social demand, one response to which has been the emergence of a non-profit but more than full-cost private universities. The other key developments include governments initiative to establish new universities with science and technology orientation, expansion within old established universities, emergence of a National University to oversee undergraduate and graduate education in colleges, distance mode of higher education initiated by Bangladesh Open University and emergence of specialized universities.

NEP 2000 has called for a "complete reform" of higher education. It has recognized the importance of emerging trends of specialization as well as interdisciplinary programs which in turn requires restructuring of undergraduate, graduate and post-graduate level of education

and learning. This requires ensuring quality in college and universities through modernization and upgrading of curricula, increased emphasis on research, improvement of the qualification of teachers, increased self reliance with respect to finance including private donation, and appropriate coordination by the University Grants Commission.

#### *Donor Response*

Development in tertiary education and support by donors in this area have not followed an overall perspective and vision for higher education in the context of longer term priorities in the whole education sector and for the nation. There have been sporadic interventions with external assistance over the last decade as indicated below.

- (1) Donors have been selectively involved in the higher education sector. In the public sector, donors helped to establish Agricultural University, Engineering University, Institute of Business Administration and Institute of Education and Research in the past. In the 1990s, donor assistance to Agricultural Education and Business Education was continued.
- (2) Islamic Development Bank helped establishment of the Islamic University.
- (3) Asian Development Bank helped establishment of the Open University.
- (4) Turkey has provided assistance for establishment of a Science and Technology University.
- (5) UK and USA continued its assistance to Agricultural University
- (6) Japan helped establish IPASA, now Bangabandhu Agricultural University.
- (7) Canada (CIDA) funded a linkage of University of Alberta project with BUET.
- (8) DANIDA funded a training network for BUET.
- (9) DFID has funded fisheries education and teaching at BAU and DU.
- (10) Ford Fountain has funded a Graduate Training Institute at BAU, a crop diversification and water market development project along with research projects on farming system, and environmental studies. Ford Foundation also supported establishment of a department of Anthropology at Jahangirnagar University and urbanization study at Dhaka University.
- (11) Japan has financed Japan-Bangladesh study.
- (12) Netherlands has funded data collection and collation of research on water resources at BUET.
- (13) SIDA has funded institutional linkage program for BUET.
- (14) UNDP has funded library automation project at D.U.
- (15) UNDP and UNFPA have funded population studies program at D.U.
- (16) ODA has funded establishment of Health Economics Department at D.U. through York University (U.K.) linkage.

These demonstrate that donor's "projectized" assistance, while valuable in respect of the specific objective, has not been responsive to systemic change required in the higher education sub-sector.

#### *Lessons*

***Increasing external effectiveness of higher education.*** As a sub-sector that represents high public subsidy to a relatively privileged clientele, it is essential that higher education performs the functions expected of it. Measures in this respect will include: (i) making higher education program planning responsive to market signals, permitting it structural flexibility to expand and contract as needed on the basis of an overall perspective of human resource needs and structural change in the economy; (ii) an integrated approach for development and use of specialized and professional skills that include regular degree programs, part-time and non-formal programs, and skill development and upgrading offered by professional bodies; and (iii) applying incentives and cost-sharing to relate higher education output to needs of the economy and society. External productivity cannot be considered in isolation from internal efficiency, management and quality of programs, discussed below.

***More effective governance and management.*** Governance and administration in the higher education sub-system including universities, colleges and professional and specialized institutions are in need of a fundamental overhaul. However, due to the special vulnerability of higher education to a politically charged environment, a major reform agenda will face formidable obstacles. A prudent approach would be cautious and gradual steps which are guided by an overall vision of change over a decade or longer. The elements of overall governance reform would include: (i) review and modification of the legal basis for university governance to restore and enhance the performance and accountability of the university in terms of its academic and intellectual objectives, (ii) strengthening UGC's role as an independent agency for assessing and setting priorities, establishing and enforcing quality standards, and allocating resources; (iii) making the National University effective in supervising the extensive network of degree colleges, enforcing accreditation standards, assisting colleges to improve quality of education, and maintaining the integrity of public examinations, and (iv) moving towards a system of public accountability of the independent higher education management bodies to parliamentary committees and appropriate professional and civil society organizations.

A culture of self-assessment needs to be built into the governance system. Students should evaluate teachers and facilities, teaching peers should evaluate the research outcome of teachers and employers should evaluate the employability of graduates. The management system needs to be designed to value contribution to knowledge and its proper dissemination, and creation of the interface between the world of work and the world of intellect.

***A strategy of development encompassing public and private institutions.*** The private universities, professional colleges and other institutions should be regarded as important and valuable components of the national higher education network. Government policies and strategies need to encourage and facilitate their development and promote complementarity with public institutions. Private institutions can be a means of expanding higher education without adding to public financial burden and introducing the norms of cost recovery and cost-sharing, greater responsiveness to market forces, and enforcing campus discipline – three serious problems in the public system. Cooperative arrangements with private universities need to be considered as a way of introducing necessary reforms in academic structures and governance patterns in new public universities and resisting pressure for unrestrained expansion. Conditional grants to private institutions, joint curriculum planning and facilitating student

loan schemes for both public and private universities are some of the avenues of cooperation.

***Investing resources in new technologies.*** A high priority should be given and resources invested for taking advantage of new information and communication technologies for making learning resources available, improving quality of instruction, and increasing flexibility of academic offerings in higher education institutions. Bangladesh Open University should adapt to methods and programs to realize the potential of the new technologies. The Internet, e-mail, teleconferencing and videodiscs should be put to use in distance education programs of the Open University to offer diversified opportunities to learners and to bring the world of learning to Bangladesh. On-line course materials from international sources should be used by the Open University and other institutions. Easy Internet access for faculty and students should be standard provision for higher education institutions.

***Resource constraint, quality and equity.*** Adequate resources for quality assurance must be a central concern in future development of higher education. Expansion of capacity should be contingent upon availability of necessary resources for acceptable quality, rather than more of the same “low cost low outcome” provisions. Expansion of low quality public provisions is far from equitable. Public-private collaboration, cost-sharing and cost recovery should be considered as strategies for dealing with resource constraints, enhancing resources for quality improvement, and contributing to equity in the education system and the higher education sub-system. Public institutions cannot aim for full cost recovery, but there should be targets for means-based cost recovery and assistance to students from poor families. Various options can be considered for cost recovery including differentiated fees and residence hall charges, student loans along with increased tuition, graduate tax or income tax for graduates linked with level of earning, and incentives for private universities to enroll qualified students from low-income groups instead of expanding public facilities.

***A long term and comprehensive vision of higher education.*** An overall vision for development of higher education in the next two decades should guide priorities and objectives for development in the sub-sector in the context of a vision for the education system and the nation in the longer term. This vision and a policy framework derived from it should be developed with active participation of all stakeholders and through wide consultation. Such a vision should be concerned with key issues including: (a) coping with the increasingly competitive global market, the “knowledge economy” and the “information society”; (b) making higher education a vehicle for social equity and mobility, instead of a force for reproducing prevailing inequity in society; (c) addressing social and economic demand for expansion with attention to quality and equity; (d) upholding the vision of the university as the domain for academic freedom and intellectual pursuits, protecting it from criminal politicization; (e) broadening resource base for higher education including beneficiary contribution and public-private partnership; and (f) taking advantage of the technological revolution in information and communication.

***Campus politics and unrest.*** Restoring academic autonomy and mission of the university and other higher education institutions without political and government intrusion should be a high priority. The government in cooperation with public leaders and respected citizens has to take the initiative to build a consensus among political parties backed by a strong civil society mobilization on issues identified as important in public discussion, such as : (i) disbanding

front student organizations on campus of political parties, (ii) disavowing use of political loyalty criteria for academic and administrative appointments (iii) modifying legal structures of university governance, (iv) a student government structure to promote participation and responsibility among students in respect of academic and university affairs, (v) forming public and community service corps of students, and (vi) a code of conduct for teachers regarding professional responsibility and political involvement.

## **5.6 Some Systemic Lessons**

A number of systemic issues and their implications have been noted in chapter 3. The brief review above of development programs and donor assistance underscores the systemic concerns noted earlier and points further to the pitfalls of the piece-meal and the short-horizon approach. (Also see Annex A5.1, “ Education Development Budget and Profile of Donor Assistance.”)

It is evident that development in education and donor support for it has largely been projectized with a focus on quantitative outputs related to the implementation process, which tend to neglect outcome and impact. This is caused mostly by the compartmentalized view of the education sector taken by the government. This view is in part promoted by a mechanical application of the log-frame analysis (LFA) technique in developing some projects.

The important question is whether the content and balance of investments in the education sector and related social services such as health-care and nutrition reflect well-designed strategies for growth with equity and poverty reduction. Progress towards the longer term impact should become evident in the interim outputs and outcomes in the education system. For example, equity in access and outcomes of education at different levels should begin to improve. Content and learning outcome of education should be of increasing relevance to improving quality of life and livelihood. Beyond the stage of basic education, programs should be related to productive sectors and job market signals. Moreover, efficiency and accountability of investments have to be maintained through reasonably effective management. The deficiencies in these respects have been discussed in Chapter 4. Lessons on overcoming these systemic deficiencies are recapitulated below.

### ***Lessons***

***Increased public resources for education.*** The serious under-resourcing of education, below the threshold of per capita expenditure needed at different levels to maintain a minimum acceptable standard of performance, must be overcome by raising substantially public allocation. Researchers and civil society groups have advocated for increase that would more than double the share of GNP for education to 5 percent in five years. This increase has to be accompanied by efforts to mobilize various non-government sources, including contribution of communities, the private sector and beneficiaries within a framework of equitable sharing of the cost burden. At the same time, commensurate attention has to be given to improving internal efficiency and external effectiveness of the education system.

***Greater decentralization at all levels.*** Practical steps should be taken to translate the frequent rhetoric about greater decentralization of educational management into reality on a system-

wide basis. The responsibility for primary, secondary and general non-formal education should be vested at the district and upazila levels. The professional bodies such as the University Grants Commission, the National University, and bodies for technical and professional education should have substantive autonomy to initiate policy reform, develop goals, determine priorities for resource use, and establish and enforce quality criteria. The education system as a whole should move towards greater authority in academic and resource management at the individual institution level from primary school to the university along with the introduction of accountability for performance to major stakeholders. In the context of an entrenched authoritarian culture, resistance to participatory sharing of authority, and widespread corruption, a move towards decentralization has to be taken initially on a trial basis, with caution and determination.

***Production and distribution of textbooks.*** The government should not publish print or distribute textbooks at any level, including primary education. The government's proper role in this area is curriculum development, establishment of criteria for evaluating textbook content and standards, providing approval for textbooks through independent and transparent review (multiple books by different publishers should be encouraged), and overseeing policy for subsidized or free textbook distribution. This is necessary to encourage quality through competition, discourage the temptation of "politically correct" re-writing of textbooks, and to deal with rampant corruption and mismanagement in the government textbook operations.

***Redefining the government role.*** A conscious political choice has to be made regarding the balance between direct control of the government for the provision of education services versus a regulatory, standard-setting and overall policy and priority-defining role of the government. The over-arching concern should be ensuring the greatest benefit for society at a given cost to society rather than the degree of public or private control. It is the governments' responsibility to protect the "public good" character of the education system, but this is not necessarily done through government control of the institutions. Comparative strengths of the public and private providers of services in different circumstances and levels and types of institutions in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and equity established by technical analysis should be the criteria for decision regarding who should be the provider.

***Professionalization of educational management.*** A plan needs to be developed with a sense of urgency for developing institutions and a system for professional development of personnel in management, planning, administration and supervision and other specialized technical tasks (such as, curriculum development, assessment of learning, and teacher training). The huge and complex education enterprise in Bangladesh cannot continue to be managed as an amateur activity. This would in fact be a greater problem if and when decentralization is implemented seriously. Along with the professional development measures, changes have to be introduced in recruitment, incentives, human resource management, and organizational structures to make use of professional skills in educational management and planning.

***A greater voice of stakeholders at all levels.*** In the education system, more than in all other social enterprises, the participatory approach, transparency in decision-making and a high degree of accountability should become the norm. Students, teachers, parents, community, and

employers of graduates should be involved in appropriate ways at institutional and system levels in policy development, broader management decisions, and evaluation of performance. The voice of the stakeholders, beneficiaries and ultimate users of the educational output needs to be respected to prevent dysfunctional isolation of the education program, demoralizing imposition from above, and a negation of the civil society role.

*Organizational structure for a systemic view of educational priorities.* A macro-level understanding of the dynamics of structural changes in society, a vision of the future for the nation, and a perspective of the global influences that touch people's lives must inform educational objectives and policies. Education system has to be the vehicle for promoting the over-arching values and goals of society, such as, building a democratic society, overcoming poverty, and inculcating universal human values. Organizational structures and processes need to be developed for linking the purposes and functions of education to the larger imperatives of society. An organizational mechanisms that could be considered for this purpose would be a Ministry of Human Resource Development with a broader coordinating and policy-setting role than the existing Ministry structure. This could be complemented by an independent and permanent National Human Resource Commission , which would be a forum for public discourse, would review system performance, guide government action, and be answerable to the national parliament.

These systemic lessons have to be taken into account in future policy formulation and development interventions in education.

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## Annex 5.1

### Education Development Budget and Profile of Donor Assistance

Selected aggregate data on development expenditures in education and the quantity and trend of donor assistance support the presentation made in chapter 5 and illuminate some of the issues raised regarding adequacy and use of resources in the education sector in chapter 4.

Annex table A5.1 provides an overall year-wise allocation for development of education sector and utilisation in the 1990s according to the records of ERD and IMED. The trend shows nearly a seven-fold increase in allocation over a decade. GOB allocation increased by 12 times and project aid increased by less than three times. The utilisation also increased by 11 times; GOB fund utilisation increased by 18 times and project aid utilisation increased by five and a half times. Another way of looking at it is that during 1990/91 and 1992/93 project aid was higher than GOB allocation as was the utilisation. From 1993/94 onward GOB allocation outpaced project aid which remained fairly constant between 1994/95 and 1999/00; so was the utilisation.

Annex table A5.2 provides an overview of project assistance by the donors during the decade of the 1990s. The information indicates nearly five fold increase in project assistance for primary sector in ten years; six times increase for non-formal sector over five years, sixteen times increase for secondary and higher secondary sector over a decade, 2.3 times increase in vocational and technical education sector with variations over time, and about three times increase in project assistance in the university sector.

Annex table A5.3 provides the trend of flow of resources into the education sector as a whole in the last three decades. First, there has occurred a substantial increase in project assistance to education sector in 30 years. Second, there has been an acceleration of aid after the acceptance of UPE as a goal and commitment to its implementation following the Education for All (EFA) initiative launched in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. Third, the articulation of the concept of human development and the publication of the Human Development Report since 1990 have given an impetus to increased resource commitment for human development, barring the years of political upheaval.

Annex tables A5.4 to A5.8 present the sub-sectoral assistance by donors and the purpose for which the assistance was given. It will be seen that construction and rehabilitation got much of the funding for primary education. In the PEDP, components of teacher training, text book printing, curricular development, educational aids etc. are included. Book distribution did get one-time funding. UNICEF is supporting the IDEAL project for improvement of teaching method, establishment of resource centres, cluster-training for teachers, material development, improvement of management, development of feeder schools and community support mobilisation.

The Non-formal education sector has received funding for development of management, running of centres, development of teaching materials, training of instructors and launching the NGO schools by smaller NGOs under a centralised supervision for monitoring progress and performance. Adult literacy, literacy for dropouts and continuing education have received support.

Secondary and Higher Secondary Sector has also received significant project assistance. Much of the assistance has gone for expansion of secondary education and assistance towards secondary education for girls. Significant amount has also been spent on expansion of Higher Secondary Education. Some assistance has gone for development of science education which is less than what has gone for development of Madrasah education. The Secondary Education Development project includes curricular development, teacher training, physical facility development, assistance for production of books, institutionalisation of monitoring and improvement of management capacity. The Higher Secondary Development Project is more restricted and covers facility development, teacher training and curricular improvement.

Assistance to technical education has primarily gone to expand intake capacity, improvement of curricula, physical facility development, supply of equipment and teacher training.

Assistance has been provided to the university sector in a selected way. The Open University received substantial assistance from ADB, Islamic University from IDB, Agricultural University from ODA and Shahjalal University from Turkey. It may be noticed that no assistance was available for IT development and



its use in education.

MOE has received assistance for strengthening MIS from UNDP; it also received assistance for development of (National Academy for Education Management. DFID has provided technical assistance through the ESTEEM project for preparation of various sub-sectoral development projects and specific research, training and extension projects.

The overview of donor assistance illustrates the characteristics of the “projectised approach,” especially the absence of a systemic view, and highlights other related issues.

*Limited interaction with stakeholders.* Exclusion of beneficiaries and stakeholders from the development of a shared long-term perspective on education and formulation of projects within this framework have resulted in poorly defined view of assessment and evaluation of achievements from interventions. As a result, the micro-level foundations for macro-level progress have remained weak. Insufficient linkage between public expenditures from the revenue and the development budgets has failed to create a strategy for progressive reform which creates externalities and increases return to investment in education.

*Contending agenda and priorities.* The effectiveness of development activities, dependent almost exclusively on donor-assisted projects, has suffered from different priorities and diverse agenda of agencies, on the one hand, and the difficulty of looking at links within sub-sectors and among sub-sectors in a project-based approach, on the other hand. This two-way tension can be minimised through openness in dialogue within the sub-sectors, amongst the donors, and between donors and the government counterparts, promoted through ongoing informal and institutionalized participatory consultation.

*Weak commitment to reform.* The achievement with respect to interventions in education sector by GOB and donors have been limited by absence of political commitment to sector-wide reform and of political and professional leadership that is proactive. This has been exacerbated by lack of a “constituency-wide” leadership and professional discourse in sub-sectors of education on the basis of deepened knowledge of specialties. The hold of a system of administrative control that neither promoted sector-wide capacity nor rational strategies consistent with long term goals for socio-economic development has only accentuated further this deficiency in professional discourse and leadership.

*Creating a conducive policy environment.* GOB needs to be cognizant of the fact that donor assistance produces desired results when sectoral policy environment correlated strongly with broader policy objectives. Education sector policy or the sub-sector policies therein cannot produce results without a macro-level integration which must have strong micro-level foundation to support a culture of change and sustainable development. Education must generate capacity, awareness, opportunity, choices and a dynamism for individual accomplishment within a broader social context. So far education development interventions have not taken such a visionary approach, largely because of a disjointed and project-specific focus with a narrow view of outcome.

However, the collective voice of donors to an extent, and indigenous critiques from the research and the NGO community, such as the Education Watch and the Centre for Policy Dialogue, have injected ideas about needed changes in the policy and strategy formulation process and their content. They have underscored the need for consistent plans and programs, identification of milestones to be achieved, and incorporation of broader socio-economic considerations, excluded in the technical concerns of the projectised approach.

These critiques are not to deny the achievements in the education sector which have created millions of new literates, brought the light of education to many poverty-ridden homes and encouraged millions of girls to benefit from educational opportunities. The critique is aimed at two facets, i.e., how to enhance productivity of the investment and how to sustain the capacity created in the context of a fast changing environment. The achievements are noteworthy, but they are inadequate in terms of needs and potential. The strategy to overcome these limitations need be based on a recognition of basic deficiencies of the interventions undertaken so far.

**Table A5.1. Allocation and Utilisation of Development Fund for Education Sector**  
(million Taka)

Year	Allocation			Utilization		
	Total	GOB	Project	Total	GOB	Project
1999-00	205,45	155,73	49,72	197,96	149,69	45,99
1998-99	177,62	126,57	51,04	169,35	125,90	43,44
1997-98	149,43	104,66	43,64	-	-	-
1996-97	158,37	107,77	49,23	145,72	103,30	41,43
1995-96	140,24	93,05	45,90	130,49	92,93	37,56
1994-95	155,30	104,77	47,19	146,53	102,07	44,46
1993-94	98,54	56,17	39,34	92,01	57,41	34,60
1992-93	65,09	22,30	41,62	52,84	21,63	31,21
1991-92	53,49	17,17	34,85	29,87	13,94	15,95
1990-91	31,99	13,66	17,06	17,34	8,96	6,37

Source: ERD

**Table A5.2. Total project assistance by sectors during 90/91-99/00**

(million Taka)

Year	Primary	NFE	Sec. & H. Sec.	Vocational	University	Teach. Edn.
90-91	1 907.6	-	417.2	313.2	272.4	15.1
91-92	3 385.2	-	418.3	286.8	643.7	3.8
92-93	4 148.7	-	1 212.1	130.5	381.7	4.8
93-94	6 412.7	-	2 194.6	101.6	479.6	7.7
94-95	8 883.1	-	5 314.4	154.0	425.0	22.3
95-96	7 894.0	318.4	4 869.2	74.3	256.2	17.2
96-97	8 022.4	594.4	5 435.9	209.3	542.0	11.3
97-98	6 715.4	1 016.5	5 015.2	226.4	744.6	8.3
98-99	8 247.6	1 456.0	6 051.7	543.6	604.2	26.9
99-00	9 262.3	1 843.9	6 565.7	737.9	831.7	21.0

Source: ADP Documents

**Table A5.3. Project Aid to Education Sector**

(US \$ m)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Amount</b>
71/72	-	87/88	55.3
72/73	0.2	88/89	36.6
73/74	.8	89/90	62.3
74/75	-	90/91	36.7
75/76	6.4	91/92	68.2
76/77	5.7	92/93	84.9
77/78	9.4	93/94	66.3
78/79	10.0	94/95	123.8
79/80	12.5	95/96	106.3
80/81	12.1	96/97	103.7
81/82	10.0	97/98	100.5
82/83	10.9	98/99	91.9
83/84	19.5	99/00	85.2
84/85	23.0	Total	1220.2
85/86	38.2	Av. (27 yr)	45.2
86/87	37.3		

*Source: ERD*

**Table A5.4. Donor Assistance to Primary Education Sub-Sector by Purpose**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Total Allocation (mill. Tk, 90/91-99/00)</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
ADB	4427.00	Primary Education Development, Rehabilitation of schools
DFID	60.00	Rehabilitation
EEC/EU	1621.00	Rehabilitation/Shelter construction
Germany/KFW	2276.00	Primary Education Development and Construction of Shelter
IDA	150.00	Rehabilitation
IDA	25.00	PMED
IDA	310.00	Primary Education Development Program
IDA, CIDA, UNDP, UNICEF, DGSI, NCRAD	7498.20	Primary Education Development Program
IDA, Norway	180.00	Book Distribution
IDA, SIDA, UNDP, UNICEF	213.6	Universal Primary Education
IDB	1246.4	Rehabilitation + Shelter
Japan	12.6	Rehabilitation + Shelter
Italy	0.1	Shelter
KSA	1947.0	Mosque, Clinic, Shelter + School
NORAD	859.2	School + Shelter
OPEC	10.5	Primary Education Development
SFD	710.0	Mosque, Clinic, Shelter + School
UNICEF	392.0	IDEAL
USAID	250.0	Shelter

Source : ERD, Plancom

**Table A5.5. Project Assistance for Non-formal Education (million Taka)**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Amount of Project Aid 91/92-99/00</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
ADB, WB	271.0	Literacy and NFE activities
DANIDA	124.5	NFE activities
NORAD, SIDA	627.0	NFE activities, technical assistance
SDC, ADB, WB	1027.0	Institutional development, NFE courses
UNDP, SIDA, NORAD, UNICEF	732.0	Institutional development, Basic education for adolescents
UNICEF	383.5	Basic education for hard-to-reach adolescents
UNICEF, UNDP	120.0	Basic education for adolescents

Source: ERD, Plancom

**Table A5.6. Project Assistance to Secondary and Higher Secondary Sub-Sector during 90/91-99/00**  
(m Taka)

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
ADB	245.1	Rehab of Schools
ADB, UNDP	140.6	Expansion of Science Ed
ADB	-	Management Development
ADB	3339.0	Secondary Education Development Program
ADB, UNDP	1975.8	Higher Secondary Education Development
EEC/EU	210.0	Female Teacher Participation & training
ODA/IDA	3046.0	Female Secondary School Assistance
IDB	599.2	Multipurpose Madrasah
KSA	10.5	Multipurpose Madrasah
USAID, TAF, NORAD	827.6	Female Stipend
UNDP, ODA	1.2	Management Development

Source: ERD, Plancom

**Table A5.7. Project Assistance to VTE Sub-Sector, 90/91-99/00**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
France	80.2	Textile technology college
IDA, ODA	362.2	BIT, TTC, Polytechnic
IDB	-	Women Polytechnic
Italy	15.5	Polytechnic
OPEC	180.5	BIT, VTI

Source: ERD, Plancom

**Table A5.8. Project Assistance to University Sub-Sector 90/91-99/00**

<b>Donor</b>	<b>Amount (Tk m)</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
ODA, UK	46.0	Agricultural University Dev.
ADB	1762.2	Open University Dev.
IDB	326.6	Islamic University Dev.
Turkey	31.0	Shahjalal University Dev.

Source: ERD, Plancom

## 6 CONCLUSION AND SCOPE FOR JBIC SUPPORT

Development literature in recent decades has moved away from an emphasis on mere capital formation in physical infrastructure and industries to a broader understanding of human development inclusive of human and social capital, growth with equity, and sustainable poverty reduction. A broad concept of human development has great implications for policies and priorities in the education sector as a whole and its sub-sectors.

### 6.1 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

The five-year plan documents provide an account of the elusive search for attainment of unfulfilled promises. The developmental strategy of Bangladesh has moved from reconstruction of a war-devastated country to building physical infrastructure and to increased emphasis on social sector development. Various recent discussions about development plans, strategies and outcomes have suggested strengths and weaknesses of the Bangladesh society and the economy, which are summarized below, applying a framework of strength-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) analysis.

#### *I. Strength*

- a) Bangladesh has established a unique national identity through the historical process of its evolution.
- b) Bangladesh is a more homogeneous and less differentiated society than others in the region.
- c) The people of Bangladesh have displayed remarkable resilience to survive amidst natural and manmade disasters.
- d) Although there remains a long way to go, women in Bangladesh have become more visible and active in the public arena, participative and capable of making themselves heard.
- e) Bangladesh has gained valuable experience of social development, especially through non-governmental initiatives.
- f) A new generation has emerged which is achievement-oriented, alert to global trends and influences, and seeks opportunities for development.
- g) The decade-long democratic experience, still nascent, has opened new opportunities for disadvantaged sections of society to express themselves.

#### *II. Weaknesses*

- a) In a condition of adverse people-resource ratio and human capital ill-endowed with knowledge and creative capabilities, workers are not able to absorb and adapt new productive techniques rapidly; this has made it difficult to break out of the “below poverty level equilibrium”.

- b) Per capita investment in human resource is low and the production system as a whole has not been imbued with a culture of efficiency.
- c) Dependency ratio is high, putting pressure on many income-earners eking out a subsistence living, which has made it difficult to ensure basic security for families and generate adequate surplus for investment.
- d) Institutional capacity has remained underdeveloped; with a structural shift of the economy towards a larger service sector, organizational resources are stretched thinly to undermine the quality of institutionalized services.
- e) The urban and elite bias in the social sector has created inequities in social and economic conditions by increasing real cost for accessing resources and services by the poor and the marginalized.
- f) Inadequate involvement of the community has resulted in a mismatch between supply and demand variables particularly in the social sectors designed for poverty alleviation.
- g) Quality of development expenditure, particularly in the social sectors including health care, education, and social and legal protection has raised widespread concern about the quality and outcome of these services; and remedial measures appear to be intractable.

### *III. Opportunity*

- a) Bangladesh has a conscious polity with articulate and vocal media and the civil society; social mobilization on critical development issues in recent years has been noteworthy.
- b) Bangladesh has taken some steps in moving from a highly regulated and bureaucracy-controlled management of the economy towards a more open and incentive-based system.
- c) Bangladesh today has an integrated domestic market and price response is rapid, though monopolistic pricing in some situations cannot be ruled out.
- d) Importance of education and its contribution to value addition in the global market is well recognized; and the scope for further value addition in diverse areas remains unexplored.
- e) With increase in a better-educated labor force, creating opportunity for employment to match workers' potential and intelligence in the country and outside remains an area to be adequately addressed.
- f) Female participation in labor force has expanded; with increase in women participation in education, the demand for further expansion of meaningful participation in the productive sector is growing, which needs effective policy and institutional support.

### *IV. Threat*

- a) Globalization has caught Bangladesh productive sectors on the wrong foot. Policy package to address the adverse consequences, particularly those affecting the

marginalized and the poor is not in place, creating imbalance in the capacity to access opportunities equitably. Unless a comprehensive price, income, wage and employment policies with attendant change in human development and institutional support system is developed, *ad hoc* reform measures are likely to create disruption and penalize the poor further.

- b) Highly centralized, non-transparent and non-participatory decision making and negotiations on matters of vital public interest is compounded by a weak accountability system. The consequence is a quagmire of ill-fated enterprises with voices of the people unheard and disaffection high. This situation produces skepticism and a negative or passive response in place of the positive and proactive attitudes essential for participatory development.
- c) Poverty alleviation has become a catchword and often a means for seeking funds in the name of the poor, making them the subject, rather than the main actors; the objective conditions for building an equitable society has become less conducive, despite proliferation of “pro-poor” projects. Social distances have increased and social cohesion has diminished, creating a volatile situation.
- d) Employment opportunity in the formal sector has not expanded to keep pace with new entrants into the labor force, creating an army of disenchanting people, who are prone to be exploited by unscrupulous people engaged in self-seeking and not-so-legal endeavors.

These in general terms summarize the achievements and challenges of the Bangladesh society and economy.

## 6.2 Recent economic growth trends

Development plans over the last two decades have sought to accelerate the rate of growth of GDP. In recent years (the Fifth Plan period), the growth rate has been over 5 percent compared to 3 percent in the Fourth Plan period. But the achievement has always been lower than projected. The following table provides the recent situation, before recent slow-down and recession in developed countries.

**Table: 6.1 Growth of Real GDP by Sector (Annual average percentage)**

Sector	1996/97 – 1998/99
Agriculture	3.18
Manufacturing	6.60
Construction	7.03
Power, Gas, Water & Sanitation	3.39
Transport, Storage, Communication	7.34
Housing	4.10
Health	4.80
Education	8.15
Trade	5.76
Banking & Insurance	4.51
Total	5.45

*Source: Planning Commission*



Agricultural growth rate, despite serious floods in 1998, has been credited to excellent coping capacity of the farmer and good performance of the support system. The manufacturing sector is handicapped by inadequacy and inefficiency of physical and financial infrastructure, crisis of confidence due to political climate and rapid liberalization without effective regional and national synchronization of policies and institutions. In power and gas sector, the lumpy investment need, long gestation period including delayed implementation, inadequacy of investment despite opening it up to private sector, lack of coordination between generation, transmission and distribution and institutional inefficiency have caused the growth rate to be lower than projected. In the transport sector, due to expansion of road network and private investment in vehicular traffic, the growth rate was higher than projected. The construction sector also experienced a boom with the private sector active in this area, but its activity has remained concentrated in the metropolis, causing overcrowding and deterioration of environmental quality. The value addition from trade and commerce has remained high even though informal cross-border trade is not accounted for. It is presumed that such trade has increased over time. These have helped the growth of the finance sector as well.

Performance in education sector is considered to be satisfactory in money terms. This reflects the expansion of the education sector and payments made to the providers. Many observers are of the view that if productivity of the sectors were measured instead of salary and wages, and if the system loss and quality deterioration were adjusted for, the real value addition would be considerably less than shown. There has been less than expected growth in the health sector.

These growth trends have resulted in change in the sectoral composition of GDP. There has been some increase in Transport, Manufacturing, Agriculture and Construction. It has remained at the same level in Housing, Trade, Finance and Health sector.

The economic development situation is summarized below.

*I. Strength*

- a) Strength of the economy lies in the resilient agricultural sector which is becoming diversified and market responsive;
- b) A network of institutions has developed for reasonably effective delivery of services and inputs for economic production;
- c) The coping capacity of people has been augmented by diversified economic opportunities;
- d) The service sector has expanded reasonably well to create a supportive network for productive activities.

*II. Weakness*

- a) The quality of administration and management seems to have declined over time;
- b) The rent-seeking activities have expanded more rapidly than the productive activities, creating adverse impact on progress and restructuring of the economy;
- c) The growth of physical infrastructure has lagged behind, instead of leading the creation of a developmental impulse,
- d) The labor force skill profile remains somewhat narrow and undiversified for a

breakthrough in the vicious cycle of under-development.

IV. *Opportunity*

- a) The emphasis on “inclusive” development policies both within the country and outside has created a space for the least developed countries to make an entry into the competitive sphere of the globalized economy;
- b) The intensified effort to improve the quality of human capital holds a promise for participation of the people of Bangladesh in the high return, knowledge-based endeavors;
- b) The linkage opportunities between sectors and across the board create new employment possibilities.

V. *Threat*

- a) Bangladesh is lagging behind other developing countries in its effort to compete effectively in the liberalized global system;
- b) The inability to expand domestic space for high value addition in productive sectors holds a threat of being marginalized in a highly competitive world;
- c) The human capital formation effort, not being well thought out and ineffectively implemented, poses a threat of causing frustration and disorder by not delivering expected results.

### **6.3 Poverty Alleviation**

Poverty alleviation has been the key stated objective of the development effort in Bangladesh. Poverty has been recognized as a state of social, economic and psychological deprivation due to inadequacy of access and control or ownership of social and economic resources. As reported in Human Development Report 2000, people who earn PPP \$ 1 per day or less are said to be 29.1 percent of the total population in the late 1990s. The value of Human Poverty Index was 43.6 with a corresponding rank of 70. Compared to 1991-92, the situation has shown a marginal improvement. Studies, however, tend to indicate that hard core poverty has not decreased meaningfully, general poverty has marginally declined, but the threat of people reverting below poverty level remains high.

Poverty is a multidimensional problem and several concerns remain manifest in the social and economic scenario of Bangladesh. First, improvement in absolute poverty situation is slow and relative poverty situation may indeed have deteriorated. Second, the dynamics of pauperization is complex; however, studies indicate that relatively more people are moving into extreme poverty than the other way round. As to the causes of continued poverty, research points to: a) low growth rate, b) inequitable income distribution, c) unequal distribution of productive assets, d) endemic unemployment, underemployment and misemployment, e) high rate of population growth rate with high dependency ratio, f) natural disasters, g) inadequacies of the supply of public and merit goods, and h) low internal efficiency and external productivity of social sector programs including education and health care.

A shift has marked strategies and practices in development programs in the last three decades.

Since the 1980s, adverse effects of the structural adjustment policy necessitated development of safety nets for the disadvantaged through programs such as expanded micro-credit,, vulnerable group feeding, food for works, rural maintenance, and programs for socio-economic upliftment of the poor largely implemented by NGOs.

However, limitations of these programs are evident by the fact that even when efficient in productive use of limited resources, the poor remain outsiders to the decision-making process; policy-making and resource allocation remain centralized; policies to enhance the social role of the poor are not effectively implemented; and the status of the poor remain largely unaffected.

The development and poverty alleviation strategy advocated by the donors and the government in the 1990s has put Human Development at the center of the development effort. First, this is helpful in enlightening a person about his or her capacity, capability, rights and obligation. Second, this focus also gives prominence to social mobilization to promote people's involvement and increases their awareness about entitlements to social and economic resources as well as public and merit goods. Capacity creation itself expands employment opportunity and occupational and locational mobility and enhances confidence in self-employment and group effort. Thus education and learning has come to be the prime component of poverty alleviation along with overall development.

World Bank points out that even a modest exposure to education, such as one to four years of education, reduces the chances of households to fall below the poverty line in Bangladesh (World Bank, Education Sector review, vol. 1, p. 49.) International experience also indicates that increasing human capital of the poor is a key to reducing poverty. Education has been found to be a critical factor in six crucial areas for ensuring that the poor maximize the benefits of economic growth. These are: (i) creating conditions for broad-based economic growth, (ii) facilitating access to assets such as credit and land. (iii) increasing productivity of workers, (iv) increasing investments in education, health and skill development which raises productivity of the poor, (v) making the market work for the poor, and (vi) removing discrimination against the poor. (World Bank 1996)

Some specific ways educational programs create the conditions for the success of poverty reduction efforts, or contribute directly to this goal, include the following: (i) early childhood education for the most disadvantaged groups improves children's learning readiness and have a lasting impact on their health and nutrition that carries over into adulthood, (ii) primary, and increasingly, secondary education are the foundation for developing capabilities for acquiring productive skills and taking advantage of new economic opportunities in the competitive global market, (iii) new skills have to be acquired repeatedly to enhance one's economic prospects in the informal sector and in the skill-intensive knowledge economy, (iv) fertility rates are highly correlated with female literacy level, but the strongest correlation is with female secondary education.

To what extent these potential education impacts on poverty reduction are realized in Bangladesh? Some questions have been raised in this respect at the beginning of this section. The midterm review of the Fifth Five Year Plan indicates that poverty alleviating programs including those for human resource development have received increased allocation in nominal

terms; but as a share of ADP, it has declined by one percentage point. Further, achievement in employment creation has been less than projected and much less than GDP growth. There is no information available about employment in informal sector and self-employment. It is generally agreed that informal sector in urban areas have become over crowded and self-employment opportunities are becoming highly localized due to concentration of income and decline in the growth of nominal wage income.

It is also recognized that without development of local level institutions for participatory planning of anti-poverty programs with concomitant institutional support, empowerment of the poor will remain constrained. More importantly, from the point of view of assessing the impact of education, the key consideration is the overall efficiency and effectiveness of educational programs. Educational programs in different sub-sectors have to function at an acceptable level of performance, before their impact on poverty can be realized. On this score, the picture is at best mixed, as the discussion above in this report shows.

NGOs, through their micro-credit programs and social services including education programs, reach at least five million poor households in Bangladesh. A summary view of NGO interventions in poverty alleviation is presented below.

#### *I. Strength*

- a) NGO efforts and variously trained personnel engaged in these have created a collaboration network that is gaining in strength;
- b) NGO intervention has created awareness about entitlements,
- c) Myths about poverty as a destined inevitability are being dispelled.

#### *II. Weakness*

- a) NGO interventions often are top-down and donor-dependent,
- b) Government persists in taking an ambivalent position about NGOs; a framework for a predictable GO-NGO relationship is yet to emerge:
- c) NGOs, same as the government, avoid incorporating dissenting but reasonable views about programs,
- d) Quality and sustainability of many interventions have remained in doubt.

#### *III. Opportunity*

- a) The conscientized populace is eager to join in a participatory process which is accountable to stakeholders,
- b) Decentralized and open expression of demands and needs and their responses in poverty programs are better understood and known than in the past,
- c) Local institutions are ready to be self-reliant over time if properly designed time-bound assistance is given.

#### *IV. Threat*

- a. Large NGOs, operating like business corporations, have developed a patron-client relationship which undermines local initiatives;

- b. Centralized and politicized nature of government interventions often fail to apply, with appropriate understanding and appreciation of local nuances, standards of fairness and justice, allowing space for NGOs and other civil society organizations to be a mitigating force;
- c. Capacity enhancement of small local NGOs and funding for them have not been addressed from the point of view of sustainability of programs.

#### **6.4 Experience and opportunities in education**

The importance of education as antecedents and consequences of other development sectors has become recognized. It is accepted that education is not merely an intervention on the supply side in the labor market. It is also an influence on the demand side through changes in income distribution and behavioral and aspirational factors.

There is an implicit recognition that the main asset of most poor people is his or her human capital. The expansion of micro-credit programs demonstrates how access to finance capital through group savings can unleash the creative faculty of the poor. These programs, in spite of limitations, have generated a surplus for small investments, which in turn has created a new awareness about education amongst poor families and women. Education complemented with credit has come to be recognized as a successful approach to augment asset, reduce income and human poverty and create conditions for upward mobility as shown by studies on micro-credit.

The educational development plans devoted much attention to (1) creating and improvement of physical facilities and maintaining regional balance in this respect, (2) promoting participation of girl child as students and women as teachers, (3) modernization of curricula, and (4) expanding the supervision network.

However, access to education has not produced the full benefits due to (a) poor quality of education, (b) inequitable distribution of institutions and opportunities, (c) little linkage of education with productive sectors (d) weak institutional reforms for increasing productivity of education, and (e) high “system loss” on a continuing basis.

A reading of the education sector plans shows that there is much rhetoric about the needed impact of education on development and poverty alleviation, but meaningful integration of poverty alleviation strategy with the education sector plan has not been achieved. The plans do not display sufficient awareness about the relationships between curriculum, teaching-learning environment, world of work, on the one hand, and the dynamics of institutional change, community support and critical role of leadership for change at different levels, on the other hand.

The plans and other documents, media and professional discourse indicate that value of learning has now become ingrained in society at large and the linkage between personal growth and learning have become widely accepted. But education programs in the public sector do not reflect sufficiently that (a) significant learning takes place beyond formal institutions and the society as a whole creates the opportunity and environment for investing in people, (b) creating the interface between institutional learning and other forms of learning for

building a rational and progressive society is an important part of the development process, (c) extending wide-ranging educational opportunities of acceptable quality to the poor is an effective way of using education for poverty alleviation, and (d) education is not merely a discipline or profession-specific competency, but also a means of enhancing personal capabilities in respect of inquiring, analytical, creative and problem-solving faculties and developing critical self-awareness. These are necessary qualities for higher productivity and growth. The current situation in the education sector is highlighted below.

*I. Strength*

- a) Link of education both as causes and effects to growth and poverty reduction have been recognized by the planners and policy makers.
- b) Education sector investment has created a large network of institutions in the public and private sector; it has also expanded sustainable access to the system despite inefficiency and inequity of such endeavors.

*II. Weakness*

- a) Lack of coordination between sub-sectors and within sub-sectors has resulted in inability to achieve efficiency and effectiveness of programs and harness economies of scale;
- b) Investment in the sector has been fragmented, projectised and *ad hoc* without a coherent systemic agenda for growth, development and release of social dynamism, as institutional capacity remained weak, disjointed, not properly staffed and largely unaccountable to stakeholders.

*III. Opportunity*

- a) A large literate body of young population has created an opportunity for social dynamism to activate a leap-frogging effort for social and economic change through targeted educational investment.
- b) Diversified government and non-government delivery of education services, through cooperation and complementarity, can expand and improve equitable opportunities with a unified focus on core competencies for all.

*IV. Threat*

- a) The vested interest groups on the providers' side can create obstacles to implementing required changes.
- b) The volatility created during the past two decades of wasteful education efforts will continue to have its negative fall-out, unless much care is taken to redirect trends and strategies.

The overview of the education sector and its social context underscores that the weakness as discussed above has resulted in a weak cause-and-effect link between GDP growth and education indicators; and that poverty reduction and education standards have less to do with spending volume than with quality of expenditure supported by effective policy reform and good management.

### 6.5 Sub-sectoral problems and priorities

To identify the scope for future international cooperation in education development, an abbreviated SWOT analysis has been applied to the sub-sectors, drawing on the presentation made so far about the sub-sectors of education in this report.

At the *pre-primary level*, the **strength** lies in its potential flexibility and opportunity for parental involvement and social support. This implies that an institutional but less formal approach is possible and desirable. The prime **weakness** is that no applied research has been undertaken to facilitate the transition of the child from the protected environment of home to a non-familiar and uncertain environment of an institution. The **opportunity** is the perceived need for pre-school and early childhood education felt by the urban and educated higher income groups which can be extended and carried over to the domain of the less advantaged. The **threat** lies in the creation of social distance between those who can access the opportunities and those who cannot and the tendency of the vested interests to protect their privileges.

At the *primary level* the **strength** lies in the large network of institutions created by government, private and non-government initiatives. There also exists a high level of social mobilization for participation in education. The **weakness** lies in the absence of unified offerings with a core curricula effectively delivered for creating a minimum level of competency. As a result the percentage of completers is low and the competency of completers vary widely. There also exist great variations in resource availability, allocation and utilization. The non-uniform standards of facilities, teachers' commitment and capacity and community support also create dysfunctional disparity. The **opportunity** lies in the continuity of commitment of resources to primary education and a scope for rationalizing the school locations and facilities. Growing demand for improvement of quality and redesigning curricula to make it relevant provide an impetus to necessary reform. The slowing down of growth of the primary school age-cohort also offers the opportunity to concentrate on quality of education rather than expansion of access. The **threat** is bureaucratic inertia, control of curricular design by interest groups of 'experts', desire for extreme "uniformity"; lack of competent and creative management at institutional and system level; and politicization of management at institutional and other levels.

At the *secondary level*, the **strength** lies in the growing awareness for an updated, functional and relevant curriculum delivered through committed teachers who are properly rewarded according to performance.. The **weakness** lies in the existence of a delivery mechanism by the same providers outside the institutional system, viz., private commercialized coaching by school teachers. The weakness is manifested also in inadequate preparation in language, science, quantitative analysis and in the domains of aesthetics and values. This is compounded by weak preparation by the teaching staff and disparity in the remuneration package as well as physical facility and opportunity for participation in extracurricular activities. This weakness is further magnified by unequal opportunities in multiple streams of offerings and inadequate supervision. The **opportunity** exists in the possibility of restructuring secondary education to create options for skill development and capacity building for new and broader development prospects. The **Threat** lies in inertia and lack of political will for change. Despite lip service, not much has been done for upgrading and professionalizing teaching and management at this stage.

The **strength** of *technical and vocational education* lies in its growing capacity to meet the increasing demand that domestic and international market has created for Bangladesh technicians and skilled manpower. The **weakness** lies in narrow focus and inadequate diversification of the offerings for skill development. The level of knowledge and practical experience of teachers are also inadequate for ensuring effective learning outcomes. The **opportunity** lies in linking it more closely with the market and creating options for improvement of skills through collaboration between different types of institutions and with the private sector. The opportunity to make a contribution to poverty alleviation through flexible courses, especially those linked to the informal sector, seems to be extensive. The **threat** is posed by its disinclination to be innovative, going beyond the conventional and formal training approach. The threat also lies in the inertia of age-old, excessively centralized and bureaucratic management.

In the *tertiary education* sector the **strength** lies in the high visibility of the providers and the possibility for mobilizing resources for change. The **weakness** lies in the politicization of a section of the student and the teaching body with attendant reward for non-academic activity. The weakness also lies in multiple streams and types of institutions not bound by a well-developed system rationale and the lack of means to assess their standards and performance. The inertia with respect to changes in the curriculum, courses, and offerings in response to “market” demands has created an explosion in the number of unemployable graduates. The **opportunity** lies in the fact that sufficiently trained teachers are available whose services can be harnessed with a proper reward and punishment structure. Accountability of institutions to stakeholders can be enhanced by making beneficiaries including employers share cost. The **threat** lies in the lack of will for preventing the intrusion of partisan politics into academia. A further threat lies in irrational proliferation of new institutions without regard to required standards and emergence of unregulated “for profit” private institutions.

## 6.6 Potential areas for cooperation

This set of SWOT analysis leads us to identify several areas for international support.

*First*, a sector-wide review can be undertaken with the intent of identifying gaps and mismatches and their remedies in policies, strategies and programs, especially in relation to equity, efficiency and quality in the education system. Such a review has not been undertaken in Bangladesh on the basis of collaboration and partnership between the government and external development partners, which could be “owned” by various stakeholders and would facilitate sector-wide development in education. The importance of such an initiative can hardly be overstated, given the vital need for a comprehensive approach to educational development identified in this and other reviews.

*Second*, support can be provided to piloting models of effective decentralization in a few districts in the sub-sectors of primary, secondary, and general non-formal education through establishing district education authorities and effective functioning of upazila and schools level planning and management, about which there has been much rhetoric and little action; the critical importance of genuine decentralization and the attendant risks of such a move make it essential that a process of trial and learning is pursued.



*Third*, professional and institutional capacity building with the development and implementation of a ten-year plan in phases for creating a system and institutions for training and deploying a cadre of professional managers, especially in primary, secondary and non-formal education. This is especially important in the context of decentralization of planning and management of the elementary stages of general education, need for greater accountability of the educational system, and ensuring acceptable educational quality.

*Fourth*, because of Japan's own excellence in this respect and also because of current deficiencies in TVE including IT education, middle-level skill development at the post-primary stage and for secondary level students is a promising area. Developing new and market-responsive models of skill training and upgrading through public sector support and incentives for public-private collaboration is practically a virgin field. IT education also can support expansion of diverse education and skill development opportunities and improvement of quality in different education programs through interactive in-service teacher training and dissemination of learning materials

*Fifth*, the area of education research has remained neglected; as a result, the ability to examine social and economic impact of various interventions and internal efficiencies of programs remains weak as does exploration of quality improvement. Capacity development in and support for research linked with development, implementation and assessment of policy would be an important area of cooperation.

*Sixth*, another neglected area is teacher education which is treated largely as an appendage of sub-sectoral interventions. The desirability of developing a systemic approach in the area of teacher education – combining pre-service, in-service and self-learning activities as well as creating necessary conditions and incentives for putting teachers' skills to best use in the classroom - is of vital importance.

*Seventh*, science education remains another area of weakness. This begins at primary and secondary level and continues up to the university education. An approach that could be taken is to develop a program for improving education in basic sciences at the tertiary level with a follow-up at the secondary and primary levels.

*Eighth*, the area of professional education has not been discussed in this report and that by itself indicates its peripheral existence. How university and specialized institution-based formal programs can be complemented and supplemented by other non-institutional forms of acquiring professional credentials, maintaining internationally comparable quality, and anticipating and responding to market signals are some of the issues which call for studies and development projects.

Once the areas of cooperation are provisionally identified, initial exploration will be needed to assess the terrain, identify national actors and involved external development partners, and determine comparative advantages of JBIC cooperation in these areas in Bangladesh.

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## APPENDIX 1

# A Position Paper on Pre-primary Education

Momtaz Jahan

### 1. Background

Studies have shown that an emphasis placed on early childhood care and development programs contributes to a stronger primary education system. Studies further indicate that establishing a strong foundation of academic achievement, coupled with measures for healthy growth during the early years of a child's development, impacts positively on later adult life. In a developing country like Bangladesh where the majority of children of primary school age are the first generation to be literate, their poor, illiterate parents are unable to provide the support needed to meet the academic requirements of schools. The chart below presents a comparison of the situation of two groups of children, advantaged and disadvantaged.

<b>Children of literate, better-off parents</b>		<b>Children of illiterate, poor parents</b>	
<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>	<b>Strengths</b>	<b>Weaknesses</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engage in drawing and painting</li> <li>• Listen to rhymes, stories</li> <li>• See at home books, pictures newspapers, magazines</li> <li>• Watch TV.</li> <li>• Have problem-solving games, toys</li> <li>• Encouragement from parents to read and count objects</li> <li>• Protein-rich food, iodized salt provided by educated parents</li> <li>• Vaccines, timely treatment</li> <li>• Academic support from parents</li> <li>• Parents strongly motivate children to do well in school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restricted activity due to restricted movement</li> <li>• Non-involvement with social environment and neighbours</li> <li>• Too much attention make them dependent, dislike work</li> <li>• Toys, TV watching restrict free play - running, climbing etc.</li> <li>• Do not feel responsibility to share in household work.</li> <li>• Think book as the only source of learning</li> <li>• Little contact with nature: trees, plants, animals, and birds.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unrestricted movement leads to exploration of environment</li> <li>• Practical knowledge about environment: trees, plants, animals, birds and neighbours</li> <li>• Skills of domestic work</li> <li>• Independent and take care of younger siblings</li> <li>• Free play-running, traditional games, swimming, climbing trees etc.</li> <li>• Sense of responsibility to share work, duties in family</li> <li>• Learn from elders, parents, environment, birds, animals, trees, field, rivers, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No motivation for school education</li> <li>• No academic assistance from parents</li> <li>• Do not develop patience and discipline for academic learning</li> <li>• Some parents engage children in income earning activities</li> <li>• Too much work load.</li> <li>• Too much responsibility in family</li> <li>• Less time to play</li> <li>• Less care and attention from parents</li> <li>• Accident-prone environment</li> <li>• Less protein, iodized salt in food.</li> </ul>

*Source: constructed by author based on observation and experience.*

This chart provides a picture of the learning needs of the two groups, highlighting especially the lack of a pro-learning environment and activities among the disadvantaged children. It is within this context that the pre-school education program has emerged as a prerequisite for ensuring quality primary education.

The convention on the rights of the child adopted by the United Nations in 1990 highlighted children's right to survival, growth, development and participation. The convention reiterated their right to education,

which has been recognized as the key element for development of their latent faculties to the full potential. The call for Education for All made at the World Conference in Jomtien in 1990 has emphasized the need for planned early childhood care and education.

**The Dakar Conference 2000** asserted that illiteracy is a root cause of various detrimental effects on society, including economic stagnation, poverty, economic and social disparity, and environmental degradation. The declaration called upon all to have an expanded vision of education and renew their commitment to it, focusing on actual learning achievement and outcome for participants. The Dakar Declaration identified Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), especially with reference to vulnerable and disadvantaged children, as one of six priority areas to be targeted as a means to improve the overall situation of primary education.

**National Education Policy 2000.** The National Education Policy has considered the need for a well designed school preparedness program for the majority of children, who are the first in their families to attain formal schooling, and therefore, do not have the benefit of academic support from their parents and siblings. The potential age group targeted for pre-primary education is 5+. Considering the financial pressures on an already vast primary education sector, a one-year pre-primary course was proposed to be implemented in phases, focusing on a handful of schools at a time. The alternative of a six-month preparatory course before grade one, which may later be upgraded to a year-long course by 2005, was also put on the table. Some ideas about ensuring public participation in the program's financing and management were also suggested.

**Education for All.** The year 2000 Assessment of the Bangladesh government in preparation for the Dakar World Education Forum referred to an early childhood education program, which had been incorporated in the National Plan of Action (NPA) for EFA following the Jomtien Conference in 1990. The objectives and targets in early childhood education were as follows:

*Objective:* Nurturing children for their physical and mental development and preparing them for schooling with the right attitude and habits.

*Target group:* Children of 4-5 years. Estimated Population: 7.3 million in 1991, increasing to 8.4 million by 2000. Planned coverage was foreseen to be 2.34 million in 1995 and 4.2 million by 2000.

*Major constraints:* Lack of awareness and experience, absence of learning materials and trained teachers were seen as obstacles in this new area of activity. The cost of implementing the activities was estimated to be Taka 23.3 million.

*Program contents suggested:*

- Formation of concepts with regard to ECCE needs and benefits and making advocacy in favour of ECCE.
- Adopting parental education program to enlighten them on the physical and nutritional requirements of children, especially as to how satisfactory nutrition can be provided even with limited means, and how to mould attitude, behavior and character of the children in a positive way.
- Giving recognition to the informal 'baby classes' attached to primary schools and equip them gradually with necessary equipment, furniture and part-time teachers.
- Developing suitable pre-school curricula and learning tools.
- Developing special teacher training courses and making arrangements for the training of the teachers concerned.
- Promoting appropriate changes in educational systems at kindergartens, play groups, maktabs, feeder schools, orphanages, etc, to make them more relevant to the needs of children in Bangladesh society.
- Conducting studies and research, undertaking experimental and pilot projects, and at the same time, continuing evaluation of on-going programs to learn more on ECCE activities.

## 2. **Some initiatives of Government, NGOs and Donors**

Systematic follow-up steps were not undertaken to implement the program for the 1990s envisaged under NPA. It remained largely an expression of intention. Some uncoordinated and separate activities were carried out as exploratory and try-out activities by the government and through initiatives taken by NGOs and supported by a number of donors.

**Practice in Primary School :** In most rural primary schools, children come with their younger siblings because they are responsible for looking after them. As a result, the primary school teachers were forced to find some way to take care of the infants who come with their older siblings. Through this necessity evolved an additional class, known as “small class 1” or “baby class”, taught by a teacher of the school or a high school student recruited part-time for this purpose. In this class, the lower age group children are provided with some basic instruction, through rhymes, alphabets and numbers. Although the baby class program is working in most of the primary schools, it is still waiting for the government’s formal recognition. The new education policy has suggested a 6 months to 1 year long pre-school program and in principle the government has agreed to provide a phased pre-school education program for children aged 4-5 years old.

**Initiative of NCTB to offer a pre-primary education :** Considering the reality of the existence of small class 1 in all rural formal primary schools and in some urban schools, in 1981/82, the National Curriculum and Text Book Board with the assistance of Dr. J. Ratnaike, came forward to develop a need based pre-school education program. The purpose was to provide school-preparedness skills to the disadvantaged children who enter primary schools without the benefit of academic readiness that would help them adjust to the formal learning environment in school. A primer was prepared introducing pre-reading and pre-numeracy skills, which were used for some years in baby classes of formal primary schools. Later, the project was abandoned because there was no clear government policy in this area and it was the view of many at policy making level that the priority should be on formal primary education.

**Experiment of Government and UNICEF :** In 1981-82, NCTB, with the assistance of UNICEF, experimented with a satellite school project in Bhaluka. A baby class was introduced in “satellite schools” (classes I & II attached to a mother primary school). The purpose of the satellite school was to have schools closer to home of young children and to reduce class sizes in classes 1 and 2 in regular schools. The primer developed for the baby class contained planned pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-numeracy exercises and activities including games, rhymes, and stories. However, the satellite school project itself discontinued soon, since the local communities failed to pay the schoolteachers’ salary, which was a condition of the project. The satellite school project was revived later and expanded, but it no longer has the pre-school component.

**Initiatives of Directorate of Non-formal Primary Education:** The Integrated Non-formal Education Program, precursor to present Directorate of Non-formal Education, with the help of NGOS and UNICEF, developed a curriculum and a teacher guide addressing pre-reading, pre-writing and pre-number skills and games. This was initiated on a small scale under the General Education Project 1 for primary education development in the mid 1990s. This initiative came to an end after the completion of the General Education Project.

**Initiatives of private English medium schools:** People influenced by the Montessori system of schooling for young children introduced educational packages to the play group, nursery, and KG classes of English medium schools. The program was designed to follow the curriculum in many Western countries, which includes play and games and offers school readiness skills.

**Maktabs (religious schools):** There are some indigenous, mosque-based Maktabs, where lessons for memorizing verses of Koran and introduction to the Arabic script are given to young children.

**Day-Care Services of Government and NGOs:** Creche or Day Care centers have been established by government and non-government organizations for helping working mothers to leave their children in a secure environment while they work. The centers also offer some literacy skills - alphabets, reading, writing skills and arithmetic - together with play time and rhymes.

**Orphanages or Children's Homes:** Orphanages established by private bodies and Ministry of Social Welfare offer skills of basic education - primarily, Bangla, Arithmetic, Environmental studies and religious studies to the targeted age group.

**ECCD pilot project of Save the Children/US:** During 1994-1996, Save the Children/US, with financial assistance from UNICEF implemented an Early Childhood Care and Development project in a poor remote area in southern Bangladesh. The pilot project was designed with the following major objectives:

1. Development and testing of a package of culturally appropriate materials and techniques based on the Child Development message of Facts for Life ( a compilation of basic health, nutrition and child-care messages) for use by rural mothers and caregivers. The package emphasized greater home-based stimulation for the cognitive, social and physical development of their young children, so that they become better prepared for schooling.
2. Development and testing of a package of reinforcement materials for use by disadvantaged children of classes I and II in formal schools, with a view to improving the academic performances of the disadvantaged children.

The project was implemented in three target areas with three dimensions:

- A. In the Save the Children Impact area where thirty five women's credit groups received the program.
- B. In a small NGO area where fourteen women's groups were purposively formed for training on ECD package used in SCF area.
- C. In formal schools under which two selected government primary schools received an education package specially prepared for children of classes I and II.

The lessons of the pilot which had policy implications are:

- ECCD programmes, if well received and well delivered, can enhance the skills required for school education.
- Early child care for infants (0-5) may address different developmental needs of children by having diversified program approaches, such as, (a) at home care through training of groups of mothers and fathers (b) at child care centers and drop-in centers through training of caregivers.
- The program found that mothers' awareness about child development activities influenced child behaviour at school. The children of mothers who received the training offered by the program had less drop-out and performed better than the children of those mothers who did not receive training. The areas in which a clear disparity was detected were continuation of children in school, attendance and performance in baby class and class I.
- The children who received the program did much better in tests given in class I, compared to control non-program school children, although both groups had access to qualified teachers and resources.

**Plan International:** Plan at present is running pre-school day care and parenting centers in Dhaka, Nilfamari, Gazipur and Dinajpur. The day-care services are provided for infants aged 6 months to 2 years, pre-school play-groups for children of age 2 to 4 years and pre-school education to children 4-6 years old.

It has developed its own curriculum, materials and training manuals. Plan, GSS and SCF/U started working together through a combined ECD unit. It has evolved a training program, which includes training in child development and learning process, thematic approach and learning materials, behavioral management and pre-academic matters.

**Gonoshahajjo Sangstha (GSS):** GSS, in primary schools run by it, emphasized child-friendly classrooms and teaching-learning processes that included play, which was designed to make learning a joyful experience for children. Its pre-school activities included free play, singing, outdoor activity, circle activity, and story-telling. Free play included four play corners in a classroom - block and manipulative corner, sand and water corner, book and art corner, and make-believe corner. ECCE of GSS was directed towards emotional, psycho-social and intellectual development of children.

**BRAC:** BRAC has initiated its own pre-primary class of one year, mainly to provide school readiness to the 5-6 year olds. The students pay Tk. 40 for materials and Tk. 15 as a monthly tuition fee while the teachers get “pocket money” of Tk. 200 per month. Recently, BRAC is considering opening pre-primary schools in catchment areas of the government primary schools so that children can smoothly transfer from pre-primary to class I of government schools. The curriculum for this purpose contains alphabets and numbers as well as rhymes and drawing.

**Institute of childhood Education (IEC):** The institute runs a three year pre-school education course consisting of play group, nursery and kindergarten, which serves both children of high income groups as well as low-income groups. The tuition fees demonstrate this difference; the high-income group children pay Tk. 17,000 annually, whereas the poor children pays Tk. 600. The classroom activities include nursery rhymes, music, drawing and instructional games. The two courses are run separately, but have the same educational content.

Further, IEC offers training courses for pre-school teachers and care-givers. It conceives parenting as a kind of joint training of parents and teachers, naming it as the mother's club. At present (2001) the club has 358 members. It has developed its own parenting and training of teachers program and materials. It also organizes courses on Early Childhood Education for interested teachers on weekly holidays and gives certificates on completion of the course.

### 3. Present status: Population, services and needs

Population belonging to the 3-5 year age group was 8.9 million in 2000. This group constituted 6.7 percent of the population in 2000, slightly lower than 6.9 percent in 1999, which indicates a trend of declining birth rates and lower numbers in the age-group in the future. The growing demand for early childhood care all over the world has influenced government and non-government bodies to give greater attention to the needs of this age group. There is also a recognition that alongside intellectual growth and emotional development, the seed of moral development is sowed at an early age.

**Table 1.** Percentage distribution of disabled persons by type of disability, age and sex, 1991 census

sex	Age group & % in population	Blind	Deaf & dumb	Crippled	Mentally Handicapped	Leprosy	
	0 - 4 years old	0.17	16.5	25.5	47.5	8.0	2.5
Male		0.22	19.7	29.2	41.6	7.3	2.2
Female		0.11	19.5	17.5	60.3	19.5	3.2

Source: Statistical Pocket Book Bangladesh 1998, BBS (printed in 1999).

The needs of children with disabilities are neglected; they generally do not receive necessary care and attention from their parents or the government. The 1991 census shows that 0.17 percent of the 0-4 year old population suffer from different types of disabilities. These children have the right to adequate care and developmental attention as their normal siblings and peers, so that they can lead successful lives. Some of the children may require very special training but some others may participate in normal schools with attention from specially trained teachers. It should be noted that internationally 10 percent of children are estimated to be in need of special attention in education programmes because of different levels of physical and mental disabilities.



The Bangladesh social landscape is colorfully varied due to the presence of 1.2 million ethnic minority and tribal groups. Most of these groups live in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and in certain areas of Rajshahi, Dhaka, Khulna and Barisal divisions. Children of these ethnic minority and tribal people need a specially tailored readiness program for ensuring their smooth transfer from tribal dialects to the national language. Moreover, their own cultural identity also requires to be preserved, honoured and nourished.

**Table 2. Tribal Population - 1991 census**

All Tribe	Bangladesh 1,205, 978	Barisal 40,506	Khulna 40,558	Chittagong 687,319	Dhaka 123,258	Rajshahi 314,337
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Note: 50% live in Chittagong Hill Tracts and 25% in the Rajshahi Division

Besides baby classes of the government and private primary schools and other preschool activities noted earlier, there are a number of preschools run by Shishu Academy (Children's Academy of the Ministry of Children and Women Affairs). There are also "Para centers" (Neighbourhood Centers) in CHT, as well as Santhal Schools in Rajshahi, which serve the 3-5 year old age group. Table 3 shows the type of services available for the children, and highlights the particular institution's area of focus, which, for the most part, emphasizes literacy skills.

**Table 3. ECCE Services**

By Type, Number of Service providers and main focus of the services (1999)

Type of Service	Main Providers	No. of Institutions/ Centers	Estimated numbers served (1999)	Main content
1. Infant or Baby Class(Shishu class)	Government and private primary schools	42,000	1,050,000 children of age 4-5	Literacy skills: reading, writing, numeracy
2. Play group and Nursery classes	Kindergarten Schools (private)	8,960	483,600 children of age 3-4	Literacy skills: reading, writing, numeracy, rhymes, play, drawing etc.
3. Preparatory class/Early Childhood Care Center	Non-government institutions	21	33,800 children of age 4-5	Literacy skills: reading, writing, numeracy, play, rhymes etc.
4. Orphanage/Children's homes: SOS Children's Village etc.	Social Welfare Department	76	2,250 children of age 0-9	Health, nutrition, literacy skills: reading, writing, numeracy.
5. Day Care Center	Department of Women & Children's Affairs & Non-government organizations	57	2,245 children of age 2-5	Health, nutrition & literacy skills.
6. Pre-school centers of Shishu Academy	Directorate of Women's & Children's Affairs.	73	Approx. 3,000 children of age 4+ to 5+ (higher age in rural areas)	Literacy skills: reading, writing, numeracy, rhymes(free books, school supplies, dresses) drawing, painting etc.
7. Maktabas, Mosque, Forkania based baby classes.	Private	10,000 - 12,000	On average , 20-25 children per maktab.	Literacy skills: Reading, Writing, Numeracy, Reading Arabic.
8. Ethnic minority Schools:'Para centers' in CHT and Santhal schools in Rajshahi.	Ministry of Education Private initiative.	1,875-para centres in CHT, 1 school for Santhals in Rajshahi.	On average, 25 children per center, approx. 46,875 children of age 4-5	Literacy skills of Bangla, Local stories, Rhymes, Play, Drawing, Colouring etc. Literacy skills in Santhali dialect, folk stories, rhymes.

Source: Education Sector Review, The World Bank, Chapter on ECD, Modified by the author.

## 5. Issues relating to target groups and services

**The girls:** Historically, in Bangladesh, girls face discrimination from birth. It is a society where males are the decision makers and women are relegated to second-class citizenship, a phenomenon that is not limited to the poorer classes. It is an unfortunate cultural fact that irrespective of economic class or religious affiliations, a girl child is generally not desired in families as a male child is. They start life in

neglect and abuse. As a result, they have to face additional obstacles along with the already existing difficulties brought on by poverty. They frequently become victims of rape, assault and acid throwing before marriage; and after marriage, they may become prey to both physical torture and mental anguish. Some are even murdered at the hands of their in-laws in disputes over dowry. In this context, the girls belonging to minority religious groups and ethnic tribal groups face an extra threat from males belonging to the religious majority, as these communities often live side by side. A girl child's insecure position in society simply does not facilitate a healthy, achievement-oriented attitude towards learning and academic pursuit. As a result, most female children leave school by the age of 10 or 11.

It is, therefore, imperative that these girls are given a fighting chance at overcoming these daunting obstacles. If practical protection is not afforded to them, then at least a strong start in life by way of well-developed pre-school and developmental programs could arm them with an opportunity to achieve academically.

***The marginalized poor children:*** These children of the illiterate poor start schooling without any preparation and continue it without having any academic assistance from their parents. They are usually engaged in domestic activities and income earning jobs to aid their struggling parents at a very early age. They are in dire need of pre-primary educational instruction in order to be equipped to continue in school.

***The working children:*** The urban slum children are engaged in various types of income generating activities ranging from being loaders, carriers, and peddlers to factory workers, assistants to Tempo drivers, etc. Many of them have no leisure time or holidays. Most of them work for 8/10 hours a day. Some NGOs are offering some educational packages to them but many are not able to find the time for taking advantage of these non-formal educational opportunities. The existing program could be more beneficial in terms of educational outcome if these efforts could offer a developmentally appropriate pre-primary education to this group.

***The religious and ethnic minority children:*** There is a degree of intolerance in society towards people of minority religions and ethnic groups which are manifested in discrimination where they live as well as in school, and in the job market; but the extent and incidences are difficult to quantify. These groups need special support from the government, private bodies, NGOs, schoolteachers and the community. Tribal children need a period of adjustment to be able to make the smooth transfer from learning in their tribal dialects to receiving instruction in the national language. If they are not given a chance to assimilate they will not be able to benefit from the opportunities and facilities available through the main-stream education system.

***The children of religious schools:*** The maktab's and madrasah's academic activities are predominantly focused upon language and arithmetic skills in which reading skills of Arabic, and the Koran get the highest priority. These schools lack fun, pleasure and play materials and do not encourage playtime. The mind-set of the teachers of this stream is not in line with a developmentally appropriate educational program. It requires a thorough review and redesigning of curriculum. The teachers also need to be brought abreast of more modern teaching methods.

***The orphans and disabled children:*** The orphanages and homes provide education to some of the orphans. Some of these institutions maintain a harsh environment with strict discipline and provide no scope for fun or pleasure. Few maintain a nurturing and loving environment where children are encouraged to express themselves through learning and play. Some of the institutions, which are engaged in providing services and education to the children with various types of disabilities, are able to serve a few wealthy children because these schools require costly equipment and facilities. A good number of children having a lower degree of cognitive ability may be included in the mainstream education system. Others, along with the above-mentioned orphanages or children's homes, may design a specially tailored pre-school education package, which would give them an equal fair start and provide them with a strong foundation for eventual academic achievement at the primary school level.

**Table 4. Strengths & Weaknesses of Current ECCE Services**

Service Provisions	Type of Programs	Strengths	Weaknesses
i. Baby classes of govt. primary schools and Shishu academy.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading, writing, numeracy and rhymes, drawing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Management by school &amp; community</li> <li>• Meet parents' demands of children to be literate.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack children's readiness skills and stimulating activities for development in all areas.</li> </ul>
ii. Baby classes of NGOs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading, writing, numeracy, rhymes, games and drawing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Close relationship between teacher and children.</li> <li>• Flexibility with opportunity to play.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No planned program for addressing all developmental needs.</li> <li>• Programming on ad hoc basis.</li> </ul>
iii. Day care centres of govt. & non-govt. agencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health &amp; sanitation reading, writing, numeracy rhymes and play.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meet child care needs of working women.</li> <li>• Meet health &amp; sanitation needs of children.</li> <li>• Learning in flexible environment.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack planned activities for child development.</li> <li>• Lack school readiness skills excepting alphabets &amp; numeracy.</li> </ul>
iv. Nursery, play group, K.G. classes of private schools.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School readiness skills, habits, games, activities, rhymes, songs, drawing, painting etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning with fun and in flexible environment</li> <li>• Close relationship between teacher and children.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned but lacking in understanding about developmental needs of children.</li> <li>• Lack planned teacher training.</li> <li>• Neglect of national language and culture.</li> </ul>
v. Maktab/Forkania madrasah	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alphabets of Bangla and Arabic, reading, writing and numeracy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learning of alphabets reading, writing.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigid learning environment</li> <li>• Burden of foreign language (Arabic).</li> </ul>
vi. Orphanages/ Children's homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Health &amp; Sanitation</li> <li>• Reading, writing and numeracy.</li> <li>• Play &amp; games</li> <li>• Cultural activities in some homes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer motherly care to orphans, homeless children.</li> <li>• Learning opportunity given to them</li> <li>• Fun, recreation in some homes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rigid rules in some.</li> <li>• Less freedom and fun in some.</li> <li>• Monotonous life, corporal punishment in some.</li> </ul>
vii. Schools/Centers of disabled children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Literacy skills for blind, deaf and mute children with low cognitive abilities .</li> <li>• Planned activities like art &amp; craft.</li> <li>• Reading, writing and numeracy skills.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Offer opportunity to improve abilities of disabled children to live a better life in family and society.</li> <li>• Increase self-confidence, self-esteem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Insufficient resources for these costly programs.</li> <li>• Serve a small section of the society.</li> </ul>
viii. Schools/ Learning centers of ethnic minority in CHT, Rajshahi.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Games, stories, rhymes.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of children's own dialect and smooth transition to Bangla based education.</li> <li>• Increase self-confidence, self-esteem in them.</li> <li>• Use of tribal rhymes, stories, songs, games.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Heavily donor dependent.</li> <li>• Lack well planned and stimulating activities for holistic child development.</li> </ul>

**Access to primary education system:** In spite of the government's commitment to compulsory primary education, all children are not in schools. All villages do not have a primary school and some schools do not have sufficient classrooms or adequate space in them with seats for all children and teachers to teach all classes. The rigid timing of enrollment and duration of school hours, teaching-learning methods, and a heavy curriculum also discourage children from attending school.

**Predominance of literacy over development in the primary education system:** The traditional view about the goal of education is achieving basic literacy, which is highly book based and one that often ignores practical experience and active learning. Consequently the policy planners, curriculum designers, teacher trainers and teachers, all put their energy and intellects into imparting literacy skills and selected information to

the children. The intellectual, emotional and moral development of children remains un-addressed. This approach weakens the child's ability to think critically and creatively and does not help in cultivation of social skills. Traditionally, the education system has not emphasized development in all areas of life and has remained restricted to memorization of information and some simple linguistic and calculation skills.

***Lack of foresight about cost-effective impact of early childhood education and development:*** Several initiatives in this area were undertaken at different times as noted earlier, but these failed to sensitize the high level government policy planners to the developmental needs of the 3-5 year old age group. The decision-makers appear to be unaware of benefits of early childhood intervention reflected in a positive chain reaction in the form of high retention and completion rate at primary and secondary level and higher income, less divorce, and less criminal offence in adult life. Moreover, rural and poor parents as well as educated parents demand literacy for their children as early as possible.

## 7. Conclusion and recommendations

Considering various positive impacts of pre-school education, cost-effective strategies along the following lines need to be considered:

- Organizing community based parenting education for holistic development of children and mothers through existing credit groups, mothers' clubs, health centers, etc.
- Organizing community based learning centres for 3-5 years old children through active participation by parents and older primary graduates of the community.
- The community, assisted by Parent-Teacher Association, School Managing Committee, Union Parishad, and local government may take the financial responsibility of the centers and the programs.
- Parenting education and Early Childhood Care and Education programs should be planned in a manner so that one complements the other, thus ensuring greater benefits for children.
- Schools should be given freedom to manage pre-primary education on their own. The schools, especially in rural areas, should be helped to devise ways of doing so at the local level. Government assistance in the form of training and learning materials would be useful and cost-effective.
- Advocacy and social mobilization for creating demands for child care, education and development is needed.
- Research, especially, small scale action research and studies may be undertaken in order to develop culturally relevant models of community and school based pre-primary, child care and parenting education programs.

In brief, performance of children in formal primary and later levels of education is influenced by the quality of preparation before schooling by children. A well designed pre-school education for all children will bring positive change in the present scenario of primary education of Bangladesh and would be a major contribution to achieving the EFA goal.

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## APPENDIX 2

# Secondary Education in Bangladesh: A Position Paper

**Abu Hamid Latif**

### 1. Policies and Objectives

The legal basis and policy guidelines for education in Bangladesh after independence emanated from the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (1972). The constitutional provisions that have bearing on education are: Article 17 which specified that the State should adopt effective measures for the purpose of (i) establishing a uniform mass oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law, (ii) relating education to the needs of society and producing properly motivated citizens to serve these needs, and (iii) removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law; Article 19 on equal opportunity; Article 27 on equality before law; Article 28 on discrimination on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth and Article 29 on equality of opportunity in public employment. Since then the various Education Commission Reports, though not formally approved by government, and the Five Year Plans provided the guidelines for policy formulation of the education sector. The National Plan of Action especially for EFA Action and the documents prepared for the development projects also enunciated the policies and objectives of education sector.

The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) listed a number of objectives for the education sector. The following are objectives related to secondary and higher secondary education:

- a. More emphasis will be given on technical and vocational education programmes at secondary/higher secondary levels and also at the university level to enlarge the technological base of economic development,
- b. Review the policy of nationalizing secondary schools,
- c. Enhance the quality of education by updating the curricula and providing better teaching and learning materials,
- d. Expand and improve the quality of science and English language education at secondary and higher secondary levels,
- e. Improve the efficiency and standard of teachers through intensive training,
- f. Reduce the gap in educational facilities between urban and rural areas,
- g. Expand infrastructure facilities such as classrooms, laboratories, etc.;
- h. Increase enrolment in secondary and higher secondary education levels, especially of girl students,
- i. Introduce suitable job-oriented subjects at the secondary level to enable students to be self-employed,
- j. Improve supervision and management of secondary schools, and review the present examination system and introduce reforms.

The external donor agencies have been involved in secondary education since the 1970s. Prior to 1993, such assistance was focused on specific areas such as, Community Schools Project (1978-84) and the Secondary Science Education Project (1985-90). However, two sub-sector wide development project with donor assistance were undertaken in 1993. These were: (i) Secondary Education Development Project , and (ii) Higher Secondary Education Project .

The Secondary Education Development Project funded by ADB had its major thrusts on improving quality of education, accelerating the participation rates especially among females, and boosting management.

The Higher Secondary Education Project also funded by ADB, included a number of policy issues related to secondary education. These were:

- a. initiate structural reforms by establishing new types of schools offering grades 9 to 12 by enabling selected intermediate colleges to add grades 9 to 10 along with grades 11 and 12.
- b. operationalization of a system for the continuous updating of curricula to ensure greater relevance , quality and efficiency.
- c. review and simplify the examination system,
- d. rationalization of the management of secondary education, through a clear demarcation of functions and reallocation of responsibilities among DSHE, DIA and the BISEs,
- e. reviewing the need to institutionalize academic supervision and link the provision of subvention support to academic quality.
- f. provide greater support to increase the participation of female students.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2000 identified the following aims of secondary education:

- a. to help the full development of the inherent qualities and potential of the students,
- b. to prepare students as skilled manpower for taking part in their field of work especially in the economic activities of the country,
- c. to prepare students for higher education,
- d. to widen and consolidate basic knowledge of students acquired at the primary level,
- e. to provide more of basic life-skills knowledge to students.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2000, passed in parliament on 28 January 2001, after almost three decades since independence of Bangladesh, could not meet the aspirations and expectations of the people. The aims of secondary education as stated in the NEP are sketchy and are not very helpful in policy formulation for addressing the issues and concerns of the sub-sector. Pragmatic approach, relevant lessons, broad-based dialogue and participation of the people have to be employed for development of secondary education.

## **2. Institutions and Services**

### **2.1 Structure**

The secondary level of education is comprised of seven years of schooling (three years of junior secondary school, two years of secondary school and two years of higher secondary school or intermediate college). Two thirds of all higher secondary education is provided by intermediate section within degree colleges. It should be mentioned that both the National Committee on Education Policy, 1997 and the National Education Policy 2000 recommended that primary level of education should be extended upto grade 8 by 2010, and thus secondary level of education will comprise grades 9-12. In addition, there is also a parallel religious system of education referred to as Madrassas. The five year 'Dakhil' Madrassa education corresponds to secondary education and the two year 'Alim' Madrassa corresponds to higher secondary education.

### **2.2 Educational Institutions**

Table 1 shows percentage of growth of secondary and higher secondary educational institutions covering both general and madrassa education streams. The table also shows that private management is predominant in secondary education sub-sector irrespective of streams. Besides, the table provides interesting picture of discriminatory growth between general and religious streams over a period of sixteen years (1983-1999). During this period, the growth of Junior Secondary and Secondary Schools were 37.28 percent and 86.04 percent respectively while the growth of Dakhil Madrassa and Alim Madrassa were 197.26 percent and 111 percent respectively.

The demand for post secondary education along with prestige value attached to establishing private colleges increased the number of intermediate colleges (grade 11 and 12) all over the country. The percentage of growth during 1983-1999 was 337.05 percent.

**Table 1**  
**Number and Percentage of Growth of Secondary Schools and Higher Secondary (Intermediate Colleges) and Madrassas**

Level of institutions	Management	Number		Percentage of Growth (1993-99)
		1983	1999	
Junior Secondary	Public	-	-	-
	Private	2073	2846	37.38
	Total	2071	2846	37.28
Secondary	Public	175	317	81.14
	Private	6605	12297	86.17
	Total	6780	12614	86.04
Higher Secondary (Intermediate College)	Public	3	5	-
	Private	249	1092	338.55
	Total	252	1097	337.05
Dhakil Madrasah	Public	-	-	-
	Private	1645	4890	197.26
	Total	1645	4890	197.26
Alim Madrasah	Public	-	-	-
	Private	508	1074	111.0
	Total	508	1074	111.0

Source: BANBEIS, National Education Survey (Post Primary) - Final Report, 1999, P. 33

### 2.3 Enrolment

Table 2 shows that the number of students at secondary level in 1999 is 7,236,939. The percentage of girls is 51.50 and that of boys 48.50. The enrolment rate of secondary age population is 41.26 percentage (Table 2.3.2) Enrolment rate of girls of the same age group is 44.57 percent. All these indicate that enrolment of girls at secondary level have steadily increased over the years. But the transition rate (83 percent) of primary graduates to grade 6 and the growth of enrolment of secondary age population indicate that a large number of students are still out of school.

The enrolment at Higher Secondary is 952,850. The percentage of boys and girls is 59.58 and 40.42 respectively at this level.

The number of students in Dhakil and Alim Madrassa is 864,717 and 288,194 respectively. The percentage of boys and girls in Dhakil Madrassa is 50.37 percent and 49.63 percent while in Alim Madrassa of is 62.64 percent and 37.36 percent.

In 1999, dropout rates at Junior Secondary, and Secondary levels were 21.3 percent (18.4 percent for girls), and 52.1 percent (57.9 percent for girls) respectively. Repetition rates were 10.5 percent at junior secondary (8.0 percent for girls), and 15.1 percent at secondary (14.3 percent) levels respectively.<sup>1</sup>

**Table 2**  
**Number and Percentage of Students of Secondary, Higher Secondary and Madrassas, 1999**

Type of Institutions	Number of Students	Girls	Boys
Junior Secondary	616094	349095 (56.66)	266999 (43.34)
Secondary	6620845	3409728 (51.50)	3211117 (48.50)
Total	7236939	3758823 (51.94)	3478116 (48.06)
Higher Secondary	952850	385115 (40.42)	567735 (59.58)
Dhakil Madrassa	864717	429193 (49.63)	435524 (50.37)
Alim Madrassa	288194	107655 (37.36)	180539 (62.64)

Source: BANBEIS, National Education Survey (Post-Primary) - Final Report, 1999 P.P. 36, 38, 40

**Table 3**  
**Enrolment Rate in Secondary Education**

<sup>1</sup> CPD Policy Brief on "Education Policy", CPD Task Force Report, 2001, P.13



Year	Secondary age population (11-15yr.)		Enrolment		Enrolment Rate (gross)	
	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls
1996	16027256	7882559	5585806	2627073	34.85	33.33
1997	16702999	8224919	6124325	2921566	36.67	35.52
1998	17283628	8525140	6752456	3282219	39.07	38.50
1999	17884440	8836319	7379716	3938925	41.26	44.57

Source: BANBEIS, Bangladesh Education Statistics (At a Glance), 2000

**Table 4**

**Transition Rates from Primary to Secondary**

Year	Graduates from Grade V (000s)		Admission in Grade VI (000s)		Transition Rate (Percent)	
	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls
1990	1183	509	709	276	63.8	56.8
1996	2200*	1000*	1580*	770*	79.0	81.0
1997	-	-	1730*	830*	78.6	83.0

\* estimate

Source: BANBEIS, Bangladesh Education Profile, June 1997, BANBEIS, Bangladesh Educational Statistics, 1997

### 3. Teachers

Table 5 shows that the number of secondary school teachers in 2000 is 175,597, out of which 26,732 are female teachers. Among them 43.6 percent are trained (male 43.6 percent and female 56.4 percent).

**Table 5**

**Number and Percentage of Teachers, Teacher-Student Ratio and Trained Teachers in Secondary, Higher Secondary and Madrassas in 2000**

Institutions	Teacher Total	Male	Female	T-S Ratio	Trained (Junior +High) Total (%)	Trained female (%)
Junior Secondary	19885	16624 (83.61)	3261 (16.39)	1 : 35		
Secondary	155712	132241 (84.93)	23471 (15.07)	1 : 42	75796 (43.6)	56.4
<b>Total</b>	<b>175597</b>	<b>148865</b>	<b>26732</b>			
Intermediate	23819	19061 (80.0)	4758 (20.0)	1 : 14		
College						
Dhakil Madrassa	60113	58188 (96.8)	1925 (3.2)	-	5525 (7.3)	15.9 (F)
Alim Madrassa	17576	17140 (97.52)	436 (2.48)	-		
<b>Total</b>	<b>77689</b>	<b>75328</b>				

Source: 1. BANBEIS, Bangladesh Educational Statistics, (At a Glance), 2000

2. BANBEIS, National Education Survey (Post-Primary) -Final Report, 1999, p.p. 76, 157

On the other hand only 7.3 percent Madrassa teachers are trained (male 7.3 percent and female 15.9 percent). Percentage of trained teachers is important but relevance of the training provided and their application in the classroom is crucial in determining the standard of education. Attempts for reorienting the teacher training programme have been made in the past and presently being done through a donor funded development project without much visible results. The 3 year Bachelor of Education (Hons) programme introduced in the recent

past by Teacher Training College (TTC), Dhaka, and Institute of Education and Research ( IER), Dhaka University, is expected to produce a new genre of professional educators including competent teachers for secondary schools.

#### 4. Public Examinations

The public examinations at the end of grade 10 (SSC) and at the end of grade 12 (HSC) are held under the five Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISEs). Table 6 shows that less than 50 percent of students appearing at SSC and HSC examinations during the period 1998-2000 could pass the examination. This is more or less the normal picture. The situation at Madrassa level is almost the same.

**Table 6**  
**Results of SSC and HSC Examinations 1998-'99**

Year	Name of Exam.	Appeared		Passed		% of Pass
		Total	Female	Total	Female	
1998	SSC	722300	307860	346435	139107	47.96
	HSC	479028	177949	220748	83640	46.08
1999	SSC	844221	365614	457252	194485	54.16
	HSC	543745	204186	290627	115448	53.45
	Dhakil Madrassa	135974	44245	97814	32507	71.94
	Alim Madrassa	57005	10703	33131	6091	56.93
2000	SSC	928391	405494	381762	161745	41.12

Source: BANBEIS, *Bangladesh Educational Statistics (At a Glance) 2000*

#### 5. Finance

During 1990s, the gaps of revenue and development expenditures between primary and secondary levels of education have narrowed down.

**Table 7**

**Percentage Distribution of Public Revenue and Development Expenditure at Primary and Secondary Level**

Fiscal Year	Primary		Secondary	
	Revenue Expenditure	Development Expenditure	Revenue Expenditure	Development Expenditure
1991 - '92	48.2	40.1	36.8	23.5
1995 - '96	43.8	45.6	42.6	43.6
1998 -'99 (B)	41.6	47.3	48.4	32.4

Source: *Revised budget estimate from Demands for Grants and Appropriations (Non-Development)*

#### 6. Major Issues and Concerns

##### 6.1 Restructuring

If the duration of primary education is gradually extended upto grade 8 by the year 2010, as recommended by the NEP 2000, the secondary level would then consist of grades 9-12. There is no disagreement regarding restructuring of secondary education (9-12), but it requires a realistic plan of action in place. The attempt to add grades 9 and 10 to intermediate colleges and grades 11 and 12 to selected secondary schools under the Higher Secondary Education Project implemented between 1993-97 has not been successful. There are many aspects of the restructuring issue that needs careful attention and proper handling besides physical and financial implications.

##### 6.2 Access

The transition rate (78.6 percent) from primary to secondary, enrolment rate at junior secondary (girls 56.66 percent, boys 43.34 percent), enrolment rate at secondary (girls 51.51 percent, boys 48.50 percent) and enrolment of 41.26 percent of secondary age population are indicators of growing participation of children at

secondary level. Girls participation has consistently increased over the last several years mainly due to stipend programme. However, access remains a key issue of secondary education sub-sector. As noted, "Only 200,000 students - just three percent of 11-15 year age group -graduated from secondary schools in Bangladesh in 1996. For a country of 125 million people, these diploma-bearers are far too few,....."<sup>2</sup>

### **6.3 Quality**

The school system has been allowed to grow in size without providing the necessary inputs that improve the quality and relevance of the education it offers. There are specific reasons for the poor quality of education at secondary level. First, lack of managerial capacity of the personnel occupying positions of importance including the heads of the educational institutions. These people need advanced professional education, and most will require job-specific training. Second, the difficulty of recruiting and placing enough appropriately trained teachers especially for the private schools is closely linked with poor quality of teaching-learning in schools. Third, absence of academic supervision has further aggravated the academic environment in the schools resulting in poor performance of the teachers. Fourth, large scale private tuition by the teachers has made classroom teaching-learning practically redundant for passing the exams.

### **6.4 Learning Assessment**

The SSC and HSC examinations are no longer considered as reliable means of assessing learning outcomes of students. They have now turned out to be national events of cheating. They have completely lost the confidence of the people. Besides, with the increase of enrolment at secondary and higher secondary levels, the number of examinees are swelling. Administrative and logistic support system for conducting the examinations are apprehended to collapse under the sheer burden of numbers of examinees. One way out would be to abolish, as early as possible, SSC as a public examinations and make it a school-based examinations to be conducted by individual schools.

The second issue related to SSC and HSC examinations is the wastage in terms of teacher-student time and the public and private costs involved in the failure of 50 percent of students taking the examinations.

### **6.5 Administration/Management**

Like other sub-sectors, the administration/management of secondary education is highly centralized. DSHE not only to administers schools, madrassas and colleges, it also has to oversee the large number of non-government secondary schools and to arrange salary payment of government school teachers and subvention of more than 167,000 teachers plus non-teaching employees of non-government schools, colleges and madrassas with the help of BANBEIS. Since DSHE has become unwieldy and unmanageable and since its administrative and supervisory capacity is limited, it has been suggested on different occasions by the education community that DSHE should be bifurcated into two separate directorates; one for secondary education and the other for higher education. Besides, the expected increase in enrolment at secondary level when UPE is nearly attained and the prospect of non-formal secondary education programme is within sight. The separation of DSHE is all the more necessary.

DSHE has not been staffed with enough qualified professionals to enable it to fulfill its leadership and monitoring responsibilities. If the directorate is to be effective, it will need stronger planning, administrative, supervisory and monitoring capacity. The directorate should be provided with enough well-trained personnel to provide the intellectual and administrative leadership to develop the secondary education sub-sector. It will also be necessary to provide on-the-job training and higher education opportunities both at home and abroad for the staff of DSHE.

### **6.6 Private School Management**

Establishment of private schools and colleges in older days was a voluntary and philanthropic act either by the community or by local landlords. The management, supervision and resource mobilization was the responsibility of the community through the SMC. But the scenario has changed over the years especially since the government decided to provide salary support to the teachers of private schools. Now, in most cases, private schools and colleges are established by vested interest groups or political aspirants. They are the owners of the schools, although each school is required to have a SMC. The SMCs are occupied by the owners or their

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<sup>2</sup> World Bank and Bangladesh Centre for Advanced Studies, Bangladesh 2020, 1999, P. 37

representatives; community participation in the real sense is almost non-existence. "To some extent community participation in school development has been marginalized by the government policy of subsidies. This has weakened the teachers' accountability towards the community and contributed to the apparent indifference of SMCs in controlling the staffing and physical standards for better performance".<sup>3</sup>

### **6.7 Academic Supervision**

Supervision is one of the weakest areas of secondary education. The schools are supervised for accreditation by BISEs and zonal inspectors of DSHE and inspected by DIA mainly for financial audit. "On an average, a secondary school is visited 1.92 times over a five-year period and about 40 percent of the schools have to wait for the renewal of their recognition for a period of more than two years".<sup>4</sup> Academic supervision for quality improvement is a much talked-about concern, but nothing tangible has yet been done. Two main reasons are usually assigned for deterioration of quality in schools: (i) the inspecting machinery is under-staffed and cannot cope with the current routine inspection load, (148 institutions per inspecting officer), (ii) hardly any one of the inspecting officers has had specialization in academic supervision and rarely they have any opportunity of attending in-service course of study in supervision. It is also to be mentioned that the inspectors or the schools have no access to an updated education code or manual of instruction. No such material has been produced during the last sixty years.

### **6.8 Curriculum and Textbooks**

There has been a general accusation that the curricula, syllabuses and the learning materials for secondary level of education are not need-based, relevant, life-oriented and not related to the world of work. But there has been no attempt to elaborate these key terms/words in Bangladesh contexts. Curricula, syllabuses and learning materials should be designed in accordance with the aims and objectives of education and the specific outcomes expected of the learners of a particular level of education. The aims and objectives have not been properly articulated and elaborated in the documents, either in the past or in the National Education Policy 2000. In such a situation, the subject specialists constituting the various subject committees formed by NCTB had a free hand in developing curricula and syllabuses. As a result, the curricula and syllabuses developed by them are academic subject-oriented. The needs of society, the economy and the demands of modern knowledge and culture are not given the attention they deserve. The textbooks are heavily loaded with factual subject content. Reorienting curricula and syllabuses on the perceived role of secondary education is an urgent need. The needs of the students who are unable to continue their studies beyond secondary level demand equal attention in designing the secondary curricula and syllabuses. They must acquire the knowledge and skills required for daily living and future employment with further training. For this purpose, teaching of languages, math and science including computer literacy must be given due importance in the scheme of education of secondary level.

## **7. Development Projects**

### **7.1 The community Schools Project**

Among the donor agencies, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has been particularly involved in the area of secondary education. Three development projects were undertaken with ADP loan during 1978-84, e.g. the Educational Equipment Development Project in 1978, the Community Schools Project in 1981 and the Secondary Science Education Sector Project in 1984.

The Community Schools Project provided opportunities of skill development in selected trades for out-of-school youths. A total of 388 non-government High Schools and 2 non-government Madrassas at the Thana level were included in the project during its implementation period (1981-88). The selected trades were: (a) mechanical trade, (b) building trade, (c) agriculture, (d) sewing and dressmaking, and (e) food processing and food preservation. The first three trades were for men and the remaining two for women.

Opinions about effectiveness of the Community Schools Project in attaining its stated goals were divided. It was generally believed that two major reasons for the project not being able to leave noticeable results behind

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<sup>3</sup> World Bank, UPL, Bangladesh Education Sector Review, Volume II, 2000, P. 87

<sup>4</sup> NAEM, Educational Research in a Policy Perspective, 1995, P.66

were the absence of a well -defined policy for its continuation after ADB assistance ceased and the absence of an effective strategy for its management, implementation, and supervision.

### **7.2 The Secondary Science Education Sector Project and the Secondary Education Development Project**

During the Third Plan (1985-90), a Secondary Science Education Sector Project (SSESP) was implemented with financial assistance from ADB. The SSESP provided for the development of 3,800 non-government High Schools and 200 non-government Madrasahs. Originally undertaken as a GOB-supported project involving 1,200 secondary schools and 150 madrasahs, its scope was extended in 1985 with ADB assistance. One thousand and seven hundred project institutions were provided with science laboratory/multipurpose room and furniture and all 4,000 (including the 200 madrasahs) received science equipment and books. The project was completed by June 1991.

Under the SSESP, 9 Secondary Education and Science Development Centres (SESDCs) were established for providing in-service courses for secondary teachers. The total number of teachers receiving in-service education during 1986-92 was 21,035. The subject areas covered by courses were: (a) physical science, (b) biological science, (c) mathematics, (d) social science, and (e) Bangla. The duration of most of the courses was two weeks. In addition to these courses, which catered for subject teachers, 386 administrators and supervisors received two-week training under SSESP. While the utility of the courses offered by the SESDCs was recognized, duration of the courses was regarded as inadequate (mostly 2 weeks).

An evaluation of SSESP by the Foundation for Research on Educational Planning and Development (September 1991) revealed that on an average, 7.28 science classes and 2.94 other classes per week have been held in the rooms constructed under SSESP, the utilization index being below the desired level.

### **7.3 Secondary Education Development Project**

A Secondary Education Development Project with ADB loan was launched in 1993. The project provided support under the heads of: (a) curriculum reform, (b) instructional materials management, (c) teacher training (including establishment of a new TTC), (d) civil works for improving physical facilities of 1,840 secondary schools (including about 460 madrasahs), (e) a stipend program for secondary girls in 53 Thanas (sub-districts), and (f) training for the DSHE staff at central, zonal, and district levels and secondary school head teachers and managing committees. About 60% of the project cost was to directly benefit females.

### **7.4 Higher Secondary Education Project**

A Higher Secondary Education Project (HSEP) with ADB loan was started in 1993. The major objective of HSEP was to assist the Government in initiating reforms in higher secondary education, aiming at the improvement of its relevance, quality, efficiency, and cost effectiveness by enabling selected intermediate colleges to add grades 9 and 10 along with grades 11 and 12. The benefits were to include completely revised curricula and improved textbooks for the higher secondary subsector; five higher secondary teacher training institutes (HSTTIs) one in each division; selected 'model' institutions offering courses with improved facilities; and an improved management information system (MIS) for the higher secondary subsector.

### **7.5 Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP)**

The Stipend Programme (SP) for girls (6-10 grades) was the major component of FSSAP Project under taken by GOB in 1994. It was felt that the FSSAP and specially the SP will have a positive impact on increased enrolment, reduced dropout, delayed marriage and enhanced employment of girls. The Impact Study of the Project carried out in 1996 found the following results.

*Impact on enrolment.* About 97.6% Headmasters/Teachers interviewed said that the enrolment of girls in schools has gone up over the last few years and 93.1% opined that SP is the reason for the increase of girls' enrolment. A large proportion of SMC (80.4) and TAC (71%) members said that enrolment of girls in schools increased sufficiently since the introduction of SP. Guardians interview results show that 25.6% guardians sent their daughters to school on hearing that the girls would get stipend.

The SP had not only attracted new entrance to schools, but also a large number of girls who dropped out from schools earlier.

**Impact on dropout.** A comparison of rates of dropout among stipend awardee, disqualified and non-awardee girls shows that there is a significant difference in overall dropout rates between stipend awardee girls (1.3%) and non-awardee girls (50.3%). The overall dropout rate of girls who received stipend but were disqualified is 1.86% which is close to the dropout rate of stipend awardee girls (not disqualified).

The two main reasons for dropout as stated by the sample dropout girls were financial difficulties (78.6%) and early marriage (50.3).

*Other impacts.* It was too early to expect desirable impact of SP on early marriage of girls as this practice is in existence in the society for a long time. The impact of SP on women's employment cannot yet be assessed.

### **7.6 Programme to Motivate, Train and Employ Female Teachers in Rural Secondary Schools (PROMOTE)**

Promote is a project undertaken with financial assistance of EU. Its focus is on improving the quality of teaching and learning and on gender sensitivity in the Government Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs) which offer B.Ed. courses for secondary school teachers. The Project started in January 1999 and is expected to be completed (first phase) in April 2002.

#### **Reference**

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4. Government of Bangladesh, BANBEIS, Bangladesh Education Statistics (At a Glance)
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6. University Press Ltd., 1999
7. World Bank, Bangladesh Education Sector Review, vo. II, Dhaka, 200
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## APPENDIX 3

### A Position Paper on Vocational And Technical Education

M.A. Aziz and Saiful Haque

#### 1. Introduction:

Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) in Bangladesh generally comprises the following:

##### Vocational Education

- ◆ Secondary School Certificate (Voc), SSC (Voc);
- ◆ National Skill Standards (NSS I to III);
- ◆ Higher Secondary Certificate (Vocational) / HSC (Voc);
- ◆ Basic Trades ( 360 Hours)

These programmes are operating mainly under MoE and other Ministries/Agencies and are accredited by Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB).

##### Technical Education

- ◆ Diploma-in-Engineering (Marine / Printing /Ceramics / Agriculture/ Textiles/ Forestry);
- ◆ Diploma-in-Surveying (Aminship);
- ◆ Diploma-in- Surveying (Survey Final);
- ◆ Diploma-in-Commerce;
- ◆ Higher Secondary Certificate (Business Management)

These programmes operating under MoE and other Ministries/Agencies as controlling authority of provider institutions are also accredited by Bangladesh Technical Education Board.

VTE also includes Vocational and Technical Staff Development Programmes comprising:

- ◆ Certificate-in-Vocational Education, (CVE),
- ◆ Diploma-in-Vocational Education, (DVE),
- ◆ Certificate-in-Vocational Education -Non Formal, (CVE-NF),
- ◆ Diploma-in-Technical Education, (Dip-in-TE)' and
- ◆ B.Sc. in Technical Education

Ministries / Agencies, such as, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labour and Manpower, Ministry of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Youth and Ministry of Women Affairs acting through corresponding Directorates/Departments in those agencies are the controlling authorities of the provider institutions under the accreditation of BTEB. There also exist private VTE institutions which operate through local governing bodies. These institutions operate through prescribed Statute Regulatory Order (SRO)s of BTEB. Some of these VTE institutions operate under NGOs, private companies and philanthropic organizations.

In the mid 1990s, Government, as a matter of policy, decided to expand VTE-programmes including the areas of courses. The policy adopted for expansion eventually resulted in diversification of secondary education into several streams including the Vocational Education Stream. The Vocational Education stream included SSC (Voc), HSC (Voc), HSC (B.M) etc. Special Basic Trade Courses were also introduced as optional subjects for SSC (general) stream.

Vocational and Technical Education (VTE) used to be a sort of monopoly for boys. There was only one Polytechnic for girls, namely, Mohila Polytechnic Institute established in 1985. Other institutions had hardly any female enrolment. During the period following 1990 the entry of girls in VTE institutions began.

This position paper outlines objectives / policies, services and institutions, management and administration of the provider institutions, controlling authorities, curricular content development and teaching-learning management, learning materials, quality assurance, funding, cost and financing, metamorphoses of the systems and issues at sight including action priorities.

## 2. VTE Objectives and Policy

The step-ladder of general education from primary school to university does not offer the opportunity to learn practical skills. The vast majority of students who get off from the ladder before reaching the summit are left with knowledge and attitude that are not useful for themselves and for society. This has been a major concern for policy makers in education. VTE objectives and policies have been outlined in the Five Year Development Plan (1997-2002) and National Education Policy 2000 (NEP 2000)

The FFYP (1997-2007) states that the enrolment capacity of the technical and vocational institutions shall be raised from 3.3 percent of the student population at secondary level to around 20 percent by the year 2002. It also says that the private involvements and initiatives in the delivery of technical and vocational education programmes will be encouraged.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2000 proposes that the entire skilled manpower will be graded in three categories: (a) Semi-skilled technician grade-I, (b) Skilled technician or technician grade-II and (c) Technician grade-III. NEP 2000 also propose that the present duration of diploma level technical education comprising three years institutional training and two months field experience in industries will be restructured as four years' combined course inclusive of institutional education and practical field experiences. The phase of field experience will be divided into two parts of three months. After the completion of formal education and the phase of field work, final examination will be held at the end of the entire course. Polytechnic institutes and other similar organisations will be increased in number for the extension of technical education. Establishment of polytechnic institutes at the non-government level will be encouraged.

### Observations on objectives and policies

*Expansion of VTE at secondary level and emerging technologies:* VTE at secondary level is being expanded to achieve FFYP targets. With the introduction of SSC (Voc) in the VTIs, TTCs and selected secondary schools, including establishment of 30 Textile Vocational Institutes, the VTE enrolment at secondary level has by 2001 increased to about 8 percent from 3.3 percent.

Besides, a project is underway for introduction of 9 emerging technologies (at diploma level) such as electromedical, environmental, architecture & interior design, construction, telecommunication, instrumentation & processes, mechatronics, mining and mine-survey, and garments & pattern making.

*Private involvements and initiatives:* As of now (2001) there are 41 private institutions offering Diploma-in-Engineering courses. The total entry capacity of private institutions has thus increased to about 4000 from 160 in 1990. Total entry capacity of both private and public institutions for Diploma in Engineering is about 9,000.

*Staff development:* There exist one Vocational Teachers Training Institute (VTTI) at Bogra and one Technical Teachers Training College (TTTC) at Dhaka. VTTI trains teachers of vocational education courses. At the moment there are about 800 institutions both public and private, which conduct vocational education courses. There are 2500 teachers in these institutions who are badly in need of updating and upgrading of their both technical and teaching skills. In view of this requirement, VTTI needs strengthening, including establishment of at least one more VTTI in the country.

TTTC trains teachers of diploma level technical courses. Since diploma level courses are diversified in areas of agriculture, textiles, forestry etc. TTTC also needs diversification in its training programme. A present, TTTC programmes are confined to training of engineering teachers only

*Implementation of 4-year diploma courses:* In accordance with NEP 2000, all the diploma level 3-year courses have been upgraded to 4-year courses. All these courses under BTEB have been introduced in 2000-2001 session with the existing infrastructure, facilities and staff positions. The infrastructure, facilities and staff position are, however, being developed at Directorate and Ministry levels. Curriculum/Syllabus in terms of structures and contents have already been developed by BTEB and introduced in the institutions, both public and private. Implementation of 4-year diploma level courses needs proper follow-up in terms of infrastructure development, creation of staff positions, staff induction and development.



*Strengthening of BTEB and NCSDT:* Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), is an autonomous body responsible for setting standards, designing curriculum, accrediting institutions, conducting examinations, and awarding certificates.

NCSDT, on the other hand, has responsibility on matters relating to:

- setting skill standards
- assuring quality of skill training
- integrating skill training to world of work
- enforcing law in respect of emoluments of VTE trained manpower, industrial disputes etc.

The roles of these two bodies need to be reconciled and both are in need of strengthening to carryout their responsibility.

NEP 2000 guidelines for technician's grades-I,-II,-III require the existing National Skill Standards to be changed into a different set of standards. Difference with current standards has to be recociled and NCSDT's role in this has to be determined.

### 3. Services and Institutions

VTE in Bangladesh operates at Diploma and Certificate levels. The following table (Table1) describes the categories of institutions, their total numbers and capacities, both public and private.

**Table 1: VTE institutions: category, intake capacity, and number of courses offered**

Category of Institutions	Number			Total entry enrolment	Number of Courses offered	Remarks
	Public	Private	Total			
1 Diploma level institutions	62	58	120	15510	22	Includes both 2-year and 4-year programmes
2 Post-Secondary VTE Certificate institutions	35	477	512	18720	16	-
3 Post grade VIII VTE institutions	101	676	777	48412	66	-
4 Post-Secondary Business training institutions	2	Variable	2+ Variable	80+ Variable	2	These Institutions are under the control of Department of Women Affairs and Department of Youth Development.
5 Post grade VIII VTE training institutions	39	27	66	3920	32	These are all NSS-Basic,-III and -II training programmes.
6 Basic Trade Programme Institutions	72	4	76	10000	23	This is part of the school programmes operated at VTE institutions.
7 Staff Development institutions (TTTC & VTTI)	2	0	2	500	13	Staff development courses are offered at degree, diploma and certificate levels.
Total	313	1242+ Variable	1555+ Variable	97142+ Variable	-	-

Source: DTE

These programmes and courses include the broad areas of engineering, business, agriculture,forestry, printing, textile, photography, leather, IT etc, and are of various durations, such as, diploma - 4 or 2 yrs, certificate - 2 years, 1 year or 360 hrs.

*IT/ ICT institutions:*IT/ ICT institutions belong to an area of vocational and technical education which is expanding rapidly in terms of number of institutions and entry enrolment. Bangladesh Computer Council (BCC) is a Government affiliated establishment acting under the aegis of Ministry of Science and Technology to regulate, promote, ensure and advise on IT and ICT research, development and all other related activities as required in the country.

As we compare the undertakings of private and public institutions, it can be seen that the IT-ICT training endeavours of private sector are growing rapidly in terms of number of institutions and intake capacities, while those in the public sector move slowly only after lengthy process of decesion-making.

### Achievement of FFYP (1997-2002) Targets

Fifth Five Year Plan envisaged intake capacity targets of technical and vocational institutes as 20000 and 43,800 respectively. The corresponding number of target institutions were 64 VTIs and 68 Polytechnic Institutes respectively. Numbers of VTIs established thus far (2001) is 59. Expansion of 20 existing polytechnic institutes and establishment of 23 new polytechnic institutes are in progress.

In the meantime, 500 secondary private schools have been brought under a project to introduce vocational education courses. Further 176 NGO / self-financed secondary level institutions have introduced vocational education courses with the approval of BTEB. Considering the existing public and private institutions offering vocational education courses, their total number is 776 and intake capacity is 48,000. Taking into account vocational courses in private institutions and the ones established on self-financed basis (including NGOs), the existing intake capacity is nearly 50,000.

The number of private institutions offering diploma courses, both in engineering and agriculture has grown to 52 with intake of 5,400. Total intake capacity of both public and private institutions for diploma courses now stands at 13,690.

### **Establishment of Private Institutions and Government Support**

The VTE institutions at different levels used to be considered as the responsibility of the government. Only a few Christian/other Missionaries and NGOs used to operate skill training institutions to assist the deprived, mostly orphans, disabled and very poor ones who had little access to education and training. During the 1980s and 1990s the private VTE institutions emerged as a distinct category alongside public institutions. The number of private institutions and their intake capacities are given below:

- Private institutions offering 4 and 2 year VTE diploma courses in engineering, agriculture and commerce: 58 with intake capacity of 5,460.
- Private institutions offering 2-year VTE prost secondary certificate courses: 477 with intake capacity of 17,400.
- Private institutions offering post grade VIII 2-year Certificate Courses: with intake of 35000.
- Private institutions offering NSS II & III 2 year Certificate courses: 7 with intake of 880.
- Private institutions offering Basic Trade Programme (360 hr-courses): 4 with variable intake

The total number of VTE institutions of different level and their total corresponding intake capacities add up to 1,222 institutions with intake of over 58,000.

Only the VTE-Institutions offering SSC (Voc), HSC (Voc) and HSC (BM) have government control and government undertakes responsibility to give the concerned institutions the supports within the frame of stipulated policy, such as salary subvention, stipend to students, building of infrastructure, supply of equipment etc. But the institutions offering Diploma level courses both in agriculture and engineering and others are yet to be brought under Government support system.

### **Staff Development Programmes**

The number of teachers yet to be exposed to VTE teacher education, according to a conservative estimate, in the public sector is over 10000. The number of those already exposed to staff development courses but requiring to be inducted to updating and upgrading through retraining is about 2000.

There are two well equipped staff development institutions under the Directorate of Technical education. These are Technical Teachers Training College, Dhaka and Vocational Teachers Training Institute, Bogra with enrolment capacities of staff development of 240 in each. In view of the existing number of VTE teachers and also the potential ones, establishment of 3 to 4 more such institutions is necessary. FFYP (1997-2002) included a target of establishment of one TTTC and one VTTI within the plan period.

### **Girls Participation in VTE**

Very few girls traditionally entered polytechnics, VTIs and TTCs. By mid 1990s, girls began to enroll, but did not exceed 10% of total enrolment. With the introduction of HSC (Business Management) and SSC (Vocational), female participation in VTE has increased. The following tables give a cursory picture of trends of girls participation in VTE.

**Table 3.1: Participation of girls in VTE-examinations conducted by BTEB during 1995-2000**

Year Curriculum	1995		1996		1997		1998		1999		2000	
	Total (Female)	Female (%)	Total (Female)	Female (%)	Total (Female)	Female (%)	Total (Female)	Female (%)	Total (Female)	Female (%)	Total (Female)	Female (%)
Diploma Engg.	3542 (259)	7.31	3538 (254)	7.18	5918 (571)	9.65	6848 (486)	7.10	3764 (395)	10.50	-	-
HSC (BM)	-	-	-	-	1116 (200)	17.92	1739 (396)	22.77	3557 (798)	22.43	5267 (1218)	23.13
SSC (VOC)	-	-	-	-	1586 (190)	11.98	5276 (795)	15.07	8594 (1735)	20.19	14560 (3877)	26.63

Source: *Technical Education for Women Empowerment by Saiful Haque, March 2001*

**Table 3.2: Intake in VTE programmes of BTEB (1999-2000 session) including female percentage**

Curriculum	Students (M)	Students (F)	Total (M+F)	Female %
Diploma Engineering	4868	461	5329	8.65
Diploma Agriculture	1028	130	1158	11.23
Diploma Textiles	416	10	426	2.35
SSC (Voc)	21815	10362	32177	32.21
<b>Total</b>	<b>28127</b>	<b>10963</b>	<b>39090</b>	<b>28.05</b>

Source: *Technical Education in Women Empowerment by Saiful Haque, March 2001.*

Among students admitted in a selected VTE programmes as shown in Table 3.2 the female participation is 28.05. It is expected that the female participation will increase steadily on account of increase of female participation at the secondary level and popularity of VTE, specially in Business and IT.

#### Teacher-student ratio in VTE programmes

National Education Policy 2000 suggests an optimum teacher-students ratio of 1:12 for VTE institutions. In the existing polytechnics and other VTE institutions, public and private, the positions of teachers have in fact been created on the basis of 1:10 ratio. The present average ratio of teacher and student in the VTE is around 1:15.

#### 4. Management and Administration

All the VTE institutions in the area of engineering courses are under the administrative aegis of MoE acting through Directorate of Technical Education. Marine Engineering Institute, Forestry Institute and few others such as Technical Training Centres (TTCs), Youth Training Centres etc. are under the administrative control of the corresponding ministries. The Ministries and Directorates are responsible for administrative control of the VTE institutions and thus their functions include allocation of funds, approval of projects and courses for operation, staff recruitment, placement and transfer, staff development and development of facilities. They are not responsible for academic supervision including setting standards/levels, curriculum/syllabus development, learning resource development, quality evaluation, conduct of examinations and awarding certificates. The academic control of VTE institutions are effected through the national technical education board i.e. BTEB. BTEB according to Technical Education Act. 1 of 1967 organises regulates, supervises, controls and develop technical education in the country.

##### *Programme Inspection Wing (PIW) of DTE*

Directorate of Technical Education has a Programme Inspection Wing (PIW). This is a vital organ of the Directorate headed by a Director. But the Director (PIW), for lack of staff capacity, at headquarter or in the field, is unable to carry out the programme inspection tasks.

##### *Independent Directorate for Management of areas other than Engineering.*

VTE institutions fall under a number of Ministries and Directorates corresponding to areas such as agriculture, textiles, forestry etc. But those Ministries and Directorates do not have adequate organisational arrangements and provisions to effectively manage their VTE institutions. The Directorates or Ministries need to have

separate management and administrative organs, or as an alternative, an independent Directorate attached to DTE or directly under MoE may be established.

## **5. Curriculum / Syllabus Development and Implementation**

Terminal and general (related) contents of VTE Curriculum/Syllabus. Broadly speaking, VTE curriculum / syllabus provide for preparing the learners to enter the world of work with requisite level of terminal competencies so that they can work as mid-level skilled worker. For programmes at diploma level the ratio between terminal competencies and related competencies is usually 60:40. For the one at certificate level it is usually 70:30. SSC (Vocational) course provides for a ratio of 50:50 between vocational skill and general education subjects. This does not, however, reflect the actual ratio between specific and general skills or theory and practice in the classroom. It varies from subject to subject.

BTEB has the following arrangements for curriculum / syllabus development:

*Subject Specialists Committee and Courses of Studies Committee:* Subject Specialists Committees and Courses of Studies Committees are formed by Chairman of BTEB according to the prescribed structure in terms of number. publishes curricula and syllabi and distributes them to concerned institutions. Teachers are the main actors in total teaching-learning management. They are responsible for interpreting the syllabus, developing schemes of work and lesson plans and making assessment of students' learning. BTEB organises periodical training of teachers for updating and upgrading their skills.

*Learning Materials:* Learning materials for general education stream are developed, printed, published and distributed by or under the control of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). Materials for VTE courses are developed, printed, published and distributed by BTEB. BTEB at present is engaged in developing 690 titles of textbooks in Bangla for their Diploma and Certificate level courses. Individual institutions ask for permission to introduce the courses available in BTEB repertoire.. BTEB acting through its Curriculum Wing, coordinates, monitors and inspects the implementation of these courses. The curriculum wing of BTEB is not adequately staffed by experts/specialists and support staff for development and implementation of curricula.

## **6. Costs and Finance**

As stated earlier there are public and private sector institutions operating under different Ministries / Agencies. The entire cost of public institutions are borne by the Government, whereas the private institutions run through total private support or partial support by Government in terms of salary subvention, support for construction of physical facilities and infrastructure, etc. or financial support of NGOs. The tuition fees from learners for VTE institutions are not significant compared to total operating cost of the public institutions. In financial year 2001-2002, thirteen development projects costing about 9,334 crore taka are in the process of implementation.

Besides, there is a master plan of development projects of DTE under consideration by Government. This includes polytechnics at each district headquarters and VTIs at each upazilla head quarters. The recurrent expenditure of Directorate of Technical Education for the financial years 1999-2000 and 2000-2001 are taka 43.621 crore and taka 46.598 crore respectively.

## **7. Major Issues**

### **Access in the public VTE institutions**

All the public institutions have prescribed number of seats available to the admission seekers. Experiences reveal that admission seekers of VTE institutions outnumber the intake capacities of the institutions. On an average, the admission seekers outnumber the seats available by more than 3 times.

### **Preponderance of non-qualified and untrained workers in the skilled positions**

In a job market study of VTI graduates (1994) by Abdur Rafique, it was revealed that 96 percent of the positions earmarked for qualified skilled workers are occupied by workers without any skill qualification or training. This preponderance of non-qualified and untrained workers still holds good in the present job market. This situation illustrates the gap between training and the job market.

### **Private institutions and services in the present VTE system**

At both diploma and certificate levels private institutions and services offering VTE courses are no longer insignificant. Private institutions obviously operate on cost-recovery and profit basis. Despite their keen interest for VTE, many potential admission seekers cannot take advantages of private VTE opportunities. As a result the private institutions serve those who can afford to bear the high expenses. This raises the issue of private-public partnership in VTE to promote greater equity in training opportunities.

### **Relevance and flexibility**

Education and training contents and practices in the VTE sub sector must relate to job descriptions, job specifications and personnel specifications of industries. The public sector remains rigid and suffer from other management limitations. The private sector VTE, on the other hand, can be more flexible and responsive, but poses the problem of equity. The important issue is to accommodate the process of transition from reliance on public provisions to greater private provisions and defining division of tasks and roles in terms of policy-planning and determination of strategies and tactics for this purpose. Despite the transition already in sight and the positive signals for further development, appropriate mechanisms and processes for policy development in this aspect are not in place.

### **Quality assurance**

Quality rests on a number of things, viz., teaching-learning management, institutional management and administration, and inspection and monitoring. It is also integrally linked to student motivation, their counseling and guidance, and placement services. Teachers are, in fact, the main actors, who create the environment to ensure effective learning. Number of teachers in VTE system is about 12,000 of whom 10,000 require training for the first time, while the rest 2000 need updating and upgrading through retraining. Although one TTTC and one VTTI exist for development of teachers at the technical and vocational levels, the needs of teacher education for the private institutions offering SSC (Voc), HSC (BM) including teachers of Agriculture and Textile Institutes are yet to be considered.

### **Girls enrolment**

Girls enrolment in the VTE remains low. As a consequence of increased girls' enrolment in the secondary level education their participation in economic activities, the demand for VTE for girls is also growing. This requires the training institutions to develop facilities specifically needed by girls.

### **Institution - Industry cooperation**

Studies to determine the nature of the gap between training and industries and how this can be overcome is needed. Appropriate and effective strategies for establishing closer linkage between training institutions and industries have to be developed.

### **Regulatory Authority for private VTE Institutions**

As stated earlier, private VTE institutions have significantly grown in a number of areas, such as engineering and agriculture. Others will emerge both at diploma and certificate levels. These institutions receive the affiliation of BTEB, but there is no adequate mechanism or capacity to conduct academic inspection and monitoring. An appropriate and non-bureaucratic organizational mechanism is needed for this purpose.

### **National Centre for VTE Research and Development**

VTE has become a vast sub-sector by its own right. Changing trends of science of technology including changes in the mode of production, distribution and services and rapidly proliferating private undertakings have made VTE sub-sector complex and multidimensional. Research and development in an independent centre, staffed by experts, and under private-public partnership, can contribute to proper development of VTE.

### **IT and ICT institutions**

The IT and ICT institutions are expanding in terms of number and enrolment. The total number of institutions have grown to over 1000: enrolling over 20,000 trainees in public and private institutions.

Training in the private sector is growing exponentially, while public sector moves slowly and ponderously. Public-private cooperation and joint planning in this areas critical.

### **Need for research**

For improving quality and relevance of VTE research and studies should be undertaken, including on the following topics:

- (a) Tracer study of trainees of institutions offering Diploma courses in the areas of engineering, agriculture, textile, health and others.
- (b) Tracer study of trainees of Vocational Training Institutions in some 40 trades.
- (c) Study on effectiveness and efficiency of the institutions offering Business Management Courses.
- (d) Assessment of management of both administration and teaching-learning capability of VTE institutions.
- (e) Study on employment pattern of industries and how their human resource needs are met.

## **APPENDIX 4 Selected Statistical Tables**

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**APPENDIX 4: SELECTED STATISTICAL TABLES (D-0 TO D-20)**

**Table D-0: Population Projections by School Age Groups  
(No. in Millions)**

Year	6-10	11-13	14-15	16-17	18-20	21-22	23-24
<b>1998</b>	18.5	10.9	6.2	5.2	6.9	4.4	4.1
<b>Male</b>	9.4	5.6	3.2	2.7	3.5	2.2	2.0
<b>Female</b>	9.1	5.3	3.0	2.5	3.4	2.2	2.1
<b>2000</b>	15.2	10.6	7.6	7.3	9.5	5.0	4.5
<b>Male</b>	7.7	5.4	3.9	3.8	4.9	2.5	2.2
<b>Female</b>	7.5	5.2	3.7	3.5	4.6	2.5	2.3
<b>2005</b>	14.2	8.8	6.2	6.9	11.2	7.2	6.5
<b>Male</b>	7.2	4.5	3.1	3.5	5.7	3.7	3.3
<b>Female</b>	7.0	4.3	3.1	3.4	5.5	3.5	3.2
<b>2010</b>	15.2	8.6	5.5	5.7	9.1	6.7	7.3
<b>Male</b>	7.7	4.4	2.8	2.9	4.6	3.4	3.7
<b>Female</b>	7.5	4.2	2.7	2.8	4.5	3.3	3.6
<b>2015</b>	15.4	9.1	6.0	5.8	8.2	5.7	6.1
<b>Male</b>	7.8	4.6	3.0	2.9	4.2	2.9	3.1
<b>Female</b>	7.6	4.5	3.0	2.9	4.0	2.8	3.0
<b>2020</b>	15.5	9.2	6.1	6.0	8.9	5.7	5.4
<b>Male</b>	7.9	4.7	3.1	3.0	4.5	2.9	2.7
<b>Female</b>	7.6	4.5	3.0	3.0	4.4	2.8	2.7

Note: PMED estimate of primary school age population varies from this projection. A Commonly agreed database does not exist.



**Table: D-1. The Structure of Primary Schooling, 2000**

Type of school	Number of schools	% of total	Teachers	% of total	Students	% of total	% female students
Government primary school	37,677	49.1	158,216	51.1	10,832,476	61.3	49.5
Experimental schools	53	0.1	259	0.1	11,482	0.1	47.0
Registered non-government primary school	19,253	25.1	76,267	24.7	4,170,925	23.6	47.5
Community school	3,061	4.0	8,949	2.9	454,905	2.6	51.6
Satellite school	3,884	5.1	6,123	2.0	209,238	1.2	52.2
Primary school attached to high school	1,220	1.6	7,971	2.6	499,353	2.8	50.1
Non-registered non-government primary school	2,126	2.8	8,603	2.8	307,867	1.7	47.9
Kindergarten	2,296	3.0	13,507	4.4	345,088	2.0	47.7
Ebtodayee madrasah	3,710	4.8	14,760	4.8	417,411	2.4	46.1
Ebtodayee madrasah attached to high madrasah	3,437	4.5	14,318	4.6	403,621	2.3	44.0
NGO-operated full primary school	92	0.1	368	0.1	15,619	0.1	47.5
Totals	76,809	100	309,341	100	17,667,985	100	48.9

Source: Directorate of Primary Education, cited in Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review, 2001, Table 1.3

**Table: D-2. Number of Primary level Education Institutions, 1996-2000**

Types of Institutions	Number of Institutions				
	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Government primary schools	37,710	37,710	37,710	37,709	37,677
Experimental schools	52	52	53	53	53
Registered non-government primary schools	19,683	19,529	19,658	19,553	19,253
Community schools	2,759	1,962	2,989	3,107	3,061
Satellite schools	200	1,042	2,822	2,945	3,884
Primary sections attached to high schools	2,759	1,292	1,582	1,230	1,220
Non-registered non-government primary schools	3,963	3,472	3,177	2,632	2,126
Kindergartens	1,434	1,545	1,691	1,940	2,296
Ebtodayee madrasahs attached to high madrasahs	9,499	8,231	7,173	6,404	3,710
NGO-run full primary schools	0	0	0	14	92
Totals	80,818	77,685	79,803	78,840	76,809

Source: Directorate of Primary Education, cited in Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review, Table- 5.2

**Table: D-3. Selected primary schooling indicators for Bangladesh, 1970-2000**

	1970	1980	1985	1990	1998	2000
GER Primary	54	61	62	72	97	97
GER Primary, male	73	75	72	77	98	97
GER Primary, Female	35	46	52	66	95	97
Female as % of male	48	61	72	86	96	100
NER Primary	50	60	56	64	83	na
NER Primary, male	66	74	65	68	84	na
NER, Primary, Female	33	45	47	60	82	na
Female as % of male	50	61	72	88	98	na
Primary student-teacher ratio	46	54	47	63	na	57
Primary repetition rate	na	18	na	7	8	na
Percentage of pupils reaching grade 5	na	21	na	47	65	na
Primary private sector share of enrollment	6	15	11	15	na	na

Source: World Bank, "Regional Education Database for South Asia Countries" 2000, cited in Bangladesh: Public Expenditure Review, Education Sector, November 2001, Table 1.2. Note: Data from World Bank Database vary in some instances from government data.

**Table: D-4. Selected primary schooling indicators among Asian countries**

	Gross enrollment ratio Primary 1997	Net enrollment ratio Primary 1997	Coefficient of efficiency 1995-98	Primary repetition rate, 1997	Primary student-teacher ratio, 1994-96	Primary expenditure per pupil as % of per capita GNP, 1995-98	Primary expenditure per pupil in US\$, 1995-98	Private sector primary enrollment share, 1995-98
Bangladesh	a97	a83	75.7	6.8	c63	6.8	23	c15
Nepal	113	a70	40.5	26.6	39	8.4	18	5.9
Cambodia	113	100	39.5	26.3	44	na	na	na
Lao PDR	112	72	51.5	23.4	30	na	na	na
Pakistan	a82	a50	b68.3	na	c43	9.4	48	na
Vietnam	114	na	79.6	na	34	na	na	na
India	1000	a60	66.6	3.7	47	11.9	42	na
Sri Lanka	109	a95	b90.4	2.3	28	5.7	43	1.8
China	123	102	b94.2	1.6	24	5.6	42	na
Indonesia	113	95	88.3	5.8	23	6.6	73	18.0
Philippines	117	101	c76.1	na	35	8.6	100	7.0
Thailand	89	na	93.7	na	c22	16.4	481	12.0
Malaysia	101	102	98.2	na	19	11.4	494	0.4

Source: World Bank, except Col. 5 (Asian Development Bank), cited in Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review 2001, Table 1-4.

a : Refers to 1997-98

b : Refers to primary schooling only

c : Refers to 1990

**Table: D-5. Adult and youth illiteracy in Bangladesh, 1970-97**

	1970	1975	1980	1985	1990	1995	1997
Adult illiteracy rate (15+)	76	73	71	68	65	62	61
Adult illiteracy rate, male	65	62	59	57	54	51	50
Adult illiteracy rate, female	89	86	83	80	77	74	72
Ratio of female to male rate	1.37	1.39	1.51	1.40	1.43	1.45	1.44
Youth illiteracy rate (15-24)	69	66	63	60	56	53	51
Youth illiteracy rate, male	57	54	52	49	45	42	41
Youth illiteracy rate, female	82	78	74	71	68	64	62
Ratio of female to male rate	1.44	1.44	1.42	1.45	1.51	1.52	1.51

Source: World Bank "Regional Education Database for South Asia Countries" 2000, cited in ADB-World Bank, Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review (Education), November 2001. Table 1.2.

**Table: D-6. Structure of secondary education in Bangladesh, 1997**

	Number of schools	% of total	Teachers	% of total	Students	% of total	% female students
<u>Secondary (VI-X)</u>							
<i>Government</i>							
Government secondary schools	317	1.5	7,500	2.7	245,900	3.1	46.6
Madrasah dakhil schools	4,795	23.0	58,400	21.1	840,400	10.6	27.3
Junior secondary schools	3,002	14.4	19,300	7.0	632,200	7.9	53.9
Non-government secondary schools	10,459	50.2	130,300	47.2	5,245,900	65.9	53.5
Subtotal: Non-government	18,256	87.6	208,000	75.3	6,718,500	84.4	53.6
Subtotal: Secondary (VI-X)	18,573	89.1	215,500	78.0	6,964,400	87.5	50.1
<u>Higher secondary (XI-XII)</u>							
<i>Government</i>							
Government intermediate colleges	8	0.0	100	0.0	6,500	0.1	27.7
Government degree colleges	225	1.1	9,500	0.4	307,400	3.9	34.6
Subtotal: Government	233	1.1	9,600	0.4	313,900	4.0	30.5
<i>Non-government</i>							
Non-government intermediate college	893	4.3	15,800	5.7	249,400	3.1	43.3
Non-government degree colleges	159	0.8	17,900	6.5	367,300	4.6	32.3
Madrasah Alim colleges	983	4.7	17,500	6.3	61,900	0.8	10.2
Subtotal: Higher secondary (XI-XII)	2,268	10.9	60,800	22.0	992,500	12.5	34.4
Total Government	550	2.6	17,100	3.1	559,800	7.1	31.4
Total Non-government	20,291	97.4	259,200	96.9	7,397,100	92.9	52.0
Total	20,841	100.0	276,300	100.0	7,956,900	100.0	48.2

Source: World Bank database cited in Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review, 2001

**Table: D-7. Gross and Net Enrolment Ratio in Secondary Education by gender, 1999**

Indicator	Junior Secondary (VI-VIII)		Secondary (IX-X)		Higher Secondary (XI-XII)	
	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls
Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER)	55.7	57.6	40.6	40.2	19.9	15.0
Net Enrolment Ratio (NER)	48.6	50.2	30.2	29.8	16.2	12.1

Source: BANBEIS, 1999, Table G1.

**Table: D-8. Internal Efficiency Indicators in Secondary Education by Gender, 1999**

Indicator	Junior Secondary General		Secondary General		Junior Secondary Madrasah		Secondary Madrasah	
	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls	Total	Girls
Dropout rate	21.3	18.4	52.1	57.9	16.1	11.1	43.2	48.1
Repetition rate	10.5	8.0	15.1	14.3	12.1	6.9	8.5	6.4
Completion rate	78.7	81.6	47.9	42.1	83.9	88.9	56.8	51.9
Retention rate	84.5	86.1	89.1	88.1	90.3	93.7	91.3	87.5

Source: BANBAEIS, 1999, Table G2

**Table: D-9. Gender Distribution in types of Post-primary Education, 1999**

Types	Boys	Girls
General Secondary Education	50.6	49.4
Madrasah Education	59.8	40.2
Vocational-Technical Education	76.1	23.9
Professional Education	67.5	32.5
All Post-Primary	52.4	47.6

Source: BANBEIS, 1999, Table- 6.3

**Table: D-10. Gender distribution in levels of Post-primary Education, 1999**

Levels	Boys	Girls
Junior Secondary	48.8	51.2
Secondary	51.2	48.8
Higher Secondary	63.0	37.0
Degree level	67.4	32.6
Masters Level	73.7	26.3
All Post-primary levels	52.4	47.6

Source: BANBEIS, 1999, Table G.4

**Table: D-11. Post-primary level Education Institutions by Division 1999/2000**

	Barisal	Chittagong	Dhaka	Khulna	Rajshahi	Sylhet	Total
Junior Secondary Schools	334	346	652	597	797	120	2876
Secondary Schools	1114	2127	3146	1673	4012	542	12604
Intermediate Colleges	73	151	265	137	437	34	1097
Degree Colleges (Pass)	63	152	189	112	240	29	785
Degree Colleges (Hons. Masters)	14	19	52	19	26	2	132
Professional Institutions	28	53	131	40	81	14	347
Vocational/Technical	102	215	594	169	340	42	1462

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Institutions

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Source: BANBAEIS, National Education Survey (Post-primary), 1999, Table 2.16, 2.11. 2.10

**Table: D-12. Distribution of Population and Selected Post-primary Institutions by Division, 1999(%)**

	Barisal	Chittagong	Dhaka	Khulna	Rajshahi	Sylhet
Population	7	20	31	12	24	6
Secondary Schools	10	16	25	12	33	5q
Degree and Honours Colleges	9	19	25	15	29	3
Vocational/Technical Institutions	7	15	40	11	23	3

Source: BANBAEIS Data

**Table: D-13. Post-Primary Education Institutions by Location and Management**

	Urban		Rural	
	Govt.	Non-govt.	Govt.	Non-govt.
Junior Secondary	-	216	-	2630
Secondary	219	1597	98	10700
Intermediate-College	3	225	2	867
Degree College (Pass)	82	209	51	443
Colleges (Hons./Master)	90	28	5	9

Source: BANBEIS, 1999, Table 2.16

**Table: D-14. Annual Income and Expenditure of Institutions, Post-primary Education, 1999 (%)**

Source of Income/ Heds of Expenditure	Income		
	Secondary Schools	General Colleges	Madrasah
Student Fees	15.28	22.70	3.95
Salary support from Govt.	51.15	51.63	71.43
Property Income	6.08	1.82	3.28
Public Donation	2.03	3.92	7.55
Development Grants from Govt.	3.12	2.75	3.42
Other Capital Assets	22.34	17.18	10.37
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>
	Expenditure		
Salary	83.88	78.15	87.24
Other recurrent	6.61	9.90	6.00
Infrastructure	6.51	8.37	3.59
Others	3.00	3.58	3.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: BANBAEIS, 1999, Table, F1 and F2

**Table: D-15. Government expenditure on education (actual and budgeted), FY98-FY02**

	FY98	FY99	FY00	aFY01	bFY02
GDP (Taka in billions)	2,001.77	2,196.97	2,370.86	2,580.68	NA
Total government expenditure (Taka in billions)	267.98	308.87	355.00	393.85	414.10
Revenue (recurrent) expenditure	145.00	167.65	184.44	206.62	220.38
Total development expenditure	122.99	141.22	170.56	187.23	193.72
Total expenditure on education (Taka in billions)	41.57	47.19	52.38	58.42	60.28
% of GDP	2.08	2.15	2.21	2.26	NA
% of Total government expenditure	15.51	15.28	14.75	14.83	14.56
Revenue (recurrent) expenditure on education (Taka in billions)	26.89	29.68	32.57	35.87	36.36
% of GDP	1.34	1.35	1.37	1.39	NA
% of Total government expenditure	10.03	9.61	9.17	9.11	8.78
% of Revenue (recurrent) expenditure	18.54	17.70	17.66	17.36	16.50
Development expenditure on education (Taka in billions)	14.68	17.51	19.81	22.55	23.92
% of GDP	0.73	0.80	0.84	0.87	NA
% of Total government expenditure	5.48	5.67	5.58	5.73	5.78
% of Development Expenditure	11.94	12.40	11.61	12.04	12.35

Source: World Bank cited in ADB-World Bank, Bangladesh: Public Expenditure Review, 2001, Table 4.1.

NA = Not Available

a = Revised budget

b = Budget

**Table: D-16. Public Revenue (Recurrent) Expenditure by Level of Education (Taka in millions)**  
**Recurrent Education Expenditure (Taka in millions)**

Fiscal year	Primary	Secondary & College (Pre-University)	Technical	University	Other Educational Institutions	Total
1991-92	6,704.1	5,089.1	334.0	1,170.7	517.9	13,815.8
1992-93	7,621.6	6,803.1	377.0	1,330.0	612.1	16,743.8
1993-94	8,478.8	7,422.6	399.9	1,434.0	322.2	18,057.5
1995-96	9,504.4	9,146.6	448.7	1,713.9	700.8	21,514.4
1996-97	9,989.7	9,854.5	476.3	1,817.0	817.9	22,957.4
1997-98	11,475.1	12,398.3	397.9	1,961.6	724.5	26,957.4
1998-99	11,990.0	14,130.1	402.6	2,072.0	1,085.4	29,680.1
1999-00	12,427.8	15,232.9	429.4	2,531.7	851.7	31,473.4
	<u>Percentage Distribution</u>					
1991-92	48.5	36.8	2.4	8.5	3.7	100.0
1992-93	45.5	40.6	2.3	7.9	3.7	100.0
1993-94	47.0	41.1	2.2	7.9	1.8	100.0
1995-96	44.2	42.5	2.1	8.0	3.3	100.0
1996-97	43.5	42.9	2.1	7.9	3.6	100.0
1997-98	42.6	46.0	1.5	7.3	2.7	100.0

1998-99	40.4	47.6	1.4	7.0	3.7	100.0
1999-00	39.5	48.4	1.4	8.0	2.7	100.0

Source: ADB-World Bank, Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review, 2001, Table 4.4.

**Table: D-17. Public Development Expenditure by Level of Education (Taka in millions)**

Fiscal year	Primary	Non-formal Education	Secondary & Higher	Technical	University	Other Educational System	Total
1991-92	1,939.1	47.5	333.0	103.2	315.5	385.7	3,124.0
1992-93	3,957.8	70.6	1,212.0	125.6	419.7	144.7	5,930.4
1994-95	8,577.9	350.1	5,178.3	53.6	100.0	925.4	15,185.3
1995-96	7,895.1	318.4	4,783.6	61.4	405.0	248.2	13,711.7
1996-97	8,059.1	594.4	5,343.4	162.6	1,010.2	348.1	15,517.8
1997-98	6,821.2	1,016.5	4,994.5	241.4	1,472.1	284.7	14,830.4
1998-99	8,171.2	1,608.8	5,156.7	543.6	292.5	1,737.2	17,510.0
1999-00	7,593.3	917.1	5,162.2	788.1	916.1	57.3	15,434.1
Percentage Distribution							
1991-92	62.1	1.5	10.7	3.3	10.1	12.3	100.0
1992-93	66.7	1.2	20.4	2.1	7.1	2.4	100.0
1994-95	56.5	2.3	34.1	0.4	0.7	6.1	100.0
1995-96	57.6	2.3	34.9	0.4	3.0	1.8	100.0
1996-97	51.9	3.8	34.4	1.0	6.5	2.2	100.0
1997-98	46.0	6.9	33.7	1.6	9.9	1.9	100.0
1998-99	46.7	9.2	29.5	3.1	1.7	9.9	100.0
1999-00	49.2	5.9	33.4	5.1	5.9	0.4	100.0

Source: FY92: World Bank, FY00: Ministry of Finance, cited in Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review, 2001, Table 4.5.

**Table: D-18. Composition of Government Revenue (Recurrent) Expenditure in Primary Education, FY92-FY00 (%)**

Fiscal year	Staff Compensation	Operations and Maintenance	Grants for salary subventions	Total
1991-92	96.4	1.1	2.5	100.0
1992-93	95.7	1.2	3.1	100.0
1993-94	94.7	1.6	3.7	100.0
1994-95	93.7	2.0	4.3	100.0
1995-96	92.2	2.0	5.8	100.0
1996-97	88.8	5.4	5.8	100.0
1997-98	87.4	3.3	9.3	100.0
1999-00	87.7	2.9	9.4	100.0

Source: FY92-FY98: World Bank 2000, FY00: Ministry of Finance, cited in Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review, 2001, Table- 4.6.

**Table: D-19. Mean recurrent and development expenditure by Government on primary and mass education at the thana level by district poverty category, 2000**

Poverty Category (based on poverty headcount index)	Mean per capita recurrent expenditure (Taka)	Mean per capita development expenditure (Taka)
1; UNDER 30%	707.3	84.4
2: 30.1 TO 35%	658.8	143.8
3: 35.1 TO 40%	684.9	114.9
4: 40.1 TO 45%	657.1	173.1
5: 45.1 to 50%	656.3	150.5
6: 50.1% and above	535.4	195.4

Source: Poverty categories of districts: BIDS (2001), Expenditure data: Ministry of Finance; cited in Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review, 2001, Table- 4.10.

**Table: D-20. Economic Classification of Government Expenditure on Primary and Mass Education, FY2000**

Types of Institutions	Revenue expenditure (Taka millions)	%	Development expenditure (Taka millions)	%
Pay of Officers	149.70	1.2	21.25	0.2
Pay of Establishment	6,334.50	51.0	20.24	0.2
Allowances	4,414.83	35.5	53.61	0.6
Supplies and Services	143.25	1.2	5,236.10	61.5
Repairs, Maintenance and Rehabilitation	178.36	1.4	242.29	2.8
Grants in Aid	1,166.92	9.4	137.69	1.6
Block Allocations	40.26	0.3	110.00	1.3
Acquisition of Assets	0.00	0.0	252.97	3.0
Acquisition / Purchase of Land & Landed Properties	0.00	0.0	20.65	0.2
Construction and Works	0.00	0.0	2,394.77	28.1
Investments in Shares and Equities	0.00	0.0	1.12	0.0
Capital Grants	0.00	0.0	0.34	0.0
Development Import Duty and VAT	0.00	0.0	17.51	0.2
Capital Block Allocation & Miscellaneous Capital Expenditures	0.00	0.0	1.84	0.0
Totals	12,427.82	100.0	8,510.38	100.0

Source: Ministry of Finance; cited in Bangladesh Public Expenditure Review, 2001, Table- 5.3