

The EFA 2000 Assessment: Country Reports

Bangladesh

[Contents](#)[Home](#) [Countries](#) [Regions](#) [Search](#)[Previous Page](#)

13. POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Assessment suggests that in spite of considerable achievements in terms of increased enrollment (of both boys and girls) in primary education, which is a progress toward EFA goals, a number of inadequacies remain. A lot more can be done to improve quality of education. Reducing the dropout rate continues to be a challenge. Similarly, expanding and sustaining the EFA gains will require extra efforts in terms of community mobilization and external resource mobilization. Improvements will be required in utilization of infrastructure. Particular attention will have to be paid to quality training of teachers and supervisors, supervision and monitoring of activities, building up data collection and data maintenance system, follow-up action, and minimizing bottlenecks in implementation of projects and programmes.

Bangladesh has a large population and each year an ever increasing number of pupils are entering school. Therefore, the country faces problems in improving quality education for a large number of pupils at the primary level. The country runs one of the biggest primary education administrations in the world. The number of teachers in the government and non-government primary schools is about 309,000. Though Bangladesh is a small country, one-third of the country is inaccessible. It has become difficult to monitor, supervise and advise the teachers to bring to the minimum desired level of quality. Resource constraint is also a formidable challenge.

The future direction for the Government of Bangladesh would be based on the premise that education is a prerequisite for ensuring sustainable development and promoting quality human resources. The GOB has to intensify its efforts to guarantee education for all and to sustain the gains once the target is achieved. Its commitment will be fulfilled only with the conditions (i) that no child is deprived of education for lack of teachers, learning materials or adequate space, (ii) that no child is subjected to disparities of access to primary education arising from gender, age, income, family, cultural or ethnic difference and geographic remoteness, (iii) that the quality and relevance of primary education programmes are improved and supplies ensured, and (iv) that all possibilities are acted upon to improve learning contents and materials, *to enhance physical facilities* and to carry out necessary reforms in the primary education system.

The Government has also to ensure an environment sufficient to encourage the children to attend school regularly and to successfully complete a five-year primary education cycle.

With increased gross enrollments in recent years and underdeveloped institutional capacity, the management of primary education has been unable to effectively bring about significant

positive changes in the primary education sub-sector. Responsibility and accountability for actions

Female Education

The constitution of Bangladesh has laid down that no citizen can be subject to any prohibition, restriction or prejudicial treatment with regard to admission to any educational institution on the ground of sex. The constitution further empowers the State to make special provision in favour of women. The Government has already initiated measures that have reduced the gender gap in primary education. Today the boy-girl ratio in primary school is 52:48. This indicates that Bangladesh has achieved almost gender parity at the primary level of education. Female teachers play a vital role in increasing girl enrollment in the schools. In order to make basic education more effective and ensure higher enrollment and retention of girls in schools female teachers have been recruited in large number. In the eighties the female teachers in primary school were below twenty percent, but in 1998 the proportion has increased to 31 percent. The Government has reserved 60 of the teaching posts for females in primary schools. Women have been in focus of public policy in Bangladesh. Non-formal education sub-sector is no exception. The non-formal education programmes of the country has built in provision that a minimum of fifty percent of its total literacy centres will enroll female learners. The women's education level in the country is steadily increasing due to various promotional steps undertaken by the present Government. One such example is tuition fee exemption for girls attending secondary school. The first population census of 1974 revealed that the adult literacy rate of women was 13.2 percent, but the literacy rate of women in 1998 increased to 48.1 percent.

throughout the sub-sector are often not recognized; institutions and schools have not benefited sufficiently from supervision received; acute shortage of teachers in many schools exists; some teachers are ill-prepared for their task; schools and students lack sufficient learning materials; physical facilities are inadequate for the number of students requiring access to schooling; and instructional time is insufficient. All these shortcomings have to be overcome at a short span of time.

Resource constraints have limited government's ability to deliver primary education to all school age children. There are still many under-served and un-served areas, and specially disadvantaged groups e.g. refugee children, disabled and otherwise hard-to-reach.

The future target is to attain net enrollment of 100 percent when the gross enrollment rate also will equal that level. In other words, the situation of present gross enrollment, which is anomalous, has to be rationalized to the extent that age recording and enrollment at the appropriate school entrance age will be at a level of perfection. It is expected that development in other sectors will take place so that parents have enhanced consciousness to take their children to school at the right age, and birth registration will enable the school authority to have record of exact age of the students.

Proper planning and Implementation of ECCD programme

ECCD is still a weak area in the Government programme. Although the arrangement of "baby class" (pre-primary) has been recognized by the Government in the public school, its necessary that due emphasis is put on designing and implementing an ECCD programme with a systematic approach that will contain the required teachers, teaching-learning materials,

supervision and monitoring arrangement and an overall accountability system. The future efforts will have to concentrate in this area.

The government plan to have a primary school in each village, as per necessity, will have to be implemented by the year 2002. The contents and quality of education will have to be in conformity with requirements of the time. To sustain high attendance rates and to increase primary completion rates, and also to prevent child labour, Food For Education Programme will be further streamlined and its management rationalized. Supply of textbooks in primary schools free of cost will have to be continued. Madrasah education will have to be modernized in order to keep pace with the time. Programmes on continuing education will have to be designed and implemented for the new literates so that this literacy is sustained and it becomes functional in this practical life. (Speech of the President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh in the National Parliament on 01 January 2000).

Ensuring Equitable Access to Quality Schooling

There is a number of areas in Bangladesh, which remain under-schooled and unserved. To help ensure that equitable access to quality schooling is available to all children, establishment of new schools and classrooms will be targeted to under-schooled and unserved areas.

(a) New schools will be established in underserved areas meeting the criteria of a) no other school within 2 km, and (b) a minimum of 150 students and a minimum population of 2000. Exceptions are to be made where natural barriers or high population density exists. These criteria apply to new government, non-government primary schools and to community and NGO managed feeder and other schools.

(b) Classrooms, furniture, toilets and tubewells will be added to or repaired at government and registered non-government schools and a community based school maintenance programme will be introduced.

(c) A programmed expansion of facilities and hiring of *additional*