

Inequality in Primary Education of Bangladesh



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Equal primary education is the fundamental right of every citizen of the country. The affiliation between education and poverty is spherical. There are many reasons for the low male gross enrolment rate in primary schooling. The lack of education may force the poor households to engage in less productivity actions, which result in poverty. On the other hand, poverty leads to low investment in education.

Inequality has appeared as a major barrier in achieving universally acknowledged primary education in Bangladesh. Disparity in primary education exists in the areas of division, locality, gender, sex and economic status in Bangladesh. Recent price hike and the failure of timely implementation of the allocation in education are the main causes of unequal primary education. There also exist some structural causes for persisting unequal primary education.

Literacy Rate (<7 years of age)

The annual increasing rates of literacy were 1.30 percent, 1.25 percent and 1.02 percent at national, rural and urban level between 2000 and 2010. If these rates remain the same, there might be a gap of 36.89 percent, 41.64 percent and 25.55 percent in achieving the target of National Education Policy (NEP, 2010) by 2014 for national rural and urban areas respectively. Furthermore, the annual increasing rates of male and female literacy were 1.16 percent and 1.47 percent at national level between 2000 and 2010. Continuations of these rates indicate that the achievement of the target of universal primary education might not be possible and there might be a gap of 34.23 percent and 39.32 percent within the time limit respectively.

Gross Enrolment Ratio

The target of National Plan for Action (NPA-ii) is to increase the Gross Enrolment into 110 percent by 2015. The rate at which Gross Enrolment ratio increased at national level (0.68 percent) indicates that the achievement of the target might be possible within the time limit. Same results are also found in case of urban and rural areas. The Gross Enrolment ratio for female children at national, rural and urban level has already been achieved. However, in case of male children in urban areas, this target might be achieved up to 110 percent by 2015 but might not be achieved in the national (108.81 percent) and rural (107.83 percent) level.

School Enrolment (age 6-10 years)

The target of National Plan for Action (NPA-ii) is to increase the net enrolment rate into 95 percent by 2015. The annual average increasing rates of the school enrolment of the poor and non-poor households were 1.26 percent and 0.67 percent respectively from 2000-2010, which might be increased by 84.65 percent and 92.39 percent respectively in 2015 at the national level. Continuation of this rate indicates that the achievement of the target might not possible within the time limit for both poor and non-poor households. At the same time, the annual increasing rates of school enrolment for male children were 0.94 percent and 0.72 percent for poor and non-poor household respectively. If these rates remain the same, it might be 78.88 percent and 91.7 percent respectively by 2015. On the other hand, the annual average increasing rates of 1.59 percent and 0.63 percent between 2000 and 2010 for the female children at poor and non-poor household indicate that there would be a gap of 4.47 percent and 1.92 percent respectively by 2015.

Dropout Rate in Primary to Secondary Schooling

The annual average declining rate of 0.29 percent dropout at the national level for both sex between 2000 and 2010 indicates that the target of achieving 5 percent dropouts by 2015 might be possible. Additionally, the annual average declining rate of dropout was 0.42 percent at the rural level between 2000 and 2010. If these rates remain the same, it might be possible to achieve the target of National Plan for Action (NPA-ii) by 2015. A different scenario was found in case of urban areas where the dropout rate is increasing. The annual average increase rate of dropout was 0.09 percent between 2000 and 2010. If this rate remains the same, there might be a gap of 5.84 percent from the target by 2015. In case of female children, the target of 5 percent dropout has already been achieved. Meanwhile, the annual average declining rates of male dropout were 0.44 percent, 0.67 percent and 0.35 percent at national, rural and urban level respectively between 2000 and 2010. If these rates remain the same, there might be a gap of 3 percent, 0.41 percent and 11.53 percent from the target of 5 percent dropout by 2015 respectively.

Student Teacher Ratio

The target of National Education Policy (NEP, 2010) is to reduce the student teacher ratio into 30 by 2018. The student teacher ratio was 57 in 2000 and has decreased into 42.6 in 2010 with an average declining rate of 1.45 percent per annum. Under the business as usual scenario, the student teacher ratio might be 31 in 2018, which is one percent higher than the targeted value.

The reasons for the Slower Rate of Progress in Primary Education

Although there has been a progress in the primary education over the years, the rate at which it has been occurring is slower than the expectation. There might be some reasons, which are as follows:

Structural Causes

Inequality is a part of the social structure. Socio-cultural norms, religious matter, lack of parental education and less expectation for girls' education create inequality in primary education. People belonging to the lower class of the society are not allowed to be associated with the upper class in any way. There has been no strong motivation policy to address the matter of literacy towards lower castes.

Allocation of Public Expenditure and Implementation Status

The proposed budgetary allocation for education is BDT 20,316 crore for the fiscal year 2011-2012, which is 9.31 percent higher than the revised budget of FY 2010-2011. The national budget of FY 2011-2012 has the percentage of 12.13 in case of the education sector. However, although there is an increasing trend in education budget, the overall educational improvement is not satisfactory due to the lack of timely implementation status of educational allocation.

Economic Hardship

Still, one-third (31.5 percent) of the population of Bangladesh is living under the poverty line. Recent price hike of essential commodities (especially, food prices) makes it difficult to maintain their livelihood. People (especially poor) spend a large part of their expenditure on food and cut off expenditure from other basic necessities like education for their children.

Geographic Isolation

Primary enrolment rate in Sylhet Division is much lower (64.16 percent for poor and 82.08 percent for non-poor) compared to the other Divisions. Economic deprivation, social inequalities, geographical isolation, unequal income distribution create unequal primary education in this area although the economic situation is better than the other Divisions of the country. Shunamgonj's haor area is the most deprived area where students have to suffer much in dry season. The sufferings become acute in rainy season.

Opportunity Cost of Going to School

Opportunity cost of going to school for poor and vulnerable households can be affected by two factors. Firstly, by the savings in households expenses per month by not sending a child to the school and secondly, by increasing the household income per month by withdrawing a child from school and engaging him/her into work (Selim, 2009). The opportunity cost of schooling, both in terms of savings of expenditure and rise in income is found to be relatively higher in rural areas compared to the urban areas.

Parental Education and Net Enrolment Ratio

There is a positive correlation between net enrolment and parental education. The proportion of never schooled parents decreased over time - from 47.7% in 1998 to 45.4% in 2000, 35.4% in 2005 and 33.3% in 2008. The net enrolment rate increased for the children of both never and ever schooled parents during 1998-2005, which became stagnant in 2008 for both the groups (Education Watch Report, 2008). If the parents remain unaware, the progress in the child education would remain elusive.

Population growth rate and equal access to primary education

Over population is also a vital barrier for the achievement of the expected progress in primary education. For example, in Barisal division, the average annual growth rate of population was 0.9 percent (1991-2001) which has been decreased to 0 percent during 2001-2011. This might be responsible for the higher school enrolment in Barisal division (91.04 percent). On the other hand, in Sylhet division, the average annual growth rate of population has increased into 2.1 percent (2001-2011) from 1.6 percent (1991-2001) (BBS, 2010), where the school enrolment is lower (73.12 percent).

1. INTRODUCTION

A plan for sustainable development should address the issue of education because it plays a vital role not only in expanding further educational opportunities but also in fostering basic intellectual abilities such as literacy. That is why primary education has received a great attention in developing nations including Bangladesh. According to the Article 15 and 17 of the Constitution of Bangladesh, education is a fundamental right and providing education to all its citizens is one of the responsibilities of the state. However, the literacy rate (57.91 percent) in Bangladesh is still low (HIES, 2010). With the chief motto ‘Literacy is freedom’, according to UN, more than 800 million people of the world and almost sixty percent of the people of Bangladesh do not know what this ‘freedom’ is. The ratio of girls to boys in primary school is 103:100 in Bangladesh (BBS & UNICEF, 2010).

Although Bangladesh has achieved a good progress in basic education over the past decade, the overall situation of various education related indicators is not satisfactory. The enrolment in the primary schools has been increasing until recent times and the government has been spending good amount on education sector. However, instead of such measures, little progress has been notified in the primary education sector over the years. Additionally, there have been problems of inequality and access. National Plan for Action (NPA-ii) has determined some targets to ensure education for all and the National Education Policy 2010 was adopted by the government to ensure inclusive education. This study on inequality in primary education of Bangladesh is an attempt to understand various inequalities in the context of primary education and to make a reality check between the promises stated in the National Plan for Action (NPA-ii) and National Education Policy (NEP, 2010), so that we can have a clear image to generate evidence and insights which can be used to formulate policy.

2. METHODOLOGY

This study was primarily conducted based on the data on Household Income and Expenditure Survey (HIES) of 2000, 2005 and 2010 conducted by the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS). Using these data and utilizing simple mathematical equation, some projections were made for the future educational scenarios. : The equation is as follows:

$$P_t = P_0 (1 + rt)$$

Where,

P_t = Value of the present year

P_0 = Value of the previous year

t = Time interval between previous and present years

r = Growth rate

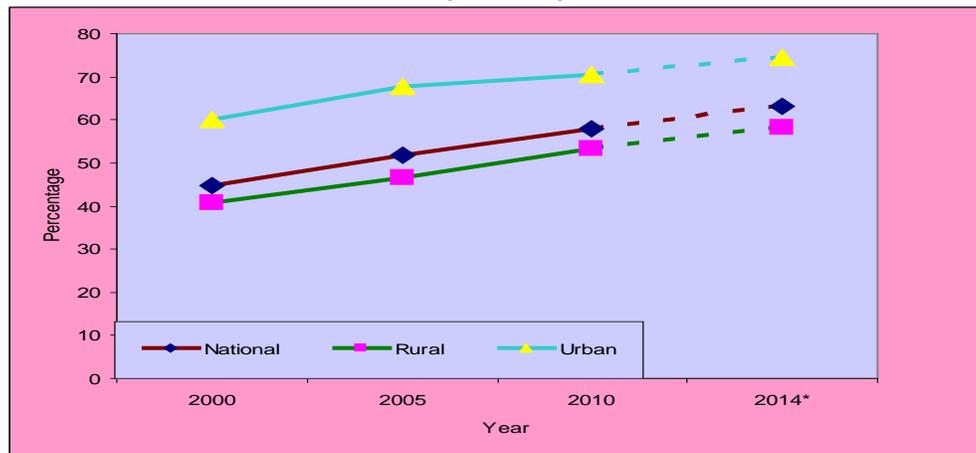
Different statistical reports, relevant research papers, books and many national and international journals have also been reviewed for this study.

3. LITERACY RATE

3.1 Disparity of Literacy Rate by Locality

One of the targets of National Education Policy (NEP, 2010) related to the literacy rate of children is to increase the percentage of literacy rate to 100 percent by the year 2014. The literacy rate of the children (<7 years of age) was 44.9 percent in 2000 which has been increased to 57.91 percent in 2010 with an average increasing rate of 1.30 percent per year. If this rate of increase remains the same, the literacy rate might stand at 63.11 percent in the national level, which is 36.89 percent lower than the target. In the rural and urban areas, the rate of literacy was 40.9 percent and 60.2 percent in 2000, which has been increased to 53.37 percent and 70.38 percent in 2010 with the average increasing rate of 1.25 percent and 1.02 percent per annum respectively. If this continues, the literacy rate in rural and urban area might stand at 58.36 percent and 74.45 percent by 2014. This shows a gap of 41.64 percent and 25.55 percent for the rural and urban areas respectively compared to the targeted value to be obtained by 2014 (Figure 1). . The annual average increasing rate of literacy in rural areas is comparatively higher than that of urban areas. This is because of the various incentives and initiatives taken by the government, which are considered as additional income generating activities by the rural parents, which help them to maintain their family status.

Figure 1: Current Situation and Future Projection of Literacy Rate of Children (< 7 years of age) by Locality



Source: Author's calculation based on BBS 2001, BBS 2006 and BBS 2011

3.2 Disparity of Literacy Rate by Gender

The percentage of the literate children also varies according to the gender. The literacy of the male children was 49.5 percent in 2000 at national level, which has been increased to 61.12 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 1.16 percent. Continuation of this rate indicates that the literacy rate of the male children might be increased to 65.77 percent at the national level by 2014, which is 34.23 percent lower than the National Education Policy (NEP, 2010) target of 100 percent. Whereas, the literacy rate of the female children at national level was 40.1 percent in 2000, which has, been increased to 54.8 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 1.47 percent. Under the business as usual scenario, the literacy rate of

the female children might be 60.68 percent at the national level in 2014, which is 39.32 percent lower than the National Education Policy (NEP, 2010) target of 100 percent. However, there are high rural-urban variations and regional disparities. This percentage of literacy was 45.5 percent and 64.9 percent in rural and urban area for male children in 2000, which has been increased to 56.67 percent and 73.1 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 1.1 percent and 0.82 percent respectively. On the other hand, in 2000, the literacy rate of female was 36.1 percent and 55.3 percent for rural and urban areas respectively, which has been increased to 50.21 percent and 67.67 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 1.41 percent and 1.24 percent respectively (Table 1). The annual average rate of increase in case of the female literacy at national, rural and urban level is comparatively higher than that of the male. This is perhaps, because of the various education enhancing activities taken by the government and various NGOs.

Table 1: Current Situation and Future Projection of Literacy Rate by Gender (<7 years of age)

Year	Female			Male		
	National	Rural	Urban	National	Rural	Urban
2000	40.1	36.1	55.3	49.5	45.5	64.9
2005	48.1	42.9	63.2	55.8	50.4	72.1
2010	54.8	50.21	67.67	61.12	56.67	73.1
2014*	60.68	55.85	72.61	65.77	61.14	76.38

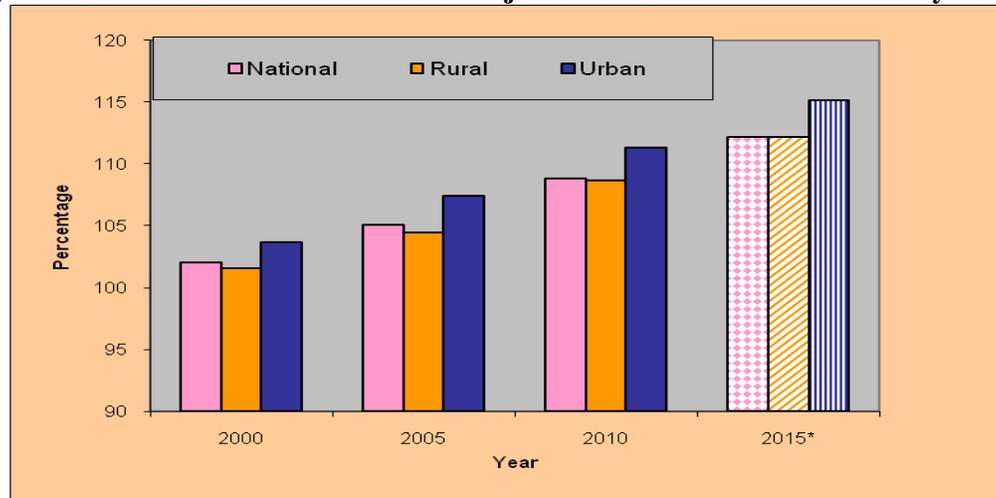
Source: Author's calculation based on BBS 2001, BBS 2006 and BBS 2011

4. GROSS ENROLMENT RATIO

4.1 Disparity of Gross Enrolment Ratio by Locality

The target of National Plan for Action (NPA-ii) is to increase 110 percent Gross Enrollment Rate by 2015. The rate (0.68 percent) at which the percentage of Gross Enrolment Ratio has been increased from 2000, gives an indication that the target of National Education Policy (NEP, 2010) of achieving 110 percent by 2015 might be possible at the national level. Gross Enrollment Ratio was 102 percent at national level in 2000, which has been increased to 108.81 percent at the national level in 2010 with an average increasing rate of 0.68 percent per annum (Figure 2). The gross enrolment ratios of the rural and urban areas were 101.6 percent and 103.7 percent respectively in 2000, which has been increased to 108.64 percent and 111.34 percent in 2010 with an average annual increasing rate of 0.70 percent and 0.76 percent respectively. Continuation of this rate indicates that both the rural and urban areas are well on track to achieve the target within the time limit.

Figure 2: Current Situation and Future Projection of Gross Enrolment Rate by Locality



Source: Author's calculation based on BBS 2001, BBS 2006 and BBS 2011

4.2 Disparity of Gross Enrolment Ratio by Gender

Gross Enrollment Ratio of the male children was 99.7 percent in 2000, which has been increased to 105.77 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 0.61 percent. Under the business as usual scenario, Gross Enrollment Ratio of the male children might be 108.81 percent at the national level by 2015, which is 1.19 percent lower than the targeted value (Table 2). However, at the same time, the Gross Enrollment Ratio of the female children has been increased at the national level with an annual average rate of 0.76 percent between 2000 and 2010. On the other hand, the rate of Gross Enrollment Ratios for the male children of rural and urban areas were 98.8 percent and 103.8 percent in 2000 which has been increased to 104.82 percent and 108.79 percent in 2010 with an average annual increasing rate of 0.6 percent and 0.5 percent respectively. Continuation of the current scenario might witness the percentage of Gross Enrollment Ratios for the male of rural and urban areas as 107.83 percent and 111.52 percent respectively in 2015. This indicates that the target might not be achieved for the rural male children by the time limit. However, in 2000, Gross Enrollment Ratios of the female in the rural and urban areas were 104.5 percent and 103.7 percent, which have been increased to 111.36 percent and 114.11 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 0.69 percent and 1.04 percent respectively (Table 2).

Table 2: Current Situation and Future Projection of Gross Enrollment Ratio by Gender

Year	Male			Female		
	National	Rural	Urban	National	Rural	Urban
2000	99.7	98.8	103.8	104.4	104.5	103.7
2005	104.53	103.48	108.47	105.64	105.44	106.39
2010	105.77	104.82	108.79	111.99	111.36	114.11
2015*	108.81*	107.83*	111.52*	115.79*	114.8*	119.32*

Source: Author's calculation based on BBS 2001, BBS 2006 and BBS 2011

5. SCHOOL ENROLMENT

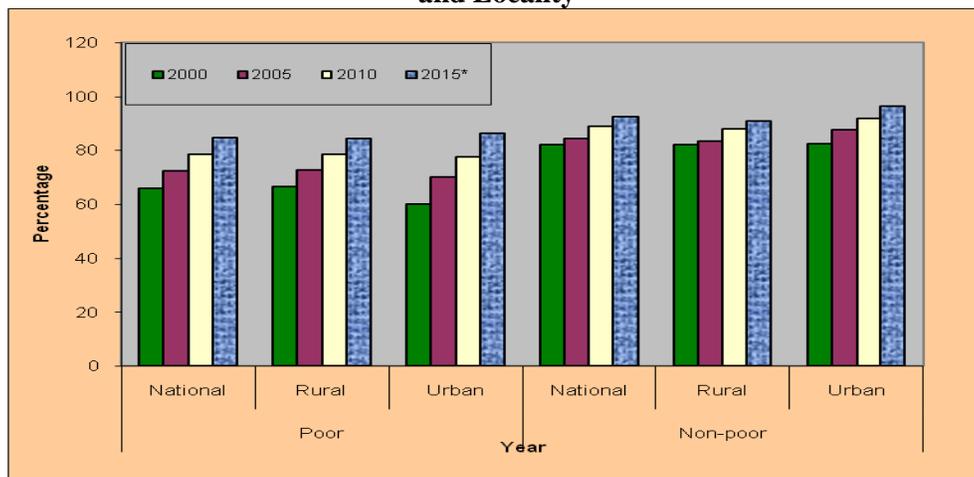
5.1 Disparity of School Enrolment Rate by Poverty Status and Locality (age 6-10 years)

The target, related to school enrolment of National Plan for Action (NPA-ii) is to achieve 95 percent net enrollment by 2015. At the national level, the school enrollment for the both sexes were 65.7 percent and 82.2 percent for the poor households and non-poor households in 2000 which have been increased to 78.33 percent and 88.9 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 1.26 percent and 0.67 percent respectively. If these annual average increasing rates remain the same, in 2015, it might be stood at 84.65 percent for the poor households and 92.39 percent for the non-poor households (Figure 3). Hence, the achievement of the target of 95 percent might not be possible within the time limit.

In case of the poor children in rural and urban areas, inequality in the percentage of school enrolment is very high. However, at the rural level, the school enrolment for both sexes were 66.4 percent and 82.2 percent for poor and non-poor households in 2000 which has been increased to 78.48 percent and 87.92 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 1.21 percent and 0.57 percent respectively. Continuation of the current scenario might witness the percentage of school enrolment for the rural poor and non-poor as 84.52 percent and 90.78 percent in 2015 for both sexes (Figure 3) respectively which is far away from the target set by the National Plan for Action (NPA-ii).

The urban level school enrolment rates for both sexes were 59.9 percent and 82.3 percent for poor and non-poor households in 2000, which has been increased to 77.53 percent and 91.70 percent in 2010 with annual average increasing rates of 1.76 percent and 0.94 percent respectively. Under the business as usual scenario, in 2015, it might be 86.35 percent for poor households and 96.4 percent for non-poor households (Figure 3). Although the annual average increasing rate is higher for the poor compared to the non-poor of the urban but the non-poor of these urban areas are likely to achieve the target.

Figure 3: Current Situation and Future Projection for Enrollment of Children by Poverty Status and Locality



Source: Author's calculation based on BBS 2001, BBS 2006 and BBS 2011

5.2 Disparity of School Enrolment Rate by Gender

Inequality prevails in the percentage of the school enrolment of the male and female children. The percentage of school enrolled male children at the national level were increased to 74.19 percent and 88.1 percent in 2010 in case of the poor and non-poor households from 64.8 percent and 80.9 percent in 2000 with an annual average increasing rate of 0.94 percent and 0.72 percent respectively. If this annual average rate of increase remains the same, in 2015, at the national level, the enrolment rate of the male children might be stood at 78.88 percent and 91.7 percent for the poor and non-poor households (Table 3) respectively which are far away from the targeted value(95 percent net enrolment rate). However, there are great variations of enrolment rate between male and female. The percentage of enrolled female children for poor and non-poor households were increased to 82.58 percent and 89.93 percent in 2010 at the national level from 66.7 percent and 83.6 percent with an annual average increasing rate of 1.59 percent and 0.63 percent respectively. If this annual rate of increase remains the same, in 2015, at national level, enrollment rate of female might be stood at 90.53 percent and 93.08 percent for poor and non-poor households (Table 3) respectively.

Furthermore, enrollment of male at the rural areas for poor and non-poor households were 64.7 percent and 80.8 percent in 2000 which has been increased to 74.06 percent and 86.77 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 0.94 percent and 0.60 percent respectively. If these increasing rates are maintained, in 2015, the enrolment rates at the rural areas might be stood at 78.76 percent and 89.77 percent (Table 3) respectively. This is much lower from the target, which has been set by the National Plan for Action (NPA-ii). On the other hand, the rate of school enrolment for urban male children of non-poor households is higher than that of the poor. The enrolment of the male children at the urban level of poor and non-poor households were 57.5 percent and 81.5 percent in 2000 which have been increased to 74.85 percent and 91.36 percent in 2010 with the annual average increasing rate of 1.74 percent and 1 percent for poor and non-poor households respectively. Under the business as usual scenario, in 2015, the enrolment rate of the male children at the urban areas might stand at 83.55 percent and 96.31 percent for poor and non-poor households (Table 3) while the average annual increasing rate is higher in poor than that of non-poor. For the non-poor households, the targeted value might be achieved by 2015.

There is a great difference between the poor and non-poor households in case of the enrolment rate of the female children in the rural level. In 2000, the enrolment rates of female children in the rural level for poor and non-poor household were 67.2 percent and 83.7 percent, which have been increased to 82.99 percent and 89.10 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 1.58 percent and 0.54 percent respectively. Continuation of the current rates may cause the enrollment rate of the female children into 90.88 percent and 91.8 percent for the poor and non-poor households (Table 3) in 2015 respectively. However, in 2000, the enrolment rates of the female in the urban level for poor and non-poor households were 62.4 percent and 83.2 percent, which have been increased to 80.38 percent and 92.09 percent in 2010 with an annual average increasing rate of 1.8 percent and 0.89 percent respectively. Under the business as usual scenario, in 2015, in the urban level, the enrolment rate of the female children might be stood at 89.38 percent and 96.54 percent for poor and non-poor households (Table 3) respectively. Non-poor female are likely to achieve the target of National Plan for Action (NPA-ii).

Table 3: Current Situation and Future Projection of Children Enrolment by Gender

Year	For Male					
	Poor			Non-poor		
	National	Rural	Urban	National	Rural	Urban
2000	64.8	64.7	57.5	80.9	80.8	81.5
2005	69.50	70.08	65.76	84.46	83.27	88.07
2010	74.19	74.06	74.85	88.1	86.77	91.36
2015*	78.88	78.76	83.55	91.7	89.77	96.31
Year	For Female					
	Poor			Non-poor		
	National	Rural	Urban	National	Rural	Urban
2000	66.7	67.2	62.4	83.6	83.7	83.2
2005	75.36	75.49	74.49	84.33	83.38	87.14
2010	82.58	82.99	80.38	89.93	89.1	92.09
2015*	90.53	90.88	89.38	93.08	91.8	96.54

Source: Author's calculation based on BBS 2001, BBS 2006 and BBS 2011

5.3 Disparity of School Enrolment by Division

Barisal is the division where children school enrollment is higher compared to other divisions. In 2000, the children enrollment rates at the national level for poor household and non-poor households were 74.1 percent and 87.3 percent which have been increased to 88.06 percent and 94.01 percent in 2010 with annual average increasing rate of 1.4 percent and 0.6 percent respectively. If this annual average increasing rate remains the same, enrollment rate at national level might be stood at 95.04 percent and 97.37 percent for poor and non-poor households in 2015 (Table 4). However, Sylhet is the division where enrolment rate is lower compared to other divisions. In 2005, children enrolment of poor household was 52.60 percent, which has been increased to 64.16 percent in 2010 at national level with an annual average increasing rate of 2.31 percent. Under the business as usual scenario, school enrolment might be stood 75.72 percent by 2015 in Sylhet. At the same time, for non-poor households, with an average declining rate of 0.83 percent between 2005 and 2010, school enrolment might be stood at 77.94 percent in Sylhet by 2015.

Table 4: Current Situation and Future Projection for Divisional Disparity of Children Enrollment

Division		Poor Household				Non-poor household			
		2000	2005	2010	2015*	2000	2005	2010	2015*
<i>Barishal</i>	Na	74.1	77.80	88.06	95.04	87.3	87.36	94.01	97.37
	Ru	74.6	77.58	87.87	94.51	87.3	86.36	92.92	95.73
	Ur	67.3	79.37	89.02	99.88	87.0	92.04	100	106.5
<i>Chittagong</i>	Na	64.0	56.32	75.52	81.28	79.4	77.05	87.11	90.97
	Ru	65.5	55.38	74.94	79.66	79.3	74.70	84.60	87.25
	Ur	55.5	63.58	80.85	93.53	79.9	85.46	94.81	94.77
<i>Dhaka</i>	Na	56.5	74.36	77.26	87.64	80.3	84.45	89.02	93.38
	Ru	56.7	76.25	79.38	90.72	79.2	83.50	88.05	92.48

	Ur	55.2	64.49	69.06	75.93	82.2	86.05	90.15	94.10
Khulna	Na	78.4	82.03	87.29	91.74	88.0	90.57	90.08	91.89
	Ru	79.1	83.09	88.88	93.77	87.2	90.07	88.50	89.15
	Ur	73.1	77.54	82.52	87.23	92.5	92.41	95.79	97.44
Rajshahi	Na	69.1	76.55	78.69	83.49	85.2	89.08	91.56	94.74
	Ru	69.6	77.00	77.66	81.69	86.0	88.51	91.74	94.61
	Ur	63.6	72.70	86.27	97.61	80.0	92.24	90.63	95.95
Sylhet	Na		52.60	64.16	75.72		86.22	82.08	77.94
	Ru		52.13	63.15	74.17		85.31	81.44	77.57
	Ur		60.00	72.97	86.56		92.31	86.20	80.09

Na- National, Ru- Rural, Ur- Urban

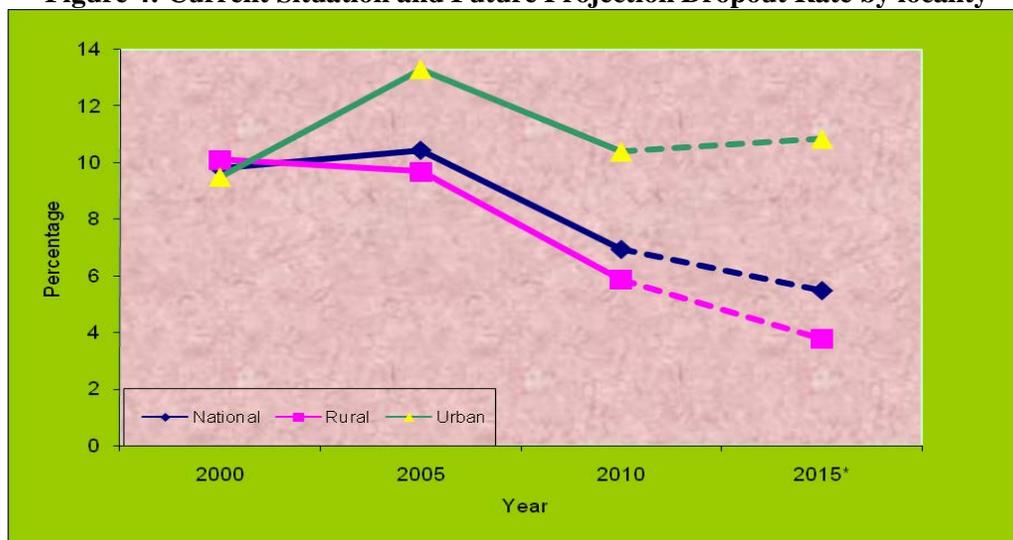
Source: Authors' calculation based on BBS 2001, BBS 2006 and BBS 2011

6. DROPOUT RATE

6.1 Disparity of Dropout Rate by Locality

The target of National Plan for Action (NPA-ii) related to the dropout is to reduce the percentage of dropped children to 5 percent by 2015. The percentage of dropped children in Bangladesh has been decreased from 9.8 percent in 2000 to 6.93 percent in 2010 at national level with an average declining rate of 0.29 percent per annum. If this current declining rate remains the same, dropout rate might be stood at 5.42 percent at national level by 2015. That indicates Bangladesh might be able to achieve the target by 2015 (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Current Situation and Future Projection Dropout Rate by locality



Source: Author's calculation based on BBS 2001, BBS 2006 and BBS 2011

In case of rural and urban areas, inequality in the percentage of dropout rate of children was found high (Figure 4). The percentage of dropped children in rural areas has decreased from 10.1

percent in 2000 to 5.86 percent in 2010 with an average reduction rate of 0.42 percent per annum. However, in urban areas, this percentage has increased from 9.5 percent in 2000 to 10.39 percent in 2010 with an average increasing rate of 0.09 percent per annum. If the current rate of reduction continues, the target would be achieved in rural areas (3.76 percent) before 2015 (Figure 4). The main reason of this successful achievement in rural areas than urban areas is the migration towards urban due to various reasons (especially economic hardship).

6.2 Disparity of Dropout Rate by Gender

Inequality prevails in the percentage of dropped male and female children. The percentage of dropped female children is lower than that of their male counterparts. The percentage of dropped children has decreased from 4.9 percent in 2000 to 3.32 percent in 2010 with an annual average reduction rate of 0.16 percent at national level for female children. It is also found that female dropout rates at rural and urban areas has decreased with an annual average decreasing rate of 0.15 percent and 0.23 percent during 2000-2010 respectively (Table 5).

At the same time, in case of male children, this percentage has decreased from 14.6 percent in 2000 to 10.2 percent in 2010 with average annual decreasing rate of 0.44 percent at national level. If this declining rate remains the same, male dropout at national level might stand at 8 percent by 2015 (Table 5) which is 3 percent higher than the targeted value. Dropout of male children at rural areas was 15.5 percent in 2000, which was decreased to 8.76 percent in 2010 with an average reduction rate of 0.67 percent per annum. If this average annual declining remains, the same, male dropout rate at rural areas might stand at 5.41 percent by 2015. However, it is also found that male dropout rate at urban areas was increased with an annual average decrease rate of 0.35 percent during 2000-2010.

Table 5: Current Situation and Future Projection of Dropout rate by Gender

Year	Male			Female		
	National	Rural	Urban	National	Rural	Urban
2000	14.6	15.5	11.3	4.9	4.1	7.8
2005	13.5	13.1	15.13	7.39	6.24	11.54
2010	10.2	8.76	14.78	3.32	2.65	5.52
2015*	8*	5.41*	16.53*	2.52*	1.95*	4.37*

Source: Authors' calculation based on BBS 2001, BBS 2006 and BBS 2011

6.3 Disparity of Dropout Rate by Poverty Status

The percentage of dropout rate of children considerably varies according to their poverty status. Dropout rate for the non-poor children decreased from 10.5 percent in 2000 to 5.52 percent in 2010 with an annual average rate of 0.50 percent. However for poor children, this rate increases with an annual average of 0.50 percent during the same time period (2000-2010). Under the business as usual scenario, achievement of the target of 5 percent might be possible for non-poor children while it might not be possible for the poor children within the time limit (Table 6).

The inequality in the percentage of dropout rate in male and female is significant, i.e. dropout rate of poor male is double than that of female poor children in Bangladesh. The dropout rate of male non-poor children decreased from 14.1 percent in 2000 to 8.89 percent in 2010 with an

annual average rate of 0.52 percent and it might stand at 6.29 percent by 2015 with continuation of such rates. On the other hand, male dropout of poor household has decreased with an annual average decrease rate of 0.28 percent during 2000-2010 respectively (Table 6).

Table 6: Current Situation and Future Projection for Disparity of Dropout rate by Poverty Status

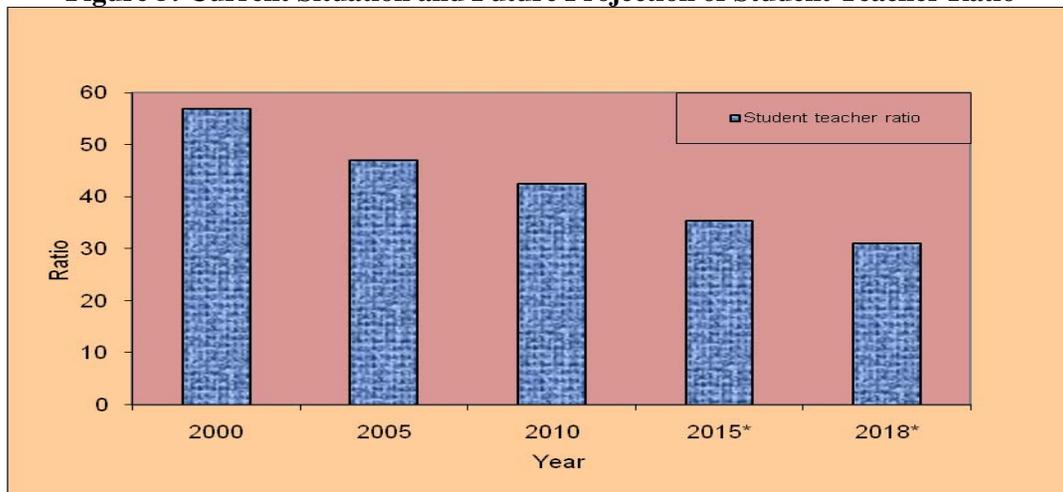
Year	Both Sexes		Male		Female	
	Poor	Non-poor	Poor	Non-poor	Poor	Non-poor
2000	7.8	10.5	20.6	14.1	6.5	6.7
2005	18.43	9.36	21.55	13.02	15.89	5.53
2010	12.84	5.52	17.78	8.89	8.31	1.69
2015*	15.35*	3.02*	15.93*	6.29*	9.21*	-

Source: Authors' calculation based on BBS 2001, BBS 2006 and BBS 2011

7. STUDENT TEACHER RATIO

The target of the National Education Policy (NEP, 2010) related to student teacher ratio is to reduce student teacher ratio to 30 by 2018. Student teacher ratio was 57 in 2000, which has decreased to 42.55 in 2010 with an average declining rate of 1.45 percent per annum. Under the business as usual scenario, student teacher ratio might stand at 31 by 2018, which is one percent higher than the targeted value within the time limit (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Current Situation and Future Projection of Student Teacher Ratio



Source: Author's calculation based on GOB (2001), World Bank (2001), ROSA 2004, BBS (2008), EFA GMR 2006, UNDP 2005, DPE 2008 and BANBEIS

8. THE REASONS FOR THE SLOWER RATE OF PROGRESS IN PRIMARY EDUCATION

Although there has been a progress in the primary education over the years, the rate at which it has been occurring is slower than the expectation. There might be some reasons, which are as follows:

Structural Causes

Inequality is a part of the social structure. Socio-cultural norms, religious matter, lack of parental education and less expectation for girls' education create inequality in primary education. People belonging to the lower class of the society are not allowed to be associated with the upper class in any way. There has been no strong motivation policy to address the matter of literacy towards lower castes.

Allocation in Education Expenditure and Implementation Status

The proposed budgetary allocation for education is BDT 20,316 crore for the fiscal year 2011-2012, which is 9.31 percent higher than the revised budget of FY 2010-2011. The national budget of FY 2011-2012 has the percentage of 12.13 in case of the education sector. However, although there is an increasing trend in education budget, the overall educational improvement is not satisfactory due to the lack of timely implementation status of educational allocation.

The development budget for FY 2010-11 was BDT 5657 crore while, non-development budget was BDT 14149 crore. However, until February 2011, development expenditure is only BDT 1756.4 crore and non-development expenditure amounts Tk. 8736.9 crore (Unnayan Onneshan, 2011).

Economic Hardship

Still one-third (31.5 percent) of the population of Bangladesh is living under the poverty line. Recent price hike of essential commodities (especially, food prices) makes it difficult to maintain their livelihood. People (especially poor) spend a large part of their expenditure on food and cut off expenditure from other basic necessities like education for their children. Price hike of essential commodities during current regime has defeated all records. General peoples are spending 80 percent of their income on food and savings are falling (Joynul, 2010). So both male and female children of poor households are forced to various income generating activities and popularly known as "child labor". About 22.9 percent of the country's total child workers are forced into different hazardous jobs to earn for the family and their family (BBS, 2006) sends 66.8 percent child workers to these hazardous jobs. Additionally rural female children engagement on garments sector is an indicating factor for increasing female enrollment. After getting primary education, female migrate to urban areas within some days to engage garments industry to run their family. About 80 percent of the industry's three millions workers are women (Solana et al., 2010). Under these circumstances, poor people might take education as an additional burden.

Geographic Isolation

Primary enrollment rate in Sylhet Division is much lower compared to the national average of other Divisions. Shunamgonj's haor area is the most deprived area where students have to suffer much in dry season. The sufferings become acute in rainy season.

Whereas 23 percent of the country's population live in urban areas, it is 12.5 percent in Sylhet division. Although, 40 percent of the population living below poverty line at the national level, it is 33.8 percent in Sylhet division (Education Watch Repot, 2010). Economic deprivation, social inequalities, geographical isolation, unequal income distribution create unequal primary education in this area although the economic situation is better than the other Divisions of the country.

Nearly 40 percent of primary students in the haor areas faced bad transportation in the dry season which increased to 66.8 percent in the wet season (Education Watch Report, 2010).

Opportunity cost of going to school

Opportunity cost of going to school for poor and vulnerable households can be affected by two factors. Firstly, by the savings in households expenses per month by not sending a child to the school and secondly, by increasing the household income per month by withdrawing a child from school and engaging him/her into work (Selim, 2009). The opportunity cost of schooling, both in terms of savings of expenditure and rise in income is found to be relatively higher in rural areas compared to the urban areas.

Parental Education and Net Enrolment Ratio

There is a positive correlation between net enrolment and parental education. The proportion of never schooled parents decreased over time - from 47.7% in 1998 to 45.4% in 2000, 35.4% in 2005 and 33.3% in 2008. The net enrolment rate increased for the children of both never and ever schooled parents during 1998-2005, which became stagnant in 2008 for both the groups (Education Watch Report, 2008).

Population growth rate and equal access to primary education

It is the main cause of divisional inequality in school enrolment. In Barisal, the average annual growth rate of population was 0.9 percent (1991-2001) which has been decreased to 0 percent (2001-2011). So there is a trend of declining average annual growth rate of population which is positively related with equal access to primary education. On the other hand, in Sylhet the average annual growth rate of population has been increased to 2.1 percent (2001-2011) from 1.6 percent (1991-2001) (BBS, 2010). Therefore, there is a positive trend of increasing average annual growth rate of population, which is negatively related with the equal access to primary education.

9. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The result of this study not only determines the socio-economic factors effecting unequal primary education but also suggests where the priority should be given for solving the backdrops of unequal education. Various structural reasons like misuse of budgetary allocation, food price hike, socio-economic and religious tradition, geographic location etc. have a major impact on ensuring equal primary education. Diverse multiple providers and highly centralized public sector management prevent area-based planning for equal primary education. The projections, which are provided in this report, indicate that the country is well on the track to achieve some of the targets of the National Plan for Action- ii within the scheduled time but the maximum of the target might not be achieved within the scheduled time period.

Operational and structural reformation should involve the beneficiaries of primary education in managing school activities. Policies should be targeted towards the poor children's greater enrolment. Failure of timely implementation of the educational expenditure should be reduced and the poor colonial administrative pattern should be eliminated. The government should attempt to take stronger measures for revising and renewing existing strategies. Otherwise, the aim of achieving universal primary education might be elusive.

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