11\textsuperscript{th} Regional Meeting of National EFA Coordinator’s

18-20 November 2010
Bangkok, Thailand

Bangladesh Country Paper

Ministry of primary and Mass Education
Bangladesh Secretariat
Bangladesh is situated in the northeastern area of the South Asian Sub-continent. The country covers an area of 147,570 km\(^2\). It has a population about 160 million.

Two Ministries organize and manage the Education sector in the country. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) is responsible for education, comprising formal primary, and literacy and non-formal education. It is the lead Ministry for EFA. The Ministry of Education (MOE) looks after the post-primary education, covering secondary and tertiary levels, including Madrasha education religious streams.


**Policy decisions of the present government in achieving EFA goals:**

The country is fully committed to achieving EFA Goals by 2015:

- Ensure 100% enrolment of all primary school age children in primary schools by 2011.
- Remove illiteracy by 2014 (make literate 37.33 million illiterates in in the age range of 11-45 years) organize programs by three age range: 11-14,15-24 and 25-45
- To reach the un-reached, stipend program has been expanded from 4.8 million children to 7.8 million by poverty mapping
- NFE program will be undertaken in line with NFE mapping done in 2008.
- Children, youth and adults of ethnic group in the Chittagong hill tracts will be served through a separate NFE project.
- Expand the School Feeding Programme for the primary level students and
- Construction of more school classrooms, recruitment of teachers, training of teachers, teacher educators, etc.
- National EFA MDA Recommendations:

  Following recommendations has been made by each Goal:

**ECCE:**

- Programmes and activities on all aspects of ECCE should be reorganized/reformulated, and
- Make adequate budgetary provisions for objective-wise activities with performance indicators, with a strong monitoring and information system

**UPE/BE:**

- Ensure reliable database on all school-age children in the country, eliminate multiple enrolment practice;
• MOPME/DPE be made responsible for managing and/or ensuring adequate coordination between/among all government and non-government agencies in matters of primary-level institutions, including ebtidayee madrasahs;
• Designing/re-designing the curriculum to suit the needs of the knowledge-based and technologically-oriented globalizing society of the 21st century.

Life Skills and Lifelong Learning:

• Identify existing and needed livelihood skills to organise training programmes accordingly to meet the market-based demand with supplies of appropriately trained hands.

Literacy:

• To set up MIS Cell in BNFE to assemble and store NFE-related data at one point
• Institute a formal arrangement between BNFE and NGOs for gathering and storing disaggregated NFE-relevant data (both are under implementation)

Gender equity:

• Low level employment of female teachers in secondary, TVET, madrasahs need to increase for equity

Quality Education:

Raise the minimum entry qualification of primary school teachers from HSC to minimum of Bachelor’s degree with commensurate remuneration, and open the door to teachers to join the primary education cadre

1. Overall Progress in meeting the EFA Goals:

The main achievements of EFA Goals by Mid Decade assessment (MDA) and latest information where available are provided below by individual EFA Goals:

1.1. EFA Goal 1: Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE):

In 2008 government and registered primary schools operated 26,300 ‘Baby Classes’ or pre-primary classes and enrolled 456,008 children, with GPI at 1.01. To expedite coverage the government has adopted a partnership approach and authorized two NGOs to set up pre-primary education centres in catchment’s areas of primary schools until formal pre-primary classes opened by the Government.

In conformity with the approved Education Policy government is moving towards universal pre-primary education. The Government has instituted an Operational Framework for Pre-Primary Education in March 2008 to guide all the PPE activities be it GO or NGO initiative. A comprehensive policy on ECCD has been developed by Ministry of Women and Children Affairs through extensive consultation to guide, implement and monitor all ECCE activities. To operationalize the universal pre-primary education, at least additional 65,000 classrooms and same number of specialized teacher is required. The recruitment of 37,672 teachers in the government primary schools for pre-primary education under revenue budget is
under process. A standard interim package including primer, teacher's guide, Alphabet chart, exercise book has been printed and distributed in the primary schools. Preparation of a standard curriculum has also been initiated. It is expected that this curriculum will be tried out in the primary schools in 2012 and complete set will be available for the children and teachers in 2013.

1.2. EFA Goal 2: Universal Primary/Basic Education (UPE/UBE):

1.2.1. The primary Education in Bangladesh is served under 10 different types of primary level institution. They cover 5 grades, I-V and enroll 6-10 year old children. In 2008, there were 82,218 primary level institutions, which enrolled 16,001,605 children; the females were 8,081,768 with GPI 1.02. The schools had 365,925 teachers with GPI at 0.72. The ratio of female teachers in Government Primary Schools (GPS) reached at 53 percent in 2008 against a quota of 60 percent (DPE, ASCR 2008).

The Government manages/supports four types of schools totaling 61,072, (74.28 percent), enrolment of 13,408,767, (83.8 percent) with GPI 1.04. GER stood at 98.8 percent (boys at 93.4 percent and girls, 104.6 percent) and NER 91.1 percent while boys were at 87.8 percent and girls at 94.7 percent. Gender parity in access has been achieved in 2005 in both primary and secondary education and has been maintained steadily.

1.2.2. Pupil-teacher ratio has improved from 54: 1 in 2005 to 50: 1 in 2008. The excepted target is to bring it down to 46: 1 by 2009 and to 40: 1 by 2015.

1.2.3. Need based expansion of Primary School Stipend Programme:

Till 2010, stipend was provided to the 40% poor students, a total of 4.8 million students of the primary schools in the rural areas of the country. Recently, the project has been revised to accommodate 7.8 million students under stipend programme with more percentage (45%-90%) in the remote and detached areas such as small islands, habitation near large water bodies and seasonally highly depressed locations (char/ haor/ baor / monga area ) and the areas where rate of enrollment is low. This programme is playing an important role in increasing enrollment of poor and distressed children in the schools and retention of them. The percentage of students may be determined on the basis of poverty and rate of enrollment.

1.2.4. Phased expansion of School Feeding Programme:

Currently government is providing 0.75gm-fortified biscuits to 1.1 million primary school students of food insecure area with the support from World Food Programme. Even that enrollment and retention rate in the primary schools is proportionately low in the Char/ Haor/ Baor/ Hill and Monga area due to extreme poverty and hunger and thus it is a serious concern for the government. Government is now planning to cover at least these areas under school feeding programme and gradually throughout the country. About 3 million of 87 Upazillas will be covered under the project.

1.2.5. Construction of New Schools/ creating primary education facilities in Char/Haor/ Baor/ Hill and other remote areas:
According to recent data, 1,943 villages with more than 2000 population are without school. Government has planned to establish 1500 new schools in those villages to cover the students of these areas. Besides government is also planning to establish child-friendly learning centres in the Char/Haor/ Baor/ Hill and other remote area.

1.2.6. Construction of additional Classroom and recruitment of additional teachers in existing primary schools:
Current average teacher-student ratio is 1: 49 in the primary schools, which is considered as too high. 40,000 additional classrooms are being constructed and 45,000 new teachers in government primary schools are being recruited under Second Primary Education Development Programme to reduce the class size. A survey reveals that 0.12 million more class room are required to reduce the class size to 45. Therefore government is planning to construct more classrooms to reduce the class size to ensure quality education under the next sector wide programme.

1.2.7Distribution of Textbooks:
Textbooks are being distributed among the primary school students free of cost. About 78 million textbooks have been printed and distributed free of cost among the students of primary schools in the academic year 2010 under PEDP-II. 100% books will be distributed from the revenue budget from the year 2011.

1.2.8Inclusive Education:
Special attention is focused on children of vulnerable groups, special needs children and tribal children. To mainstream tribal children, children with special needs and children of the vulnerable group three different strategies and Action Plan have been approved, which are now under implementation. Screening tool to identify children with special needs has been introduced. A handbook has been developed for the teachers that they can easily take care of the children with special needs. To encourage the children with minor disabilities, they are given preference in distributing stipend and textbook. Currently 77,488 children with special needs are enrolled in primary schools. 10 residential schools will be constructed in Chittagong Hill Tracts and other remote areas to enroll more children those who are not attending schools due to distance barrier and seasonal migration of their parents. Many other important steps have been undertaken to include the children in difficult circumstances.

1.3. EFA Goal 3: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning:
NPA-II targeted meeting learning needs of all young people and adults through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. Literacy rate among youth (15-24 years) is estimated at 72.7 percent (males 75.03 percent and females 70.36 percent, GPI 0.94 in 2005). Comparatively adult literacy rate was slower to grow as adults had less access to education in pre-Jomtien days. The growth in the TVET sub -sector was slow and still more so in the public sector. Demand was low, more so from females, leaving GPI at 0.35. The private institutions offered training in a variety of skills (80 percent students). However, the public sector had no control or oversight of the private sector institutions or of setting standard and determining quality of skills. The Directorate of Technical Education is trying to develop some innovative courses to attract male and female students with possibilities of employment abroad.
1.4. EFA Goal 4: Literacy in Bangladesh:

1.4.1. BBS-UNESCO Literacy Assessment Survey 2008 provides an adult (15+ years) literacy rate of 48.8 percent with 46.4 percent in rural (males 46.1 and females 46.7 percent) and 56.9 percent in urban areas (male 56.7 and female 57.1 percent). There has been no basic literacy project in the public sector from late 2003; NGOs went more for projects in formal basic education.

1.4.2. Post literacy and Continuing Education:
Between 1990 and 2003 public sector implemented five non-formal basic literacy projects including four on adult literacy. 18 million learners aged 11-45 years have graduated in NFE courses through these project. It took up three post literacy and continuing education projects from 2002-3 with the basic objective of ‘consolidation of literacy followed by application of literacy skills and skill training for income generation’ and lifelong learning’.
PLCE projects 1 and 3 were completed in 2007, serving 1.375 million neo-literates and school dropouts against a target of 1.626 million. The on-going PLCE-2 has similar types of target of 1.6 million and will end in 2011. Together, PLCE 1&2 will have covered 61 districts.

1.4.3. Literacy Initiatives for Empowerment (LIFE):
An action programme, LIFE supports achievement of EFA. It is designed to increase literacy learning opportunities in terms of the United Nations Literacy Decade (UNLD), 2003-2012. Bangladesh is one of the 35 countries containing 85 percent of the world’s illiterate population and meets both conditions of having less than 50 percent adult literacy rate join the LIFE support. UNESCO provides broad support to Bangladesh within the UNLD framework. The country has taken a number of initiatives under LIFE

1.5. EFA Goal 5: Gender Equity and Equality:
To eliminate gender disparity and ensure wide participation of women in development activities, 60 per cent posts of teachers have been reserved for female teachers. As a result, overall percentage of female teachers in primary school has already reached 53% in government primary schools. The policy to increase the number of female officials at various levels of the management of primary education is being pursued. More opportunities are being created for admission of girls in schools. Separate toilets are also being constructed in primary schools for girls. To encourage more women to join primary schools as teachers, steps have been taken to raise the residential capacity of the women’s hostels at the Primary Training Institutes (PTIs). While students are enrolled, the names of both mother and father are being registered. For payment of stipend money to the students, provisions have been made to open the bank account in mother’s name. Massive social mobilization programmes have been undertaken to encourage guardians to send the girl child to schools. These steps have contributed to the increase of girl enrolment bringing gender parity. Present boys and girls ratio is 50: 50.

1.6. EFA Goal 6: Quality achievement
1.6.1 Capacity building of the teachers and officials:
Training is the most important tool for qualitative improvement of primary education. 73,079 teachers received Certificate in Education training among targeted 90,000 teachers under PEDP-II. Currently percentage of trained teacher is 70%. Besides it, various types of in-service trainings is being provided to the teachers, School Management Committee members and primary education officials.

1.6.2 Decentralization of Education Management and planning:
Rather than imposing the central implementation and management plan to the schools and offices of the field level, currently, the Government has introduced School Level Improvement Plan (SLIP) and Upazila Level Education Plan (UPEP) under PEDP-II. Schools are identifying their own need and prepare plan on the basis of approved guideline. Training is also provided to them for their capacity building in this regard. Basing on the SLIPs of the Upazila, UPEP is being prepared for each Upazila.

1.6.3 Assessment of Students:
Assessment of pupils’ quality achievement began with a scholarship examination, participated by top 20 percent Grade 5 students. Except repeaters and dropouts the others were treated as completers. An outsourced third party assessment of sample grade 3 and 5 pupils was also done in 2006 and 2008. The Terminal examination is a new initiative taken by the Government to assess the performance of the primary level students after completion of their five year cycle of education. This terminal examination has replaced the primary scholarship examination. With this new initiative all students of class five who followed the NCTB curriculum took part in this examination. As all the students have the opportunity to undergo assessment procedure through this new initiative so it was widely accepted by all the stakeholders and it was also highly appreciated. Further improvement of Terminal Examination will be done to make it more quality focused and functional.

1.6.4 Innovation Grants Programme:
A unique opportunity of improving quality of education through community participation at the grass root level has been created through Innovation Grants Programme under PEDP-II. A block grant (up to 10 lakh) has been provided to an organization, especially for promoting access of disadvantaged children and retaining them in the schools, improving quality of teaching-learning and school facilities. Applications for Innovation Grants encouraged from Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), School Management Committees (SMCs), Parent Groups, local voluntary organizations, registered and reputed NGOs and other agencies.

1.6.5 Primary School Quality Level (PSQL) Standard:
Quality of Schools has been measured on the basis of Primary School Quality Level (PSQL) Standard and Key Performance Indicators (KPI) developed under Primary Education Development Programme-II. A quality Standard Taskforce also constituted to monitor and oversee the quality of schools against PSQL Standard.

2. Development Partner Coordination:
In line with Paris declaration for Accra agenda Development Partners are committed to harmonize among the efforts. Recent examples of their joint effort are preparation of joint country strategy World Bank, ADB, DFID and Japan. In the Primary and Mass Education Sector, Government is implementing PEDP-II under sub-sector wide approach with support from 11 Development Partners. It is a very good example of Development Partner Harmonization. This programme will be ended in June 2011 and next sector wide programme will be started in July 2011 with a broader scope. This programme will include pre-primary education, primary education and non-formal primary education. 10 Development partners will support this programme. At present ADB is the sole development partner supporting post literacy and continuing education. ADB also committed to provide a Project preparatory technical assistance for Adult Literacy. Government of Bangladesh is expecting more support from the Development Partners for Adult Literacy to fulfill the Government commitment of total literacy by the year 2014.

3. Education/ EFA data collection and analysis

3.1 Child Education and Literacy Survey 2010:
Recently country-wide Child Education and Literacy survey has been conducted. All sorts of data related 0-14 year age group children will be collected under this survey and will be maintained in the database. The data related to pre-school children, special needs children, children of the vulnerable group will also be maintained in the database.

3.2 Annual School Survey and Annual Sector Performance Report:
Every year a school survey is being conducted under PEDP-II. All information related to school and students have been collected under this survey. A annual Sector performance Report have also been prepared basing on this survey.

3.3 Literacy Assessment Survey (LAS):
NPAII emphasized the urgent need for a comprehensive database in both formal and non-formal basic education. BBS conducted the LAS in 2008 with UNESCO cooperation establishes the baseline data for NFE. The Survey assessed literacy levels of people aged 11-14 and 15-45 years through tests. The test-based results of the survey will update Literacy/NFE database through surveys once every three years.

3.4 NFE Mapping:
NFE Mapping was done nationwide in 2008 with support of UNESCO and SIDA. It provides a comprehensive picture of NFE programs by major providers and their actual coverage. It facilitates making projections of future NFE program coverage and designing new programs for targeted areas.

4. Key /major challenges in meeting the EFA goals and addressing marginalization in education:

Challenges of achieving EFA goals by 2015:
Goal 1 ECCE:

- Ensuring uniformity in ECCE delivery mechanisms.
- Mobilizing resources for ECCE, particularly for the CSN and unreached children in depressed areas and
- Establishing effective coordination mechanism between GoB and NGOs in matters of planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of activities for effective use of resources and delivery of services.

ii. Goal 2: Universal Primary/Basic Education

- Institutionalizing the Sector-wide program approach, that is, putting all primary level institutions in the country under the DPE, with allowances for diversity;
- Ensuring equity through implementing Inclusive Education (IE) in context of Salamanca Statement, 1994 (UNESCO, 1994) and the extended definition that brings in the other disadvantaged persons – children, youth and adults; Ensuring quality through capacity development, professionalization of teaching,
- Opening career path for teachers to senior management, good governance and results-based management, involving children and communities in the organizational aspects of the school and its environment;
- Provide facilities for ICT learning; and other facilities that make the school a living and vibrant entity; and
- Learn from and make use of the lessons already available from the experiences of PEDP II;
- Ensuring adequate financing
- The overall challenge is to further increase enrolments and retention, particularly amongst the most disadvantaged communities, to improve the quality of education and to move forward from numerically-based gender parity to full gender equality in all levels and types of schools.

iii. Life Skills and Lifelong Learning

- Expanding and improving the quality of TVET programme incorporating skills on national and international market-based demands,
- Giving due importance to lifelong learning by promoting Community Learning Centres (CLC) or Gonokendras

iv. Goal 4: Literacy/NFE/LL programs

- Putting together basic literacy, life skills and livelihood skills into one manageable learning package;
- Promoting peer group culture of learning and working together by putting learners of different age groups in separate classes;
- Ensuring quality of adult/functional literacy to facilitate transition to lifelong learning;
- Updating and upgrading the teaching and learning materials and replacing the long outdated materials in use;
- Instituting an equivalency program with complete facilities to provide an alternate process of learning and progressing life
v. Gender parity and equality in education

- Sustaining the progressing gender equity and ensuring no new disparity arises striving to achieve equality in education at all levels by 2015;
- Getting more women into teaching and other supporting staff positions speedily and technical jobs in the government departments dealing with basic education, and across the government and the society.

vi. Quality and excellence in basic education

- Ensuring improved delivery at the school and classroom level by the teacher and performance\(^1\) in examinations by the pupils, with both internal and external efficiency;
- Expanding the coverage of Inclusive Education speedily;
- Expanding the scope to include and enroll children with all types of disadvantage to the extent possible, not just children with mild disabilities are enrolled.
- Improving the scope of professional development of teachers through enhancing entry level qualification, improved training under the new training arrangements, and improved status of teachers in context of strategy #9 of the DFA and opening career paths for them.

The Second Ministerial Meeting of South Asia EFA Forum held in Bangladesh on 14 December 2009 focusing on Reaching the Un-reached also emphasized on “Enforce the right to education for all effectively, if needed through amendment or fresh legislation, right to education for all; Review and reformulate education policies and practices to reach the un-reached; Examine the main causes of exclusion and barriers to education for the disadvantaged; groups;” The meeting also witnessed notable progress as indicated below:

- Preparation of the National EFA plans through consultative processes with all stakeholders on strategies and policy development;
- Continuous dialogue with International Agencies and Development Partners for enhancement of funding for bridging resource gaps;
- Publication of National Mid Decade Assessment (MDA) reports with regional synthesis and sharing of the outcomes with all countries of the region;
- Enhanced organizational and institutional capacity to meet the challenges ahead;
- Increased activities to implement continuous assessment, especially of learners’ performance and outcome as a basis for in-country and cross-country comparisons;
- Developed linkages between formal and non-formal systems of education through equivalence;

Built professional partnerships between the Government, Non-government Organizations and Private sector for sharing resources, knowledge and practices to meet the challenges of the EFA and relevant Millennium Development Goals