



PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH



STREAMS, DISPARITIES AND PATHWAYS FOR UNIFIED SYSTEM



উন্নয়ন অন্বেষণ
Unnayan Onneshan
The Innovators

centre for research and action on development

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The report is an output of the research programme, Primary Education Policy Watch, undertaken by the Social Policy Unit of the Unnayan Onneshan, a centre for research and action on development, based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The present report has been prepared under the guidance of Jakir Hossain. The report has immensely benefited from insights shared in different in-house dialogues and from contributions made by participants in different consultations.

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AUEO	Assistant Upazila Education Officer
CEF	Commonwealth Education Fund
CPE	Compulsory Primary Education
CPEIMU	Compulsory Primary Education Implementation and Monitoring Unit
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
DNFE	Directorate of Non Formal Education
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
DPEO	District Primary Education Officer
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
FEP	Food for Education Program
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GPS	Government Primary School
HSC	Higher Secondary School Certificate
INFEP	Integrated Non Formal Education Program
MDGs	Millennium Development Goal
MOPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
NAPE	National Academy for Primary Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NRNGPS	Non- Registered Non Government Primary School
PTI	Primary Teacher Training Institute
RNGPS	Registered Non Government Primary School
ROSC	Reaching out-of-school Children
SMC	School Management Committee
TLM	Total Literacy Movement
UEO	Upazila Education Officer
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
URC	Upazila Resource Center
WCEFA	World Conference on Education for All

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Preface

The Constitution of Bangladesh stipulates that primary education shall be the responsibility of the State and 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.

There are diverse streams of education. There are 11 types of primary level educational institutions. These are as diverse as English medium, vernacular secular education and religion centred Madrasah education. There are differences in curricula, teachers' training, infrastructure and attitude and outlook of both school authorities and guardians among the different streams in primary education. Children start their education with different systems and develop differently which significantly influence their future life.

The NCTB curricula are used in all GPS, RNGPS and NRNGPS while Ebtedayee Madrasah follow Madrasah board's curricula. But Kindergarten and English Medium schools are not yet purview of any regulatory system. What objective can be achieved through un-harmonized different streams of primary education is a big question. Besides, political, religious and other ideologies also injected in the primary education based on either ideology of ruling regimes or the interest of the organizations that run the programmes. For example, the text pertaining to history differs from one stream to the other. In NCTB curricula, general history of the country is discussed whereas Madrasah board curricula emphasise on the Islamic history and in English medium these vary from one English medium institution to the other based upon the books that particular institution imports from. There has been a little effort at the national level in assessing the appropriateness of such diverse curricula and resulting in a harmonized system in accordance with national goals and aspirations.

There are disparities in qualifications of the teaching staff. There is an inherent systematic divide on quality between urban and rural school teachers. The skill-development of teacher is envisaged to be carried out by the Primary Teachers' Training Institute, catering to the government- and government-supported primary schools. Training of teachers for the other streams not receiving government subvention is theoretically determined by streams' governing authorities, yet presence of such institutional arrangement is conspicuously absent. In sum, the country is left without any comprehensive plan and programme to ensure up-scaling of teachers to deliver quality education in line with the national heritage and aspiration.

There are also considerable divergences, inequality and bias in educational environment, materials, infrastructure, and logistics. Average spending per student in different streams varies in a considerable way. In a registered Ebtedayee Madrasah only Tk.10.50 is spent per student per month whereas per student spending in the Kindergarten is Tk.531.25 which is almost 51 times higher than Madrasah.

The majority of the children are enrolled in the government primary schools. The non-government registered primary schools have the next highest number of entrants. Currently, about half of the schools are managed by the government. Non-government institutions (mostly run by NGOs) have been active in running non-formal programmes, with limited infrastructure and curricula, and have also attracted criticisms. .

There are disparities among the different streams which act as barriers to the achievement of universal primary education. The inequalities exist in opportunities, quality education and rules and regulations.

Creating a unified approach to education is not an easy task. The proponents of unified education often have different perspectives, priorities, and concerns. Therefore, academic educators, workforce developers, vocational educators, and private sector employers tend to view standards-based education and school-to-work transition reform differently. Despite these differing perspectives, there is an underlying consensus on key issues among some proponents of unified education. A group of people, mostly are academics, thinks that this can be achieved by preparing uniformed curricula for all streams of primary education.

The creation of such a unified system needs to address and settle some important issues, which amongst others, include: (I) defining what 'free' education means and what it entails; (II) enshrining 'free' education as a constitutional right; (III) highlighting long-term benefits sacrificed in favour of short term returns; (IV) confronting the dominant paradigm not only statistically, but also ideologically; (v) allocation of resources and budgets for education programmes with equity and affirmative actions in favour of the disadvantaged; (VI) subjecting education policy and programme decisions as well as resource allocation to address the issue of inequality, inflicted upon the majority of primary-level school entrants; (VII) adopting the rights perspective to fulfill the education rights and entitlements of all children; (VIII) finding ways of combining access with quality in-terms of teachers, curriculum and learning materials, learning facilities, and management; (XI) ensuring a central framework of regulations and standards; and IX) modernization of curricula of NCTB and Madrasah Board.

The present study is an in-depth investigation into the overarching disparities existing in our primary education system by way of attempting to comprehend input-output linkages in different streams of primary education system. The study also tries to develop a pathway of linking different streams for a sustainable uniform quality education in Bangladesh. Its perspectives are built around the intrinsic value of education and its outcome, stemming in from different streams.

I would like to express sincere appreciation to the students, the teachers and the management of the studied schools to host, participate and contribute to finding of this research. The support received from the Commonwealth Education Fund and thoughtful suggestions received from Mohammad Muntasim Tanvir, ActionAid, Bangladesh are gratefully acknowledged. The subsequent pages are contribution of Dewan Muhammad Humayun Kabir and Shahorin Monzoor, who deserve a special mention for their courage to embark on such a complex, yet extremely needed, area of investigation.

Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir
Chair
Unnayan Onneshan

INTRODUCTION

Research Perspective

The development gateway: Education is a state of mind that enables individuals to make choices bearing on its merits and demerits, and eventually acquire skills to fulfill that choice.¹ It contributes directly and indirectly to a higher level of socio-cultural and economic development that provides sufficient resources to address environmental issues also.²

Education has been recognized as an investment not only for creating human capital, but also for inducing social change and promoting overall development. The Nobel laureate Amartya Sen in his speech to a teachers gathering in Delhi on 2 January 1999 said, "Elementary education is central component of any kind of economic development ... Economic powers such as Japan had high levels of education before they advanced towards industrial development."³ This vision of education as 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 18th 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.⁴

There is no alternative to education for development of human resources. It is the root of all sorts of efficiency. It is also the pre-condition for human value system. It becomes significant from the words of great philosopher Aristotle when he said, "the difference between an educated and uneducated man similar to the difference between a dead and an alive." It explores the latent talents of human beings and is a gateway of opportunities. It encourages as well as empowers people effectively to participate in the national development process.

Global and Local Commitment to Education: Access to basic education is now the right of all human beings and it is the key to most of the nation's progression objectives. "Everyone has the right to education", says Article 26(1) of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Declaration of the Rights of the Child proclaimed by the UN General Assembly in 1959 states, 'the child is entitled to receive education, which shall be free and compulsory, at least in the elementary stages.'⁵ From the Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child of 1924 to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child of 1989, all international declarations and covenants on rights of the child acknowledge children's right to education. The same is echoed in the Dakar Forum on Education for All (EFA) and Millennium Development Goals in 2000.⁵ Bangladesh has been trying relentlessly to uphold the cause of education for all since its emergence as an independent country. Article 17 of the Constitution of Bangladesh stipulates that primary education shall be the responsibility of the State. To bear this responsibility primary education in Bangladesh underwent a great deal of changes and development during the last few years. Bangladesh is a signatory to the world declaration on education for all held at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990. Bangladesh is also a signatory to the summit of 9 high populous countries held in Delhi.

Neo-liberal State policy: The education planning in Bangladesh, like other developing nations, has rest on the argument that both private and social rates of return of primary education are high. This led to conceptualise education objectives largely to build a body of capital to maintain the economic system operational. Such

¹ Mahfuz Sadique, "On the state of public schooling in Bangladesh", *The New Age/ August, 2005*.

² W.O. Lee, *Education in Developing Asia, Volume 4: "Equity and Access to Education: Themes, Tensions, and Policies"*, Asian Development Bank, Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong

³ Atiur Rahman, "Bangladesh's Education: Crisis and potentials" in *Management of education in Bangladesh*, edited by Husne Ara Shahed, Dhaka: *Succheepatra*, 2002

⁴ *Bangladesh Education Sector Overview, JBIC Sector Study: Final Report, 2002*

⁵ Alamgir Khan "Education is a right, not a privilege" link, <http://www.dhakacourier.net/issue45/other/doc2.htm>, Accessed on 25 June 2007

restricted and purposeful objectives of education in effect have narrowed the outcome of education to simply "the supply of qualified people over a long period of time to make it more in line with economic demands". The policy changes over the years, accordingly, have created programs for horizontal expansion of increasing access, and for changing curricula for catching up in knowledge space without an understanding that the education system in itself has created concentration of power and responsibilities and disinherited the family and community from the partnership in the teaching learning experience which causes lack of interest, reduced fellowship, disenchantment, lack of performance, ultimately creating conditions for exclusion itself. The exclusion of certain groups of children, differences in learning achievements and differentials in academic and physical resources outcome accrued through the current education system are manifestations of entrenching inequalities based on social class, gender, spatial differentiations.

Education that responds: The education objective is not merely an issue of enhancing access to education, but also of raising standards and extending creative customized choice and freedom to reduce conventional dropouts. The issue is not merely harmonization with an explosive knowledge horizon through curricular change but also of provisioning space for individualized inculcation of capacity for discovery of self, environment and a whole new world of unknown. This essentially calls for such a system of education that not only enable individual ability to expand the meaning of education which is responsive to external changes globally as well as to internal needs but also reflect the cultural context and aspirations to take off in a path of self-actualization.

Access and inequality: The primary schools in Bangladesh have failed to become social institutions in true sense of the term. The government primary schools remain an external institutions located in a place without any meaningful social interface. The private but government aided schools have increasingly lost their social character due to dependence on subvention and pressure of external control. The NGO schools have either accepted externally developed agenda or developed a monopoly stance over methodology and material. None of these have augmented social integration since socialization and peer interaction are generally neglected as a result social cohesion and control never emerged as a basis for social progress of the pupil and the populace. The explanation of failure of demographic explosion in primary school to create a responsive and responsible social evolution not only lies in politicized control of schools by vested interest groups but also in the failure of society to put the primary schools at the centre of the cluster of institutions that promote positivist social change through internal innovation and development. The human capital approach, due to its ideological orientation, deliberately regard issues of political power as exogenous in its theoretical framework and accordingly most of the policy making for equality in education has been formulated in terms of access for boys and girls and of investment for purposes of economic production. Education has been seen as business, setting a 'Business Plan' for education to produce labor power for capitalist enterprises and a 'Business plan' in education directed towards profit making from education. Thus, increasing educational access without challenging the structural mechanisms of inequality will not improve status of boys and girls.

Promoting a sustainable quality primary education thus require the shifts towards an understanding of value of education that rests on policies that not only ensure basic needs of girls and boys, but that they have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and realize their human rights.

Goals and Objectives of Primary Education

Education is a social process through which peoples' knowledge, aptitude, efficiency, moral strength and character are cropped up. Educationist Mackenzie

also opined that education is a life-long process which is tuned by different experiences of life. It's a tool for societal construction & transformation and a gizmo of implementing nation's aspiration. Thus, the principal functions of education are making people especially the farmers, laborers and the middle class perceived about different important issues, making them capable to solve the problems and inspire them to create condition for positive changes. Primary education is the fundamental building block of the education, society and development. The prime objectives of primary education are to:

- inspire people in the cognition of humanity and world brotherhood
- create a positive attitude for peace and respect
- craft an outlook responsive to people's alliance and friendship, human rights and physical labor
- make conscious about the rights and responsibility of family and social life .
- train people to carry out citizen responsibility in democratic polity as a good citizen
- motivate for patriotism and develop insight and respect for national heritage and culture
- develop a scientific outlook and approach in problem solving
- know and understand the environment and act accordingly

To attain the above objectives, it is a pressing need to develop clear pathways that endorse the national aspiration, values, and heritage and strengthen solidarity. So, it is indispensable to formulate a sustainable uniform education system that does not serve group interest rather guarantee national solidarity.⁶

Study Objectives

In the above context, the current study seeks to explore the overarching disparities existing in our primary education system through studying input-output linkages in different stream of primary education system and tries to develop clear pathways of linking different streams for a sustainable uniform quality education in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- **Tracing Disparities:** Identify the existing disparities prevalent among primary institutions of various kinds such as government and private primary schools, kindergartens, Ebtedayee Madrasah, and different NGO-run schools and its differential outcome;
- **Spelling out the challenges to Uniform Primary Education:** Spell out the challenges to establishing a common system for a sustainable uniform quality primary education for all.
- **Torching the pathways for Uniform Primary education:** Develop pathways of linking different streams and identify roles of different stakeholders to frame a comprehensive education system at primary level.

Study Methodology

The current study seeks to explore the overarching disparities existing in our primary education system through studying input-output linkages in different stream of primary education system and tries to develop pathways of linking different streams for a unified system of sustainable quality education in Bangladesh. Inputs here are expressed by pedagogy, curricula, quality of teaching staff, internal efficiency of the stream, public-private expenditure for education, student-teacher ratio etc., whereas output and outcome measures include different indicators of availability, accessibility, acceptability, affordability and accountability of the streams.

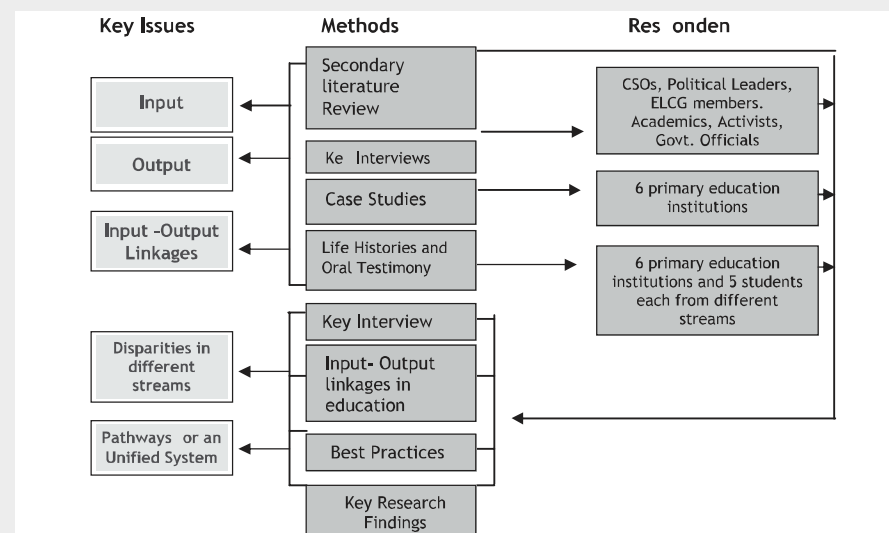
⁶ *Teacher's guideline for the Governments primary school.*

Data Source

Information for this research was collected both from secondary and primary sources, and would employ hosts of research methods. Secondary sources include books, journals, and articles, statistical review written in home and abroad. The World Wide Web was also an important source of data gathering. Primary sources were key informants from teachers, parents of different streams, officials from related line ministry and government organizations and members of civil society organizations active in primary education sector.

The research project collected life histories of six different education organizations from different streams i.e. government, registered private primary schools, non-registered private primary schools, kindergartens, Ebtedayee Madrasah, and NGO-run schools. The study also employed oral testimony methodology to collect information from students of different streams (5 students each from 6 different streams) to understand the exclusion of certain groups of children, differences in learning achievements and differentials in academic and physical resources outcome accrued through the current education system further entrenching inequalities based on social class, gender, spatial differentiations.

Research Issues and Design



Respondents and Study Area

Study was conducted in 6 institutions of different streams at Upashahar and Terakhadia area of Rajshahi city and Manakasha & Hausnagar village of Shibgonj upazila under Chapainawabgonj district. The key respondents in the study are:

- Teachers of different educational institutions
- Guardians of Students studying in different streams
- Students
- Instructors
- District Primary Education Officer
- Text curricula experts
- Educationalists
- NGO officials

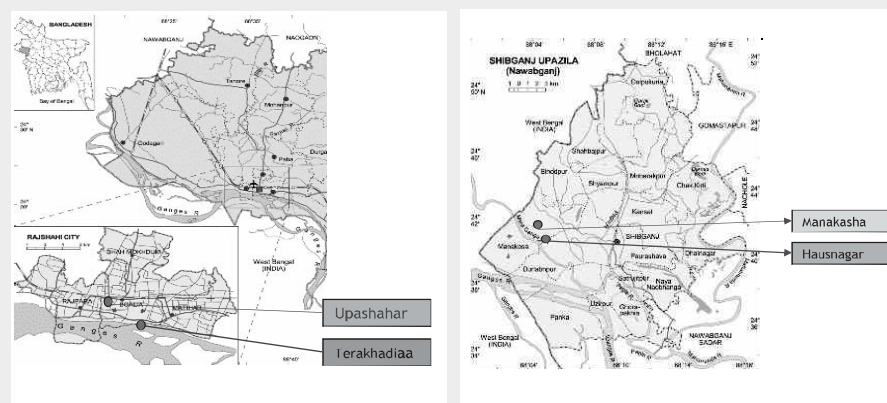
Respondent categories: Education institute based respondents are:

Data source	Study Area	Upazila and District	No. of respondents				Total
			Head Master	Students		Guardians	
				boys	Girls		
Govt. primary school	Upashahar	Boyalia, Rajshahi	1	3	2	3	9
	Manakasha	Shibgonj, Chapai-nawabganj	1	3	2	3	9
Registered non-govt. Primary school	Terakhadia	Boyalia, Rajshahi	1	3	2	3	9
	Manakasha	Shibgonj, Chapai-nawabganj	1	3	2	3	9
Un-registered non-govt. Primary school	Terakhadia	Boyalia, Rajshahi	1	3	2	3	9
	Manakasha	Shibgonj, Chapai-nawabganj	1	3	2	3	9
Ebtedayee madrasah	Terakhadia	Boyalia, Rajshahi	1	3	2	3	9
	Manakasha	Shibgonj, Chapai-nawabganj	1	3	2	3	9
Kindergartens	Upashahar	Boyalia, Rajshahi	1	3	2	3	9
	Manakasha	Shibgonj, Chapai-nawabganj	1	3	2	3	9
NGO run school (BRAC)	Chamarpara	Boyalia, Rajshahi	1	3	2	3	9
	Hausnagar	Shibgonj, Chapai-nawabganj	1	3	2	3	9
Total	-	-	12	36	24	36	108

Respondent categories: Respondents categories are:

Data Source	Location	No. of respondents	
Education related persons and organizations	Asst. Instructor	Rajshahi & Dhaka, URC	4
	Instructor	Rajshahi, URC	1
	DPEO	District primary education office, Rajshahi	1
	Text curricula expert	NAPE, Mymensingh	1
	Related NGO	BRAC, Proshika	2
	Educationist	Dhaka, Rajshahi	2
Total		11	

Study Area



Map Source: Banglapedia, (Multimedia version, 2005), Asiatic Society Bangladesh, Dhaka.

Mode of Data collection and its rationale

A. Interview: Semi-structured interview scheduled was used to collect most information in this study. All these were in-depth interview and mostly very successfully used to grasp the required information. The interviewees are:

- **Teachers:** key issues like subject wise teaching scope, teachers' training and their professional opportunities etc. are discussed with the teachers teaching in different streams
- **Politicians:** Politicians are one of main role players in non-government school management. So, study tried to understand the politician's dynamics management issue along with the recruitment of teachers, financial misappropriation, and problems of education etc,
- **Guardians:** One of the important objectives of the study was to know the conscious level of the guardians regarding their kids' education besides, study tried to know what the parents' vision for educating their children are and are they willing to keep house tutors etc.
- **Government Officials:** Information sought from the respective government official on management issue, disparities in different streams of education, contradiction and challenges to unified education system
- **Academics and experts:** They were the key informants regarding the disparities of existing education systems, how unified system can be introduced and tone down the barrier to it.

Case Study and Oral Testimony: The case study and oral testimony was applied in identifying the existing disparities prevalent among primary institutions of various kinds such as government and non-government primary schools, kindergartens, Ebteyee Madrasah and different NGO-run Schools and its differential outcome and indicate pathways of linking different streams and identify roles of different stakeholders to frame a complete comprehensive education system at primary level.

Informal discussion: Informal discussion was one of the key tools to understand the inner view of the stakeholders regarding disparities in existing different system of primary education, their problems and the way out for unified system.

Observation: Observation was an effective mode of data collection to have a practical idea about the teaching system, status of teacher, students and guardians and other stakeholder as well as how the different system is running.

SHAPING PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

Primary education is the foundation on which the nation's edifice of education has to be built in and the ground laid for the individual's pursuit of further learning and fulfillment of life's potentials.

From the time of the English rule to Pakistani regime and finally Bangladeshi system, education has evolved not only in methods but also in fundamental character like language and governance. In other words, through history, Bangladesh has gone through various phases of education systems.

During the British rule, education was mainly kept for the wealthy class. The language of pedagogy was English as religious nuns and other British people ran schools. The few natives who were fortunate to receive education were either from wealthy families (Nawabs) or whose family had ties with the British governing body. Native people were treated as second-class citizens, were largely deprived of education

After the British had left the Indian Subcontinent, the territory presently known as Bangladesh came under Pakistani regime as the state of East Pakistan. The basic character of education and ruling regime remains almost same as British regime.

After the liberation war of Bangladesh in 1971, the People's Republic of Bangladesh became an independent nation free to choose its own educational destiny. As Bangladesh was, and still is, a secular state, many forms of education were permitted to co-exist. The formidable British system was, and still is, largely practiced. In fact, presently, the Bangladeshi system of education is divided into three different branches. Students are free to choose anyone of them provided that they have the means. These branches are: a) The English Medium (includes kindergarten system), b) The Bengali Medium, and c) The Religious Branch.⁷

From 1947 onward, the main problem with primary education has been its tardy growth. At that point of time, for one village with a primary school there were four without any. Most of these schools were poorly housed; teachers were, most of them, poorly trained, and invariably poorly paid. The uphill task of lifting this whole sector to a reasonable level of efficiency rested with the government. But resources, when it came to education, especially primary education, were always scanty. From 1947 to 1972, that is the time when Bangladesh emerged as a truly independent country, primary education and the level of literacy of the country were both stuck in a state of prolonged stupor.

The Legal Regime

The fêted Wood's Educational Dispatch of 1854, resulting from an inquiry 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 developing an organization and management structure for education. The first substantive effort was the enactment of Bengal Primary Education Act, 1919. Education sess was introduced in the municipalities to

⁷ Alochona Magazine Staff Writer, "Reality of Education System in Bangladesh: Opportunities and Challenges" link, <http://magazine.alochona.org/magazine/2002/april/TOTM1.htm>, Accessed on 23 April 2007

provide primary education for 6-11 years old children and commencement of education inspection got started. The enactment of the Bengal Education Code in 1930 was another landmark legislation that extended primary education to the rural areas and 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.

After the creation of Pakistan in 1947, it had been repeatedly mentioned to establish a universal primary education for all. But it failed to attract the attention of the ruling regime. What happened is that the Bengal provincial Assembly passed the "Bengal (rural) primary education Act" in 1951 to introduce compulsory primary education. Within 2 years this initiative expired. 'Compulsory Primary Education for All' was one of 21 demands of Juktafront (united front) upon which they boarded on power. Under the leadership of Juktafront government District education Board was dissolved and primary education brought under the direct control of government. The schools that were in the compulsory education program were named as 'model school' whereas other schools were called 'non-model' school.⁸

The discriminatory societal and State character of Pakistan gave birth to independence movement and creates a new nation- Bangladesh. Since the origin of Bangladesh as independent nation-State in 1971, various laws have been passed regarding primary education including Primary Schools (Taking Over) Act 1974, the Primary Education Act 1981, and the Compulsory Primary Education Act, 1990. The Act of 1974 provided for free primary education all over the country and teachers of primary schools became central government servants. The Act placed 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 districts). The Act also provided for school based management and the formation of the school management committee. The 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.⁹

It is very remarkable that though India and Bangladesh have inherited the same education system but in present days India is a superpower in the 'knowledge economy' that has taken centre stage in today's global information-driven dynamics and whereas education quality in Bangladesh is deteriorating. Indians may have had a two decade head start, but their present state was not attained in one stride of a decade. A knowledge-based economy needs professionals with a solid grounding on the basic sciences, on the lingua franca of the world i.e. English and a plan (that a nation sticks to).¹⁰

Education Commission and Policy Responses

The need for a comprehensive statement of the national education policy has been felt and voiced repeatedly. Since the birth of Bangladesh, several national education commissions and committees have been appointed to develop education policies and priorities in line with national goals and aspirations. Beginning from the Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report of 1974, at

⁸ *Abdullah Al Muti: 2002*

⁹ *Manzoor Ahmed, Khondoker Shakhawat Ali, Kishwar Kamal Khan, Bangladesh Education sector Mapping, Institute of Education and Development, BRAC University, http://www.sfu.ca/mpp/pdf_news/800-05-Bangladeshschools2.pdf*

¹⁰ *Mahfuz Sadique.*

least half a dozen such initiatives have been taken. Qudrat-e-Khuda commission recommended declaring class I - VII education as primary education and makes it universal. Articles 15 and 17 of the Constitution (1972) and Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission Report made primary education the responsibility of the government. In 1974, true to the provisions of the Constitution, the government issued a 'Decree of Nationalization' of all 36,165 primary schools in the country. This was truly a landmark in the history of education. Since then, with every successive five-year plan, the allocation for primary education has increased steadily, both in the revenue and development parts of the annual budget.¹¹ Khuda Commission proposed to complete all preparation by 1975 to start implementation of compulsory primary education within 1976. In its initial year (1976) class I will come under compulsory education preview and it will be extended to class by class year wise. In this roadmap by 1980 up to Class V education will be compulsory and it will end in 1983 by making up to Class VII education compulsory. To make the plan works commission recommend provide sufficient teachers, text books, education materials, establishment of new schools, introduction on 2nd Shift, making primary schools lower secondary schools, appointment of women teacher to increase girl student enrolment, initiate Cash Program for teachers' training and non-formal education for adult literacy. But due to economic and political complexities the roadmap ends into a blind alley.

The common elements in the diagnosis of problems and recommendations in the different education commissions' reports outweigh the differences. The most important common feature of the reports, however, is that few of their substantive recommendations have been fully implemented. The latest to be consigned to the archives, after a change of government in 2001, was the National Education Policy Report of 2000. The new administration appointed an Expert Committee on Educational Reforms (headed by Professor Muhammad Abdul Bari), which submitted its report in July 2002. Some recommendations of this report have been put into effect, but the fate of others remains unclear.

In January 2003, a Commission with 24 members, headed by Prof. Maniruzzaman Mia was formed to identify the "major problems of the education system and recommend remedial action." The National Education Commission 2003 (NEC 2003) presented its report to the Prime Minister in March 2004. It made recommendations about various aspects of the education system, including those on quality, access, strengthening management and governance and promoting equity in education.

Universal Education for All

The history of educational policy statements not acted upon and almost a counter-productive nature of the initiatives in aggravating political divisiveness have given rise to skepticism about formal policy exercises. A civil society policy brief before the 2001 national election recommended "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."¹²

In 1990, the World Conference Education for All (WCEFA) was a watershed event that changed the face of educational development in Bangladesh.

¹¹ *Banglapedia, (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2005)*

¹² *Centre for Policy Dialogue, "Policy Brief on Education," CPD Task Force Report, August 2001*

Table 1: Development goals for universal primary education.

Target Year	Approved	Forum
-	1934	International Conference on Public Education, Geneva
	1984	UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, New York
	1951	International Conference on Public Education, Geneva
	1952-54	UNESCO Regional Conference on Free and Compulsory Education ; Bombay, Cairo and Lima
1980	1960	UNESCO Meeting of Representatives of Asian Member States on Primary and Compulsory Education, Karachi ("Karachi Plan")
	1961	UNESCO Conference of African States on the Development of Education in Africa, Addis Ababa ("Addis Ababa Plan")
	1962	UNESCO Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning, Santiago ("Santiago Plan")
	1966	UNESCO Conference of Ministers of Education and Ministers Responsible for Economic Planning in the Arab States, Tripoli
	1970	International Development Strategy for the second UN Development Decade, New York
2000	1979	UNESCO Conference of Ministers of Education and those Responsible for Economic Planning of Member States in Latin America and the Caribbean, Mexico City
	1980	International Development Strategy for the third UN Development Decade, New York
	1990	UNICEF World Summit for children
	1990	World Conference on Education for All, Jomtien ("Jomtien Declaration")
	1993	Education for All Summit of Nine High-Population Countries, Delhi ("Delhi Declaration")
2015	1995	Fourth World Conference on Women, Beijing ("Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action)
	1996	<i>Shaping the 21th Century</i> , OECD Development Assistance Committee
	2000	World Education Forum, Dakar ("Dakar Declaration")
	2000	Millennium Summit, New York ("Millennium Declaration")
	2001	<i>Road map towards the implementation of the United Nations Millennium Declaration</i>
	2002	UNICEF The Special Session on Children
	2002	UNICEF Convention on the Rights of the Child

Source: Multiple sources, cited in Clements, 2004

Bangladesh was an enthusiastic signatory to the WCEFA framework in 1990 and its participation and pledges to the global accord, coupled with the advent of democratic rule in the country in 1991 (first time since 1973), served as catalysts to education expansion at a scale not witnessed previously. While most of Bangladeshi social life remains highly politicized, the issue of achievement of the EFA goals, since the advent of democracy, has remained an uncontested domain despite three changes in regime from 1990 to the present day.

Bangladesh's Responses to Universal Education

In the generic sense of the word, education policy can be overarching principles and objectives as well as detailed and formal statements of general goals and procedures that guide decisions regarding educational program choices and strategies. The Constitution of the Republic is the source of overall principles and objectives for educational development in the country. 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:

- 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;
- develop education that is consistent with the needs of society and to create a citizenry, educated and motivated to fulfill those needs; and
- 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 (e.g. National Education Act of Thailand adopted in 1999).¹³

Article 17 is included as one of the fundamental principles of state policy in Part II of the constitution, which consists of generalized principles and broader visions for running of the state for a long period of time. And, for the assumed sanctity of these principles, which have never been kept in practice since their inception, they cannot be judicially enforced. Much of education policy and practice in the 1990s has been based on the 1990 Primary Education Compulsory Act which was passed in Parliament in 1993. The Act committed that:

- No child be deprived of education for lack of teacher, learning materials and adequate space;
- No child be subject to disparities of access to primary education arising from gender, income, family, cultural or ethnic differences and geographic remoteness;
- There would be quality and relevance of primary education by intensifying efforts to improve learning content and materials and to carry out necessary.¹⁴

Box 1: Education in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Article-

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

¹³ *Japan Bank for International Cooperation (JBIC), Bangladesh Education Sector Overview, Dhaka, 2002.*

¹⁴ *Scherezad Latif, "Improvements in the Quality Of Primary Education in Bangladesh 1990-2002*

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 1993.¹⁵ Bangladesh is committed to EFA and Dakar Framework and U.N. Millennium Development Goals for 2015. Its national development objectives and plans are guided by a strategy of poverty reduction and human development in which education, especially at the basic level, has a critical role.

Table 2: Present status of achievement of universal primary education & MDGs

Goal	Global target	Bangladesh target	Achievement Indicators	Base year (1990-95)	Status in 2000-2002	2015 Goal
Universal primary education	Every boys and girls has to complete primary education by 2015	Net enrolment has to be elevated from 73.7% of 1992 to 100% by 2015	Net enrolment ratio	73.7%	82.7%	100%
		Drop out has to be reduced to 0% by 2015 from 38% of 1994	Enrolled in class I and completed five years education	42.5%	80.6%	100%
			Adult (15+) literacy rate	36.6%	38.8%	

The national goals and commitment in respect of primary education are reflected in the Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP II), described as a sub-sectoral program of the government supported by external development partners. It aims to address the primary education access, participation and quality problems with "a guarantee of essential primary school quality levels (PSQL)" for all children.

But one would not be incorrect in stating that the primary education system in Bangladesh is in shambles and in terms of quality lacks even the basic requirements. However, enrolment rate is probably the most positive side of the primary education system and special mention, in terms of increasing the general literacy rate is deserved by the non-formal primary education initiative undertaken by various non-government organizations. Yet, in Bangladesh, as in other developing countries, with one out of every five children out of school, education has remained only a privilege. This has remained a privilege not only in social reality, but within the conscience of the state too.

Thematic and Cross-cutting Issues

An important systemic concern is how the education system as a whole and its sub-sectors function to make their contribution to meeting key social goals, including fighting poverty. It is a question of vertical and horizontal linkages and articulation within and among sub-sectors of education and the possibility of taking a systemic view of the organizational structures and function of the system and sub-systems.

The overall organization and management of education show critical disjunctions and discontinuities. For example, at the primary level, the four major streams - the government and non-government registered schools, the Madrasah, non-formal primary schools run by NGOs, and the proprietary

¹⁵ Hossain 1997

English medium schools - operate with differing learning objectives and academic standards, with limited opportunity for horizontal movement of students, and no interaction among organizational authorities running these different streams. The same applies to the secondary level, in respect of the parallel streams in general secondary education, Madrasah, proprietary schools and post-primary vocational and technical education.

Notwithstanding the good intentions behind the separation of primary and mass education 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 secondary education cannot be resolved in isolation.

Primary Education that Exists

Compulsory Primary Education Act was passed in 1990 and, in January 1992, the government launched the Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) program in 68 out of the then 460 thanas in the country. This program has been extended nation-wide since January 1993. About the same time, in 1992, the government made rural primary education free for girls up to grade 8, and a new Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) was created under the Prime Minister's Secretariat to strengthen the management of primary education and non-formal education programs.

The national EFA program was officially launched in March 1992. A project called Expansion of Integrated Non-formal Education Program (INFEP) was also initiated; this has recently been upgraded into the Directorate of Non-formal Education. In 1993 the government launched the 'Food and Education' program, designed to improve enrolment and class attendance and reduce drop-outs. For qualitative improvement in the primary education sector, several new programs have been introduced such as (a) a curriculum dissemination program for teachers, (b) cluster and sub-cluster training programs, (c) continuous pupil assessment, and (d) a satellite school program.

Non-formal Education Programs

In the 1980s a number of NGOs began to see the need for initiating programs of basic education in support of their poverty alleviation activities. An important result of the Jomtien WCEFA has been that several NGOs have identified education as a priority sector for their areas of operation. Many of them have significantly expanded their education programs over the last few years.

The NGOs realized that educating the whole nation would require a massive effort and close collaboration between them and the other progressive forces. Consequently, in 1990 a coalition of the mainstream NGOs having major education programs was formed under the title 'Gono Shakkharata Ovijan' (Campaign for Popular Education - CAMPE). The aim was to foster cooperation among the NGOs, the government and civil society in developing a mass movement encompassing both formal and non-formal programs in order to eradicate illiteracy.

Currently more than 400 NGOs are involved in non-formal education programs in Bangladesh. In 1994, these had more than 2.6 million enrolled in about 73,000 centers. Of those enrolled, at least 1.4 million were primary-age children (63 per cent of them girls), over 0.4 million were adolescents (65 per cent girls), and about 0.8 million were adults (80 per cent women).

In the EFA National Plan of Action, the government set the target of raising gross primary enrolment from 76 per cent in 1991 to 95 per cent by the year 2000, the completion rate from 40 per cent to 70 per cent, and the adult literacy rate from 35 per cent to 62 per cent. It is being claimed that already considerable progress has been achieved in realizing these targets: gross primary enrolment has reached 92 per cent, completion rate 60 per cent and adult literacy rate 42 percent.¹⁶

The 2005 monitoring report on progress towards Dakar goals released by UNESCO in November, 2004 has applied an Education Development Index to countries based on values for net primary education enrolment, adult literacy rate, gender parity indices, and survival of children to grade five in the primary school. Of the 127 countries rated, Bangladesh ranked as number 107, just behind India (106) and ahead of Pakistan (123) and Nepal (110). It is projected that all of these countries will fail to meet the 2015 Dakar Framework targets unless their rate of progress accelerates substantially. It is vitally important that the government strategies and programs including the umbrella program PEDP II and the ROSC project¹⁷, aimed especially at the disadvantaged children, succeed.¹⁸

Government Spending on Education

The education sector effort has to be the center-piece of the human development component of the poverty reduction strategy. The contribution of education must lead to intended cognitive development of participants, resulting in change in behavior, capacities, understanding and perceptions of people. The change has to be reflected in people's life, livelihood and work habits; in habits related to health, sanitation, nutrition and raising family; and in perception about and demand for education and learning. This is the sector which can ensure highest return if spend in a planned way. From the very initials years of independence education sector especially the primary education drew the highest attention of government.

The country spends 2.3% of its GNP on education which is far too short of what other countries in the region spend (compared to India's 3.8%) (1994 estimates). The allocation in primary education is also very little, and 90% of the allocations are spent in meeting salaries and allowances leaving only a negligible amount for supervision, training and curriculum development.

A heavy reliance on donor contribution for up to a third of education "development" budget (in contrast to the "recurrent" budget) has given the external development partners leverage in respect of education policies.¹⁹

System of Budgeting for Different Institutions

The full costs of government primary schools are borne by the government. The government also pays 95 percent of basic salaries of non-government registered primary schools. Besides, the non-government schools also receive grants from the government for repair of school building. The Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) decides which school receives grant and disburses money accordingly. Students in both government and non-government registered schools receive free textbooks.

Although the government virtually bears the full cost of government primary and secondary schools, and also provides free textbooks to primary school students, there still remain other costs such as uniforms, educational supplies, transportation, etc. Those still have to be borne by the parents. Moreover, in a country like Bangladesh, where nearly half the population lives below poverty

¹⁶ A. M. Sharafuddin, *Innovations in Primary Education in Bangladesh*,

¹⁷ *Establishment of non-formal learning centers to serve two million out of school children through the ROSC project is expected to complement PEDP II, which is confined to formal public sector primary education. The ROSC project signifies the recognition by the government of the need and legitimacy of non-formal approaches, so far supported only by NGOs, as essential complement to formal schools.*

¹⁸ *Education Watch 2003/4.*

¹⁹ *Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) All Right Reserved, 5/14, Humayun Road, Mohammadpur, Dhaka-1207, Bangladesh*

line, the opportunity cost of education in terms of foregone income that could be derived from child labor is not insignificant. The government therefore had to intervene with programs like Food for Education, Primary Education Stipend Project, and Stipend for Girl Students at secondary schools.

A look into the composition of public current expenditures on primary education reveals that teacher salaries in government primary schools and grants for salary subvention for non-government primary schools together accounted for 96.7 percent of total current spending on primary education in 1998, operation and maintenance accounting for only 3.3 percent. Its share, earlier, was even lower, 1.1 percent in 1992. As Organization and Management (O & M) expenditure also includes expenditure on a fairly large educational bureaucracy, very little is actually left for spending on pedagogical inputs other than textbooks. Development expenditures in primary education are spent largely on building physical facilities including renovation of damaged schools and improving physical facilities.

Staff compensation dominates current expenditures, also in case of secondary education as 79 percent of revenue expenditure for secondary education goes towards teacher subvention payments to non-government secondary schools. Grants from the development budget are primarily for construction.

Reflected by the stable shares of different sub-sectors in the education budget revenue expenditures appear to be set by precedent rather than rational planning and tend to follow the previous year's pattern. Development expenditures, however, show large variations in sub-sectored shares, primarily due to varying commitments of donor and lending agencies (World Bank, 1999). Budgetary allocations towards O & M for primary schools are small fixed amount and bear no relationship to actual needs. 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 widely, from 7.3 percent in 1991/92 to 0.4 percent in 1994/95. In recent years, an increasing trend reflecting higher priority attached to the sector is being observed.

Management System at Various Tiers of Education System

Bangladesh runs one of the biggest primary education administrations in the world. The management of the education system falls under two ministries - the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME, responsible for primary education) and the Ministry of Education (MoE, responsible for secondary, vocational and tertiary education). Overall there are more than 17 million students at the primary level.

The Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) set up as a separate Division with the status of a Ministry in 1992. While the PMED is involved in formulation of policies, the responsibility of implementation rests with the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) headed by a Director General.

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and its subordinate offices in the district and upazila are solely responsible for management and supervision of primary education. Their responsibilities include recruitment, posting, and transfer of teachers and other staff; arranging in-service training of teachers; and distribution of free textbooks, and supervision of schools. The responsibility of school construction, repair and supply of school furniture lies with the Facilities

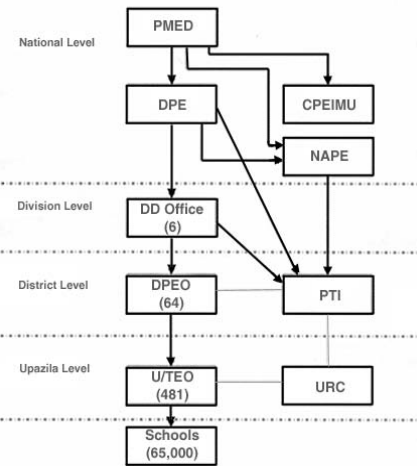
Department (FD) and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). The National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB) are responsible for the development of curriculum and production of textbooks. The NCTB is responsible for developing curriculum and publishing standard textbooks.

Six regions based Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) is responsible for conducting the two public examinations, S.S.C. and H.S.C., in addition to granting recognition to non-government secondary schools.

The Directorate of Technical Education (DTE) is responsible for planning, development, and implementation of technical and vocational education in the country.

Primary education had in focus from the commencement of education system in the sub-continent. Primary education that we find today is not shaped in a day. It had gone through changes in different time and different regime. Various steps had been taken for shaping pro-poor primary education but key essence of education was missing. Call for a universal primary education is the popular demand and constitutional requirement which needs to be met.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF PRIMARY EDUCATION



- PMED- Primary and Mass Education
- DPE- Directorate of Primary Education
- CPEIMU- Compulsory Primary Education Implementation and Monitoring Unit
- NAPE - National Academy of Primary Education
- DD Offices- Deputy Directors Offices
- DPEO- District Primary Education Officer
- PTI- Primary Training Institute
- U/TEO- Upazila/Thana Education Officer
- URC- Upazila Resource Centre

STATE OF DIFFERENT STREAMS OF PRIMARY EDUCATION

At present, there are different pre-primary and primary educations in Bangladesh. This chapter will give details on main streams primary education but spotlight on six case studies. The mainstream primary and pre-primary education system in Bangladesh is structured as follows:

- One or two year pre-primary education imparted in private schools/kindergartens, and informally in government primary schools for six months.
- Five-year compulsory primary education for the 6-10 year age group, imparted mainly in government and non-government primary schools.

In metropolitan cities, however, government and non-government primary schools cater to the educational needs only of the poorer sections of the people, as the better-off families usually send their children to Private English Medium schools, Kindergarten school, secondary schools that run primary sections as well. Ebtedayee Madrasah is also very vital streams for providing primary education. There, however, exists a substantial number of NGO run non-formal schools catering mainly for the drop-outs of the government and non-government primary schools. Very few NGOs however impart education for the full 5-year primary education cycle. Because of that, on completion of their 2-3 year non-formal primary education in NGO run schools, students normally re-enter into government/non-government primary schools at higher classes. NGO run schools differ from other non-government private schools. While the private schools operate like private enterprises often guided by commercial interests, NGO schools operate mainly in areas not served either by the government or private schools essentially to meet the educational needs of vulnerable groups in the society. They usually follow an informal approach to suit the special needs of children from the vulnerable groups.

Table 3: Different types of primary level institutions

YEAR	Institution											Total
	GPS	EXP	RNGPS	COMM	SATT	HSAPS	NGPS	KG	Eb. Mad-rasha	HMAPS	NGO	
1996	37710	52	19683	2759	200	2759	3963	1434	9499	2759	-	80818
1997	37710	52	19529	1962	1042	1292	3472	1545	8231	2850	-	77685
1998	37710	53	19658	2989	2822	1582	3177	1691	7173	2948	-	79803
1999	37709	53	19553	3107	2945	1230	2632	1940	6404	3253	14	78840
2000	37677	53	19253	3061	3884	1220	2126	2296	3710	3437	92	76809
2001	37671	53	19428	3268	4095	1576	1971	2477	3843	3574	170	78126
2002	37671	53	19428	3225	4823	1576	1792	2477	3443	3574	301	78363
2003	37671	53	19428	3260	4823	1618	1670	3088	6581	8200	345	86737
2004	37671	54	19814	3218	-	1283	1699	3745	6723	8214	447	82868
2005	37672	54	19682	3027	-	1353	946	2281	3531	8329	289	77164

Note : GPS- Government Primary School, RNGPS- Registered Non Government Primary School, NGPS-Non Government Primary School, EXP- PTI attached Experimental School, KG- Kinder Garden, HSAPS- High School Attached Primary Schools, HMAPS- High Madrasah Attached Primary School, * SATT-Satellite Schools which are closed form 2004.

Presently there are about 9,500 independent and 2,850 attached Ebtedayee Madrasah under the administrative control of the Ministry of Education. The number of Dakhil Madrasah is 4487, that of Alim 949, that of Fazil 899 and that of Kamil is 120. Almost all of these have been established by the community and operated by the Managing Committee recognized by the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board. The GoB provides salary subvention to the teachers of recognized madrasahs as well as development supports at a limited scale. (Source: EFA Assessment 2002, Country Report)

Government Primary School

There are 11 streams of primary education that are government recognized. Although there are different categories of primary education yet government is the principal primary education provider. In 2005, out of 77,164 primary education institutions, 37,672 were government primary schools. 61% school going children enrolled in these government primary schools. Government has increased the total volume of allocation for education which stands 14% of the national budget. Of this 14% of national budget for education 43% are spent for primary and mass education.

Table 4: Budget of different streams

Education Institute	Budget (in BD Tk.)			Average enhancement
	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	
Govt. Primary School	1049,46,53,000	1691,25,96,000 Enhancement rate (38%)	19,43,62,01,000 Enhancement rate (13%)	25%
Government Madrasah	1,44,45,000	2,29,90,000 Enhancement rate (37%)	2,72,80,000 Enhancement rate (16%)	26%

Having 14% of national budget the teacher- student national ratio for primary school is 1:46. But in the government primary school this ratio is 1: 58.

Table 5: Teacher and Student profile in primary education

Schools	Total No. of school	Teacher-student ratio	No. of teachers		No. of Students	
			Total	Women	Total	Women
GPS	37672	1:5 8	162084	71740	94 83891	4848049
RNGPS	19682	1:47	76566	22833	3572686	1802605
NGPS	946	1:46	3456	22 00	15 8059	78186
EXP	54	1:44	223	84	9828	4762
Pvt.	42725	1:3 7	182705	53250	67 41767	3286388
Total	80397	Average 1:46	344789	12 4990	16 225658	8134437

Source : Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), 2005

Note : GPS- Government Primary School, RNGPS- Registered Non Government Primary School, NGPS- Non Government Primary School, and EXP- PTI attached Experimental School, Pvt.-private, such as kinder Garden and others.

At the primary level, one in five children do not enroll in school and one in three of those enrolled does not complete primary education. This adds up to almost half (47 percent) of the children not having the benefit of a full cycle of primary education. It is reasonable to conclude that children from poor families are the ones who either do not come to school or are very poor achievers. It is very likely that there is an overlap between non-enrollees and non-completers and some 6 million children estimated to be engaged in harmful child labor. Education provisions for children with disability are very limited either in the public or the private sector. There is still a major access and equity problem in primary education in spite of the policies including stipends for children from poor families and non-formal education programs. An important positive development is the closing of gender gap in enrolment.

To increase the enrolment especially targeting the children of poor parent's government has introduced Food for Education Program in 1993. In 2002-03 this program has been changed to Cash Support Stipend Program. Under this program poor parents will get 100 taka per month for sending one student to Government primary school in rural areas. For sending more than one child to school parents will get Tk.125 per month. Government allocates Tk.5200 million (86 million US\$).²⁰

To bring gender equity and ensure greater participation of women in development, 60% quota is reserved for women in primary school teacher. As result the women teachers' involvement in primary education has increased to 37.6% from 20.57% in 1990 (Ministry of Education, 2005). Different programs have been undertaken to raise the girl student enrolment rate. This results in bringing boys-girls enrolment ratio to 68:63 in the year 2000.

Participation in education has expanded significantly in the decade of the 1990s. Gender equality in enrolment at the primary and secondary levels is another accomplishment of the last decade. Effective participation measured by completion of the stage and acceptable learning achievement is much lower than what the enrolment rates may suggest.²¹

A high level of dropout and very poor learning achievement seriously undermine the progress in expansion of education. One-third of those who complete primary education have been found to be functionally illiterate. (Education Watch 2002) Dropout and poor learning achievement affect disproportionately the poor and disadvantaged groups. The segment of the population judged to be in extreme poverty, 20 percent to one-third of the total depending on criteria used, is effectively deprived of educational opportunities that could help the poor to pull themselves out of poverty. Virtually no public sector activities in non-formal education have existed since the literacy activities were discontinued and DNFE was shut down by the end of 2003.²²

The Government Satellite School Project

The Government of Bangladesh has undertaken several projects such as Food for Education, Compulsory Primary Education Program, and stipend for girl students, etc. to combat the problem of low coverage, low attendance and high drop-outs. The satellite school project is one such project designed to increase coverage and attendance and reduce drop-outs. The project was undertaken on an experimental basis in 1992 with the opening of 62 schools.

²⁰ Ministry of Finance, 2005

²¹ BANBEIS 2002 data

²² Manzoor Ahmed, Khondoker Shakhawat Ali, Kishwar Kamal Khan, Bangladesh Education sector Mapping, Institute of Education and Development, BRAC University, http://www.sfu.ca/mpp/pdf_news/800-05-Bangladeshschools2.pdf

In a sense, a Satellite School (SS) is a feeder school for the normal primary school. The planners were convinced that bringing schools to the doorsteps of learners would increase enrolment. In the second year another 138 schools were opened, bringing the total to 200. Of these, 144 were set up in four administrative divisions, namely, Dhaka, Rajshahi, Khulna and Barisal, and the remaining 56 schools are in Chittagong division. It was closed in 2004

Program description: Usually a locality with very low literacy rate, high population density and difficult access to school (particularly for girls) owing to natural barriers (canal, bush, field) is chosen for the satellite school. Children of the 6-7 years age group are enrolled in grades 1 and 2. In the second year, a low-cost two-room school is constructed. It is usually established one kilometer away from a primary school, which is called the mother school.

Teacher selection: Teachers must be female and employed as volunteers. They receive a modest monthly allowance of Tk.500. The induction of women in the project is expected to contribute towards the participation of women in development.

Mobilizing community support: In the first year no expenditure is made on the construction of the schoolhouse. The house or space is provided by the local people to be used as a classroom temporarily. The classroom can be housed in a mosque, maktab (religious learning centre), and veranda or in the drawing room of a private house.

Supervision of satellite schools: Teachers of the mother school provide overall assistance to the volunteer teacher of the satellite school (SS), while the ATEO inspects the school and supervises the teacher locally. Furthermore, TEO and DEO visit the school and send a report to the Deputy Director, Satellite School Project. An instructor nominated by the superintendent of the District PTI (Primary Training Institute) visits each SS once a month and sends a report to the DD.

Training for the satellite school teachers: The Satellite School section of the Directorate of Primary Education has designed a training module for teachers which contain such topics as community participation, teaching-learning methods, child psychology, evaluation process, teaching aids, management, etc. The training course is expected to be attended by the District Primary Education Officer, TEO, ATEO, teacher of the mother school, PTI instructor and the volunteer teacher.

Management: The Deputy Director, Satellite Schools, under the Directorate of Primary Education based at Dhaka, is in overall charge of the project. He is assisted by an Assistant Director and a Research Officer. There is also a Satellite School Managing Committee headed by the local Union Parishad chairman.

The project aims to achieve some crucial objectives like drawing community support by way of securing space for classrooms and donation of land for schools, organizing guardians' meeting by the volunteer teachers, total coverage, etc. Moreover, there are three committees: for the selection of a location for the school, to involve the community in teacher selection, and for school management.

The voluntary teacher bears a work load heavier than her counterparts in government primary schools. The pilot project is being implemented centrally.

Its outcome would help small NGOs to design or redesign their own NFPE programs.

There are some similarities between the non-formal primary education programs of the NGOs and the Satellite School Project such as hiring female teachers from the community, providing them with short training, recruiting the teachers as volunteers for which they receive an allowance, block teaching, etc. The objective of solving children's access problem to school due to geographical barriers has largely been achieved. The other objective of drawing community support seems to have been achieved to some extent. It also has succeeded in recruiting village women for the teaching jobs.

Madrasah Education in Bangladesh

Madrasah education system is a formal one, in addition to the general education stream, and consists of a well established Islamic religion based education stream. It has a long history.²³ In Islam, Madrasah education started from the first word of the divine revelation, iqra or 'read'. The first schooling of Madrasah education started at the house of Zaid-ibn-Akram in the valley of the Safa Hills, where the Prophet (S.) himself worked as a teacher and some of his early followers became his students. After hijra, a Madrasah, namely the Madrasah Ahle-Suffa was established on a site adjacent to the east of Prophet's mosque at Medina. Ubada-ibn-Samit was the teacher there. Abu Huraira Mu'az-ibn Jabal (R.) and Abu Zar Gifari (R.) were among the students. The syllabuses of early Madrasah included the Qur'an, hadith, farayez, primary healthcare, genetic science, and tajwid. In addition, horse riding, war skills, calligraphy and physical exercise were also included. The first phase of Madrasah education continued for about 100 years from the day of nubuwat to the end of the rule of the Umayya dynasty.

In imparting education most Madrasahs of Bengal followed the darse nizami system and it continued till early 1970s. According to darse nizami syllabus, a student had to complete his studies at the age of 17/18 to be able to read and understand any of the 99 prescribed books written in Arabic and Persian. The curricula included the unani method of medicine, cottage industry, and technical training. The period of studies under darse nizami was 9 years.

The old darse nizami courses are still in existence in many self-supported Madrasahs in line with Dewband Darul Ulum Madrasah of India established in 1280 hijri by Maulana Qasim Nanutabi. In many towns and villages of Bangladesh, there are branches of Dewband model of Madrasahs. These are locally called qaumi Madrasah and are financed by subscriptions, *sadiqa*, *zakat* etc. Most imams or muazzins or teachers of nurani or furkania Madrasahs come from the qaumi group.

In order to induce Muslims to English education a new type of Madrasah was introduced by the colonial government in the 1890s. It was called New Scheme Madrasah. In its syllabi were included all Islamic subjects and vernaculars. English language was made compulsory. All New Scheme Madrasahs were government aided. New scheme Madrasahs had two streams, junior and senior. The junior Madrasahs taught up to class five and senior up to secondary level. Muslim students aspiring to government jobs and services were attracted to the New Scheme Madrasahs.

²³ *Banglapedia, (Dhaka: Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2005)*

It was officially introduced in 1882 following the Hunter Education Commission Report. At present, there are three systems of Madrasah education in Bangladesh, viz. the old dars-e-nizami system, the revised and modified nizami system, and the alia nisab (higher syllabus). The first two categories are popularly called quawmi or non-government Madrasahs. To co-ordinate these Madrasahs a government body called Non-government Education Board was established in 1978. In 1998, there were 2,043 quawmi Madrasahs registered with this board and a total of 7,711 students of seven standards took part in its 21st central examinations, in which 5,348 passed. The seven standards are: Taqmeel (post graduation), Fazeelat (graduation), Sanubia Ulya (Higher Secondary Certificate), Mutawasita (Secondary School Certificate), Ibtidaia (standard V), I'imul Qiraat Wat Tajuid (higher qiraat), and Hifzul Quran.

At present Madrasah education is an integral part of national education system. All categories of Madrasahs are entitled to receive government aid if they fulfill prescribed conditions of the state authorities like the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board and National University of Bangladesh. Now Bangla, English and sciences have been introduced in most government aided Madrasahs. Students having recognised diplomas from Madrasahs are also entitled to obtain transfer for themselves from Madrasahs to colleges and universities.²⁴

Madrasah education comprises five stages, e.g., Ebtedayee, Dakhil, Alim, Fazil and Kamil levels, ranging for 5, 5, 2, 2, and 2 years, respectively. As of now Ebtedayee, Dhakil, and Alim have been recognized as equivalent to Primary, Secondary (Junior Secondary and Secondary education) and Higher Secondary levels respectively.

Religious education has an important place in the school curriculum. It is a required subject of study up to grade 8 and can be studied as an elective subject at higher levels. Efforts are now underway to integrate general education with Madrasah education. Ebtedayee Madrasahs also enroll children of age 6+ to 10+. The Ebtedayee curriculum/course includes (1) the Qur'an and Tazbid, (2) Akaid and Fikah, (3) Arabic, (4) Bangla, (5) English, (6) Arithmetic, (7) Environmental Study: Social Studies; and (8) Environmental Study: Science. This curriculum resembles that of general primary education where religion education replaces the Qur'an, Arabic and Fikah.

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 modernization 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 presently does not produce employable graduates for modern-day vocations. Most of

²⁴ AKM Yakub Hossain and Balal Muhammad, *Banglapedia*, 2005

the Madrasahs are in rural locations; rural learners account for 91 percent 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.

Before fiscal year 2006-2007 there was no budgetary allocation for Madrasah teachers' training. But primary school enjoys the allocation from much earlier. But teachers' training in any stream is very vital.

Table 6: Budgetary allocation for teacher's training

Education Institutions	Budgetary allocation		
	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Primary school teachers' training institute	10,78,44,000	17,70,37,000	20,72,86,000
Madrasah teachers' training institute	0	0	1,78,01,000

A principal of a Madrasah echoed the same when he said: " In Madrasah teachers try to make the student understand the textbook of Madrasah through their personal skill and knowledge. But we cannot deny the fact that teacher cannot teach them efficiently for not having teaching guidelines and subject proficiency". Similar situation prevails in the kindergarten school.

Kindergarten School

It is very difficult to have appropriate statistics on kindergarten school from authentic source like government. Ministry of Education source says that in 2005 there were 2281 kindergarten in the country, but fact is that there are around 7000 kindergarten, English Medium and Pre-cadet school only in Dahka City. (Humayun Kabir, 2006). The Curriculum, syllabus, examination system everything is determined by their own way.



There are two mediums of instruction of teaching in kindergarten schools- English medium and Bangla medium.

English Medium Schools

Though the number of English medium schools is not too big yet they follow the foreign Curriculum and method of teaching. The English medium school claims that they ensure quality education as they abide by the foreign system and instructions. It is definite that these schools do not perceive our history and culture. Only the very well off family children have the opportunity to get

admitted to these schools, because, the admission fee, tuition fee, price of the books are so high that these schools are out of reach for the middle and lower class people.

Pre-cadet School

Pre cadet concept comes from the high achievement of the cadet colleges in the country. The initial approach was to run these schools from pre-primary to primary level in line with the cadet college concept. Class VII is entry point for Cadet College and ends in class XII. There is no similarity in m, textbooks curricula and method of teaching. Government has no control over these pre-cadet schools. They are self-styled.



NGO Schools

NGOs continue literacy and adult education activities on a small scale. Non-formal primary education managed by NGOs, a category by itself, which may not be regarded as non-formal by many, also continues. The government was reluctant initially to recognize it as legitimate primary education. As noted earlier, NGOs, the private sector, households and the communities are major providers and stakeholders in the education system. NGOs have made a major contribution in introducing innovative non-formal approaches in primary education to serve on a substantial scale to the children who have been left behind by the formal system. Non-government institutions other than NGO-run non-formal schools are recipients of substantial government subventions for staff salaries and development of facilities. A great potential for public-private partnership through cooperation of all service providers and stakeholders exists but an effective modality for this remains to be developed. 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 State schools are very low endowed in terms of teaching resources, school/centre management, academic supervision and parental (community) participation. This holds true even when the resource endowment is compared to NFE centers. Again State schools are not permitted to mobilize resources from the community. The government-owned schools are fully financed by the government in terms of teachers'/staff salary, free text-books and other instructional materials, construction and maintenance of physical facilities. The non-government registered schools receive salary-subventions for the teachers and free textbooks for the pupil; these schools construct and maintain their own physical facilities. Following are some NGO approach to primary education:

BRAC Non-Formal Primary Education Program: The Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) has developed this program. BRAC was one of the first NGOs to have started large-scale programs of non-formal primary

education in Bangladesh. While BRAC started as a relief and development agency for the rural poor in 1973, its education program began with only 22 experimental schools in 1985. Today its NFPE program is by far the largest single non-government primary education program in Bangladesh, currently with more than 30,000 schools and about a million pupils. More than 90 per cent of the children who start in BRAC schools graduate, and a large proportion of the NFPE program graduates are admitted into grade 4 or higher of the government school system.



BRAC organizes two types of schools: three-year NFPE schools for 8-10-year-olds who have never attended school. In 1998, this model was expanded to a four year program which covers the primary curriculum for grades 1 to 5. In addition to first categories the Basic Education for Older Children program opened in 1987. This is Kishor-Kishori (KK) schools for 11-16-year-olds who have dropped out of primary school and are unlikely to return. These run for three years and cater to the basic educational needs of 11 to 14 year old children. All of the BRAC schools are provided with books and other materials free of charge.

Pupils: A school consists of 33 children, 72 per cent of whom are girls living in rural areas, within about a two-kilometre radius of the school. For the most part, pupils come from relatively disadvantaged homes, their families being landless or owning only their homesteads.

Teachers: Teachers are generally married adults, 95 per cent women, who have completed nine or more years of education and live within easy walking distance of the school. The teachers are hired on a temporary, part-time basis and are paid modest wages. There is one teacher for every 33 pupils. Teacher training includes 12 days of initial training at a residential BRAC training centre and one-day or two-day refresher training sessions each month conducted by BRAC staff at a BRAC office near the teacher's school. Weekly visits from BRAC field workers provide regular feedback.

Parents: The parents of most BRAC school pupils are illiterate and are usually the most socio-economically disadvantaged in their villages. Parents pay no fees for the schooling, apart from replacing broken slate boards and worn mats; BRAC provides all pupil and teacher supplies - pencils, notebooks, textbooks, teacher manuals, slate boards, chalk, etc. Prior to the opening of a new school, parents and BRAC staff meet several times. Parents must pledge to attend monthly meetings and to send their children to school each day.

Schedule: The NFPE instructional program is presented in three-year cycles. The school is in session for 2½ to 3 hours a day, six days per week, 268 days per year, at a time of day selected by the parents. The group of 33 pupils is enrolled at the beginning of the program and advances together through the program. At the end of the program, the school begins another three-year cycle if there are enough eligible children in the community.

Instructional Site: Instruction is provided in one-room premises rented for just three hours per day. These rooms generally have bamboo and mud walls, an earthen floor, a tin roof, and a blackboard. The children sit on the floor on bamboo mats, holding their slate boards on their knees. The teacher has a stool and a metal trunk that serves as a desk as well as a supply cabinet.

Curriculum: The curriculum for both NFPE and KK schools, consisting of Bangla, social science and mathematics, has developed over a period of years and has been revised several times. The material covered is roughly equivalent to grades 1-3 in the formal school system. Since the formal school system requires English, the NFPE schools include English in their curriculum during the third year so that children who want to join formal schools later are well prepared.

BRAC's ability to implement all the necessary elements of a targeted basic education program derives largely from its expertise in development management. In terms of development, since its creation 20 years ago BRAC has designed surveys that help it develop and target its programs for the most disadvantaged rural families. BRAC also has developed ways to encourage these families to participate in the decisions that most affect program implementation.

Cost Efficiency: Independent cost studies have confirmed BRAC costs for schooling (about Tk.800 or US \$20 per annum) as roughly equal to the government's formal schooling, without considering the extra private costs that make the formal schools more expensive and lead to high drop-out and low enrolment rates in the formal schools. In addition, unlike the formal school system, which allocates most of its resources to teachers' salaries and school facilities, BRAC allocates almost 30 per cent of the NFPE program budget to management and supervision. Only 29 per cent is allocated to salaries and 6 per cent to rent school space.

By contrast, government schools operate 220 days a year for one or two hours, two or three hour's shifts per day. In addition, teachers may have as many as 100 pupils in a classroom, at least tripling the amount of time allocated to simply taking roll. Because most of BRAC's classroom time is allocated to instruction, the estimated annual range of actual instruction is between 670 and 804 hours.

The distance from home to school for BRAC pupils ranges from less than 1 km to 2.5 km. In comparison, the average catchment area for government schools is about 3.2 km, with distances somewhat greater in remote rural areas. Because of this proximity children lose less time in travel to and from school. Especially for girls, this is considered relatively safe. Also, parents are able to monitor what happens inside the schoolroom, how their children are treated, and whether they are happy and busy.

Classroom Environment: The 33 pupils that comprise a BRAC school move through three years of course-work as a group. One teacher leads the group. This pupil-teacher ratio is very low in comparison to the government primary schools, where the average pupil-teacher ratio is 65:1. Pupils are often divided into small working groups in which the quicker pupils help the slower ones and all pupils move together through the lessons at the same pace. BRAC materials stress a basically child-centred approach to learning. Instruction in

the core subjects is broken up with co-curricular activities, sometimes for as little as five minutes between subjects.

Curriculum and Materials: The NFPE's instructional materials have gone through several phases of revision, sometimes with assistance from the Institute for Education and Research of the University of Dhaka and several outside consultants. The curriculum originally covered three subjects: Bangla, Maths and social science. By 1987 it was clear that many of the NFPE program graduates planned to continue in government schools, and the BRAC curriculum was modified to incorporate English and religious instruction, required subjects in government schools.

The current BRAC curriculum spans grades 1-3 and includes Bangla, mathematics, social studies and English with an emphasis on the practical health and social issues that are likely to be encountered by a typical BRAC pupil. Class time is allocated in the following segments: Bangla (25 minutes reading and 25 minutes writing); mathematics (35 minutes); social studies (25 minutes); and two 20-minute co-curricular activities, which include physical exercise, field trips, singing and dancing. English is added to the schedule in grade 2.

The BRAC curriculum addresses significantly fewer objectives than does the government's primary curriculum, particularly in languages and mathematics. Such a lean curriculum may be a contributing factor to the program's success. A curriculum that addresses fewer topics allows teachers to cover them at a deeper level than if the teacher is responsible for covering many topics. BRAC's simplified curriculum is effectively implemented, whereas the more comprehensive government curriculum is not fully implemented in most formal primary schools.

The materials are carefully sequenced, segmented into short, discrete lessons, and attractively printed in small, non-threatening booklets (as opposed to larger books that can overwhelm young learners). There is one reading primer for the eight-week preparatory phase (this phase is only two weeks for older pupils), one reading booklet and one Maths booklet for each of the three primary grades, and one social studies booklet for each of grades 2 and 3. Concrete examples from everyday life are used throughout the booklets, especially in the social studies materials.

GSS Primary Education Program: This program has been initiated by the Gono Shahajjo Shangstha (GSS). Children who could not get admission in formal primary schools are enrolled in these schools. The children are taught up to grade 3, which is now being extended to grade 5. Classes are generally held in brick schoolhouses built by GSS.

GSS, a leading NGO of the country, was set up in 1983, aiming at the empowerment of the rural and urban poor. It started its activities by organizing and mobilizing agricultural laborers of fourteen villages of Khulna district in south-western Bangladesh. Over time it has grown into a national-level NGO which has development intervention in 16 out of the 64 districts of Bangladesh, covering over 450,000 households. GSS joined the private sector effort for promoting basic education in mid-1987 with the first education centre in a village. Since then its educational program has been expanded to about 250 centers for both rural and urban children.

The objectives of the primary education program are:

- Preparing learners as independent readers while they are in grade 1
- Preparing learners as creative writers by achieving independence of thought and the ability to present their own ideas in writing
- Enabling children to become numerate
- Creating a real and lasting interest in books and other printed matter
- Taking pupils to the standard of grade 5 of the formal system

It also set the following quantitative targets:

- More than 90 per cent attendance rate
- Less than 5 per cent drop-out rate for grades 1-3
- More than 50 per cent of the children going on to grade 4
- 100 per cent children should learn to use the four maths rules to 100 by the end of grade 3
- 100 per cent children should be able to do creative writing (six lines) by the end of grade 3

Table 7: Comparison of Traditional and GSS Teaching Methodology

<i>Traditional Method</i>	<i>GSS Method</i>
1. Rote learning	Child-centered approach
2. Passive learning	Active learning; group teaching
3. Use of insufficient reading materials	Large quantity of meaningful, relevant and interesting reading materials
4. Absence of supporting materials	Use of adequate support materials
5. Inefficient use of lesson time	Efficient use of lesson time

The child-centered teaching practice followed by the GSS appears to be quite innovative in the context of Bangladesh, where formal primary schools follow a rigid curriculum and the teaching method basically remains teacher-centred. The GSS curriculum aims to provide the following skills to the learners:

- (a) participating in a discussion
- (b) drawing pictures
- (c) writing and expressing creativity through writing
- (d) reading of any materials

During the five-year course, learners at GSS schools are given a wide range of books published by the government, BRAC, individual writers, and the GSS itself. As a result, children become independent readers within 8 months of joining a GSS school and independent writers in the following 8 to 12 months.

CMES: A Technology-Based Basic Education Program

The CMES (Centre for Mass Education in Science) was founded by Dr M. Ibrahim and originated from the publication and distribution of a science periodical by him.

The first step towards the goal of CMES was establishing basic schools which were designed to provide non-formal primary education to disadvantaged children and youth along with integration of technology training and marketing. The basic school is a grass-roots school within the home environment of the target group. Its inner campus consists of a small bamboo-and-mud house or shed provided by the beneficiary families' right within their homesteads.

Twenty basic schools are served by a Rural Technology Centre for Basic Schools (RTCBS), covering an area equivalent to a union (the smallest administrative unit of Bangladesh). There are four levels of education in the system: ankur (germinating), bikash (developing), Agrosor I (Advanced I) and Agrosor II (Advanced II), roughly equivalent to grades 1, 2, 3 and 4 respectively, of the formal system, and each takes about one year. The first two levels are available in the basic schools and the last two only in the RTCBS.

The ankur and bikash levels mainly deal with the attainment of literacy, numeracy and some life skills, while the Agrosor I and II in addition to basic education provide opportunities to learn one or more technological skills directly relevant to income generation.

The learner: The learners of the system are from those children who never went to school or dropped out. There is no age bar for enrolment. Thus this can be an option for children who are too old to enter or go back to primary school. Pupils may be enrolled in either ankur or bikash level as appropriate. In each of these levels there may be 20-30 pupils at a time. Care is taken to enroll at least 50 per cent girl children.

The teacher: Each basic school has one teacher. The teacher is a young man or woman from the locality who has finished or is about to finish high school. In some cases very successful pupils who have passed from RTCBS within the system itself are trained as teachers.

The RTCBS has two teachers and five assistant teachers. The teachers are diploma holders in technical education while assistant teachers are skilled artisans who in most cases have had a reasonable schooling and have been practicing their trades in the locality. Currently, there are 20 RTCBS centers with 400 basic schools enrolling 23,000 learners.

In addition to the basic education programs, there is an adolescent girls' program. The aim is to free the girls from social constraints and free their creative energies. CMES conceived the necessity of undertaking this program in 1992 with the objectives of undoing the injustice done to the girls, helping them have a chance to exercise their basic rights as human beings, and develop properly towards an empowered womanhood.

One of the major objectives of the program is to put its participants in a leadership position in the community. Towards this end, participants are assigned to take the lead in installing a sanitary latrine, mobilizing children to be vaccinated against six deadly childhood diseases, making provision for safe water, motivating villagers to make compost, providing nutrition advice to mothers, and so on and so forth. In carrying out the above activities, a participant pays house-to-house visits.

Service centre of CMES

The service centre, which is located in the capital city, functions as the headquarters of CMES. The basic school system is planned, developed, managed, monitored and evaluated from the service centre. It carries out research on appropriate technology for the basic school system. By organizing training and preparing relevant materials and prototypes it transfers the findings of experimentation to the school system. It also innovates technology suitable for the villages. It designs and develops curricula, teaching methods, instructional materials, teaching aids and training courses for teachers and monitors their effectiveness.

It is thus obvious that the NGOs in Bangladesh have been playing a leading role in introducing innovative non-formal education programs. There are some obvious limitations in the present non-formal education programs. These relate mostly to the issue of replicability of the programs. In most of the organizations there is no middle-level staff between the co-coordinator and the field supervisor. As such, the project head has to give considerable attention to field-level supervisors. Generally, the period of training is also too short to help a teacher internalize the whole teaching-learning process. The teaching method calls for a teacher with long experience and it is difficult for a newcomer to attain mastery over teaching skills.

Another problem is the lack of resource materials. Although the major NGOs generally have more resource materials than the formal system, the supply proves to be inadequate. A number of small NGOs have taken steps to introduce the newer innovative models such as those of BRAC and GSS in their schools, and for this they have sent their staff to the respective organizations to undergo training.

In the beginning, some organizations like the GSS faced difficulty in training teachers who would implement the relatively complex teaching method. Their method demands teachers of higher capability than the average teacher. The problem was solved in the following way:

- a systematic minute-by-minute time-table for the teachers
- a focused curriculum so that the number of tasks is restricted
- adequate provision of low-cost materials and resources to permit and support individual and group work
- on-the-job training for six months so that new teachers are carefully inducted into the role they have to play and into the philosophy that lies behind it

Overall, it may be said that the public sector agencies should benefit from successful NGO-introduced innovative programs. NGOs, moreover, will need sustained government cooperation and support to make their efforts a greater success through to the end.

3 CMES Technology School: The Centre for Mass Education in Science (CMES), a science- and technology-oriented NGO, has initiated this program. In grades 1-2, pupils are provided general education; in grades 4-5, some science lessons are included covering environment, popular science and technology. The aim is to make people conscious of the importance and impact of science education in real life.

4. Dhaka Ahsania Mission Alternative Primary School Program: Children of 6-8 years are the target group. The course duration is 27 months with 3 grades, each of 9 months. The school premises are provided by the local community.

5. UCEP School: The Under-privileged Children's Program School is a specialized program designed for working children in the age group 6-14 years. The duration of this program is 7 years. It is a mixture of general and technical education.

6. Terre Des Hommes (TDH) Street Children Program: Children aged 8-10 years who work at railway stations, bus and launch terminals, etc., are the target groups of this program. Such children are assembled for teaching under the sheds of railway stations or bus and launch terminals with the help of local authorities including the police. BRAC curriculum and materials are used.

7. Primary Education in Gonopathsala, Bangladesh: The overall goal of the People's Schools Program is to enable poor and marginalised children, especially girl children, in Bangladesh to have access to basic primary education that is relevant to their needs. The Program supports the running and maintenance of 16 existing schools in the plains region and the construction and establishment of 32 new schools in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) and Shaotali regions. The work done in the latter region is significant since this project represents the only sustained, community driven development initiative that these communities have experienced to date.



Gonopathsala has been sensitive in its approach to working in CHT. The issues on culture, local language and physical location are considered in both the classroom and in the construction and running of the school. In light of current issues surrounding ethnic minorities in Bangladesh, the overall education within these schools and teaching resources positively reflect the cultures and traditions of the different tribes. In this, GK aims to provide a multi-lingual education and protect cultural diversity within the area and has worked with tribal activists to produce teaching materials in 3 different tribal languages (Tripura, Mro, Khumi). The methodology and timetable have been designed to allow for flexibility, and to ensure relevance to the needs of poor children in rural areas such as the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This is one of the key reasons for high attendance rates in



Students are learning in Gonopatshala

the people's schools in comparison with the state schools in these areas. The program has also made use of those schools in the region which had fallen into disrepair during times of conflict because of the insecurity of the environment and general isolation in the area.

Women and girls Whenever possible girls are given priority for school places and the overall aim is to attract a majority of girls and to recruit a

majority of women teachers. The issue of early marriages is a sensitive one in rural and tribal areas but one which GK is trying to address with caution given that it results in girls ending their education prematurely. Where GK has recently established schools in the CHT, teachers concentrate on encouraging attendance of girl students. Over time, this does stabilise with positive results.



Health In the health classes students are taught about basic health care, cleanliness, nutrition, treatment of dysentery, care of nose, ears, teeth and throat. They also receive training on how to provide first aid. Aside from what the students learn on health all teachers have received basic health care training to use both practically and to be able to incorporate this into their teaching. Monthly visits are also made to each school by senior GK paramedics. Students also receive vitamin enriched food supplement in Chittagong Hill Tracts schools since it was experienced that during difficult periods children became ill or too weak to concentrate or attend class. The primary health services have now been extended to all CHT schools so that each has a visiting paramedic.²⁵

The quality of education in different streams of primary schools varies to a great extent. In terms of comparative efficiency compared in relation to Achievement-scores in language and Mathematics tests reveal that the NFE centres of NGOs performed best followed by the non-State schools. The Ebtedayee Madrasahs are the less than-satisfactory performers. The instructional time was the highest in the case of NFE centres (666 hours for grade I and 1979 hours for grade IV) and the lowest in the case of mainstream State-schools (411 hours for grade I and 751 hours for grade IV).²⁶

Case Study on Six Streams of Primary Education

There are nearly one dozen of streams of primary education in running in Bangladesh. Among them this study examines six major streams as case study. These are:

1. Government Primary School
2. Registered Non-Government Primary School
3. Non-Registered Non-Government Primary School
4. Ebtedayee Madrasah
5. NGO-run School
6. Kindergarten School

Case study 1: Rajshahi Upashahar Model Government Primary School

"Indifferent attitude of rich people towards government primary school, lack of awareness of guardians, lack of teachers' sincerity, bigger rich-poor gap all these together do not help students to dream in wider angle"

:Shamsunnahar Begum, Head Mistress, Rajshahi Upashahar Model Government Primary School, Rajshahi.

²⁵ *One World Action for a just and equal world*

²⁶ *A. M. Sharafuddin, Innovations in Primary Education in Bangladesh*



The words of Shamsunnahar reflect the general pictures of government primary school in entire Bangladesh. This model school is one of the old primary school in Rajshahi city. For the last four decades uncountable restless efforts of many learned people and social workers made this school in today's shape. After getting the education from this primary education children have to attain 53 skills and can dream a good future and reality is different.

Professor Shamsul Hoq took the first initiatives along with other education patrons in to establish this school. Initially it was an administrative building of Upashahar (suburb) housing estate of Rajshahi city. Later on administrative building was shifted other place and school started function in a very small building. After independence it is nationalized along with other primary school in 1973. Presently it is known as model school of Bowali, Rajshahi metropolitan city. One it had huge number of students but today the number of students are decreasing. The reasons are obvious. The well-off family fell disgrace to send their children to government primary school.



There are 11 members in the school managing committee. They are: (I) Head Master; (II) person patronizing education; (III) Teacher from nearest high school; (IV) Teachers' representation from the school; (V) land donor of school; and (VI) Guardians' representatives. Besides, there is another committee named 'Teachers-Guardians Welfare Committee'. The prime responsibility of this committee is to ensure transparent use of fund received to run the school.

School receives Tk.2000 for every six month as contingency to buy chalk, duster and other necessary logistics. For other necessary requirements school authority has to manage by themselves. The other sources include, donation of rich people of the society and the well-off guardians and rent receives from the some shops owned by school. It was changed as model primary school in 1983. As the number of students were greater comparative to other government primary school, the number of teachers also more than other government primary school. At present the number of teacher is 10 and everyone is trained from Primary School Teachers' Training Institute. School has subject-wise teacher.

Additionally, there is cluster training system for teachers imparted by Thana Education Officer (TEO). Among the teachers 20% are post-graduate, 30% graduate and remaining 50% teachers passed only higher secondary school certificate (HSC). Pay structure of the teachers:

Table 8: Pay structure

Designation	Basic pay	Addition to Basic pay			Total Pay	Deduction from pay		Net Pay
		House rent	Medical Allowance	Tiffin		Gratuity	Welfare trust	
Head Master	3500	1750	500	100	5850	200	26	5624
Assistant teacher	3100	1550	400	100	5150	200	26	4924

The total number of students is 350 out of which 60% are girls and 40% are boys. 95% students of class I- III passed successfully whereas, successful completion of class III - V is only 50%. Among other reasons of non completion in the study school is leaving for better school especially for that government school that provides education up to secondary level. School Curricula in model school is as follows:

Table 9: Curricula for different class

Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
1.Bengali	1.Bengali	1.Bengali	1.Bengali	1.Bengali
2. English,	2. English,	2. English,	2. English,	2. English,
3. Math,	3. Math,	3. Math,	3. Math,	3. Math,
4. General knowledge & Environment,	4. General knowledge & Environment,	4. Social studies	4. Social studies	4. Social studies
5. Religion	5. Religion	5. Religion	5. Religion	5. Religion
		6. General science	6. General science	6. General science
		7. Art & Craft	7. Art & Craft	7. Art & Craft
		8. Physical studies	8. Physical studies	8. Physical studies

Student Evaluation: Students are evaluated by examinations conducted as per government instructions. The marks distribution for examinations:

Most students (50%) feel that Mathematics is the toughest subject for them. 40% respondents told that English is hard subject to them. Cent percent respondent students enjoy studying Bengali. It is because, Bengali is easy to understand but English and Mathematics cannot. Though, the teachers do not give them rigorous punishment if they do not able to do the homework, yet sometimes teacher use cane to punish them. Parents have long dream about their children. The aims of educating them are to be a good human being and have a good livelihood. Respondent student said that they have been cared off little but in private institute more care is taken for the students. One guardian said, only learning in the school is not good enough to do good result, it needs parents' care at home and if need house tutor can be kept for hard subject.

There is regular system of inspection by higher authority. Assistant Upazila/Thana Education Officer, Upazila/Thana Education Officer, and

District Primary Education Officer visit school every month. Officials from District Administration, Upazila Administration, and Directorate of Primary Education and Ministry of Primary & Mass Education very occasionally visit school. Upazila Resource Centre is very adjacent to the school. Assistant Instructor and Instructor designated officer work here and they regularly visit the school.

Table 10: Marks distribution in examination

Class	Examination		Comments
	Written (Marks)	Oral (Marks)	
Class I	Bengali (100) English (100) Math (100)	General knowledge & Environment (25) Religion (25)	For art and craft exam students draw picture and prepare
Class II	Bengali (100) English (100) Math (100) General knowledge & Environment (25) Religion (25)	No oral exam.	creative items There is no book recommended by Text Book Board for art and craft Government
Class III	Bengali (100) English (100) Math (100) Social studies(100) Religion (100) General science (100) Art & Craft (25) Physical studies (25)	No oral exam No oral exam	provides free text books to student from Class I-V
Class IV	Bengali (100) English (100) Math (100) Social studies(100) Religion (100) General science (100) Art & Craft (25) Physical studies (25)	No oral exam	
Class V	Bengali (100) English (100) Math (100) Social studies(100) Religion (100) General science (100) Art & Craft (25) Physical studies (25)	No oral exam	

Students have opportunities for amusement. They are provided with Carom, Ludu, skipping and other indoor sports item by the government. School Authority is trying to introduce school uniform of its own initiative.

Study tries to grasp the students' aim in life, their future thinking and education environment. 45% students want to be physician, 20% Engineer, 10% teacher and remaining 25% will be pleased to get any sorts of job. Most of the parents are poor and earn their livelihood by very low profile job (See, table-11).

Table 11: Parents' literacy and livelihood Profile

Literacy level			Livelihood		Average family member & monthly income
No literacy	30%	Small	grocery	60%	6
Class III-V	30%	Small	trade	10%	Monthly income: Tk.2500-3000
Class V-VIII	25%	Govt.	service	20%	
Above	15%	Others		10%	69

- Lack of sufficient space to sit
- Lack of sufficient sanitation facility. The school has only 4 toilets for the students, teacher and staff. There is no separate toilet for girl student..
- Play field is very small
- School curricula is changing with the time, but teachers are not equipped with the changing curricula by training
- There is no cleaner and night guard for the school, so school cannot be kept clean always and maintenance becomes tough.
- School authority has employed a woman caretaker by their own initiative not by the government, so they have to pay for her and it is very difficult for them.
- Most of the government sponsored large-scale programs like preparing voter list, children survey, vaccination program etc are implemented by the primary school teachers. It hampers the students learning. Moreover, often this work is done without honourarium. There is no Cash support stipend for the municipality students. As a result, sometimes it becomes difficult to prevent drop out.
- Most of students of government primary school are come from very poor family. Even they cannot arrange their Tiffin during break. So, these students cannot keep their mind in the study.

Case Study 2: Terokhadia Progati Registered Non-Government Primary School.

Liakot Ali dreamt that the young kids will learn in beautiful environment and contribute to the nation building. After complementation of student life he starts the materializing his dream. In his journey he finds some associate to make it easy. Local ward commissioner Murad Ali, the then deputy commissioner of the district Mr. Selim Sarder were two important of the queue who contributed to establish this school. Deputy Commissioner Selim Sarder provides land for the school and Liakot Ali was vested with the responsibility of running the school. Now he is the Head Master of the school.



Establishment: Terokhadia Progati Non-Government Primary School was formally started in 1989. It is 2 Km away from the Rajshahi Cantonment, very

adjacent to Upashahar. It is registered in 1991. As per government rule 4 teachers work here. The existing school building is constructed in 1994 on LGED finance. This two storied building has 6 rooms, out of which 2 are used for teacher and remaining are class room. LGED constructed one storied building for 95% registered non-government primary school by 1995. There is 11 member managing committee for the management of the school. Committee is constituted with Head Master of the school, donor, and guardian, Head Master of nearest high school, ward commissioner and local person patronizing education. There are 500 students in the school. School follows the curricula set by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board for all class ranging from class I-V. Apart from this there is one pre-primary class for the very small kids. The teacher themselves prepare the curricula for pre-primary class. It helps to enroll maximum number in class I and increase quality of class I students.

Name : **Shah Md. Saeem**
 Class : V
 Age : 9 years
 Father's profession: Electrician
 Tuition Fee: Free
 Exam Fee: Tk.15



My mother says that one day I will be a bank officer. Our family consists of our parents, my sister and I myself. My father earns very little and often it becomes difficult for my father to run our family. Yet my parent dreams on me that one day I will end their sufferings and hardship. In our school, if we cannot prepare our home tasks then teacher used to punish us. Thanks God that always prepare my class work and able escape punishment. Bengali is easy to read and understand but English is too hard for me and other students. I will go to another good school after completing education of this school.

Pupils: Most of the students (95%) of registered non-government primary schools come from very poor family. Though textbooks are provided by the government yet it becomes hard to buy writing pad, pen and other logistics. Most cases parents cannot provide financial support to the students. An there is no system of Cash support stipend in municipality area, so parents do not encourage to send their children to school rather they choose to earn money by their kids. Enrolment and attendance is good in Class I-III. After Class III some of the students go to other good schools or drop out. The student respondents said that most parents of the students are poor. One of the respondent's fathers lives by earth cutting. One's father is a peon in Rajshahi city corporation; one's father died and one' father is a driver. Many times they face difficulties to continue education due to financial crisis. They have stay school from 12:30 to 4:00 pm. In this long time they feel hungry and some of the students do not money to buy Tiffin. It is difficult to keep attention in studies with hungry stomach. School provides them with half new books and half old books. The second hand old books are often torn and cannot be read. All the respondent students said that class III-IV students get 3 old books and 3 new books supplied by board. But class- I, class-II and class-V students receive all new books. Most students do not know what they will do in future. They do not have specific aim. Class V student Hafiz's father work as peon in Rajshahi City Corporation and Hafiz also want to work in City Corporation

Teachers: There are 4 teachers in the school. Of them 2 are male teachers and 2 are female. Head Master is only graduate and remaining teachers have HSC. Every teaching faculty has PTI training. District Primary Education Officer (DPEO) supervises the training matters. The teachers of Registered Non-government primary schools are sent to PTI for one year training. Teachers are provided cluster

training subject wise once in every two month. Assistant Upazila Education Officer conducts cluster training in his/her upazila with trainees from 4-5 schools. It's a day-long training and teachers are immensely benefited from this subject wise training as commented by the teachers. According to the Registered non-government primary school regulation a school can appoint highest 5 teachers in a school. But only 4 will get government subvention and school authority will arrange salary for extra one which almost impossible for them. Appointing teacher needs school managing committee approval. After exhausting the all necessary requirement to appoint teacher, school authority need to seek government endorsement.



Table 12: Pay structure (in BD Taka)

Designation	Pay scale	Basic pay	Addition to Basic pay			Total Pay	Deduction from pay		Net Pay
			House rent	Medical Allowance	Tiffin		Gratuity	Welfare trust	
Head Master	3000	2850	200	200	0	3250+50 (as HM allowance)	0	66	3234
Assistant teacher	3000	2850	200	200	0	3250	0	66	3184

Note : Teachers will get 2 festival allowances (half of the basic pay). Every teacher has to deduct 2% of his/her basic pay as benevolent fund (welfare trust)

Problems:

- **Poorly Paid:** The teaching faculty of registered non-government primary school (RNGPS) teacher is getting monthly around Tk.3000. If needed one additional teacher can be appointed but government will not pay him/her. It is simply impossible to run a family in municipality with monthly salary of around Tk.3000 only whereas 1kg simple rice is Tk.30.
- **Lack of space:** The number of students in each class is around 90-100. Students have to sit very congested which demotivates to attend in the class room. The class room is over crowded and noisy, so, all students cannot hear their class teacher. School authority informed the matter to concerned authority but no remedy has been provided.
- **Complexities in staffing:** Recruitment in RNGPS is very complex and time consuming. Even it is difficult to appoint a new teacher in a place of retired teacher
- **Teacher-student ratio:** In government statistics teacher-student ration in primary education is 1:40. But in this school the ratio is more 1: 100+. As per government instruction a RNGPS can enroll only 400 but in this study school 500 students are learning here in two shifts.
- **Meeting regular expenditure:** To meet regular expenditure a RNGPS get Tk.150 per month as contingency bill. The study team examined the

mandatory expenditures of month and found that the school needs Tk.500 only to pay electricity bill. School has appointed a cleaner (not government paid) for whom authority has to pay Tk.700 per month. In addition there are some other occasional expenditures like, Milad-Mahfil, Annual Sports Competition, Mothers' Day, Guardians' Committee Meeting, Managing Committee Meeting that have to be met by school administration but they do not have permanent source of income.

- **Reading material and other logistics:** School does not have required reading material and other logistics like Bench, and fund for infrastructure development
- **Maintenance:** There is no government provision to appoint night guard and other lower subordinate staff. So it becomes impossible to maintain the school.
- **Play ground:** Students do not have enough space to play.
- **Sanitation:** The school has very inadequate sanitation facility. 500 students can use only 2 toilets. There is only one tube well to meet 500 students drinking water need and ironically often it becomes out of order.
- **Extra curricular activities:** School authority cannot arrange extra curricular activities to nourish the creativity of the students due funding crisis.
- **Electricity facility:** Whole school building does not have electricity facility.

The problems mentioned above are the general scenario of any RNGPS. Teacher crisis, apathy on the part of school managing committee, lack of initiatives of District Primary Education Office, insufficient financial support from government, guardians' indifference attitude detracted RNGPS from its goal of providing productive education.

Case Study 3: Shishu Niketon (Un Registered Non-government Primary School)

Establishment: Shishu Niketon-a Un Registered Non-Government Primary School (NRNGPS) commenced its function as education provider to little angels long three decades ago. Still this teachers and staff of the school did not come under government subvention. It does not have required infrastructure and support



from government authority. The school is housed in a go down of Rajshahi Upashahar Housing Society. Before establishing school this go down was used by bad people of the locality. To rescue it from this unbearable situation, the then Chief Engineer Mr. Masudur Rahman planned to establish a school in this goes down in 1984. Presently the school has 100 students of which 60 are girls and remaining 40 are boys. It provides education to class I-V. They provide Textbook given by National Curriculum and Textbook Board. Most of students are very poor. Even they cannot pay the admission fee Tk.250 and other fees. Situation of other NRNGPs located in rural areas is horrifying.

Staff and infrastructure: There are only 4 teaching staff in the school. All are women. One had master degree, one is graduate and remaining 2 have HSC.

There is no opportunity for their training. Shamsun Nahar is working as Assistant Teacher since its inception. She told that she cannot leave this school for her love to it. She does not get salary from government. Even she does not get salary regularly from school also.

The school is a tin-shed house with brick built walls. But inside the school partition is made by bamboo-made mat. School has only 4 class room. The blackboard and benches are so old that it is hard to use them. During rainy season the roof cannot protect rain water. There is no tube well of its own. If needed, water is brought from outside. There is only one toilet just outside of the school compound. There is no supporting staff for the school. So, school cannot be kept dirt free. As there is no night guard, often outside people make the school dirty during off-hour especially at night. School is not inspected by any government official.

Managing committee: There is 11 member managing committee consisted of Head Master, guardians and the member of housing society for the school. Committee is mostly inactive. There is no development for long time. Teachers cannot be paid by the students' tuition fee. Even the regular expenditure cannot be met by the tuition fee. This is almost common picture of the all NRNGPS. Land on which the school is situated is not registered for the school by the Housing Society. So, school cannot be registered to government. School authority drew attention of Rajshahi City Corporation to settle the issue as the Housing society is a program of City Corporation.

Case Study 4: Masjid-E-Nur Dakhil Madrasah

Establishment: Masjid-E-Nur Dakhil Madrasah is set up in 1984 but it got academic recognition and government grant in 2000 and 2002 respectively. It has two parts: one is for Ebtedayee and another is for Dakhil. Since 1990, only Ebtedayee is not recognized in the urban areas. Therefore, only Ebtedayee Madrasa is not available in the city areas. There is no full-fledged government Ebtedayee Madrasah in the country. Some of the Ebtedayee



Madrasahs that are in the rural areas have government registration. These registered Ebtedayee Madrasah can only get grants from Bangladesh Madrasah Board. The Madrasahs those are registered receives salary from government.

Managing committee: The Madrasah under studied has 11 member managing committee for smooth running of it. This committee comprised of representative from District administration, teachers, doctors, guardians, Principal of the school and a local personality patronizing education. Committee acts as watchdog for all activities of the Madrasah including recruiting teachers and staff, Madrasah development, solving problems and ensuring financial transparency.

The total number of learners in the Madrasah is 200 of which 30% are girls and 70% are boys. There is no tuition fee for students. Examination fee is Tk.15-25 based on class. It follows Madrasah Board Text curricula. It provides free text books to the students supplied by Madrasah Board. The curricula for different class:

Table 13: Subjects taught in different Ebtedayee class

Baby Class	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
Quran	Quran	Quran	Quran	Quran	Quran
Arabic	Arabic	Arabic literature	Arabic literature	Arabic literature	Arabic part I
Bengali	Akayeed & Fiqah	Akayeed & Fiqah	Akayeed & Fiqah	Akayeed & Fiqah	Akayeed & Fiqah
Math	Bengali	Bengali	Bengali	Bengali	Bengali
English	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
Practical	English	English	English	English	English
	Practical	Practical	Practical	Practical	Social studies
		Math for little baby	Social studies	Social studies	Science
			Science	Science	General knowledge
			General knowledge	General knowledge	Word book in three language
			Word book in three language	Word book in three language	Arabic Part II
			Quran learning	Quran learning	

Quran, Aqaeed & Fiqah, Arabic literature, Bengali, English, Mathematics, social studies and Science are published by Madrasa Board. General knowledge book is published by Islamic Education Society. Bangladesh Nurani Talimul Quran Waqaf Estate published Quran learning book. Bengali and English rapid readers are written by independent writers but nominated by the board. There are some other books written by independent writers. The practical class includes learning Amal Akhlac and cleanliness. This Madrasah has separate dress code. Boys have to wear white Punjabi, pajama, navy-blue Sherwani, white cap, white shocks and white keds. The dresses for girls are: White kamij, white pajama, navy-blue veil, handkerchief, white shocks and keds. Small girls must wear scarf on their head and sober dress.

I lost my father in 2004. Ours is a 6 member's family: 3 brothers, 2 sisters and my mother. My elder brother is a worker of a furniture shop and my moter lives at village in naogaon. I live in an orphanage here. When I will be grown up I will be a Muajjin and ends our family's sorrow

Md. Abu Saeed

13 years, Class V

Masjid-E-Nur Dakhil Madrasha

Rajshahi

Staff: 90% students of Madrasah come from orphanage. Total number of teaching staff is 4 of whom one is woman. The Head Master's educational qualification is Fazil²⁷. Among the Assistant Teachers one's qualification is Alim²⁸; one is kwari²⁹ and another is HSC. Teachers get 95% of their salary from government. The teachers of only registered Ebtedayee Madrasah get fixed salary of Tk.500 per month.

²⁷ Ministry of Education promulgated a notification equaling Fazil to Degree of general education, but later on it was not implemented.

²⁸ In 1986 through a gazette notification government made Alim equivalent to HSC

²⁹ In 1995 government allow the member of Kwari Mujabbed Group to appoint as teacher. They are appointed to teach Quran correctly. After completing ebtadaye they have to study Quran for another five years and must qualify in a 400 marks examination. They do not have any sorts of certificate.

Table 14: Pay structure (in BD Taka)

Designation	Pay scale	Basic pay	Addition to Basic pay			Total Pay	Deduction from pay		Net Pay
			House rent	Medical Allowance	Tiffin		Gratuity	Welfare trust	
Head Master/ Super	6800	2850	200	200	0	3250+50 (as HM allowance)	0	66	3234
Assistant teacher (Fazil)	4100	2850	200	200	0	3250	0	66	3184
Assistant teacher (Alim)	3300	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Assistant teacher (Kwari)	3000	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Note : Teachers will get 2 festival allowances (half of the basic pay). Every teacher has to deduct 2% of his/her basic pay as benevolent fund (Welfare trust)

Case Study 5: BRAC School

An old brick built house with unfinished walls. Students are reading sitting on a long jute mat put down on floor. A woman teacher is educating the learners with sincerity. This is a BRAC school at Chamar para, Laksmipur of Rajshahi city. It started in 2006. This is a small unit of BRAC education program for the poor. There is 7 member committee consists of teacher of the school, 5



guardians and owner of the house for managing the school. BRAC, one of the biggest NGOs in our country (now operating other countries e.g. Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and some African countries also) finances for entire expenditure. Out of 30 students, 10 are boys and 20 are girls. This program puts extra emphasis on girl education. The academic curricula are different from other primary schools of the country. Students get admitted here in class I. They elevated to class II after learning 10 months. For class II to class V students are required to study 8 months in each class. Thus a student can complete his/her primary education in BRAC School in 42 months.

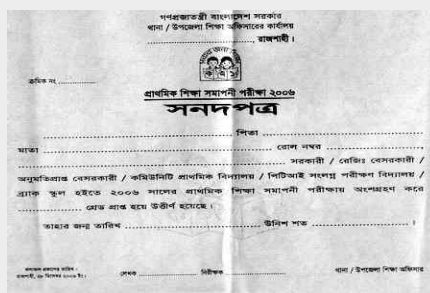


For each batch, success rate is 100%. No one drops out from any class. If someone is irregular or delay in school, then teacher tries to find the true cause of it and solve it in consultation with the student and guardian. If needed, class schedule and time are also changed. The teacher of this school Mrs. Poli Begum opined that teacher's close super vision is the secret of this grand success.

Table 15: The subjects taught in different classes of BRAC School.

Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
Bengali	Bengali	Bengali	Bengali	Bengali
Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
Environment	Environment	Environment	Social studies	Social studies
	English	English	English	English
		Science	Science	Science
			Religion	Religion

The curricula for Class I - Class IV are designed by BRAC. Books for Class I- IV are published by BRAC itself and distributes to the learners free. Class V follows government curricula and is taught government publications for class V. BRAC collected necessary books from district primary education office and distribute them to the students. The principal reason for following same curricula for class V is that the students must sit for Primary Education Completion Examination designed for all class v. The students successfully passing this examination are awarded certificate. This certificate is needed to get admitted into secondary schools. BRAC's Books for class I-V is easier than the books of National Curriculum and Textbook Board. This is intentionally done because, 90% parents of students are illiterate. They cannot help their children in their learning.



School Management: School starts at 7 am in the morning and continues to 12 noon. There are some amusement systems between the different class hours. Teacher and student together sings, dance and do some other extra-curricular activities. This removes the boredom of the continuous class. 30 students are enrolled for each class and supervised by one teacher. In addition 2 students make group and prepare home work in the house. They can also sit for class V scholarship examination. Teachers hold talk with guardians in every month to motivate the parents so that they can provide highest help to their kids' education.

Every teacher of the BRAC School must have HSC qualification and appointed on monthly salary of Tk.1000. Before starting their career as BRAC School teacher they are to be provided with 15 days training. Besides, teachers will receive one day training in each month on specific subjects. Teachers motivate both parents and students to complete primary education from BRAC School. They also monitor students in their secondary education too. If any student is too poor to carry on their secondary education, in that case, BRAC provide some financial assistance to them.

The present school is on rent which Tk.200 per month. All the learning materials e.g. books, pencils, color pencil for drawing, writing pad, chalk, dusters etc. are given free of cost.

Sitting arrangements for the students are not good. They have to sit on floor and write bending their body which is harmful to their body. Sanitation facility is very poor. If not extremely necessary the house lord does not permit any one to use his toilet. But students use the landlord's tube well.

Case Study 6: Adventist International Mission School (kindergarten/English Medium)

Establishment: Adventist International Mission School is established at Upashahar in Rajshahi in 1996. The school is housed in two floors of a three storied building. It's out look is definitely aristocrat. Always there is a gate keeper wearing uniform. During school hours, guardians wait in front of the gate for their kids. It is expensive, yet parents opted for it considering the future of their children. There is a school managing committee which is consisted of 9-11 members. Principal and guardians is the only member of the committee.



Teachers and pupils: 160 students are learning here. Not exceeding 30-35 students are enrolled in every class. The classes are Play, Nursery, KG and Class I-V. It runs in two shifts: 1. Morning shift (7 am to 11:30 am) for Play group to KG and 2. Day shift (12 pm to 4 pm) for Class I- V. Admission rate is high in Play group to class I. After that some students leave this school. According to the opinion of the Principal of the school Mr. Stephen Gomez, financial limitation and ignorance of guardians about English medium school, not having enough O level- A level school etc encourage guardians to take their children from this school to other schools. But most parents want start their kids education from this school as they believe this school provides education to the babies with utmost care and sincerity. 99% students that enrolled in Play group complete Class I and 60% complete Class V education from this school.

Table 16: Students' expenses (in BD taka)

Class	Tuition Fee	Price of books	Price of class diary
Play, KG, Nursery	600	435	50
Class I - III	700		
Class IV - V	750		

Table 17: Book lists for different class

Play	Nursery	KG	Class I	Class II	Class III	Class IV	Class V
Moral	Moral	Moral	Moral	Moral	Moral	Moral	Moral
English	English	English	Computer	Computer	Computer	Computer	Computer
Bengali	Bengali	Bengali	Drawing	Drawing	Drawing	Drawing	Drawing
Math	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math	Math
	Computer	Computer	English Grammar	English Grammar	English Grammar	English Grammar	English Grammar
	Drawing	Drawing	Science	Science	Science	Science	Science
	Health	Health	Bangla	Bangla	Bangla	Bangla	Bangla
			English Literature	English Literature	English Literature	English Literature	English Literature
			Health	Health	Health	Health	Health
			Moral		Social Science	Social Science	Social Science

Bengali subject for class I- V, school follows the National Curriculum and Textbook Board . For social Science it follows English version of Social Science book of National Curriculum and Textbook Board . For other subjects they follow British Curriculum with some modification to adjust Bangladeshi Curriculum.

The total number of teachers in the school is 10 of which 50% are male and 50% female. Two teachers have master degree and others are only graduate. The salary is fixed base on individual's educational qualification. The salary scale of the teachers is Tk.4000-5000.

Building rent, teachers' salary, teaching materials like chalk, duster, amusement equipments, sports items etc are born by Church based Christian Missionary.

Facilities: The whole school is well equipped. It has good sanitation system, sports items. But it does not have play ground. Having all the modern facilities of learning the school is not so popular which it needs to be due to guardians' ignorance about international standard of education, negative attitude towards Christian Missionary, insufficient family budget for children's education etc.

When children started to use English words in speaking after getting admitted in the kindergarten or English medium school, parents think that their kids will do better in their future life. Most of the guardians do not think whether their children will be able to adjust and to be feet for Bangladesh socio-economic condition having different education. There is no specific and effective government regulation to control kindergarten and English Medium.



ASPECTS OF EXISTING DISPARITIES AND DIFFERENTIAL OUTCOME

There are differences in curricula, teachers' training, infrastructure and attitude & outlook of both school authority and guardians among the different streams in primary education. Children start their education with different systems and develop differently which significantly influence their future life.

Curricula

The followings are some disparities among the different streams in primary education.

Table 18: Differences in Curricula

Class	General subjects included in the text curricula	Differences of subjects taught in different streams			
		Govt. primary school	Ebtedayee Madrasah	NGO- run school	Kindergarten/English Medium
Class I	Bengali Mathematics	English, Introduction Environment, Religion	Quran, Arabic literature, Aqaeed & Fiqah	Environment	Moral, Drawing, Grammar, Health, Computer, English Science,
Class II	Bengali Mathematics	Introduction Environment, Religion	Quran, Arabic literature, Aqaeed & Fiqah	Environment, English	Moral, Drawing, Grammar, Health, Computer, English Science,
Class III	Bengali Mathematics English, Social Science	Religion Art & craft, physical study	Quran, Arabic literature, Aqaeed & Fiqah, General knowledge, word book on three language, Quran learning	-	Moral, Drawing, Grammar, Health, Computer, English
Class IV	Bengali Mathematics English, Social Science	Religion Art & craft, physical study	Quran, Arabic literature, Aqaeed & Fiqah, General knowledge, Practical, word book on three language, Quran learning	Religion	Moral, Drawing, Grammar, Health, Computer, English
Class V	Bengali Mathematics English, Social Science	Religion Art & craft, physical study	Quran, Arabic literature, Aqaeed & Fiqah, General knowledge, Practical, word book on three language, Quran learning	Religion	Moral, Drawing, Grammar, Health, Computer, English

The curricula for Government Primary school are formulated by National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) and Ebtedayee Madrasah's curricula are designed by Madrasah education board. Registered Non-government primary school and Non-Registered Non-government primary school follow NCTB. NGO run school (BRAC) follows their own curricula for up to class IV. For class V they follow NCTB. Kindergarten and English Medium neither follow neither full NCTB Curriculum nor foreign Curriculum in to.

Selecting Curricula

The main aim of the primary education is flourishing and development of children's overall physical, mental, social, ethical and human ability. There are means to attain the set goals and objectives of primary education.

The experts of NCTB designed the Curriculum for primary school students based on:

- State goals and objectives for primary education
- Age of the children
- Economic, social and cultural context
- General IQ of the children
- Mental maturity of students
- Teachers' preparation
- Infrastructure of the school
- Needs of individuals and society

Table 19: Different contents in primary education

Subject	Streams	Differences in the contents in 3 Primary Education Streams		
		NCTB for GPS, RNGPS & NRNGPS	Madrasah Board	English Medium/ kindergarten
Social Science Book of Class V		Added regional and international cooperation, ethnic community, nation's general history, citizen duties and responsibility	Instead of NCTB's contents it added Prophet Hz Muhammad (sm) life in Medina, Medina charter and establishment of State, Muslim rule in the Middle East	Avoided both NCTB and Madrasah Board the studied kindergarten/English Medium school included New children's illustrated History by Henderson & Word published by Oxford University Press, India. The first chapter is on Jorge Washington and in the following chapters it describes international history
Science Book of Class V		NCTB' science book put emphasis on general science & technology, agriculture, medical science and astronomy	Shuns the NCTB contents like medical science and astronomy but keeps agriculture	They teach Integrated Primary Science which describes plant life, animal life, human body, earth & atmosphere, sky & space. Avoided both NCTB and Madrasah Board' subject matter
Mathematics		NCTB book clearly gives idea about Bengali, Solar and Hizry year, month and day; general arithmetic logic	Madrasah Board gives idea on only Hizry year, month, day etc but not solar and Bengali year	General mathematics

Note : NCTB : National Curriculum and Textbook Board

GPS : Government Primary School

RNGPS : Registered Non-Government Primary School

NRNGPS : Non-Registered Non-Government Primary School

NCTB curricula are used in all GPS, RNGPS and NRNGPS and Ebtedayee Madrasah follow Madrasah board's curricula. But Kindergarten and English

Medium is not designed so. What objective State can be achieved through un-harmonized different streams of primary education is a big question. Besides, political, religious and general ideology also injected in the primary education based on either ruling regimes ideology or the interest of the organization that run the program. In history related part of the concerned book is different from one stream to another stream. In NCTB curricula general history of the country is discussed whereas in Madrasah board curricula, it avoided the general history rather included the Islamic history and in English medium instead of general and Islamic history they have included foreign history. The appropriateness of each curriculum needs to be assessed and harmonized with national goals and aspiration.

Disparities in Teaching Staff Quality

There are disparities in qualifications of the teaching staff. The quality of urban school teacher is better than that of rural areas. In case study 1, the studied model school 50% teachers have master degree whereas in rural areas it is difficult to have master holder teachers. There are mark differences in quality of teachers in different streams (case study school):

Table 20: Teacher's educational qualifications

Institute	No. of teachers	Educational qualification of teachers			
		Master	Graduate	Intermediate	Kwari
Government Primary School	10	20%	30%	50%	0%
Registered Non-Government Primacy school	4	0%	25%	75%	0%
Non-Registered Non-Government Primacy school	4	25%	25%	50%	0%
Ebtedayee Madrasah	4	0%	25% (Fazil)	25% (Alim); 25% (HSC)	25%
NGO school (BRAC)	1	0%	0%	100%	0%
Kindergarten/English Medium	10	20%	80%	0%	0%

It is not denying fact that the teachers' qualification is very vital for teaching and it is significantly reflected in the output (quality education). In addition, teachers' training is another fundament cause in quality education. There are also differences in trained teachers.

Teachers' Training

Training for the teachers is general policy stand. There is Primary Teachers' Training Institute is set up to train the primary school teachers. Training has a significant contribution in teachers' salary where subvention comes from government. Training of teachers for the other streams not having government subvention is determined by streams governing authority. Government does not intervene to it. Virtually government does not have any comprehensive plan and program to ensure quality education in line with the national heritage and aspiration.

Table 21: Teacher's training in different streams

Institute		Teachers' Training		
		Categories of training	Training Institute/ Authority	Duration of Training
Government School	Primary	PTI Training; Subject-wise Cluster training	PTI training is provided by PTI; Cluster training is given by DPEO Office	PTI is 1 year training Cluster training is day long and provided by Assistant Upazila/Thana Education Officer on subject basis one in every 2 month.
Registered Government school	Non - Primacy	PTI Training; Subject-wise Cluster training	-Do-	-Do-
Non-Registered Government school	Non-Primacy	No training	-	-
Ebtedayee Madrasah		No training	-	-
NGO school (BRAC)		Teachers' Training	Teachers' Training Centre	15 days
Kindergarten/English Medium		Foundation training	Training centre of School	15-21 days

Always there remains a gap between the earned knowledge in formal education and knowledge required for a job. Training reduces this gap. Though there is a system of training for government and registered non-government primary school teacher, but there is no feedback or monitoring mechanism of imparted training. It is an urgent need to develop training module based on curriculum as well as monitoring its feedback.

Education Materials and Logistics

There are also considerable divergences in educational environment, education materials and required logistics. A very few pictures of the disparities in this regard depicted below:

- Classroom: Except English Medium school the other streams under study suffer from adequate classroom needs. Government constructs building for government and registered non-government primary schools but those are not sufficient for the students. Government needs to edit its primary school building construction blue print. It should be need based. The classroom of BRAC is in no criteria could be classroom for young kids.
- Sanitation facilities: Sanitation facilities in all the streams excluding English Medium are very poor. The following table is good enough to visualize the sanitation situation of the children in different schools:

Table 22: Sanitation situation of different streams

Institute	No. of students	No. of latrine	Latrine-student ratio	No. of tube well
Government Primary School	350	4	1:87	1
Registered Non-Government Primacy school	500	2	1:250	1
Non-Registered Non-Government Primacy school	100	1	1:100	Nil
Ebtedayee Madrasah	200	2	1:100	1
NGO school (BRAC)	30	Nil	-	Nil
Kindergarten/English Medium	160	4	1:40	1+Water supply

Response of Teacher to Students

Teachers' response to the students is very vital to create congenial learning environment. Teachers of kindergarten take highest care for their students. Even teachers help students to use toilet if needed. Teachers make students attentive to the class. Also in BRAC school teacher is earnestly attending to the learners. Teacher is a friend to the student in BRAC School. To remove monotony of continuous learning, teacher arranges cultural events for them in between the classes. In government primary school it is absent. Teachers are not much careful for their pupils. If they can be more vigilant to students' learning the poor parents can avoid private coaching. In Madrasa the teacher-students distance is greater than other streams. In government primary school teachers are accustomed to use cane-stick to punish students. Teachers' behaviour to the students is as follows:

Table 23: Students responses to teachers' behaviour to them.

Institute	Do teachers' punish student			Teachers' attitude to the students if they fail to understand & prepare lesson
	How teacher punish	respondents	No	
Government Primary School	Teacher use scale to beat	28%	30%	Teachers try to make us understand (20%)
	Teacher use cane to beat	14%		
Registered Non-Government Primacy school	Teacher use cane to beat	40%	20%	Silent in response (30%) First make us understand if not they beat (10%)
Non-Registered Non-Government Primacy school	Teacher use cane to beat	55%	20%	-
	Teacher use hands to punish	25%		
Ebtedayee Madrasah	Teacher use cane to beat	90%	-	prefer to keep silent (10%)
NGO school (BRAC)	Teacher sometimes punish	2%	90%	First try to make students understand then censure (8%)
Kindergarten/English Medium	-	-	-	Scold

Spending on Education in Different Streams

There are disparities in spending also.

Table: Differences in spending in various streams. Per student spending in different streams varies in a considerable way. In a registered Ebtedayee Madrasah only Tk.10.50 is spent per student per month whereas per student spending in the Kindergarten is Tk.531.25 which is almost 51 times higher than Madrasah.

Table 24: Expenditure for education in different streams

Institute	Expenditure per month (in BD Taka)					
	No. of teachers	Salary	Others	Total	No. of Students	Expenditure per student
Government Primary School	10	49940	350	50290	350	143.69
Registered Non-Government Primacy school	4	13050	150	13200	500	26.40
Non-Registered Non-Government Primacy school	4	N/A	-	-	100	-
Ebtedayee Madrasah	4	2100	-	2100	200	10.50
NGO school (BRAC)	1	1000	200	1200	30	40.00
Kindergarten/English Medium	10	65000	25000	85000	160	531.25

CHALLENGES TO ESTABLISHING A COMMON SYSTEM

Notwithstanding a constitutional directive of unified people-centered secular educational system, there are diverse streams of English medium, vernacular secular education and religion centred Madrasah education in Bangladesh. There are 11 types of primary level educational institutions. The majority of the children are enrolled in the government primary schools. The non-government registered primary schools have the next highest number. Currently, about half of the schools are managed by the government. Non-government institutions have been active in promoting education in poor villages without schools and for primary school age working children with flexibly timed non-formal programs in response to meeting unmet needs for primary education.

PRSP

Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP)-the blue print for Bangladesh government takes a rights-based approach and identifies four strategic objectives:

- a) creating opportunity towards realizing the full potential of children (access to health, nutrition, education, water and sanitation);
- b) ensuring the best interests of children in national, social, family and personal situations (empowerment of children);
- c) ensuring safety and security at home and in the public space (protection against abuse, exploitation and violence) and
- d) Establishing and protecting children's rights (social inclusion, decent work and livelihood).

PRSP goal is-

- to introduce and strengthen early childhood and pre-school education;
- introduce a unified and common primary education opportunity for all children;
- improve quality of primary education;
- 100 % enrolment and raise all other targets to achieve quality and completion in primary education;
- increase literacy rate to 80% and
- Expand the scope of NFE beyond the literacy to reach out to the extreme poor and in remote areas.

Introducing a unified and common primary education opportunity for all children is a State policy that has been incorporated in the constitution and again the same policy has been reflected in the PRSP too. But the reality is the existence of different streams in primary education in Bangladesh. Then, pertinently question arises where does the problem lie? Let's do the dissection of the problem.

Education Structure

The education system of Bangladesh is divided into three conventional stages, viz. primary, secondary and higher education. Each stage consists of different

educational programs and types of institutions. Primary education is imparted by government and government- assisted primary schools (catering to two-thirds of the students), Madrasah and at least eight other types of institutions, including NGO-run non-formal primary schools.

Along with 5-year general primary education there is 5-year religious education in Ebtedayee Madrasah. Besides, there is full religion-based kawmi education in primary stage.

Curricula for general primary education are designed by NCTB and curricula for Ebtedayee Madrasah education are blueprinted by Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board. There are gulf of differences between this two systems. In addition to this, non-formal primary education

Box 2: Education Systems in Bangladesh

General Education	Technical Education	Religious/ Madrasah
Primary education (formal & non-formal)	-	Kawmi
Junior secondary	SSc vocational	Ebtadaye
Secondary	HSC vocational	Dakhil
Higher secondary	Diploma	Alim
Graduation (Pass and Honours)	BSC	Fazil
Post graduation	Master	Kamil

mostly run by NGOs is treated as complementary to general primary education. Though, Kindergarten education in Bangladesh started immediately after the independence but it got momentum is new millennium. Kindergarten system is further divided into two streams- Bengali and English medium. There is now effective state control over kindergarten system. They set curricula by their own. In case of English medium they usually follow British education system. Few of the English Mediums follow American system of education. In most cases, the text books and other supplementary books are imported from different countries.

Dichotomy of religious education in primary level: NGO-run schools also follow their own system of teaching and curricula. There are differences in approaches of various NGOs in running primary education. For standardization of primary education it needs to be harmonized among the different systems. It is essential developing a universal primary education system that is acceptable to all streams and can meet the changing national and global requirements. Principal and other teachers of kindergarten opined that religion in primary education has to be excluded from the curricula. It will be taught by the family itself. Religion can be taught at the stage where student can think and decide independently. But teachers from Madrasah opined reversely. They think that adding religion in primary education is essential to learn ethics and to be pious. They also further recommend introducing Islamic history at all levels. Issue of religion in primary education has to be settled.

Poverty: There is no specific program from government to educate the hard to reach children. The parents of these children are hardcore poor. These students will not get any sorts of help either in preparing lesson or getting financial support from their parents. They need support from government and easy curricula. Poverty is a major challenge for them to be literate. Millions of poor children, a majority of them girls, fees and other charges make education an unaffordable luxury. School fees are a key barrier for poor children to receive an education. The knowledge and means exist at an international level to realise the right to education for every child. Governments and donors have

a collective responsibility to meet the core costs of a quality basic education and to coordinate and adopt clear time bound plans for eliminating fees and other charges.³⁰

When fees are eliminated, demand for education increases. But because revenues are also lost, scrapping formal fees without a major increase in public funding for education can lower quality and is unsustainable. Most poor countries cannot provide free basic education without a massive increase in aid to education. At present, only two cents in every dollar of aid goes to basic education

Table 25: Average Family Expenditures on Primary Education

Family Category	Average Monthly Family Income	Average Monthly Expenditure on Student	Expenditure on student as % of Income
Well-to-do	16336	329	2
Middle Class	4386	279	6.4
Poor	1471	251	17.1

Source: Private Expenditure for Education Survey 2000, Education Watch

90% parents are incurring expenditure for their children. More than 90% of the primary students spend money for buying stationeries and 75.7 percent pay for examination fees.



Although the textbooks are 'free', more than 1/3 of the students have to pay some money, and 37% have to spend money for buying/collecting supplementary books.

- More than 1/3 of the students pay money in the name of various fees,
- 30.8% pay admission/readmission fees
- 21% pay for private tutors.

The students also pay for

- School dress (15%),
- Monthly fees (7.8%) and
- Transportation (5%).

Source: Private Expenditure for Education Survey 2000, Education Watch.

Quality in Education: The quality of education in different streams of primary schools varies to a great extent. In terms of comparative efficiency compared in relation to Achievement-scores in language and Mathematics tests reveal that the NFE centers of NGOs performed best followed by the non-State schools. The Ebtedayee Madrasahs are the less than- satisfactory performers.

³⁰ Mohammad Muntasim Tanvir "Cost Barrier to Education: Bangladesh Experience" Regional Education Workshop, Bangkok, May 15, 2006

The instructional time was the highest in the case of NFE centers (666 hours for grade I and 1979 hours for grade IV) and the lowest in the case of mainstream State-schools (411 hours for grade I and 751 hours for grade IV). The State schools are very low endowed in terms of teaching resources, school/centre management, academic supervision and parental (community) participation.

Gender Inequality: It is observed that-

(i) Irrespective of food security status of households, expenditure for the students of rural schools is much lower than that of the urban students;

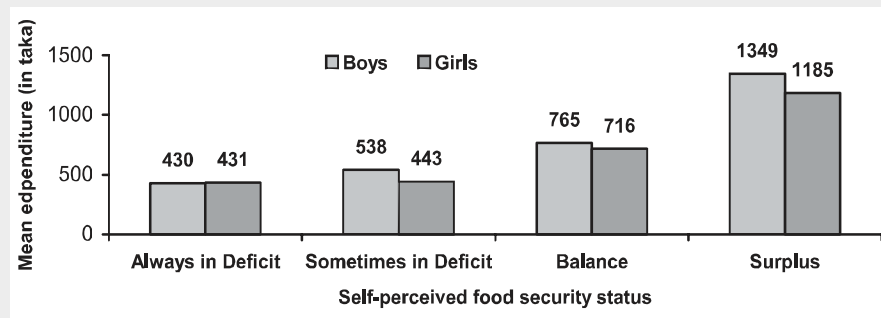
(ii) Families spend less for girls than boys in the both areas; and

Gender variation is wider among urban students than that of rural.

The above situation indicates of gender inequality in the primary education sector

While almost equal amount of money is spent for the girls and boys of 'always in deficit' group, in the 'surplus' households on an average, the boys spend TK. 164 more than the girls' students

Figure 2: Private expenditure for education



Money that talks: Once there is maxim that s/he rides in car who studies well. Today, it is modified to he learns well who rides in car. Education has now become the privilege of rich families. The children of rich families are educating in kindergarten/English Medium or any renowned private institution that requires high amount of spending. As results rich children are educating in better environment and becoming the principal claimant of better job in future. It is polarizing the society into rich-poor. Differences also exeunt in pay and allowances of the teachers of different streams. This also effects in level of motivation of the teachers to teach.

Different goals and objects in different streams: Father of a Madrasah students said, "I am educating my kid in the Madrasah for mortal life and eternal world". It is the approach of Madrasah education for most parents. Besides, a majority student (60%) of Madrasah comes from orphanage. Students of the kindergarten dream to be the leader of the society but GPS, RNGPS, NRNGPS and NGOs-run school children do not dream to lead society but learn to survive. Different streams have separate goals and objects which also creating the differences in the entire society.

Education Policy

The basis of education policy is article 17 of the Constitution. Constitution gives clear directives to design an education system which must be harmonized

with society, people oriented and universal which will reflect people's hopes & aspirations values, religious believes; history & culture of the country, and ideals of liberation war. Accordingly Khuda commission was constituted in 1974. Some of the observations of Khuda Commission are as follows:

- It is necessary to attract the most influential and creative persons for education profession. But it is unfortunate that this teaching profession is neglected for long time. Teachers are to be the principal claimant in important decision making of the nation. If, they are not socially & economical established the nation's progress cannot be attained.
- Formulation of appropriate curricula in primary education is indispensable to create a positive outlook for women and gender balance so that social behaviour to women can be brought.
- It should be limited as much possible as to give abstract expiation in the science books of class I-V for any natural incident.
- As much as it is possible to ensure equal opportunity in education to all by developing the standard of education.
- To take firm and careful state initiatives to remove the causes of inequalities in education existed either in mental construct or education environment.
- Major problem of education is to make teacher pro people and society. New education system would be the carrier to change and its principal role ought to wipe out the class discrimination in education. Nationalization of education would be the only way to this. Nationalization will be in a sense of State control, bringing equal education quality in rural and urban areas, bringing uniformity in salary and allowance of teachers based on qualification, experiences and volume of workload. Providing education material and logistics to create a congenial education environment.
- Among 1974 to 1996 many changes took place in political arena. Keep all these in mind Shamsul Hoque committee drafted the education policy and finalized by Dr. Nazrul Islam committee.³¹ The important recommendations of the committee were:
 - Duration of primary education will be made 6 years by 2003, 7 years by 2006 and finally 8 years by 2010.
 - Establishing information technology centre at district and upazila to spread computer science and information technology education.
 - To set up library in all upazila headquarter whose principal responsibility will be to provide books to the primary level students. One or more selected primary school will be act as centre of mobile library

There were many important recommendations in the report of Nazrul Committee, yet many important recommendations of much discussed Qudrat-e-Khuda commission and Shamsul Hoque committee were not reflected in the Nazrul committee report. The last education commission was Professor Moniruzzaman Commission. It submitted the report to the Prime Minister on 31 March 2004. Some key recommendations of the commission are:

Box 3 : Education Commission 2003

Constituted on	: 16 January 2003
Report Submitted on	: 31 March 2004
Commission Chairman	: Prof. Moniruzzaman Mia
Members	: 24
No. of terms of references	: 30
No. of Recommendations	: 696

³¹ M. Akhtaruzzaman, *National education policy 2000*.

- Commission was in favor of 5 year long primary education, although all the previous committees recommended 8-year long primary education. Rationale for 5 year long primary education was resource constraint of the country. The additional money required for 8 long primary education can be utilized the development of the country
- For the first time commission recommended for pre-primary education for age group 3-5 years
- It would be compulsory to send all children of 5 years
- There should be well-thought mapping to set up 100 new schools within next 10 years.
- There are 11 categories of primary education in the country and there is no State control over 6 categories. These 6 categories should be brought to State control.
- Bringing uniformity in primary education is fundamental needs. There may be different streams like general system, English medium and Madrasah but there should be uniformity in curricula and other things so that children can get uniform primary education.
- Commission recommended student teacher contact for 220 days. On the basis of this, minimum 720 hours for class I and II and 1275 hours for class III and V will be required. Students should be given idea on Bengali, English, and Science & Environment around them.
- At least 6 classrooms and 6 teachers will be minimum requirement for each primary education provider institute. Education material especially text books and other learning materials need to be ensured for the students
- The teacher-pupil ration would be 1:30
- The performance evaluation would be such that can attract the young kids and prevent drop out. Scoring 60% in examination will be eligible for scholarship.

Commission put some separate recommendations for Madrasah education. Commission recommended for equal opportunities for Ebtedayee Madrasah teachers and students that are enjoyed by primary school teachers and learners. To keep distinctiveness of Madrasah education separate madras education directorate needs to be established instead of keeping them under present Directorate of Higher Education. To elevate the management quality of preparing Madrasah curricula and text books separate 'National Madrasah Education Curricula and Text book Board have to be established

There are recommendations for unified education in the report, but it was not mentioned how this could be done.

Education- Fundamental Right vs. Fundamental Principle: Ensuring universal primary education is a fundament principle of the State which is not judicially enforceable. Primary education is to be fundament rights not fundamental principal. The four major components of PEDP-II (the Second Primary Education Development Program, a coordinated effort of Government of Bangladesh and eleven development partners) are: 'improving and supporting equitable access to quality schooling' for all children of Bangladesh. Still, children of the poor households, remote rural areas, urban slums, coastal belts, indigenous communities and many other marginal and excluded communities and those who are disabled or handicapped are deprived of the right of access to school and, in effect, their right to education.

The demand for inclusion of education as a fundamental right in the constitution has recently risen in our country too. A little amendment making education a fundamental right in the constitution won't cost a penny to anyone, whereas it can arm children of every country with a constitutional weapon to fight against injustice in their life.

Such were also the words on education in the constitution of India, which said, 'the State shall Endeavour to provide, within a period of ten years from the commencement of this Constitution, free and compulsory education for all children until they complete the age of fourteen years.' In the following 5 decades it has remained as elusive as ever to a large number of children of India. Then, following a Supreme Court decision in the case Unnikrishnan vs. State of Andhra Pradesh (1993) inclusion of education as a fundamental right was passed as the 86th amendment of the constitution of India in 2002. Now, since the amendment, every child between 6 to 14 years in that country has the right to get education as a fundamental right. If a child of that age-bound is denied facilities for primary education the court can be asked for an order directing the concerned authorities to take appropriate measures. The law also stipulates a duty for parents or guardians to send their children to school; otherwise, they have to face punishment

Inequity and deprivation: The prevailing inequality and deprivation in primary education is a serious problem and acting as a barrier to the unified education.

Effective implementation of competency-based primary education: The promise and potential of curricula and teaching-learning based on essential learning continuum and competencies, even after a decade, have not been fulfilled. The concept remains sound and valid. A concerted effort needs to be made to implement competency-based curriculum, classroom work, and learning assessment.

Centralization and management trial: The absence of any oversight responsibility and planning of primary education involving all service providers at the local level and lack of management authority with accountability at school level have been identified as impediment to quality and equity in primary education. At the same time, there is apprehension about the problems decentralization may cause and the capacity and resources at the school and local level

Supporting development and use of professional capacity: 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 centres for professional and technical expertise in the sector in institutions such as NAPE and NCTB and at central and field levels of DPE.

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. Openness and sharing of information and dialogue in public forums should be the norm at school, union parishad and upazila regarding objectives, plans and progress, and budgetary allocations in the school, and for the upazila.

Addressing governance issues: Political interference and undue involvement of politicians, institutionalized by government regulations about managing committees, have been identified as a major contributor to corruption, mismanagement, waste and obstacle to good management practices in general.

CREATING A UNIFIED EDUCATION SYSTEM

There is no option but to uniform the three main streams of primary education-general education, English medium and Madrasah education. Among the different streams of primary education disparities exist in opportunities, quality education and rules & regulations. Creating a unified approach to education will not be easy. Developers and proponents of unified education often have different perspectives, priorities, and concerns. Therefore, academic educators, workforce developers, vocational educators, and private sector employers tend to view standards-based education and school-to-work transition reform differently. Despite these differing perspectives, there is an underlying consensus on key issues among proponents of unified education

Box 4: Attributes of unified education system

- All students, regardless of their level of educational achievement, remain in the same educational setting for most of their schooling.
- All students are expected to achieve at a high level in preparation for work and further learning.
- All students have the opportunity to focus on workplace skills and/or further education.
- Instruction emphasizes the integration of workplace skills and academic skills.
- Instruction occurs in the setting most appropriate for learning academic and workplace skills.
- Students are given choices based on their interests.

Source : Stan Koki, "Integrating Academic Standards and Workplace Skill Standards for a Unified Education System", PREL Briefing Paper, November, 1998

Unified education is a quality base education. It emphasizes on two criteria: (1) Education quality and (2) Education that responds to future job market and can face the challenges of global economy. The academics and the education experts think that this can be achieved by preparing uniformed curricula for all streams of primary education and this will be the basis of unified primary education. The way forward for creating unified primary education:

- Defining what 'free' education is and what it entails
- Enshrining 'free' education as a constitutional right
- Exposing exclusion and inequity caused by cost barriers
- Highlighting long-term benefits sacrificed in favour of short term returns
 - Including opportunity costs in calculating cost barriers
 - Enhancing the relevance of education
- Confronting the dominant paradigm not only statistically, but also ideologically
- Allocation of resources and budgets for education programs with equity and affirmative action in favor of the disadvantaged as key criteria,
- Subjecting education policy and program decisions as well as resource allocation and budgets to poverty impact analysis,
- Applying poverty impact and consequences as a component in education program assessment and evaluation,

- Supporting research, experimentation and analysis of experience about how the poor can be effectively served and the program outcomes enhanced, and
- Adopting the rights perspective to fulfill the education rights and entitlements of all children.

Expanding opportunities. Expanding opportunities for all levels of education is required.

Growth with quality and equity. With increased participation and completion in primary education, a growing recognition of secondary education as a part of basic education and improvement in transition from primary to secondary level, the social demand for secondary education will continue to rise. The major challenge, therefore, is to find ways of combining growth with quality improvement. Elements of quality enhancement, including teachers, curriculum and learning materials, learning facilities, assessment of learning and school-level management, have to be built in as integral parts of plans and strategies for the expansion of the system.

School level action targeted at the disadvantaged. On top of non-entry of more than half of the age group, high dropout and failure to complete the cycle mean that the poor are largely deprived from secondary education opportunities. Those of the poor or somewhat less poor who manage to enter into the system are hit the hardest by the low efficiency and quality of the system. Secondary education, as a result, is less a vehicle for social mobility than a means of reinforcing existing social divisions. Poorly performing Madrasah serving mostly the poor and proprietary English medium schools serving the elites are potent symbols of the divisive system.

Protecting and consolidating gender gain. Advances in girls' enrolment are meaningful to the extent that this can be sustained until the end of the cycle and they realize the full benefits of education. Targeted efforts are needed, especially at the school level, to identify and remove the obstacles that hold girls back, and improve the quality of teaching and learning practices for both girls and boys.

Improving teachers' capabilities and performance. Supplies of qualified teachers and of expanding opportunities that are effective in teachers' professional development are vital requirement. Creative initiatives are needed in these regards.

Strategies to serve key objectives by combining private and public resources. Since private expenditures are several times larger than public spending in secondary education, mobilization and use of resources for expanding educational opportunities, promoting equity and improving quality need to be based on the premise of effectively combining public and private resources for promoting key objectives, rather than plan and allocate public expenditures in isolation. Mechanisms for combining the resources and using these well need to be explored and tried out by ceding greater authority with accountability to the school level.

Gender balance in managing committees. The School Managing Committee is seriously in default in gender balance - with a total representation of only 3.4 percent women in all observed schools, although the vast majority of schools enroll both boys and girls. Both regulations and practice must change to include more than symbolic participation of women and mothers in school management.

Making managing committees responsive and accountable. Modification of

regulations, awareness raising and active encouragement on the part of political and education authorities are needed to make the selection of the chairperson and members of the managing committees less beholden to local political personalities and more a genuine choice of the community. This key responsibility should not be placed in unfit hands that do not have the necessary capabilities or are not genuinely interested in education.

Strategy to promote greater authority with accountability at school level. A central framework of regulations and standards is necessary, which appears to be the principal government response to the management problems and huge waste of resources; but more important is impartial and objective application of these provisions. And even more critical is for individual institutions to become responsible and accountable for promoting and maintaining standards. This aim can be supported by the government by inviting and encouraging schools to take responsibility and demonstrate their capacity to do so on the basis of agreed criteria. Once it is established by independent assessment that the schools have lived up to their obligations, these schools can be rewarded, exempted from central control and allowed to develop and follow their own higher standards. This strategy of nurturing self-regulation is likely to be an effective incentive for greater school-level responsibility with accountability.

The other step in creating a unified education system, states and governmental entities will need to identify the overlap and shortfall between academic standards and workplace skill standards. In the development of curricula, identification of career pathways, and implementation of performance-based assessments, practitioners will need to overlay the skills, knowledge, and requirements of each set of standards. The incorporation of skill standards into the school-to-work transition system requires the establishment of explicit connections between academic content standards and workplace skill standards through the following sequence of events:

- Identify broad skills and competencies that cut across specific occupations or occupational groupings. In particular, identify the math, language, and reading skills that are needed for success in any career and build a basic curriculum that all students are expected to master. Identify which academic standards these skills and competencies address and when they occur in the curriculum.
- Identify the advanced skills that cut across occupations within broad career pathways for inclusion in a career-oriented curriculum in secondary school. Identify the academic skills and competencies that these advanced skills address and at what grade level they are taught in the curriculum.
- In the general curriculum, identify and include instruction, contexts, and problems from real work situations that can be used to demonstrate and teach general skills and knowledge. For the general curriculum, a wide variety of contexts should be used as a way to expose students to a range of careers.



- Identify the work-related uses of knowledge and skills, including advanced skills, and incorporate these connections in classroom instruction.
- Include instruction in basic workplace skills at the appropriate age and grade.

Modernization of curricula: Modernization of curricula of NCTB and Madrasah Board is very essential. Use of computer and information communication technology (ICT can be introduced in very easy way. Kindergarten already started to orient their student with ICT and Computer.

Understanding not memorizing: The present curricula for NCTB and Madrasah Board lead to memorize the lesson especially English and Mathematics which works them as fear factor. Redesign the curricula and make learning an interested event so that children do not fear to go to school or feel boredom to learn.

Redesigning the Madrasah education: In present system Madrasah students mostly memorize the lesson without understanding the inner meaning and context of religious issue studied. Memorizing or getting the wrong message is very harmful for the State and the globe.

Visualizing and reality orientation: There is no alternative to have an appropriate education system responsive to the societal need. To avoid abstract idea, the pictorial presentation and practical orientation is essential.

Uniform curricula for all streams: Drastic changes need to be brought in all streams of primary education for informing the entire primary education. There would be single curricula for most subjects for all streams but language may be different in appropriate stage. And all teachers should be trained in uniform teaching module. Registration would be mandatory for all sorts of educational institutions.

Job Security: The important motivation for the parents to educate their children is the future job security of their kids. If the earning knowledge and skills are not applied in real situation everything will be treated as waste of time and resources. So, government should have comprehensive plan on how State is going to do with its learners.

Conclusion

Bangladesh enters into market oriented new millennium where quality of education is sole criterion to be fit in the market. Three compelling economic forces pull it-widespread, pervasive poverty, a small but growing participation in a global economy, and a still fragile local economy. Unarguably, education plays a major role in shaping the direction of all three forces. Education can transmit specific, targeted, useful tools for survival and improvements in quality of life. Hence, nationwide, even modest exposure to education contributes a major role in reducing poverty levels substantially. The first step in competing globally is therefore to address the fundamental issue of poverty and quality of education that reflects nation's heritage and aspiration. The target of educational spending ought to be threefold: (1) increase commitments to education as per capita income rises, (2) set the rates of growth of educational spending higher than the anticipated rate of growth of GNP, and (3) set realistic rates of change in growth rates and sustain them over a lengthy period of time. As a first priority, investments in primary education ought to be protected. Bangladesh in her Constitution pledges for an equitable access to a uniform, mass oriented and universal primary system of education. Meeting this constitutional requirement is an immediate need for a better Bangladesh which we always dream of.

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This study provides an indepth investigation into the overarching disparities existing in our primary education system through studying input-output linkages in different streams of primary education system and tries to develop clear pathway of linking different streams for a sustainable uniform quality education in Bangladesh. Its perspectives are built around questioning the intrinsic value of education and its outcome in different streams.