

Education in Bangladesh: A Study of Policy Planning in Primary Education

A. M. ANISUZZAMAN
K.M. AMINUL ISLAM

Bangladesh Public Administration Training Centre (BPATC)
Savar, Dhaka.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Title	Page
Introduction :	
Objective and Methodology :	
<u>CHAPTER-I</u> :	
Historical perspective	
<u>CHAPTER -II</u> :	
Primary education in the Pre-liberation period(1947-71)	
<u>CHAPTER -III</u> :	
Primary education in the Post-liberation period(1971-89)	
<u>CHAPTER -IV</u> :	
Issues in Policy Planning	
<u>CHAPTER-V</u> :	
CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATIONS	
BIBLIOGRAPHY :	

Introduction:

Bangladesh is a small country with an area of fifty six thousand sq:mile and highest density of population- 1800 per Sq,Mile. Growth of population by 2.7 per cent per annum, deficiency in natural resources and abysmally low rate of literacy and high incidence of poverty are compulsion for Bangladesh to take serious steps for socio-economic development. Education is a key element for the social and economic development of Bangladesh.

Education as defined by Socrates is " to know oneself and ones surrounding" It is apprenticeship for life. In that case memorising a few will not help face the complexities of real life; full development of personality is the ultimate goal of education. In order to achieve that aim, it is necessary to have an education which confine physical moral, intellectual and other aspects in an integrated manner.

This is a country where rate of literacy is only 24%, both the quantitative & qualitative dimensions of education deserve serious consideration. Larger proportion of population are to be given excess to education and those who get excess to education should be able to nurture their inquisitiveness and creativity, acquire required skills and develop analytical mind and positive attitude. Primary education gives a vitally important input in this direction. This job of an educational policy planner is to take all the factors that form infrastructure for education and devise a harmonious policy which will ensure quality education for all. Therefore, it is necessary to have an idea of what policy planning implies.

Policy is a continuous process involving individuals, groups and values(). a process of decision making and activity involving a series of decisions taken over a long period of time. Since it involves exchange of information, resources, discussion and bargaining, a policy is dynamic and is inextricably linked with the politico-economic domains of a society. Functionally, this may be seen as 'guides to action' and also as 'means to establishing the universe in which action is to be taken.

On the otherhand, planning may be taken as a means of assessing the future and making provision for it. This may be taken to mean choosing. Through present actions, it attempts to drive the future course of events in the desired direction. Thus policy planning in primary education implies determining the goals setting the objectives and deciding on the priorities of primary education.

The legacy of policy planning dates back to the early days of the Mughals when the Mughal emperor Akbar formulated a long term plan for elementary education. During the long period of the British rule efforts were made. For historical continuity, the developments in elementary education has been briefly discussed in chapter I. Since the policies of the colonial era did not suit an independent nation, the efforts continued for an appropriate policy planning. In the post partition period beginning steps were taken in the famous Karachi Plan 1960 for universal primary education. The period between 1947-71 has been treated in Chapter II. The post-liberation period witnessed a major policy shift in primary education namely nationalisation of the subsector. In 1983, Bangladesh has been outlined a perspective plan which aims at raising the literacy rate from 24% to 75% in the year 2000 A.D. During the Second and Third plan period there has been relatively higher amount of resource inflow into this subsector. Chapter III deals with this period. The reports of different important Commissions and Committees have been referred to the relevant provisions of the planning have been presented in these chapters.

In primary education there are quite a number of issues of immediate concern e.g. low rate of enrolment, alarming rate of dropout and repetition low quality of education due to material, human and institutional

factors. These and a host of other issues ultimately determine the outcomes in the sub-sector. Some of those issues have been articulated in Chapter IV. The final chapter contains conclusions and recommendations.

Methodology:

The study focuses on the aspects of policy planning in a subsector of education relied mainly upon the secondary published and unpublished materials. A survey of the literature and documents was made and a series of interviews were conducted with a number of people concerned with the subject. Data and information have been collected with questionnaires for different set of people; but the questionnaire was not structured. Moreover, various programmes, options and institutions involved in primary education have also been surveyed.

Objective of the Study:

The study attempts to:-

- i) provide a historical presentation of development in education the elementary level;
- ii) describe and analyse different policy programmes;
- iii) articulate some issues which are of importance of policy planning primary education.

Historical perspective1. The Ancient period:

1.01. This period extends from pre-historic times down to the beginning of the medieval period. However, history tells us very little about the people of pre-Aryan India.

1.02. The Aryan came to India as invaders two millenium before the birth of Christ, settled here and became part of Indian society. Some of their literary works represents high level of educational attainment in that society. The Aryan society was also called vedic society probably because it was founded on the tenets of the Veda. Early education of the Aryan was based on the Veda and the Upanishad. The Upanishada which was a philosophical treatise, implied a session or assembly in which one or more pupils received instruction from a teacher (1). The priests were the most powerful section in vedic society. The priestly class that dealt with religion also handled education. It was the privilege of a priest - namely the Brahmins to give instruction to someone who is likely to be involved in future priesthood. Evidence is lacking as to the existence of a systematic and graded education over consecutive classes. (2) Knowledge was imparted at the family level and was handed down generation after generation through memorising. Thus education in its objective, scope and content remained confined within narrow limits.

1.03. During the later part of the vedic period, the need of the society changed, religious rituals became more and more complex and different schools of thought emerged. As a result, family instructions proved inadequate and schools were established to meet the changing needs of the society. However, education still centred.

1) F.E. Keay, A History of Education in India and Pakistan p.11.

2) T.N. Saigneira, Modern Indian Education p.9-10.

3) xxxxxNxxSigneairxxppxxppxx

around the preparation for priesthood until 800 B.C. when some people began to ask serious questions regarding birth and death, origin of soul and life, the nature of the universe etc. This led to the development of another stream of education following from the 'search for truth'.

1.04. Education in that society aimed at not only searching for excellence in the worldly affairs and in the hereafter, but also preserving the caste system which was profoundly established in vedic society through the use of precedence, history and strict observance of the customs of the respective castes. Therefore, the system of education must have been discriminating against woman and the lower castes especially in that stream which was dominated by the priests.⁽⁴⁾

1.05. In this stream the curriculum was literary. It contained secular subjects beside the religious ones. The children learned about religious festivals, the alphabets and the rudiments of arithmetic. Moreover, specific attention was given to the role a student would play as the member of a caste. In the other stream known as 'popular elementary education', the curriculum included knowledge of measure and weight, rules of sale and purchase, profits and loss etc..

1.06.

The predominant method in those days was oral teaching; the students had to count on memorizing until writing was developed. The students were taught individually and also in a body. Different ages were set for admission of different castes-eight^{years} for the Brahmin, eleven^{years} for the Kshaitiya and twelve^{years} for the Vaeshya. They also had different uniforms.

(4) To the contrary, it was held that education was prescribed for all children. This suggests provision for universality in education. For further reading consult V.B.Mathur "Women's Education in Indian 1913-1966", p.1.

1.07. Since basic elements of education was based on religion, emergence of Buddhism brought about considerable changes in education system. Buddhist education drew heavily from the education system of the vedic period; but it had certain peculiarities of its own. Buddhist education started with the monks & was based in the monasteries and founded on the philosophy of freedom from desire

and the 'nirvana' (ultimate salvation) and aimed at spiritual and moral improvement. However, secular purpose of education was also attended to. There were two types of elementary education - one attached to Biharas/monasteries. The other curriculum which contained writing and arithmetic was offered in the schools outside the monasteries.

1.08. From the inscriptions in vernacular which King Asoka got inscribed on rocks and pillars, it appears that there was popular education in his time. Inscriptions of imperial edicts made sense only because the people had some knowledge of reading and writing. It is probably that ⁱⁿ thousands of villages obtained their (elementary education) boys and girls from the monks and nuns (M) who used the method of oral teaching and memorizing. Archeological evidences suggest that the lessons were given in tutorial form mainly to the students in a group;

individual instruction also prevailed. In Buddhist systems of education, learning environment was better than in the earlier system. The students did not pay either in kind or in cash but they used to render personal services to the teachers.

1.09. Contrary to the position taken by some author(s) it is held that the system of education was decaying since long before the conquest of Bengal by the Muslims. It is held that the same factors which drove Buddhism (and the Buddhists too) out of the mainland India, were also responsible for degeneration of the great tradition of Buddhist education.

2. The Medieval Period

2.01. The conquest of Bengal and Bihar by Bakhtiar Khilje in the 12th century AD marked the beginning of the medieval period. The remarkable addition which was made during this period to the educational scene in India was popularly known as the 'Muslim Education'. The Muslim education in India developed in line with the education of Muslim countries elsewhere. Most of the early sultans of Delhi established madrasahs for higher education; attached to mosques there were some makhtabs where the children obtained religious instructions. In fact, early Muslim kings of India did not have any systematic and consistent education policy.

(g) P.V. Bapat, 2500 years of Buddhism, p.156.

2.02. It was king Akbar who took a deliberate and comprehensive policy on education especially at the elementary level. Ain 25 of the Ain-i-Akbar outlined the curriculum for primary education which contained reading, writing and arithmetic.⁽¹⁾ As an improvement in teaching methodology a three step method was introduced for quicker acquisition of skills in reading and writing. During Akbar, a large number of maqtabas and madrashas were founded and the state support was extended to the poor and the meritorious students. However, necessary institutions were not created for implementing for royal decrees and spreading elementary of education among the masses. Moreover, the imperial patronage also varied depending on the rulers' interest in primary education.

2.03. The Muslim education was universal and free with some qualification as regards female education. Women were historical under-represented in all educational arrangement because of some deep-seated socio-religious factors. The girls from the rich families had opportunities for education; but the girls from the poor families received very little of education. The Muslim education was geared to attain both religious and secular purposes. Elementary education was received from the maqtabas attached to the mosques as well as the elementary schools in the royal palaces, houses of the nobles and the well-to-do. Besides, there were also elementary Persian Schools that emphasised Persian which was the official language. Moreover, there were also Hindu schools⁽¹⁾ which were later known as Pathshala's. The rulers established free primary schools and orphanages. They also created vast endowments and set apart big estates for the promotion of primary education. The pathshalas were established and operated locally by the interested quarters; some royal patronage was extended for their maintenance.

(1) Ain-i-Akbari, translated by Blochman, pp 278-79.

2.04. During the mughals education has drawn the attention of the rulers. Akbar undertook a determined policy on education in general and primary education in particular. The policy covered a number of areas of education such as.

- a. the objective and scope of education ;
- b. physical facilities;
- c. curriculum;
- d. metholology and
- e. state support system.

The objective of education did not remain strictly religious. Education was visualised by Akbar as a powerful tool for political, religious, social and cultural unification, strengthening of solidarity and creating of a nation. Therefore, everyone irrespective of religions, caste or creed - was allowed to have access to educational facilities. Hindus and Muslims were together attending the same schools. Unfortunately, this attitude to elementary education based on a broader political perspective did not prevail for long. As a result elementary education received less than desired level of attention.

2.05. The school system that evolved since vedic period down to the muslim rule in India formed the indigenous systems of Education with maktabas, madrashas, persian schools and pathshalas. Only in the later period of the mughals, western education was flowing into the existing education system. In fact the system of education had been undergoing changes with the process of transformation and modernization of India over the long period of British under the British India Company and the Crown.

3. Modern period:

3.01. Modern education system started developing with the advent of the British in India. Before the British, indigenous system of education prevailed in India including the part of Bengal which forms Bangladesh today. Beside the rulers, the elite and the affluent people. In those days used to offer generous help in establishing running and maintaining such institutions. William Ramsay, a missionary educationist mentioned in his study (1835-38) about the existence of 100,000 schools in 150,000 villages of Bengal and Bihar. Even before the advent of the British these institutions for elementary education were having difficulties not developing owing to lack of financial support. Royal patronage during the later period of the Mughal was concentrated in the field of higher education. On the other hand, the British policy on Indian education was not favourable to either the survival of the indigenous system or the growth of any other system of mass education.(1) In 1793, some members of the British parliament expressed their concern saying:

"We lost our colonies in America by imparting our education there; we need not do so in India too".(2)

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1. Samuel Roy, 'Education Policy of the Government of India during the British period', an unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Kerala, 1967.
 2. Don Adams and Robert M. Bjart, Education in Developing Area, David McKay Co., New York, 1869 p.78.

3.02. For encouraging mass education through the indigenous education system. Some illustrious personalities in administration and education such as Thomas in North West Frontier Province, Elphinston in Bombay and Adam in Bengal put forward suggestions but the suggestions were ignored by the Government of India. A study by F.W. Thomas in 1891 shows that the student body in 1881-82 would have been four times the actual number if the rate of attendance were same as that of 1820. This is an indication of the extent of decay of indigenous schools.

3.03. At the policy level, the negative views of the Government had to be modified in the light of pragmatic considerations. The colonial power gradually expanded their sphere of activity throughout the country. In running their business, they required a set of educated people. The Minutes of Macaulay in 1835 proposed for educating the elite who would be native in origin but English in mind. This position undoubtedly reflects a negative attitude but compared to the ^{restrictive} views that had prevailed earlier, this was a definite improvement.

3.04. At that time a major policy decision in education was concerned with the role of religious bodies namely the missionaries involved in education. The declared policy of the East India Company was one of neutrality. However, the Charter of 1813 paved the way for the missionaries to engage in education in India. In fact, throughout the second half of the 18th and the early part of the 19th century, various missionary groups took active interest in education. In spreading of education in Bengal, the Baptist Mission of William Carey played an important role. Besides, there were other

churches in Bengal such as the Wesleyan Mission and the Church Missionary Society which were engaged in educational activities. This missionary involvement in education created an awareness of the East India Company and the British Government about their responsibility for education.

3.05 The first move for government involvement was taken by Charles Grant when he proposed for introduction, in the Charter of 1793, a clause on the 'duty of the Company for educating the children of India'. However, the company was involved with education as late as 1813, when the Governor General of India was empowered to spend a minimum of Rs.100,000 for the sake of education. Based on the Charter of 1813, efforts were made to organise state system of education in three presidencies including Bengal.

3.06 Education in Bengal during this period was stimulated by two other incidental events. The semi-nationalist movement by Raja Ram Mohan Ray, advocated for introducing schools, even though in English medium. Another impetus was the printing of books in vernacular. In 1823, the Governor General of India appointed a General Committee of Public Instruction. Through this committee the state took up the responsibility for and established control over education. In 1842, the committee of Public Instruction was dissolved and a Council of Education was set up. The Council worked until 1854. A parliamentary enquiry into contemporary education was conducted in 1853. The findings of that enquiry report formed the basis of a despatch published in 1854.

3.07. The famous despatch of Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of control of the Governor General in council, was issued in 1854. Primary education as understood in Bangladesh today was first recommended in that despatch. The despatch sketched an outline for public instruction and recommended encouraging the growth of indigenous system of education, the policy of religious neutrality, and a scheme of publicly aided education for the masses.

3.08. On the basis of this despatch, departments of Public Instructions were established in the provinces; in the centre, a separate branch on education was created in the year 1857. However, the recommendations of the despatch for integrating indigenous school, increasing financial commitments and providing grants-in-aid to the private primary schools were not implemented owing to inadequate funding and lack of political will.

3.09. A proclamation was made by Queen Victoria in 1858 which brought India under the rule of the crown. This also laid down the policy of strict religious neutrality which led to disappearance of many missionaries engaged in education. Meanwhile, the Secretary of State approved the despatch of 1854, reviewed the progress of implementation and advocated for levying of a special tax on land in order to provide for vernacular education. In the year 1859 another despatch was published.

3.10. The despatch of 1859, recommended that (a) all schools other than a few government ones should be handed over to the local bodies which should be authorised to levy rates in order to defray expenses for the management

of those primary schools and (b) the government should rely for mass education on the government schools only. Thus this despatch suggested a policy for reduction of governmental commitment to primary education and created a confusion as to the agency to be relied upon for the spread of mass education.

3.11. Until 1871, local taxes were imposed to pay for primary education except in Bengal, where a system of permanent settlement was introduced. However, with local initiative and an amount of government grant, Bengal achieved some expansion of primary education. This expansion was too little to compensate the decay of the indigenous system of education.

3.12. The Government became increasingly involved in educational matters when in 1882, Lord Ripon, the then Vice Roy of India, appointed "Indian Education Commission (1882)". The Commission which was popularly known as Hunter Commission, named after its Chairman, William Hunter addressed the issues arising out of the conflicting despatches and made the following recommendations on primary education. (1) the primary education should be regarded as instruction of the masses through vernacular; (2) the instruction of primary education should be adapted to the environment (this implies that the commission did not recommend uniform curriculum) (3) the administration of primary education should be handed over to the local bodies-municipalities and District Boards mainly because local administration would be able to permit flexibility in keeping with divergence of environment in different localities. (4) The curriculum should be adapted to the environment and simplified. (This implies that the commission did not recommend uniform curriculum) (5) a specific fund should be created besides using the local resources for financing primary education.

(c) There should be specific fund^{provision} for the purpose of primary education.

3.13. In the process of development a notable thing was happening. The age-old system of indigenous education was being replaced with the oriental/western education. This was done by the non-government organizations until the first half of the 19th century; since the second half, education was drawing increasing attention of the state owing mainly to some political and economic imperative(1)

However, the official policy for primary education was deficient in promotional role of the government. During the end of the 19th century quantitative expansion was too little. There were some changes and improvement in qualitative aspects. Some Measures were taken for:

1. Construction of school buildings;
2. Improvement in the quality of teachers through training;
3. Opening of the state schools for the girls and the low caste, who were ostracised from the indigenous school system and
4. Improvement of the curricula over that of the indigenous schools.

However, owing to enlargement of the class under the new method teaching the personalised teacher student relation, as seen in the indigenous school was lost.

3.14. In 1910, Lord Curzon who took over as Viceroy of India in 1899, convened a conference of Indian Educationists and Directors of Public Instruction to discuss matters concerning education. In order to strengthen the government machinery for education, a Director General was appointed in 1901. He was to advise the government on educational issues and supervise and co-ordinate educational administration. These moves led to increase in enrolment and the number of recognised primary schools; but the measures were inadequate for addressing the massive problem of illiteracy that prevailed at the beginning of the 20th century. (a)

- (1) Richard B. Morris & Graham B. Irvin (ed.), *The expanding World of Education: An Encyclopedia of the modern World*, Vikas, Delhi, 1970 p. 853-893

3.15. As a sharp break from the past system of education, which was essentially oriental, the Government of India Resolution of 1904 underscored the need for the medium of instruction for children upto the age of 13 to be in their own tongue. The resolution also depicted a grim picture of primary education in the country. ()

3.16. The situation was so pressing that the leaders of India national movement formed a National Education Commission to bring home the need for introduction of compulsory universal primary education. (a)

3.17. In 1910, a bill was introduced by Gokhale in the Imperial Legislative Council recommending the beginning steps towards making elementary education free and compulsory'. The bill was rejected. Another attempt by Gokhale in 1912 to make primary education 'free' was also rejected however these efforts had significant positive influence in policy making. An institution in terms of a separate 'Department of Education' was created at the centre. Moreover, these moves helped strengthen the movement for mass education and prompted the government activism between 1912-17 in the field of Primary Education. During this time the central department of education worked more or less as a co-ordinating body and clearing house of information relating to educational administration.

3.18. In 1912, King George V, during his visit to India, made a proclamation for spreading of education in India. This was the basis for enhancing governmental support to education to an amount of Rs 330,000 annually; increasing the number of Primary Schools by 75% and that of

(a) Some authors argued that percentage of literacy for men in 1901 was even lower than that in 1835-"Arun Kumar Bose, Pattern of educational progress in Pre-Independent India" in 'Trend of socio-economic change in India 1871-1961, (Indian Institute of Advanced Study, Simla, 1969) p.351.

students by 100%. In pursuance of this proclamation a Resolution was published by the Government of India in 1913. The Resolution provided for raising the lower primary schools to upper primary level and emphasised the training and fixation of minimum pay for teachers. In Bengal this resolution was not put to effect. Instead an arrangement was made under the "Panchayat Union Scheme". Under the scheme, the Government at its own cost, provided for one model lower Primary School with three classes in each union. The managing such schools was entrusted to the District Board.

3.19. In response to the general awakening of India during the 1st world War period, the government passed the Government of India Act, 1919. This act initiated a policy for decentralization which had brought education out of the sole control of the Secretary of State in London to that of the provincial governments and created an institutional framework for better access of the people to primary education. The provincial government passed various acts empowering the local bodies to make primary education free and compulsory in the areas within their jurisdiction.

3.20. An act passed by the province was the Bengal Primary Education Act. of 1919. This was initially applied to municipalities only and later in 1921, the Act was amended to include the village unions too. The Act. of 1919 provided for a survey of primary education to be conducted by the municipalities so that the Government might determine the possibility of introducing compulsory education for boys between 6 to 10 years of age. The municipalities were also assigned with ensuring of attendance, assessing of the capability of the students for payment of fees and levying,

with the sanction of the government of an 'Education Cess' (Shikkha Kar).

3.21. It is obvious that the girls were not covered by the Act: in order to permit the Chittagong Municipality for extension of compulsion to the girls of the same age, the act was amended in 1932. In Bengal compulsion was not implemented. In fact Bengal was far behind two other presidencies namely Bombay and Madras. However, these efforts led to an increase in the number school and enrolment. But the dropout rate upto the end of class IV was about 97%.

3.22. In spite of the policy of progressive indianisation of education, the results seemed far from satisfactory. The Government of India Act. 1919 created a system of diarchy between the centre and the province. Education was transferred to the province; but finance remained with the centre. So, the province did not have enough resources to embark on a plan for spreading education among the masses. The provincial Education departments were dictated by the centre and they never enjoyed enough power to formulate a policy on 'education for the masses'. In fact, one may trace a long history of diarchy in policies for administration of primary education.

3.23. During 1921-27 the issues ^{of primary education} came up again before the government of India when the Hartog Committee reviewed the situation in education and pointed out that increase in the number of primary schools in the past decades failed to improve literacy situation proportionately. The Commission identified the reasons for slow progress in Primary Education in terms of poverty, illiteracy, conservative outlook, lack of transport, physical

obstacles, and social, religions, communal and linguistic barriers (a)
3.24. The committee disapproved the early policy for expansion and instead recommended that

1. A policy of consolidation should be adopted in preference to one of diffusion.
2. The duration of primary course should be four years.
3. The standard of the general education of the primary teachers should be raised.
4. The curriculum of primary school should be liberalized.
5. School hour and holidays should be adjusted to seasonal and local requirements.
6. Special attention should be given to the lowest class in the primary school. Efforts should be made to reduce stagnation and wastage.
7. Rural uplift work should be undertaken and centered in the school.
8. It is the duty of government to assure necessary power to control and improve the efficiency of administration.
9. The inspecting staff of the government should be considerably strengthened¹.

3.25. In spite of generating appeal in the official circle, the report received unfavourable reaction from the public in general. Meanwhile, the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act of 1930, was enacted to cover the children of 6 - 11 of age from the rural areas. Under this act a district-school board for each district was created and a central primary education committee was set up for supervising the activities of the Board and advising the government on primary education.

(a) Nurullah & Naik.

3.26. The controversy over the recommendation of the Hartog Committee continued. On the otherhand, the world economy plunged into deep depression, causing substantial financial hardship globally. This in turn affected all public support systems in India including those for primary education. As a result, the qualitative improvements as suggested in the Hartog Committee report did not work out. Drop-out situation was not addressed to and inspection of schools could not be strengthened. In

1936-37, 62% of schools in India were run privately 37% by the local boards.

Expenses on primary education between the period 1890-1920 remained between 30-35% of the total educational expenditure from local board and government funds. However, there were serious failures in copying up with those factors which were responsible for stagnation in primary education. In 1936-37, the Woods Abbot Committee pointed out that inspite of the fact that lower education in local language showed better results than that in the English language, the number of schools with local languages as the medium of instruction were diminishing continuously.

3.27. The decade between 1937-47 deserves to be specially mentioned because of some events which helped shape the policies toward primary education. In order to achieve the universal compulsory primary education M.K.Gandhi proposed in 1937 a new system of primary education. He sketched a system of primary education based on a few principles so that

- 1) The new education would be meant for the villages, where illiteracy was greater than the towns;
- 2) It would be meant to give a minimum education consisting of practical literacy and knowledge of some useful handicrafts;

- 3) It would promise not to burden the taxpayer but to be virtually self supporting;
it would
- 4) Aim at preventing the rush of population from the village to the towns which is one of the acute problems of the country.

3.23.

The ideas of Mr. Gandhi laid the foundation of the Resolution passed in a national conference held in the year 1937. (d) He proposed introduction of seven-year free and ^{and} compulsory primary education throughout the nation. The conference endorsed his view and suggested that the medium of instruction should be in the mother tongue. In order to devise a scheme of primary education in pursuance of these resolutions, the conference appointed a Committee, under the chairmanship of Dr. Zakir Hossain.

3.23. The committee recommended a seven-year primary education which would centre around a basic craft at the elementary level and subsequently lead to different occupations at different stages. This innovative approach was tried elsewhere in some selected schools; but in Bengal this curriculum was not introduced because only private schools were free to choose that curriculum.

3.30. As a result of the WW II, education sector sustained considerable amount of loss. Between the period 1935-36 and 1945-46, the number of schools declined even though there was negligible increase in enrolment mainly because of demographic reasons.

3.31. In 1944, a comprehensive report on educational reconstruction was published by the Central Advisory Board of Education with Sir John Sargent, Educational Advisor to the Government of India as the Chairman. The report popularly known as the 'Sargent Report' was the last important document of the British Government in the field of education.

3.32 As regards elementary education, it proposed that nursery schools should be established on a voluntary basis for children under 5, while for those ^{between} 6 to 14 years of age, both boys and girls, education should be free and compulsory. education at this stage would provide for what

all ought to know in order to take their place in the society and would include a handicraft suitable to the locality where the school was located. For carrying out this scheme, the report suggested that number of schools should be increased and more teachers should be employed. Moreover, it also emphasised on the need for training of teachers.

3.33. The report emphasised the need for national planning along with the reform of educational finance which would involve some kind of subsidy for the provinces from the central revenues; but without entailing any onerous interference by the Centre in provincial affairs. There ought to be some effective liaison between the Central and Provincial Education Departments so that the former might advise and assist the latter to keep track of the developments. The Report also visualized several modes of financial assistance from the Centre to the Provinces.

3.34 It was stated in the report, that a great mistake was made when the administration of education, particularly in the lower stages, was handed over to local bodies. The charges levelled at the local bodies were nepotism, incompetence, irresponsibility, ill-treatment of teachers, religious and political bias. However, in order to retain local interest in education as far as possible, the following measures were recommended :

- a) where sufficient people with requisite knowledge; integrity, enthusiasm and standing were prepared to offer their services, school boards should be established to deal with basic schools(primary and middle);
- b) given the above conditions, school managing committees might be formed for individual schools;
- c) members of these bodies should be nominated by the Provincial Education Department;
- d) the schools maintained by the private bodies would have managing boards of their own;
- e) At the provincial level there should be an Advisory Board of Education.

3.35. The report also recommended that the Director of Public Instructions should be responsible to the Government for the general administration of education (other than university and higher technical education) throughout the provinces. Even though India was partitioned, within three years of publishing of that report, it was instrumental in the development of education planning in the independent countries of this region.

4. Primary Education on the eve of the partition in 1947.

4.01. The primary education system as obtained in the then East Pakistan right after partition in 1947 evolved over a long period of time. Even though the elements of the system were drawn from both the traditional as well as modern sources, the system took its shape owing mainly to the policies adopted during the British rule in India.

4.02. Primary education had been of four year duration, recommended by the Hartog Committee. The management of primary schools was held by different agencies such as the government, the local bodies and the private individuals/organisations. The following table gives a picture as of 1946-47.

Table
Number of Primary Schools by management,
1946-47

	Boys School	Girls Schools	Total
1. Government	39	-	39
2. District School Boards	17,680	501	18,181
3. Municipalities	138	54	192
4. Private Schools receiving aids from public funds	5,721	3,255	8,976
5. Private Schools not receiving aid from public funds	901	961	1,862
6. Pre-primary	-	1	1
	24,856	4,778	29,634

Source: Report on Public Instruction in East Bengal for the year 1947-48.

4.03. There were 29,634 primary schools with 20,46,311 students. The number of teachers was 72,021 including 2,781 women teachers mainly in the urban areas. Only a small percentage of teachers were trained. Among women this number was smaller. The curriculum contained subjects with examination and those without examination. While examinations were held in vernacular, reading, arithmetic, geography, rural civics elements of science the latter category included religious instruction, physical education games,

and hand/firm work. English was an optional subject whereas the medium of instruction was Bengali. Scholarships were awarded in two grades on the basis of the results of the Primary Scholarship examination.

4.04. The District Boards and, in case of Sylhet, the local school board were responsible for primary education in rural areas. In urban ^{areas} municipal bodies were assigned with this responsibility. The task of supervision and inspection of schools was done by the government officials.

4.05 The local bodies supported the schools out of the fund obtained locally and from the Government. Control over primary education was exercised as per conditions attached to grants-in-aid to the schools. Primary education in Chittagong Hill Tracts was controlled by a Board of Education with the Divisional Commissioner as the president and the District Inspector (DI) of schools as the secretary. About one fourth of Primary Schools in Bangladesh were supported in part or wholly by the private organisations or charity.

4.06. Primary education was free in the district of Dhaka, Faridpur, Mymensingh, Barisal, Chittagong, Noakhali, Tippera, Kushtia, Rangpur, Dinajpur and Rajshahi. In the district without School Boards, fees varying from annas 2-4 (4 annas = Tk.25) were charged from the students of primary schools. Primary level students in a secondary school were charged more.

4.07. There were fewer schools for girls. The enrolment of girls in Primary schools constituted very small percentage of the total. Even by 1950, this was below 20%. This disproportionately low level of female education is explained by a set of socio-economic and cultural factors which goes back to a long period.

5. Primary Education in Post-Partition period (1947-71):

5.01. While partition of India, the geographical area that forms Bangladesh today constituted East Pakistan. The eastern province of the erstwhile Pakistan.

5.02. Primary education in East Pakistan did not receive due attention from the Government of Pakistan even though some rhetorical statements were made from time to time. In 1947, the Pakistan Education Conference resolved to introduce free and compulsory primary education of five year period which would be gradually raised to eight years. But the

later developments in East Pakistan did not reflect sincere efforts in this direction.

5.43. In 1947, there were 29633 primary schools in East Pakistan with 4777 schools for girls only. The corresponding total number for West Pakistan was 8000 by 1969-70, this number went upto 40,000 - a 500% increase in West Pakistan but in East Pakistan the number went down to about 29000 including 1591 girls' primary schools. It was held that the decrease in number was due to the policy of consolidation, improvement, abolition of weak and ineffective primary schools and the amalgamation of the inefficient girls schools with the boys' schools of the neighbourhood. Total enrolment in Pakistan increased from 35.3 lakhs to a total of 105 lakhs a three fold increase; but for Bangladesh enrolment did not increase proportionately: it was 27.6 lakhs in 1947 and in 1969-70 this number stood at. At the time of partition, Bangladesh had 75 thousand teachers out of a total of one lakh for the country. During the Pakistan period the percentage of increase in teachers was 33 for East Pakistan and 200 for West Pakistan. The proportion of female teachers in East Pakistan remained almost constant - 2.9% in 1947 and 3% in 1970. These numbers indicate that during the period primary education received less than desired level of attention from the policy makers.

6. The Commissions and Committees:

6.01. The Government of Pakistan set up a number of commissions and committees on education. Some of them exclusively dealt with the educational issues of East Pakistan. Reports of a few bodies deserve particular attention. For example the Akram Khan Commission (1949) made a detailed treatment of Primary education. The Commission observed "In our opinion-primary education in this province should be universal, free and compulsory and should have the highest priority in the nation-building programme". The report of the Commission covered wide range of areas in primary education development of curriculum, recruitment and training of teachers, such as courses and duration of teachers' training and administration of primary education etc.

6.02. The Commission suggested for development of an appropriate curriculum in keeping with need for the psychological, physical and mental preparedness of the children of the school going age - one that will be designed "in terms of activity and experience rather than knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored". Such curriculum was to aim at realising the following objectives:

- (i) physical development of the children;
- (ii) mental and emotional growth;
- (iii) social and moral training ; and
- (iv) preparation for everyday life.

G.03. The Commission prescribed tentative syllabus and recommended that recruitment of well-qualified teachers and training them in the techniques of the child education would enable them use the proper methods and appropriate techniques to cater for the learning needs of the children. The Commission agreed with the recommendations of the Committee on Primary and Adult Education (1938-39) that the qualification for a teacher should be matriculation and training. In order to produce quality teachers the Commission suggested that it was necessary to raise the salary of the teachers, draw excellent trainers in the training courses completely. The Commission suggested for scrapping the bookish, lecture oriented and disjointed training programme in favour of a training course which will be practical, integrated and based on understanding of children and wider participation of teachers in social life. In this connection the need for enhancing the musical strength of women teachers in pre-primary and primary schools was also understood.

G.04. As regards administration, the Commission warned against politicisation and favoured an impartial administration which was decentralised to efficient and manageable units such as the then sub-divisions, upgraded to the districts later on. The Commission held that the agency for administration should be constituted with persons who would take initiative for improvement of primary education. Simultaneously, the supervision and inspection of primary schools and the teachers' training institutes should also be strengthened.

G.05. The recommendations of the report of the Akhram Khan Commission could be translated into action. Another Commission had to be set up under a different set of social and political circumstances. Then The East Pakistan Educational Reforms Commission 1957 was headed by the then Chief Minister Aftab Rahman Khan. The report of the Commission provided that:-

- (i) universal, compulsory and free education should be introduced within 15 years for all boys and girls between 6 - 14 years of age;
- (ii) free education for children between 6-11 years of ages should continue; and
- (iii) there should be uniform type of education for all upto primary stage.

C.07. The Commission dwelt with curriculum, its content, methods, qualification for primary teachers', their remuneration, salary structure, training of teachers and measures for improving the primary teachers' training institutions etc.

C.08. The Commission took to the same principles and objectives as that of the Akram Khan Commission in respect of curriculum. It was recommended that in designing a curriculum, a few things should be noted carefully. Environmental studies should be duly emphasised; there should be no second language during the period of primary education; ungraded education upto class II may be introduced experimentally; burden of books should be reduced and the teachers should have handbooks and manuals.

C.09. Regarding teachers, the Commission prescribed the same qualifications for entry into training and teaching as those suggested in the Akram Khan Commission. It was recommended that two year pre-service training should be followed by in-service and refresher courses in general as well as training programmes for religious education and particular crafts. Other recommendation included enhancing the remuneration of the primary teachers introducing a salary structure in accordance with the qualifications and ensuring a ratio of 4:1 between the students and the teachers.

C.10. The recommendations on administration follows the same line as that of the previous commission. However, this commission specifically suggested for

- (i) passing of an Act vesting the Government with the responsibility for administration of primary education;
- (ii) decentralising the administration of primary education by forming of the Sub-divisional Boards (in lieu of the then District school Boards) with the Sub-divisional Education Officer (SDEO) as the Secretary;
- (iii) expanding the Inspectorate;
- (iv) providing incentives to the teachers' training institutes ; and
- (v) involving the Union Parishad in administration by allowing them representation on the Managing Committee and making them responsible for construction and repair of the school building and teachers' quarters and regular attendance of teachers and children.

C.11. The priority areas of action identified by the Commission were:

- (i) administrative decentralization of primary schools;
- (ii) establishment of a model school in each union, if possible;
- (iii) improvement of prospect and status of primary school teachers;
- (iv) pre-service and in-service training for teachers;
- (v) provision of physical facilities for primary schools;
- (vi) improvement of supervisory system for primary education and
- (vii) inspection of the PTIs.

C.12. Before the report of this Commission could be used as policy guidelines, martial law was promulgated in 1958. Another Commission was set up by the new Martial Law Government and a report was published in 1959. The 'Report of the Commission on National Education, 1959, popularly known as S.M.Sharif's Commission recommended that primary education should be designed to

- a. make a child functionally literate;
- b. develop all aspects of his personality moral physical and mental;
- c. equip him with the basic knowledge and skills required of an individual and a citizen and prepare him for further education;
- d. arouse a sense of civil responsibility, love for his country and willingness to its development;
- e. develop the habits of industry, integrity and curiosity and
- f. awaken a liking for physical activity, sports -----

C.13. The Commission suggested improvement in the content of the curriculum at primary schools and the teaching methods. The Commission underscored the need for religious education, attitude building and provision of facilities, including buildings, furniture and learning materials. Due importance was attached to the quantity, quality and composition (male/female) of teachers. Financing and Administration of primary education was also discussed.

6.14. Disappointments and frustration in the field of education as reflected in widespread agitation among people led to formation of another commission. In search of an education policy the Noor Khan Commission, 1969 was set up. The Commission suggested a school system for Class I-X with the elementary level ranging between (I-VIII), formation of a governing body for each school and the District School Authority. This exercise had very little to achieve because later developments led to political confrontation of the two provinces and the war of liberation and independence of Bangladesh leaving no scope for action following the policy guidelines of this commission if any.

7. Plans between(1947-71):

7.01. During her association with Pakistan, Bangladesh had three plan periods. The First Five Year Plan - FFYP(1955-60) intended to attain free and compulsory primary education by 20 years. The plan aimed at improvement in the quality and effectiveness of primary education by expanding the training facilities and increasing the number of trained teachers^(b). The plan also emphasised the provision for buildings equipment and supplies, improvement of curriculum, and quality of teachers and participation of the community in financing of primary education. Besides, the plan objective also included improving of teachers' salary in order to draw better people to primary school and providing better building and facilities in about 6000 schools. During this period enrolment was estimated to increase by about 40,000 and percentage of trained teachers was to make an addition of 20% over the plan period.

7.02. At the end of the plan in 1960, there were 26583 schools. This implied an addition of 583 schools over the plan period. Some development works were undertaken for development of a few schools. The enrolment increased by less than 50% of the target and expansion in physical facilities lagged behind enrolment. The percentage of trained teachers increased from 62% in 1955 to 67% in 1960. This is only 25% of the target. However, this period marked the beginning of rise in teachers' salary. This is why the Second Five Year Plan of Pakistan observed that during the (FFYP) plan ----- -- apart from some improvement in teachers salaries little was done in East Pakistan"^(a).

(b) First Five Year Plan(1955-60) Government of Pakistan.

(a) Second Five Year Plan (1960-65) Government of Pakistan. Chap--- p.341.

The Second Five Year Plan (1960-65):

7.03. The Second Five Year Plan was preceded by two important events. To find ways and means for meeting the challenges of primary education. A regional level meeting was held. Under the auspices of the Unesco, the countries of the Asia and the Pacific region adopted the 'Karachi Plan' in 1960. The plan proposed "every country of the region should provide a system of universal, compulsory and free primary education of seven years or more within a period of 20 years-1960-80". Secondly an Education Committee was set up in the year 1959. A reflection on the plan, lends support to the view that the recommendations of the committee and the resolutions of the regional level meeting were not taken into active consideration in formulation of the SFYP.

7.04. The objective of the Second Five Year Plan was to (a) enhance the rate of enrolment from 48% to 63% among the children between 6 - 11 years of age. This would imply additional enrolment of 1.3 million children (b) provide 13,300 primary schools (50% of the total) with better buildings and equipment regular supplied and qualified teachers (c) provide adequate facilities for primary education of girls (d) revise curriculum to harmonise it with the needs and abilities of young children and (e) enhance the production of primary school teachers.

7.05. The enrolment target was not fulfilled; even in 1968, the rate was below 63%. The percentage of trained teachers declined over the plan period even though the number of teachers increased during this time. This implied that the training facilities failed to keep pace even with modest increase in teachers. There was little progress in female education. In fact, the number of girls' primary schools declined over the plan period.

The Third Five Year Plan(1965-74):

7.06. The Third Five Year Plan TFYP(1965-70) was the first to be formulated within the framework of the perspective plan for 20 years. In respect of ^{/primary} education the aim of the plan () was to attain "Universal Literacy".

7.07 In accordance with the objective of the perspective plan, the FYP underscored the need for balanced and integrated development of primary education, improvement of the quality of education and expansion of primary education through reduction of dropout rate, supply of better qualified teachers and facilities, improved teachers training and enhanced supervision and inspection. The programme of action included measures (a) to raise enrolment to 70% of primary school age group by 1970. This would involve additional enrolment of 30 lack over the period (b) to open 4000 new schools besides improving 18,500 schools and (c) to increase retention and reduce dropout through improvement of the quality of education.

7.08 Performance during this peirod was disappointing. Primary education received only 18% of total allocation for the education sector as a whole. Actual utilization of fund in East Pakistan was about 50% of the allocation. The percentage of enrolment in 1970 was only 59.08% as against the plan target for 70%. In fact the enrolment was declining in the years before 1970 both in absolute and relative terms. Even though the number of trained teachers increased, the percentage showed slight decline. The number of schools increased from 27,562 to 29082. This is only ----- percentage of target.

() First Five Year Plan(1965-70), Government of Pakistan June, 1965.

8. Constitutional Provisions

8.01 The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh embodies our sublime hope and declares our sincere pledge to establish a society, which will be free from exploitation and in which the rule of law, fundamental human and social wellbeing will be secured for all citizens^(a). In order to realise this hope and redeem our pledge, the constitution made certain specific provisions^(b) which have important bearing on formulation of policies in primary education. Some of the provisions are as follows:

8.02. According to article 3 " the state language of the Republic is Bengali⁽¹⁾. For effective use of this language both orally and in writing, it is necessary to arrange for universal primary education.

8.03. Article 15 states " it shall be a fundamental responsibility of the state to attain, through planned economic growth, a constant increase of productive forces and a steady improvement in the material and cultural standard of living of the people with a view to its citizens - (a) the provision of the basic necessities of life including education....

8.04. Article 16 of the constitution makes it a state responsibility to bring about rural transformation through the improvement of education. /

8.05. Article 18 of the constitution pledges for improvement of public health and morality which pre-supposes for all a minimum amount of educational attainment.

8.06. Article 19(1) provides for equal opportunity to all citizens and pledges for removal of social and economic inequality. For ensuring equality of opportunity, it is necessary to provide for primary education for every one.

8.07. The article 20 (2) of the constitution states that the state shall endeavour to create conditions in which, as a general principle, persons shall not be able to enjoy unearned incomes, and in which human labour in every form intellectual and physical, shall become a fuller expression of creative and of the human personality.

8.08. In order to realise these objectives and attain socio-economic development, the constitution pledges a "free and compulsory" education. The article 17 provides that the state shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of:(a) establishing a uniform,

(a) Preamble of the constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

(b) Dr. Muhiuddin Khan Alamgir.

(1) The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, 1979.

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; (b) relating education to the needs of society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to serve those needs; (c) removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law.

8.09. These constitutional directives provide guidelines for policy planning in primary education. In fact, the constitutional provisions make it a state responsibility to introduce universal primary education. The ideals of the constitution have been drawn in order formulation of policies and devising of action programmes in the plan documents. However, the plans were also guided by the recommendations of different commissions and the committees set up by the government from time to time.

9. The Commissions and the Committees;

9.01. Since 1973, a number of Commissions and Committees have been set up for educational reforms and reorganisation. The first in the series was the Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission, 1973. The report of the Commission was published in 1974. In the year 1976, the National Advisory Board on Education headed by Kazi Zafar Ahmed, submitted a report on education. However, that report was not published. Subsequently, a Council Committee was set up and series of meetings were held. The outcome of those Committee meetings was not made public. Another report was submitted by the Justice Sattar Committee which concerned only with the issues of university education. After promulgation of Martial law in 1982, a "Martial Law Study Committee" was set up. The recommendations of the study committee formed the basis of policies formulated subsequently. Last in the row was the Mufizuddin Commission, 1988 which has elaborately dealt with the issues of education and provided detailed guidelines in primary education. As for primary education, there are at least two Commissions that deserve special attention, namely the Qudrate-e-Khuda Commission, 1973 and the Mufizuddin Commission 1988.

Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission, 1974:

9.02. The Bangladesh Education Commission Report 1974 popularly known as the Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission outlined the following objectives⁽¹⁾ of primary education:-

- (a) to develop the child's whole personality-moral mental, physical and social;
- (b) to awaken patriotism and a feeling for good citizenship and to develop such qualities as perserverence, diligence, good conduct and devotion to justice;

- (c) to help the child to read and write in his vernacular and maintain basic accounts and, in addition, to make him familiar with the fundamentals of knowledge and with skills which he will require a future citizen; and
- (d) to prepare him for acquiring higher education.

The commission identified the problems of primary education as being the:-

- (a) want of realistic and life-centred educational programme;
- (b) paucity of properly trained and enterprising teachers;
- (c) want to class-room accommodation;
- (d) non-availability of well-written and attractive text books; and
- (e) short supply of necessary items of furniture, educational appliance, sports-goods and library books.

9.03 The Commission recommended for extending the duration of primary education, (which was then five years) to eight years; making it free and compulsory for universalisation; recruiting competent teachers in required numbers; opening of new schools; providing for text books and learning aid; introducing additional shifts; arranging for night shifts for working children; appointing female teachers, opening of girls schools; making the syllabus attractive and extending training and research facilities in education.

Mufizuddin Commission, 1987:

9.04. The Education Commission, 1987 is popularly known as Mufizuddin Commission. The report of the Commission endorsed the views of the Bangladesh Education Commission (BEC) Report, 1973 that education should be a means for human resources development and primary education should be so designed that it ensures harmonious and overall development of the children-physical, mental, social, emotional and ethical.

9.05. The Commission recommended that the duration of primary education should be five years by 1995 and eight years by 2000. The recommendation of the Commission included co-operation between the government at the center and the local authorities in introducing compulsory primary education; organizing a system of joint financial support; arranging for mid-day tiffin; for students, opening of feeder schools in the remote areas mainly under local initiative; introducing of shifts, if necessary; rescheduling the holidays in keeping with the working seasons; arranging for pre-primary education in all primary schools; and providing for uniform, text book learning materials etc. for the children belonging to the families below poverty level.

9.05. The Commission suggested that for qualitative improvement of primary education, measures should be taken to:-

1. ensure that at every stage of primary education minimum required competency is earned by all students and to arrange for make-up for those who lag behind;
2. specify the competence to be attained at the end of primary education and to determine the attainable competence at each class and subject.
3. design courses in order to cater to the needs of those who will end at primary level and also to lay a sound basis for those who will move on to higher stages of education. So, the content of the course and the methodologies are to be decided very carefully.
4. familiarise the teachers with the principles, objectives and features of a curriculum for successful implementation of a course. Continuous efforts have to be made for imparting knowledge and skill and bringing in required changes in attitude.

9.06. In respect of curricula, the Commission suggested that it should be flexible, work oriented and less bookish. The commission approved the course designed by the national committee on curriculum and syllabus (1975) and suggested for expanding the scope of work experience as a course content so that the students may keep in touch with work at home or in the fields and factories.

9.07. As regards teaching of English, the Commission recommended English as a compulsory second language at class VI; but suggested that English may also be tried from III; if so required.

9.08. In order to engage competent and sincere teachers in primary education the Commission emphasised on careful selection and recruitment. The Commission identified the educational and training requirements for a teacher and recommended that a teacher should have an HSC/equivalent degree and a candidate with a year of training should be given preference over one without training. To be a head teacher, HC-in-Ed degree would be necessary. In addition to qualification, a teacher must pass a test on 'Aptitude for teaching in primary schools. In-take of teachers with aptitude for teaching will help improve motivation which is found lacking among many teachers.

9.09. The Commission provided for pre-entry, pre-service(post entry), in-service or on-the-job and refresher training for the primary teachers. For development of their career, the Commission suggested (i) creation of the post of Asstt.Head Master and (ii) promotion of capable teachers to the position of the Cluster Inspector, Instructor of the PTIs etc.

9.10. As regards financing of primary- education, the Commission underscored the importance of the local initiative. The report referred to East Bengal (Rural) Primary Education Act, 1930, which provided for compulsory primary education to be organised by the Local Bodies. Under that Act, Government support was limited to only the salary of the teachers; land, building, furniture and other learning aids for primary schools were to be arranged by the local people. Since nationalisation, there prevails a misconception that the Government had the sole responsibility for primary education. This has drastically reduced the local initiative and efforts. In order to work in co-operation with the teachers/ officers, utilization of the following bodies has also been suggested:-

1. Managing Committee.
2. Teacher-Guardian Committee.
3. Mosque and other Religions Committee.
4. Local Youth or Voluntary organisation for social supplement.

9.11. The Commission has identified some areas in which local help may be extremely useful. The areas are:-

- a. survey of the children of school going age;
- b. admission and attendance of the students;
- c. reduction of drop-out;
- d. cooperation in building, repair and maintenance of schools;
- e. celebration of different ceremonies; and
- f. joining the government extension workers in different educational programmes.

9.12. The programmes undertaken for primary education suggest that the reports of different education Commissions are yet to be translated into well thought out action programmes. In this country development activities are undertaken in terms of development projects which constitute the building blocks of a plan. A brief analysis of the plans in primary education and their implementation provides an idea as to the policies pursued in the field of primary education.

* Minister of Education informed the parliament about the steps to be taken by the government in making primary education universal & compulsory.

The First Five Year Plan - FFYP(1973-78):

10.01 The first Five Year Plan, FFYP had been formulated before the Education Commission Report, 1974 was published. The plan sets the objective of the primary education subsector within the framework of the education sector as a whole. The objectives were to:

- (i) raise the total enrolment by about 2.6 million from a base of 6 million to 8.5 million;
- (ii) increase the percentage of primary age-group students attending schools from 58 per cent to 73 in 1978;
- (iii) give ninety per cent of the boys of primary age group access to primary education during the plan, compared to 76 per cent in 1973;
- (iv) accelerate participation of girls from the current level of 40 per cent to 55 per cent during the plan. This implied an increase in actual enrolment of girls by 1.1 million compared to 1.4 million for boys;
- (v) revise the curriculum at the primary level to make it more relevant to real life obtaining in the country;
- (vi) supply the text books, writing and instructional materials to all children free of cost or at subsidised rates;
- (vii) reduce drop-out rate from 63 per cent to 52 per cent by undertaking supplementary and non-formal measures such as well-deisgned educational programmes through radio and television and innovative measures such as provision of feeder schools, child feeding, female teachers, support and recreational facilities and synchronisation of holiday with crop seasons etc; and
- (viii) encourage educated housewives to teach in primary schools.

10.02. In order to realise these objectives the government took up a scheme for 'Development of Primary Education in Bangladesh within the framework of the FFYP. The scheme involved an expenditure of Tk.42.04 crore including a foreign exchange component of Tk.2.45 crore. However, the scheme covered only the second half of the plan period and aimed at what the document called "consolidation and improvement" of the system in terms of

- (a) the physical facilities of the existing schools;
- (b) the provision of basic supplies and equipment for the school;
- (c) the development of supplementary reading/learning materials for children;
- (d) improvement the organisational arrangements for management and supervision of primary education;
- (e) the training of the existing stock of untrained teachers and
- (f) the development of the curriculum and related materials.

10.03. The scheme was taken in the backdrop of deficiency in physical facilities, inadequacy of the administrative arrangement for management and supervision of the primary school and inefficient use of the existing facilities. However, there are two fundamental aspects of the project which suggests failure of the project to reach the heart of the issue. With a literacy rate of 20% in 1974, and a projection of high growth of population, Bangladesh required rapid expansions of education and educational facilities, even if deficient; because when the option is between low quality education and no education, the rational choice is education even though of low quality. Studies revealed that at the elementary level, expansion of education, even though deficient brings about tremendous amount of benefits. Therefore, the policy for consolidation and improvement and away from expansion was probably inappropriate for meeting the educational needs of a fast growing population.

10.04. The scheme underscored the physical and human factors; however, there are other important determinants for low rate of literacy in Bangladesh. Those aspects deserved consideration. Besides, implementation of a project requires facing of problems meeting of challenges and resolving of issues. Some of them are common to different projects and some are specific to a particular project. ^{^ Necessary arrangements were not made to face these challenges.} The scheme had serious deficiencies in project implementation leading to a substantial cost overrun and delay: the project which was supposed to be completed by 1978, was declared complete in 1981. Even then only 60% of the target for development of physical facilities could be attained while the cost incurred was 98.17% of the budget.

10.05. Secondly, success of a project requires better and intensive utilisation of the existing personnel and institutional capability or creation thereof. Unfortunately, in the scheme, this aspect of the personnel (both quantitatively and qualitatively) and institutional support was given very little consideration.

(1978-80).

10.06. The FFYP was followed by a Two Year Plan - TYP. Nothing new was set in the Two Year Plan. Infact, the plan was designed to complete the incomplete works of the FFYP. So the T P was simply an extension of the First Five Year Plan. From evaluation of the performance of the education sector, it appears that the period covering the FFYP and TYP could be characterised by:

- (i) disproportionate emphasis on Secondary/Higher education in terms of allocation as well as utilization. For example, the universities spent Tk.68.3 crore which is 1.19% of the total allocation during the period between 1973-80. On the other hand, during the same period the primary schools spent Tk.34.11 crore which is 43% of the total allocation of Tk.80.03 crore for this subsector;
- (ii) revision of curricula in a rudimentary fashion mainly to avoid references to Pakistan without any change in content or style. The text books introduced on the basis of the recommendations of the curriculum and syllabus Committee, 1978 failed to address the issue of the ^{need for} relevance of text books to environment; and
- (iii) insufficient provision for books and other teaching materials. Due to inadequate provision and lack of institutional arrangements, distribution of text free/subsidised, remained a pious hope. Only in 1981, free books could be distributed among 50% of class I students of the country.

10.07. Review of the FFYP suggests that progress made in development of primary education was little. It has been argued that the FFYP was based more on idealism than on pragmatism. Some of the fundamental assumptions ^{of the plan} role of different agents proved unrealistic. As a result of misplaced emphasis, inadequate provision and under-utilization of fund, and also unforeseen contingencies the policies adopted in primary education failed to attain the goal. Enrolment target was not achieved. The target of enrolment was 8.5 million for 1978 and 9.0 million for 1980. Only 1/3 of the target for additional enrolment could be achieved. Dropout rate remained as high as ever. Educated women came out for teaching in a considerable number not during the plan period but only lately induced by a policy shift for preference of woman as primary teachers and compelled by the forces of inflation and rising cost of living.

11. The Second Five Year Plan-SFYP(1980-85) :

11.01. The plan made an evaluation of the past performance and incorporated the lessons of experience from the past mistakes. The nature of the problem facing the nation was identified as"- - - - -". the rural areas where over 90% of people still live, constitute a state of mass poverty, unemployment, illiteracy and malnutrition".

11.02. The issue of Mass Literacy and eradication of illiteracy was included in the 19 point programme of the then government in 1977 and thus the matter was accorded political importance.

11.03. The National Educational Advisory Council in 1979, recommended introduction of universal primary education by 1983. This reflected a shift in the policy from compulsory to universal primary educations. It may be recalled that the provision, as expressed in the constitution, was made initially for compulsory primary education.

11.04. With those policy guidelines in the background, the SFYP was formulated. Instead of spelling the objectives for the education sector or the subsector thereof, the plan so sets the objectives, that many of them have important bearing on primary education. The objectives of the plan were:

- (i) to bring a noticeable improvement in the standard of living by ensuring adequate supplies of the basic needs;
- (ii) to bring about significant improvement in the quality of life in the rural areas through greater participation of the mass in development activities through local bodies;
- (iii) to expand opportunities for gainful employment, beyond the growth of labour force so that people have access to resources for their basic needs;
- (iv) to eliminate illiteracy and make a significant progress towards a comprehensive development of human resources;
- (v) to reduce the rate of population growth;
- (vi) to attain a higher degree of self-reliance;
- (vii) to move towards a more equitable distribution of income, resources and opportunities for better social justice;

- (viii) to accelerate food production beyond self-sufficient in the shortest possible time;
- (ix) to accelerate the pace of economic development⁽⁷⁾;

11.05. While three of these objectives relate to primary education directly the other objectives also required primary education for their realization. Infact, education is the best input for better life, better force to unify people and a good tool for attaining social justice and economic progress so the plan aimed at (i) eliminating illiteracy and (ii) achieving Universal Primary Education(UPE).

A number of strategies for attaining the objectives of the plan such as:-

- (a) improving physical facilities;
- (b) supply of textbooks free of cost to all children;
- (c) supply of school uniforms free of cost to one-third of the girl students (policy being currently reviewed);
- (d) supply of teaching aids;
- (e) training of teachers.

11.06. The SFYP accorded top most priority for introduction of UPE by 1985. With this end in view, about 47% of the total allocation for education sector was earmarked for primary education programme. The original plan target was to enrol 90% of the primary age group (6-11 years of age) children in schools i.e. 129 lakh children by 1985. This involved on additional development of million. Infact only 10% of this target was reported to have been achieved. Subsequently, the target was revised and emphasis was given on retaining 50% of the enrolled children in primary school upto completion of the five year primary cycle. Provision was made for in-service and pre-service training of teachers and supervisors creation of necessary physical facilities(i.e. repair of schools, construction of new class room and toilets and sinking of tube-wells etc.) free distribution of school uniforms, text book and learning materials.

11.07. The SFYP allocation for primary education was Tk.331.68 crore against which Tk.263.62 crore was provided in the ADP's. Out of this allocation, Tk.230.10 was spent for primary education. Physical progress achieved were repair and renovation of 8658 schools out of a target number of 14,454 construction of 12519 class room of out of a target for 16,943, distribution of 231.35 lakh sets of textbook against the plan target of 270.00 lakh sets and of 35 lakh sets of uniforms, supply of 3.54 lakh pairs or benches against the targets of 5.90 lakh pairs, sinking of 6242 tube-wells(31%)*

(7) The Second Five Year Plan 1980-85, Planning Commission, Ministry of Planning, Govt. of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

construction of 5181 toilets (15%)*, and training of 32064 teachers and supervisors against the targets of 1,6173. In-addition, a directorate of primary education was set up and 1850 Assistant Upazila Education Officers (AUEOs) were appointed. For smooth implementation of the UPE programme authorities for administration and management were decentralized to the Upazila level.

11.08. During the period under review-despite provision of physical facilities and incentives such as text books, uniform and learning materials-enrolment increased from 82.19 lakh in 1980 to 89.20 lakh in 1985, against the plan target for enrolling 129 lakh including an addition of 6.0 million during the plan period. Acutally enrolment increased by 6.4 lac which is nearly 10% of the target **. About 2000 schools in the private sector were to be nationalised. Only 110 schools were nationalised. This is only 5% of the target. It appears from officials statistics that in the SFYP Tk.331 crore was allocated for UPE. Budget allocation was reduced by one third to Tk.229.00 crore and the actual utilization was still lower-Tk.210.7 crore. On the other hand only Tk.130 crore co-ld be spent on UPE(national) project.

11.09. The projects for universalisation of primary education was relied upon for realisation of the objectives of the SFYP for primary education: in primary education was on one of the two such projects was the UPE(IDA) which was scheduled to be completed by 1985. But the project was declared complete in December'86 even though some of the physical works were yet to be done. The other, UPE (national was to continue upto 1990.

11.10. From a brief evaluation of the UPE(IDA) project, it appears that the major part of the project consisted of physical works. The project implementation Unit, PIU was responsible for construction and civil works. There was delay in design, even though the Architechtrual Section of the PIU responsible for project design, obtain necessary external help.

11.11. The construction work was looked after by the PIU, until 1984, when the Facilities Division was created in the Directorate of Primary Education. The size of both the usual class rooms and the IMPACT class rooms were smaller than their stipulated size. Civil works had may deficiencies which reflected poor supervision of the project.

*

** Chapt XIV-8, TFYP, Planning Commission

11.12. Many of the schools under the project were not provided either with the right kind of or any furniture. The majority of learning materials were left unused or poorly used and maintained. The supply of books were late and in many instances, inadequate. Arrangements for local storage and transportation of books were also deficient.

11.13. Some incentive measures like uniform for girls created moral hazards as the quality of the provision was negotiated in many instances and many girls who were not eligible also received clothing.

11.14 As part of the IDA project some works were undertaken for class room, furniture learning materials and books were given. Some amount of incentive measures such as the distribution of school uniform was also taken.

11.15. The project included a big training package for both the traditional and the innovative approach called IMPACT. Some 21,15 persons were trained under the project. This number implies an addition of 3994 persons to the project target envisaged in the appraisal was exceeded by.

11.16. A brief review of the changes in the key variables show that the project provided for 381,800 additional primary school places and brought about a higher percentage of enrolment in the schools within the project area than those outside. However, the actual enrolment falls heavily short of what was expected in the appraisal.

11.17, Between 1982-85, the increase in female participation was 1.8 per cent. For boys' the enrolment increased by 2.3 per cent. Within the project area female participation was little above the rate for male. This should not elude the fact that in 1980 enrolment for female was about 72% of that for male and the absolute increase in enrolment of female was only 87% of that for male. So higher percentage also reflects lower base and it is hard to prove the contribution of the projects a remarkably ensuring greater access of female to primary education. It is believed that the issue of female education is for more complex than it appears to be. To accelerate female enrolment public education programme, social awareness and attitude to female education should be improved. Besides, political/social movement for change in perception of the parents and the society is necessary for removing the barriers to female education.

11.18. In order to reduce dropouts measures were to be taken in the areas of management & administration, school supervision, training & employment of teachers, text books, academic achievements, and welfare assistance.

11.19. School management and administration was found inadequate in many project schools. Supervision was deficient. Absence of institutional capability was the initial hurdle in training and employment of teachers. The text books used had a number of shortcomings. The tests administered for testing of academic achievement did not help much in identifying the achievements/weakness of the pupil in the project schools and preparing lessons for removal of weakness or reinforcement of strength. Welfare assistance does not seem to have improved female enrolment.

11.20. The IMPACT experiment involved high overhead costs. Acceptability of the programmed teacher was lower and the teaching materials instead of being 'teach-yourself' type was more teacher dependent. These problems were to be addressed in the later project on IMPACT experiment.

However, under the project four studies were made on:

1. curriculum Development;
2. education Management & administration;
3. education costs and financing and
4. text books production.

11.21. Some of the recommendations of the study e.g. merger of the textbook board and the NCDC, has already been implemented. There are others which may be used in planning the development of education in Bangladesh.

11.22. Thus in the areas of planning for primary education; the SFYP, had some distinguishing features such as:-

- (i) education came within the purview of the human resources development. This reflects a change in attitude;

- (ii) added emphasis was given to primary education. About 1.3% of the total public sector allocation was made for education. Primary education was given priority by allocating about 46% of the educational budget for primary education. It may be mentioned that the Education Commission, 1974 recommended 60 per cent of sectoral allocation for primary education:
- (iii) in recognition of the inadequacies of the formal arrangement for primary education 'mass Literacy and Informal Education' programmes were launched;
- (iv) some innovative measures in primary education were tried;
- (v) attention was drawn in increasing institutional capability. An institution, namely the Directorate of Primary Education was created to handle the newly assigned tasks. The Directorate remained responsible for implementation of plans and projects for primary education.

12. The Third Five Year Plan(TFYP) 1985-90:

12.01 In the field of education, the aims of the plan was:-

- (i) to enrol 70% of the primary age-group children by 1990 and ensure their retention for completion of primary school cycle in order that UPE might be achieved by the end of the century.
- (ii) to reduce the rural-urban gap in educational facilities;
- (iii) to provide in service training to primary, secondary and technical education teachers;
- (iv) to give emphasis on science, technical and vocational education;
- (v) to reduce illiteracy among the adults;
- (vi) to rationalise enrolment among various disciplines at the college and university levels;
- (vii) to reduce the gap in educational opportunities between sexes;

- (viii) to reduce wastage of public money through training of those who do not join the teaching profession. Current policy of training as an eligibility for recruitment should be changed. Persons with good academic background should be recruited first as primary school teachers and then they should be sent for training.

12.02. Reflection on the sectoral objectives reveals that a number of them deals exclusively with primary education while the others relate to primary education significantly. In order to attain the objectives and realise the plan targets in education, the following objectives and strategies were set for primary education.

- (i) the objective of primary education during the TFYP will be to enrol 70% of the primary age group population by 1990 in order that UPE may be achieved by the close of the country.
- (ii) the community will be involved in management and administration of the schools by following integrated school development approach particularly by forming parent-teacher associations at the school level;
- (iii) supervision and administration of the school will be improved by appointment of Assistant Upazila Education Officers who will be responsible for inspection and supervision of 15-20 school on average;
- (iv) management information system will be developed and there will be provision for in-built and continuous evaluation of the measures;
- (v) free text books and learning materials will be supplied to the students which will act as a direct incentive to the students and parents; and
- (vi) necessary physical facilities will be created.

12.03. The programme in primary education during the plan period between 1985-90 contained in the Universal Primary Education Project. The official objectives of the project was to:-

- i) enhance enrolment and reduce dropout rate through development and expention of physical facilities;
- ii) improve quality and
- iii) develop administration and management of primary education.

The project has delt with some areas which are of specific importance to management policy. The areas are:-

- i) inadequate management aystem and management capacity at the field and the control level;
- ii) inadequate management skill and knowledge of central and field level staff;
- iii) lack of information required for planning development of non-formal education;
- iv) inefficient project finance and budgeting procedures;
- v) lack of proper information to plan, financing of improved text book, publishing, distribution and utilization;
- vi) inefficient text book publishing and production managemet procedures and practices.

12.04. In the areas of training and project support communication the project focuses attention on:

- i) inadequacy of trained personnel for field and central level implementation of UPE;
- ii) inadequate community involvement in the implementation of the UPE project.
- iii) inadequate and inappropriate training of primary teachers and lack of co-ordination between pre-service and in-service training of teachers.

12.05. In the area of Curriculum Renewal and Development the project address the following issues:-

- i) absence of long-term perspective and planning for curriculum development;
- ii) inadequate participation and experimentation in curriculum development;

- iii) lack of explicit objectives and specification of learning outcomes;
- iv) lack of overall plan for accomplishing curricular objectives and development of essential tools and materials.

12.06. The major contents of the project are as follows:

- | | | |
|----|--|-----------------|
| 1) | Repairs and renovation | 16,257 schools. |
| 2) | Construction of class-room(in 9285 schools) | 29,563 rooms. |
| 3) | Construction of latrins | 16,641 nos. |
| 4) | Sinking of tubewells | 18,121 nos. |
| 5) | Provision of furniture(seat benches, chairs, tables & steel almirahs) | |
| 6) | Training and orientation(for teachers persons)
trainers, supervisors and educational administrators | 1,95,646 |
| 7) | Nationalisation of non-government schools | 1,000 schools |

12.07. The nationalisation target has already been fulfilled by June 1988. One thousand schools have been added to 36,881 government schools as on June, 1985. Following table provides an indication of changes in parameters during the first three years of the plan period.

As on	Number of schools	Enrolment	Dropout rate (percentage)				
			I	II	III	IV	V
June, 1985	44,383	77.22	25	12.50	10.90	10.30	9.20
June, 1988	45,080	112.52	13.76	9.5	14.69	13.68	15.05

Source : Ministry of Education.

12.08. The plan did not specify any target as to reduction of dropout rate. Reliable data on dropout rate for the SFYP period is not available. However, the rate was very high and continues to be so even at present. From the information cited above it appears

that over the plan period the dropout rate remained almost same-66.69 in June'88 as against 67.90 in June, 1985. It is claimed that the enrolment targets of the plan has already been achieved by 1989. The mid-term evaluation of the plan, presents the following enrolment scenario.

Enrolment (1985-88) in Primary Schools

	June'85	June'86	June'87	June'88
(a) School age population(6-10 years)	1.48	1.53	1.56	1.60
(b) Target of the PP:				
(i) Enrolment	.89	.95	1.01	1.06
(ii) Enrolment as percentage of the age cohort	60.00	62.00	64.00	66.00
(c) Actual:				
(i) Enrolment	.77	.98	1.08	1.12
(ii) Enrolment as percentage of the cohort	52.00	64.00	69.00	70.00

12.09. However, the figures may not conform to facts. A UNESCO publication stated that the dropout rate as in Jan., 1989 was as high as 80%. So, the performance of the plan in enhancing enrolment and reducing dropout may not be as remarkable as it seems to be. However, this period(1985-89) marked an upward trend in female enrolment.

TABLE - 19

Trends in Female Enrolment

Class	Year	Male Enrolment	%	Female Enrolment	%	Total Enrolment	%
Class-I	1985	15,38,793	56	12,57,099	44	27,95,892	...
	1988	20,69,587	56	16,13,025	44	36,82,612	...
Class-II	1985	11,06,117	62	6,77,941	38	17,84,058	...
	1988	14,05,183	56	11,49,704	44	25,99,887	...
Class-III	1985	8,38,508	63	4,99,535	37	13,38,043	...
	1988	11,63,134	56	9,15,629	44	20,78,763	...
Class-IV	1985	6,77,943	63	3,92,492	37	10,70,435	...
	1988	8,82,741	56	7,05,239	44	15,87,980	...
Class-V	1985	4,83,858	66	2,49,767	34	7,33,625	...
	1988	7,16,293	57	5,49,461	43	12,65,754	...
Total	1985	46,45,219	60	30,76,834	40	77,22,053	...
	1988	62,81,938	56	49,33,058	44	112,14,996	...

Source : Ministry of Education.

12.10. The table given above shows the changes during the years between 1985-88. The overall increase in enrolment was 45% in 1988 relative to the enrolment figure of 1985. The female and male enrolment growth were 60% and 35% respectively. This significant gain in enrolment was due to increase in female participation. This may have important socio-economic implications in terms of gradual transformation in the society.

12.11. Another area of vital concern has been the rural urban-gap. Even though the plan provides for narrowing the gap, the performance of the first three years was far from satisfaction. This may be demonstrated by the following table:

TABLE-17

Rural Urban Share

Location	Number of Schools in which new class rooms will be constructed				Number of New Class rooms			
	PP Provision (1985-88)		1985-88 Performance		PP Provision (1985-88)		1985-88 Performance	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Rural	38.75	88.75	1936	87.84	11628	82.57	5080	88.25
Town	295	6.76	203	9.21	1475	10.47	1015	14.20
City	196	4.49	65	2.95	980	6.96	325	4.55
Total	4367	100%	2202(50%)*	100%	14083	100%	7148(51%)*	100%

Source: Ministry of Education.

* as percentage of the PP provision.

So far as the total number of schools in concerned, performance is only 59% of the PP provision. But for the town, the percentage is as high as 69% of the PP provision.

12.12. The data shows that relative to the plan target, only 33% of the supervisory and 59% of the management training could be imparted. This performance falls short of the target for the first three years (in 1985-88) by 45% and 17% respectively in supervisory and management training. It is unlikely that the training could be speeded up further and the target could be realised during the rest of the plan period.

12.13. Performance in primary education section leaves much to be desired. Between 1985-88 the financial performance in constant prices of 1984-85 shows that by 1987-88 only 40.16% of the TFYP allocation has been utilised. The plan allocation for primary education during 1985-88 was Tk.538.00 crore. A total of Tk.323.00 crore including the GOB component of Tk.64.96 crore was allocated in the ADPs. The utilisation of fund amounted to Tk.228.93 crore including a GOB component of Tk.49.12. Thus the ADP allocation fell short of the plan provision by about 40%. On the otherhand the utilisation rate remained lower than the rate of funding. This along with spillovers from the previous years indicates among other things, continued weakness of the subsector in implementation of the development projects.

12.44. It appears from the mid-term evaluation of the TFYP that even in the second half of 1988, there were some spillovers from 1985-86 and 1986-87. Even though construction was nearing target, supply of furniture was lagging far behind. The liberal promotion policy, a measure to reduce dropout rate, was not yet universally accepted.

12.15. To improve quality, measures have been taken to train teachers, develop curriculum and training materials, supply text books and learning materials, organise seminars/symposia for renewal of curricula and conduct project related training.

12.16. For Developing administration and management, measures have been taken for strengthening the Primary Education Directorate, the NIEAR and the NCTB, organising the pilot Management Training programs, working out the Faculty Development Plan, devising and operating an efficient MIS and conducting proper monitoring and evaluation of the project activities.

ISSUES IN POLICY PLANNING

Enrolment:

It appears from the data that for the period between 1947-1970. There has been a rising trend in enrolment in primary schools. Initial decline in enrolment was due to post partition disturbances and dislocations. From 1950 onwards until 1969, enrolment was consistently rising mainly because of the growth of population. Subsequently, there was a short period of decline due to disturbances associated with struggle for autonomy and war of liberation in 1971. Enrolment picked up in 1972, but hardship in 1974 reduced enrolment again. Barring one particular year enrolment has leveled off over a few years. Only in 1980, it has picked up again probably as a result of massive promotional activities of the SFYP. However, actual enrolment was much below the target.

Actual enrolment is influenced mainly by the growth of population and rate of enrolment. Bangladesh has a population of 110 million which has been rising at an alarming rate over the last few years. Bangladesh has one highest density of population in the region. As the following table shows due to increasing population, rise in enrolment and repetition, the rate at which students will be attending primary schools will be more than the percentage growth of population in the school age cohort.

Table: Enrolment of school going age children 6-10 years of age.

Year	1981	1985	1990	1995	2000
Population between (6-10) years of age	138.0	148.0	155.0	163.36	172.94
Enrolment, Actual/Projected (%)	83 (60%)	89 (60%)	108.5 (70%)	130.69 (80%)	155.65 (90%)
Out of school	40%	40%	30%	20%	

Source: Ministry of Education.

Even though the official age level for primary education is 6-10 in practice, the students body ranges between below five upto 12 years of age. The following table demonstrate the age specific enrolment for 3 specific years.

Age Specific Enrolment(I-IV) Govt. and non-Govt.
Junior and Secondary Schools.

Age	<u>1970-71</u>		<u>1973-74</u>		<u>1977</u>	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Below 5	115135	2	62410	1		
5	1141354	22	2342560	30	2545606	29
6	1205983	23	2019240	26	2323595	27
7	1024953	20	1366806	17	1457910	17
8	802602	15	950608	12	1035954	11.2
9	620930	12	718913	9	1036805	12
10	299505	6	281120	4	256234	3
11	16494	.31	126289	1	13702	.02
12			11507	.15	4198	.05
All Ages	5226956	100%	7879453	100%	86744004	100%

Source: Educational Statistics, BENBEIS, 1980

The table shows that the enrolment in primary education covers a range of age between below 5 and 12 years and there is considerable concentration between 5-7 years. Over the years there has been little change in composition or in concentration. This also implies that enrolment rate in primary school is higher than the enrolment rate for 6-10 years age group

Female enrolment deserves particular attention. Whereas the growth in female population is almost same as that of male population, participation has been lower even though female students have been increasing at the primary level. Gross enrolment ratio for female student has risen from 31% in 1965 to 50% in 1985. In the recent years this rate has been growing faster. Total female enrolment was 1.6 million in 1970, the figure reached a record high of over 3.5 million in 1985. Female enrolment constituted 44% of total in 1988. This trend in female literacy may have salutary effect on the current development as well as in the future.

Class wise enrolment figures demonstrate another aspect of the problem. In 1988, there were 9.85 million students in the government primary schools with 32.24 lacs in class I, 22.84 lacs in class II, 18.30 in class III, 13.99 lacs in class IV and 11.13 lacs in class V. In percentage terms they constituted 33%, 23%, 19%, 14% and 11% respectively of the primary school children. Thus fifth grade enrolment is only one third of the enrolment in grade I.

There is disparity in enrolment between male and female. The World Bank questions the information on the growth of female enrolment and reports only 1% rise between 1981 and 1985. Enrolment is lower in some regions like Chittagong Hill Tracts and Coxes-Bazar. Moreover, those who do not enrol are mainly poor come from rural areas. This implies that there exists a wide disparity in enrolment between the regions and also the groups with different socio-economic status.

Repetition:

Repetition is one of the reason for inefficiency of primary education in Bangladesh. It drastically reduces the efficiency of education system. From the chart at annex- , it appears that repetition rate is about 18% at primary level. In Bangladesh only 20% of the students enrolled complete 5 year cycle without repetition compared to 55% in other low income developing countries. In repetition again same kind of pattern may be seen as in enrolment. Percentage of repeaters is likely to come from the rural areas and from among the poorer students at the earlier stage of education. Repetition rate is highest in Grade. An estimate based on data for 805 shows that the repetition rates for class I, II, III, IV and V are 15.7%, 12.9%, 12.5, 12.4 and 12.1% of the grade cohort.

Wastage in Primary School System: Dropouts

A major source of wastage in primary education is dropouts. According to official statistics, 30% of children of school going age never enrol. A large percentage of those who enrol also drop and they do so before completing five year cycle of primary education. The percentage of drop out is 66% in official statistics, and according to a UN publication the figure is 80%. This indicate why efforts in primary education contribute so little to the literacy rate in Bangladesh.

Those who drop out lapse to illiteracy within a few years and add to the pool of illiterates. The alarming amount of drop out account for high cost of producing educated and qualified manpower for the country. Available statistics suggests that most of the dropout occurs between the first and third grades when the children are of 6-8 years of age. This ^{is} true for both male and female, but for female, the percentage of dropout is higher than for male. The younger a child, the higher on average is the probability of dropping out and lower is the likelihood of their involvement in income generating or expenditure saving activities.

Since a large proportion of parents of school going children is illiterate it is likely that before they came to school they had no idea of what ^a school is like. In order to dispel their fear, the schools should be a place for them to feel at home and ease and be interested in. Unfortunately, in real life, we see the reverse - stress on memorising, lengthy & tedious school hours, hardly any arrangement for mid-day tiffin, physical punishment and public insult for trifling faults, a big burden of home task with hardly any one at home to help ^{/an authoritarian teaching method} and a curriculum which many of the students are not familiar with.

Memorising thwarts development of the faculties of understanding and creativity and creates cramming habits. This leads to poor performance and dropout. Possibility for punishment tells upon the development of the faculties for expressing and nurturing of curiosities. Homework with no one to help creates serious frustration and embarrassment for the students and their parents. In order to develop the capabilities of the children for understanding it is necessary to have a curriculum oriented to the environment. This is likely to make them feel confident about the knowledge of their own world around them. This confidence will push them forward and thus reduce dropout.

There are at least two types of factors associated with dropouts. Some of them are internal to the schools. Such as the curriculum, quality of teachers their education, experience, training availability of physical facilities, pre-primary schooling and learning materials etc. Some factors are external to the school e.g. occupation, income and literacy of parents, parental awareness, incentives and punishment, religious, social and cultural prejudices against female education, incidence of bond and child labour etc.

Poverty of parents or guardian is the most prominent reason for dropout phenomenon. If we divide a sample population at a cut off point of poverty line, it is our conjecture that most of the dropouts shall come from families below the poverty line. It is due to poverty that the parents use their children in income generating or expenditure saving activities within the family or outside especially where there is scope for employment of children and bond labour. Higher incidence of bond labor and child labour and poverty is likely to be positively related to dropout. However, this opportunity cost argument is somewhat weakened by the fact that most of the dropouts occur at the grade I & II where the children are of 6 - 7 years of age. This means that the dropout rate is highest when the children are least useful in generating of income or saving an expenditure. There is no tuition fee in the state system of primary education. Books are given free. Moreover, there is no compulsion on dress, the children may attend the school even ill-clad or bare foot and body.

Another factor engendering from poverty is malnutrition and ill health which make it difficult for a child to continue in school.

Literacy of parents may be associated with dropout because due to illiteracy, they do not appreciate the value of literacy nor can they help a student who is usually burdened with lot of home task. Such parents do not have adequate awareness or interest to send their children to schools. Among the parents of dropout an apathy is observed which develops more due to ignorance than impoverishment. So, before educating the children it is necessary to ^{educate the parents and} arouse interest among them.

In many schools of Bangladesh, physical facilities are at a rudimentary level. The students assemble under the open sky or a tree. Most of the schools do not have furniture, toilet and teaching materials etc. However, this should not be over emphasised because during the Second Five Year Plan moderate improvement was made in physical facilities for primary educating; but enrolment did not improve and the dropout rate remained at a very high level.

Lack of congenial environment may be associated with dropout phenomenon. Primary schools are deficient in learning aids and adequate number of teachers with proper qualification and right kind of aptitude. While the curricula is unintegrated and less relevant with the familiar world, the content of the curricula is scattered and unorganised. This creates disinterest leading to dropout. Distance of school from home and bad communication may create disinterest and fear about the school to dropout.

Educational Planning:

a) The planning commission is the apex body for planning of education in Bangladesh. The Commission sets the objectives and strategies of plans for different sectors, gives programme outlines and makes financial allocation. In course of planning, the commission works in collaboration with the Ministry.

The Ministry of Education prepares reports on the performance of existing programmes. They furnish data and keep the Commission informed of the developments and the changing needs. The General Economic Division of the Planning Commission indicates each wing of the Planning Commission as to the amount of resources that may be available over a year or the plan period. Since much of the success of a policy depends on the capability of a sector for implementation of policies, an appraisal is also made of the sectoral capacity for implementation. Depending on the resource position, sectoral needs and the capability for implementation a plan is prepared by a wing in the Planning Commission for the education sector as a whole. The commission invites comments and observations of the education ministry if any, to be incorporated in finalising the sectoral plan.

The Ministry of Education gathers information from and implement programmes through the Directorates. An entirely separate organisation namely, Facilities Division has been created in the Directorate for construction^{/of building},^{/supply} of furniture and other physical works related to the development of primary education.

The Ministry also has its own Planning Cell. With inputs from the Directorates and other agencies, the cell is expected to help formulate educational plans, in conformity to the politically declared goals and objectives, co-ordinate in house planning activities in^{The} Ministry and keep in touch with the Planning Commission.

The planning Cell also receives and scrutineses projects prepared by the Directorates/Departments and sends them to the Planning Commission. Smaller projects are approved by the Ministry and bigger ones by the Planning Commission. The projects still bigger need approval of the

National Economic Council-NEC. Within the framework of periodic (5 year or 20 year) plans an annual development plan- ADP is prepared jointly by the Planning Commission and the Ministry. Organisational set up of the Education and Religions Affairs of the Planning Commission is shown at annexure -----.

() Toward Universalisation of Primary Education in Asia and the Pacific UNESCO, Bangkok, 1984.

teaching

teaching and visiting them with the responsibility for implementation of educational plans.

Besides, in designing a structure of organisation for administration of primary education have job openings at the very base level of activity in primary education and also possibility for growing with it upto an extent limited only by individual potential. Otherwise, the field will remain burdened by people who are professionals or specialists only literally but novice in terms of qualities and expertise required for work in the field of education in general and primary education in particular.

In this connection a policy option is to have a set of people with proven administrative and managerial abilities totally separated from those in teaching.

Educational Administration: Central

Educational programmes at primary level are conducted under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education. There are also activities under the Ministry of Defence and Social Welfare. However, major activities of primary schooling are undertaken by the Ministry of Education.

The Secretariat at the Ministry of Education is headed by a Secretary. After independence this position was occupied by the prominent educationists. There are a few wings in the Ministry of Education. Besides the regular wings, the Ministry has a Planning Cell headed by a Chief. Each of the wings are headed by Joint Secretaries while the cell is headed by a Chief. Each wing has Deputy Secretaries, Senior Asstt. Secretaries and Asstt. Secretaries. An Asstt. Secretary and Deputy Secretary exclusively looks after primary education. Chief is assisted by a number of Deputy Chiefs and Asstt. Chiefs and Research Officers working in the Cell. Many of them come from education service. In fact, the Ministry has a mixed set up with professionals from the Economic or the Education cadre and the generalists from outside those cadres. An organogram of the Ministry appears at annexure -----.

It was expected that both set of people would contribute to cause of education. The educationists could provide professional and expert services while the generalists could bring in their expertise and experiences to the field of planning, administration & management of education. In fact, the generalists work in the Ministry for a shorter period of time. The educationists in the ministry and Directorate are also transferrable. Moreover, they are drawn mainly from the services in the Higher Secondary Education. They have had very little scope for functional exposure to primary education. Their experiences and aptitude in primary education is hardly more than those of generalists. In order to ensure an efficient administration, one has to make the fundamental distinction between the instructional and managerial aspect of education. In fact, it is necessary to have better managers and administrators in the Directorate and better instruction/teachers in the schools. In this connection a policy option is to give a serious thought in the proposal for creation of a set of people with proven administrative and managerial abilities totally separated from those in

Administration and Management: Field

Present primary education system is no doubt a legacy of the colonial post. Since Woods Despatch there has been many changes in the policy towards management and administration of primary schools at the field level. However, the whole process took a definite shape after decentralisation of primary education and promulgation of the Rural Primary Education Act of 1930.

All aided primary schools came under the management and control of the District Board from 1938. This system continued upto 1954. District Inspector of Schools (DI) was the Secretary of the Board while the Chairman of the Zila Parishad headed the Board. At the subdivisions, the SDI had the responsibility for inspection and supervision of both primary and secondary schools. There were in every Circle- usually comprising of more than one thanas- an SI of schools who was responsible for only primary education.

In order to ensure inspection of primary schools in some selected thanas the posts of Assistant Inspector of School (ASI) were created in 1951. The inspection and academic supervision of the primary schools remained with the government machinery under the Director of public instruction. On the other hand, the District School Board was responsible for the construction and establishment of schools, appointment and transfer of teachers and payment of their salaries. In 1954, some changes were made. Firstly, due to excessive politicisation of the school system to the detriment of the people the District Magistrate was appointed the administrator of the Board. Secondly, from each union a school was taken up as model free primary school. This was taken to be a discriminatory policy which had an adverse effect in terms of student enrolment and teachers' morale in other school. As a result, this was replaced by another scheme and all primary schools were designated 'Managed' Primary Schools.

In 1961, SIs of school were appointed in each Thana with the sole responsibility for and inspection and visit of the primary schools. They were later redesignated as the Thana Education Officer-TEO.

In 1967, the District Primary Education Offices were created where District Inspector of schools functioned as the Chief Executive Officer in the District so far as primary education was concerned. In spite of the policy change during the period in which Bangladeshy formed a part of Pakistan, the administrative system for primary education, by and large remained the same in structure as that of the colonial period. Though this system was deficient because of period.

- i) disproportionately low representation of educationists in administration of primary education, the system provided for sharing of administration and management between the local bodies and the Government and greater role for the community.
- ii) heavy inspectional and supervisory load in a small organisation skeleton staff and
- iii) highly centralised nature of administration & management.

Nationalisation, of primary schools in July, 1973, created a big administrative and supervisory responsibility. But the administrative structure remained as before; probably because of the assumption that the politicians and the political cadre will play a significant role in case of primary education

In 1977, the Assistant Inspectors of Schools-ASIs was redesignated as the Assistant Thana Education Officers (ATEOs): Until 1981, the Director of Public Instructions was responsible for implementation of policies in education. An ADPI, who dealt exclusively with primary education assisted him. In 1981, a separate Directorate of "Primary Education and Mass Literacy" was created. The Directorate had district and subdivision level officials. At the Divisions there were DDPIs while at the district there were the District Education Officers and the District Inspector of Schools (DI) who were designated PEO in Dec, 1981. Under the provisions of Primary Education Act, 1981 a body "Local Education Authority" was formed with the Sub-Divisional Officer as the Chairman and the Primary Education Officer as the Secretary.

In 1985, the PEOs were promoted to the position of the DPEO when the subdivisions were upgraded to districts. With the upgradation of thanas into Upazilas the TEOs and the ATEOs at the thana were placed under Upazila Parishad and they were designated as the UEO and AUEO. A schematic chart of this organisational changes appears at Annexure

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Decentralisation of Primary Education:

After independence primary education was nationalised almost completely. Fiscal constraint of the government, deterioration of administration and accountability, alienation of parents and community and central decision and sometimes absence of any in local matters prompted the government to take measures for decentralisation.

In 1979-80, the Government proposed for entrusting the Union Parishad with the management of primary education. This plan, sharply contrasted to the system administered nationally, could not be implemented due to agitation of some teachers who formed the core actors of the scene in primary education. Infact, the plan could not be implemented not because it was inappropriate but because the steps were considered by the interested group as losses which were not adequately compensated for. Moreover, the policy did not conform to the highly centralised administrative environment of the country.

The primary education Act, 1981 made an attempt to address the issue. The Managing Committees were reconstituted and their functions were delineated. As an effort to decentralise administration of primary education some of the powers and functions exercised centrally-such as appointment, posting transfer etc. were vested with the Local Education Authorities. After administrative reorganisation and creation of Upazila, primary education was transferred to Upazila with necessary delegation which among other things, contained the powers and function previously held by the local Education Authority (LEO) at the subdivisions, upgraded to districts in 1983.

A reflection on the administration of primary education suggests that certain amount of decentralisation illude its highly centralised nature. School organisation, curriculum and teaching methods, supervision and control, nature of dependence in decision making and fiscal matters all suggest very little decentralisation. The system is run mainly with the resources from the government, and administered albeit at less than required level of efficiency by the national organisation namely the Directorate

with little local mobilisation of or access to resources or allocation thereof. The decision on school organisation, curriculum and teaching methods, construction of schools and provisions of educational inputs and supervision are also centralised.

The amount of community involvement in financing primary education is usually very scanty. This meagre amount of support is very often provided at the initial stages and meant to meet the requirements for nationalisation. While supervision of primary schools is done by the field officers of the central organisation, the system of examination is designed locally. On the otherhand, decentralisation of the personnel system pertaining to recruitment, posting and transfer of teachers within Upazila involved more of costs than benefits. Localisation of recruitment very often led to poor quality of intakes and performance. In order to ensure a minimum acceptable level of quality of the teachers and their performance, it is necessary to promote competition in recruitment preferably at the divisional level. The current policy for transfer and posting policy so that personal and family preoccupations donot hamper public duties.

In order to ensure local administration and public accountability, the service of the primary teachers may be vested with the Upazila Parishad. Like other government servants in the Upazila, the primary teachers will also be held under social control. The Parishad should be improved to dispense reward and punishment in accordance with the performance of the teachers. The public representatives and the local bodies especially Upazila Parishad Upazila Parishad may be assigned with the responsibility for mobilisation of local educational resources-human and material-from all possible sources, creation of awarness for literacy and organisation of mass movement against non-enrolment and dropping-out. The parishad should also co-ordinate the activities(in the Upazila) of different central organisations and the NCOs engaged in primary education.

Procedure for National isolation of Primary Schools:

Nationalisation of primary schools continued since 1974. The nationalisation process usually implies taking over by the Government of an already existing school. To be considered for nationalisation a school must have:-

- a. at least 0.30 acre of land;
- b. registration with the concerned Divisional Deputy Director;
- c. two hundred students;
- d. a command area of two square km/two thousand people with no government primary school within the area of 2 square km;
- e. a managing committee and
- f. a house with necessary furniture and class rooms for two hundred students.

For a school to be eligible for nationalisation, the community has to support a whole range of activities beginning from construction of house, employment of teachers, procurement of furniture and instructional material and formation of a Managing Committee etc. under very unusual circumstances, the Government at the high level of authority may feel the necessity for establishing of a school in certain locality in such cases, the requirement for nationalisation are relaxed and the school is established, staffed and furnished by the Government. However, such situation is extremely rare.

The proposals for nationalisation are sent to the Upazila Parishad. The Parishad scrutinises the proposals and gives priority to schools which are older and have larger number of students and better qualified teachers. Then the proposal alongwith the proceedings of the Parishad is sent to the Zila Co-ordination Committee for onward transmission to the Directorate of Primary Education.

However, eligibility is only a necessary but not sufficient condition for taking over. A given number of schools is nationalised over a period of time and the number is only 1000 for the current plan period-1985-90. In spite of various justifiable constraints in nationalisation process, it has been alleged that the decision is not always taken objectively.

A number of interviewees expressed their dissatisfaction and complained of delay and improper handling of the nationalisation cases.

At the local level the list of the schools is finalised by a Committee with the M.P. as a member. It is likely that the political compulsions and interpersonal relationship especially between the Upazila Chairman the M.P. may come up as factor in the process of evaluation of a school for nationalisation.

Development in Curriculum:

Following the 'Text Books Committees' of the British India, East Bengal Text Book Committee was formed after partition in 1947 with a view to produce text books. This committee used to approve books for classes between I-VIII. The performance of the committee was less than satisfactory. So, an autonomous body- "School Text Book Board" was created in 1954. Books for Primary Schools were produced and distributed by the Board through the market.

After independence a National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee was set up in 1975 with specific terms of reference and objectives. However, the report of the Committee was not operationalised until 1978. Between 1971-77, the Board modified, rewritten and published text books; but fundamental changes were necessary in the light of changed circumstances of the newly independent country. Therefore, writing of new books were undertaken in 1978-79 on the basis of the recommendations of the National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee.

The objective of modification and renewal of curriculum was to enhance enrolment, reduce dropout and repetition, improve the quality of education and make primary education more attractive. The renewed curriculum was to reflect the principles of the constitution and also the newly adopted policy of automatic promotion at the end of class one and a continuous evaluation system to be based on completion of prescribed lessons and attaining of certain level of competency.

In 1981, a body namely "National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC)" was formed for monitoring the effectiveness of teaching methods and materials. Since development of curricula and writing of text books are related, the government merged the School Text Book Board and the NCDC into the newly created institution National Curriculum and Text Book Board (NCTB).

The recommendations of the Qudrat-e-Khuda Commission Report, 1974 provided a sense of directions as regards curriculum. Curricula was introduced the year 1978. In the new curricula a major departure has been the introduction of the concepts and ideas relating to the known environment of everyday life which involved formalisation of different food items and dissemination of information on health and nutrition etc. Besides, word method of teaching has been replaced by sentence method. Arithmetic teaching has been based on "Competency" and environmental studies were modified to cater to the childrens need for better learning and growth. Language and literature courses underwent some changes reflecting a move towards an integrated approach in furnishing different concepts and ideas.

However, the current syllabus of primary education deserves continued attention for improvement and modification because:-

- (i) the curriculum is rigid, inflexible and centralised and it allows little provision for variations to fit to the needs of different people locality and environment;
- (ii) the curriculum is yet to have an identity because it is designed to serve the feeder stage: next stage being secondary education. Change in this attitude will bring in an emphasis the need for attaining competencies and completeness in primary level of education.
- (iii) The curriculum is not yet integrated. In order for integration it is necessary to think about applications and the interrelatedness of different disciplines and subjects.
- (iv) Non-cognitive aspects have not been duly emphasised in the current syllabus. Besides intellectual growth, it is also necessary to have moral and physical inputs within primary education.

Ibtedai (elementary) Madrasa:

An option in primary education is offered by the Ibtedai/Madrasha (elementary religious schools). Most of the secondary (Dakhil) and post secondary ('Alim' 'Fazil' or 'Kamil') madrasahs have attached facilities for instructions at the elementary level which aims mainly at preparing students for the higher classes. Of course, many of the students drop out before the completion of elementary education. Ibtedai Madrasa as a separate institution is a recent development. They are non-government institutions established by the local people and recognized by the Madrasa Education Board under the Madrasa Education ordinance, 1978. These Madrasahs have an approved curriculum for five year duration which compares fairly with that of primary schools. In their curricula these madrasa combined elementary islamic teachings with literacy and learning of numeracy. There is provision for five teachers- four of them with at least an HSC or an equivalent degree. They are appointed by the local Madrasa Committee and the Upazila Education Officer, who are also responsible for their inspection & supervision. Unlike the teachers of attached Ibtedai madrasahs who are paid by the Government as per scale of pay for the teachers of the non-government institutions, the teachers of separate Ibtedai madrasa are paid out of local contribution and charity. After recognition, some of them received - on two occasions in the year 1985-86 and 86-87 about a total of Tk.8,000/- as lump sum grant.

There were 12000 madrasahs on the approved list for grant; but subsequently this number has been reduced drastically. Officially, the number of such madrasa at present stands at 14,000. This is definitely a big number compared to a total of 37,000 government and 7221 non-government primary schools in the country. There are a few factors that account for the recent expansion of Ibtedai madrasahs such as the financial support from the Government, appeal for islamic education as part of the curriculum, and inadequacy of primary schools etc.

While appreciating the possible contributions of the Ibtedai madrasahs in promoting the cause of primary education it is also necessary to have an understanding of the problems this type of education is beset with. Unlike the primary schools, students of Ibtedai madrasa have to pay fees and purchase books. Secondly, the house of the madrasa is constructed, repaired and maintained out of the charity and fees paid by the community. Some people held that these madrasahs offer - poorer option ^{for elementary education} and very often attract the people with low level of achievement. The madrasahs may involve lower per unit cost for imparting education at primary level; but there are reasons for concern about the quality

of such education. Physical facilities of the Ibtedai madrasahs are at a rudimentary level, learning aid is almost absent, teachers are very often of low educational qualification and untrained, there is hardly any workable arrangement for supervision and inspection in order to ensure that the students attain a minimum level of competency required at different grades and at the end of primary education. It is also argued that two types of primary education is confusing and undesirable. In terms of curricula, one emphasises on religious instructions and the other, secular education. Again there may be duplication of efforts and financial commitments and also a violation of the constitutional provision for uniformity of primary education.

Even though the official statistics seems to be inflated, it definitely makes sense to utilise the existing facilities and make further commitments only after the efficacy of the program is ensured.

In order to make these madrasahs contribute to the cause of primary education; following policy measures may be taken:

- a. Ibtedai madrasahs may be integrated to the education system in order to attain objectives to be spelled out clearly.
- b. The institutions must have registration, follow conventional or innovative approaches, ^{and be} approved by the government.
- c. The supervision of such madrasahs may be organised by the Upazila Education Committee. The Committee may arrange for appointment of teachers through open competition, a short training course for them especially in their use of teaching methods and materials, improved textbooks and teaching and methods of evaluation.

There should be an experimental study on the quantitative and qualitative aspects of the functioning of the Ibtedai madrasahs in order to ascertain their actual number and determine their potential for attaining universal primary education in Bangladesh.

d. Reading of politics in education suggest that there is likelihood of the government subvention in terms of salary of the teachers of Ibtedai madrasahs. If such action is inevitable, the government should guard against assuming further responsibility for their control and supervision from the center. Additional subvention, if any must accompany social control and supervision ^{of the Ibtedai madrasahs} by the local authority.

Maktabs:

The maktabs have been playing a modest role in elementary education since long. They came up in Bengal since the beginning of the muslim rule in India. The British called them indigenous muslim schools which were run by the muallims (religious teachers). The maktabs, which were basically of religious character, contained mainly religious subjects in its curriculum. This aspect of the maktabs has drawn the attention of the Education Commission, 1882. The Commission observed that the indigenous muslim shcools should be liberally encouraged to add secular subjects to their curriculum.

The governmental recognition and assistance (grant-in-aid) provided a stimulus to maktabs. As early as 1891, Sir Alfred Croft proposed for recognition of maktabs. In 1904, Sir Alexandar Pedlär submitted a scheme for providing grant-in-aid to maktabs. The scheme became effective the following year. Later, under Earle's scheme, maktabs were reclassified and a system of governmental grant was introduced.

The question of secularisation of maktabs, raised in 1882 was considered by the Madrasa Reform Committee (1909-10). The committee suggested for introduction of secular courses into maktabs while retaining their definite religious character.

Following the recommendations of that a revised curriculum for primary schools and maktabs, was introduced. In the revised form, the maktabs had a five year course in which the compulsory subjects were same as that of the primary schools. With a course containing both religious education and secular subjects and a provision for financial support in terms of governmental grant, the maktabs in Bengal witnessed a fast growth - four times in number and more than five times in enrolment-over a period of less than two decades. The following table demonstrates this fact.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Maktabs</u>	<u>No.of boys</u>
1912-13	3917	111,672
16-17	6549	206,496
21-22	8855	279,315
26-27	13017	461,715
31-32	16359	614,717

However, the Rural Primary Education Act of 1930, intended to have not more than one type of primary education in Bengal. Probably, this was the policy shift that had led to decreasing importance of the role of maktab in spreading of primary education.

In the post-partition period, religious education was made compulsory at the primary level. Perhaps there was also changes in attitude. The perception of threat from secular education at primary level had been weakening during that time. Due to attitudinal changes, pragmatic considerations and promotional policies towards primary education, the primary schools were drawing popular attention while the maktab were giving way so much so that the maktab again turned into institutions mainly for religious instructions at a lower standard.

The maktab as foundation in Bangladesh today fits the above description; they are informal schools imparting religious teaching to muslim children. There the boys and girls learn prayers, recitation of Holy Quran and lessons on islamic way of life. The maktab are usually attached with the mosques and run by the Imams under the local initiative and support. Normally children upto 11-12 years of age attend the maktab early in the morning before they go to schools. Some poor children end up with the maktab as the only insitution for their learning.

It is claimed that in 68,000 villages of Bangladesh there are at least 150,000 mosques with one or two staff called the Imam and the Muazzin. They are potential source of help for the cause of universal primary education. If all the mosques on average run maktab with 20 students in each, there will be three million students attending them. This is half the student body in class I and II of the entire government primary school system in Bangladesh.

In order to realise the potentials of maktab, in spreading of education it is necessary to formulate definite policies (i) arrange for extensive Imam training of short duration as undertaken by the Mosque society and the Islamic Foundation (ii) equip the Imams with workable knowledge &

(iii) motivate them to run the maktabas as pre-primary and lower primary (class I and II) schools where students in small groups, will receive religious instruction and learn reading, writing and arithmetic (iv) guide the training and curriculum of the maktabas centrally and (v) organise and administer the programme locally by the community, through the religious institutions and charitable organisation etc.

This plan is not easy to administer; but it has to be remembered that with severe resource constraints and a fast growing population, Bangladesh can hardly achieve its literacy goal within stipulated time through the formal schools. For spreading literacy within shortest possible time it is necessary to use all possible means and utilise all available resources including the maktabas which have a long tradition of serving the cause of elementary education in this country.

Kindergarten:

Growth of kindergarten in Bangladesh is a post liberation phenomenon. After independence, the population of cities suddenly took an upward turn resulting in paucity of seats in the primary schools. Besides, deterioration of the standard of education in the government primary schools is also responsible for such growth. There are more than 2500 Kindergartens with 35000 teachers and half a millions students throughout the country. In the city of Dhaka, there are about 1700 such schools. Most of the Kindergartens are infact run commercially. The tution fee is too high for the larger section of city dwellers. Other than in few cases the stardard of education has also deteriorated over time. The system is run with care for social objective of education. The medium of instruction is very often English. This is regarded by some quarters as a breach to the social commitment for uniform system of universal primary education.

In our country, we donot have adequate educational facilities for children. So, the kindergartens may play an important role in this regard provided they are run under uniform principles and guided by a national policy. The National Commission on Education observed, "Kindergartens are basically ment for business. Their social philosophy, teaching methodologies and educational activities are ill designed for development of mental faculties of children". In fact, such schools which remain beyond all sorts of social control and guidance and arbitarily decide on the medium of instruction, curricula, syllabus, schedule, system of examination and evaluation are very often defective.

Adult Education -

Adult education deserves public attention on its won merit. Literacy rate in Bangladesh is one of the lowest in the region. Most of our population between 13 - 60 are illiterate. Adult literacy rate was reported to be only 29% in the year 1981. At the 1980-85 rate of growth in primary education there will be an addition of 2.5 million illiterate people. Adult education is also a necessity for attaining universal primary education. From a survey, it appears that the probability of a student dropping out is higher in the case of illiterate than in the case of literate parents.

Illiteracy is concentrated more among the poorest people. Their object poverty is a stumbling block to adult education. Again 69% of male population is illiterate whereas among woman the rate is as high as 84%. There is also rural urban imbalance literacy rate in urban area is twice the rate in the rural areas. On the otherhand a well-off illiterate is usually least interested in adult education. Most of the illiterate people, irrespective of the economic and social position, consider adult education as an additional bothering and a matter of ambarrassment. Embarking on any plan for adult education presupposes breaking of this mental barrier. Fortunately for us there is improved technology in this field. A study in India revealed that it takes six months to make an adult person educated and only five weeks for an illiterate to attain the standard of class II.

Unfortunately, we have a very poor record for Mass Education Programme. The programmes could not be properly implemented. During 10 years of Comilla programme only 100,000 could be trained and only 700,000 were reported to have been trained as against a target of 40 million during the plan period. For success of any programme it is necessary to have strong political will and commitment. In case of adult education this is exactly what we need namely competent & dedicated leadership, right initiative and efficient direction and management in turn will have a positive impact in universalization of primary education. To organise

adult education it is necessary to provide for appropriate institution for management and supervision and arrange for staff and venue for teaching, learning materials and support services.

In this area, the following policy options desire immediate consideration:

- i) Additional shifts should be introduced for adult education and the existing physical facilities e.g. Primary Schools, High School, Colleges Clubs and even an abandoned house, Kachari/dahliz or courtyard may be used as venues for adult education;
 - ii) the local leadership with the help of every able and willing person e.g. school teacher, government officer, social worker etc. should organise programmes for adult education.
 - iii) funds should be raised locally. External assistance may also be taken;
 - iv) the NCO experience of motivating people and providing incentives to the poor etc. should be used;
 - v) the content of the course for the illiterate should contain environmental information and motivational inputs and emphasise issues that affect their every day life such as 'Family Planning' Education of Children' and diversification of food habits etc.
 - vi) the teaching methodology should contain keyword and pictureword and lively discussion on theories and issues of importance especially those related to education for the children.
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The role of the NCOs:

Beginning from the post-liberation relief and rehabilitation efforts, the NCOs have been emerging as organisations for development in many areas of Bangladesh economy including adult and primary education.

Initially most of the activities were concentrated in adult education because of menacing rate of illiteracy. For urban population the rate was going up from 51.9% in 1961 to 54.6% in 1974 and a record high of 61% in 1981. The corresponding rates for the rural areas were 80.60%, 77.8% and 75.9% respectively. Due to demographic changes, the number of illiterate persons were increasing at an alarming rate. In absolute terms, some 78,36,000 persons were added to the pool of illiterates between 1974-81. Under the on-going mass literacy programme which began in 1988, fifteen NCOs have been operating 1757 centres where 66,225 persons were attending as of Jan.1989. The government organisations are covering half of the number these efforts are too little compared to the massive literacy problem of the country. In order to address this colossal problem, some NGOs expanded their sphere of activity in the field of primary education outside the formal structure.

It appears from the study of the programmes of the NCOs that their target group consists mainly of those children who are seldom covered by the formal system of primary education. They belong to the disadvantaged section of population whose children either do not enrol or drop out and lapse into illiteracy in no time. Pecuniary hardship is by far the major reason for their non-enrolment and dropping out. In respect of the NCOs differ among them and also from the formal schools. Generally, their curricula is shorter in duration and flexible in implementation. The curricula usually consists of (i) Bangla; (ii) arithmetic and environmental studies and is designed with particular emphasis on the study of environment broadly defined. This is meant to help the students face the challenges of every day life in case they end up with only primary education. The other features of the programmes are (a) reducing of costs in some cases, in terms of physical facilities & teachers salary. The school is accommodated in a small room/shed rented from the locality and a teacher, preferably female, who may not have even a Secondary School Certificate - SSC, is appointed for a small amount of honorarium (b) arranging pre-service and refresher training for teachers. Every teacher is trained for a short period- at least two weeks- before entry and while in service. (c) providing for participation of the community and all concerned. Proposals for opening new centres are

drawn from the field officials who are held responsible for successful operation of the school. Once the school is established, monthly meetings are held between the teachers and the parents. (d) devising of a system of joint monitoring by the field and the central offices. An information system has been developed for monitoring and management decisions. (e) continuously uplifting the moral of the concerned parties. Close link among the functionaries and the beneficiaries positively influences motivation and sense of involvement. (f) promoting female participation both as teacher and student. Female teachers are preferred. In enrolment, female students are usually given priority. (g) linking the programme with the formal primary education. On completion of nonformal primary education, the students may and infact do enrol in formal primary education. (h) giving personalised attention to every pupil in an atmosphere of comfort and ease. Environment is limited to a managable number say 30, and the students are treated nicely. Coupled with co-curricular activities, an environment is created to help reduce the drop out rate to a minimum (i) introducing variety of schemes covering different age groups such as one for children between 8-10 years of age and another for the children between 11-14 years.

At this stage it is not fair to make any conclusive judgement on the performance of the programmes of the NQOs. In case of one NQO, there has been spectacular increase in both the number of centres and enrolment over the period between 1985-88. By 1989, the same organisation will have 1552 schools with 46560 students and this number will be doubled by 1993.

The growth path and future projection of an NQO is given below:

Year	1985	1986	1987	1988	Total
No.of Centres	22	154	410	223	809
Enrolment	676	4672	12305	6690	24343
Year	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993
No.of Centres	1552	2000	3000	3100	3200
Enrolment	45,560	60,000	90,000	93,000	96,000

Designing a flexible curricula and administering the schooling programme with care and attention for the distressed section of the people, attracting the out-of-school children and the drop-outs, using locally available resources-human and material-and

devising a system of community involvement, supervision and management are definitely innovative. Probably this is why policy planners are conceding to the requirement of some donor agencies for increasing participation of the NGOs in the literacy and primary education programmes. The above table is an indication of their larger commitment in future. However, the size of all the NGO involvement taken together, is very small compared to the rising stock of the illiterate and the social imperative for taking a massive action programme to combat the problem of deplorably low level of literacy. While the quality of the nonformal programme of primary education has not been tested, the programme is yet to be cost effective: same level of learning in formal schools involves less costs per unit of student than in some of the NGO run schools. However, massive wastage in formal system due to retention and drop-out may account for the comparative advantage of the non-formal primary education offered by some of the NGOs.

Finally, complementarity of the NGO programme to the formal system is real when the former addresses the issues of the out-of-school and the drop-out; but it is only apparent so far as claim on resources is concerned; because such schools may be directly competing for local or foreign resources with the formal schools especially those in the public sector. So it is necessary that the resources are utilised in a co-ordinated way and all experimentation and innovations are undertaken within the broader framework of a national plan for Universal Primary Education.

Financing of Primary Education:

Education is investment in human capital. Public funds have been the major source of financing primary education in the post-liberation Bangladesh (Annex). About 92% percent of primary school system is financed by the government. So, there is tremendous pressure on government funds. Financing of primary education suffers due to: **faulty priorities, misallocation of resources, inefficiency and wastage etc.**

i) In Bangladesh, projects and programmes of secondary importance are given priority over the vitally important issues like primary education. This resulted in under investment for primary education.

ii) Simple criteria for using resources is maximising return. In many instances, especially in developing countries. The impact on earning and productivity of each unit of investment in primary education is more than that in higher education. Disproportionate spending on higher education led to a vast number of unemployed university graduates side by side with increasing illiterates. In 1981 only 19.7% of the population was united as literate. This is an addition of only 2.7% over the 20 years since 1960.

iii) The school managers have least incentive and are least willing to try for efficiency. They have very little say in the use of public funds. The major construction and public works are done by the Facilities Division of the Primary Education Directorate which is having serious problems of efficiency and proper monitoring & accurate reporting. High repetition and drop-out rates account for big wastage in primary education.

iv) Existing arrangements do not encourage contribution and financial support for primary education from the community and the private sector. The inadequacy of public resources and lack of a reasonably efficient institutional framework for successful planning and implementation of public sector programmes for primary education calls for exploiting the wider potential for wider role of the private sector. This will ease the fiscal pressure and lead to competition with a possibility for improved quality and added options within a universal primary education system.

v) In spite of the measures of decentralisation, in the areas of control over allocation of resources or making of a decision our primary education is highly centralised. One stroke of centralisation has taken away so much that even successive efforts for decentralisation could not restore that sense of community involvement which steers popular support and activism for attaining the required quantity and quality of primary education.

vi) Financing programmes concentrate in the supply side. The financing of primary education is done through projects which follow an agenda that hardly emphasises on those aspect which work on the demand side of primary education e.g. creating social awareness, enhancing adult literacy, changing value system regarding female education etc.

vii) Policy of indiscriminate subsidy & support. Every student does not need government subsidy and support available income data suggests that there is a segment of population with enough income to partially or fully pay for education of their children. Increasingly larger number of students have been attending the more expensive private schools. Besides, widespread tutoring of students at home also indicate the potential for recovery of some amount of user cost in the public system. Whereever, possible the able beneficiaries/users must be made to pay. Any amount of saving on this count may be used for making access for those who are totally deprived of education.

viii) Neglecting the participation of the private sector and the local bodies further reduces resources for financing of primary education. Declaring a policy on private sector participation in primary education is a necessity. The private sector should be provided with a set of guidelines for investment in education.

ix) It is held that the government has assumed too much and involved in many activities which could probably be better done by the private sector. Even when government assumes responsibility, it is not necessary for the government to do a job herself. Instead the government may identify areas/ activities ~~scope~~ with the scope for contracting out. This may relieve some public burden for direct involvement in some areas in which private initiative suits better.

Summary and Conclusion:

Major problems in primary education in Bangladesh are low rate of enrolment and high rate of dropouts and repetition, disparity in enrolment between male and female, different socio-economic groups and the regions and poor quality of education which in turn is caused by inadequate number of teachers, deficiency of curriculum, lower level of administrative and supervisory services, lack of community support, inadequacy of resources, poverty and malnutrition etc.

- (i) There should be an act to provide for compulsory primary education and all governmental intervention and the policies in primary education;
- (ii) In order to improve enrolment, all the factors determining enrolment should be properly identified and addressed to;
- (iii) Poverty alleviation programs have to be accelerated in order to succeed in the programmes for primary education. By raising family income poverty alleviation ^{programs} will help increase enrolment;
- (iv) Timely supply of books, and teaching aids work as additional attraction for attending the schools;
- (v) Creation of additional facilities is required in order to respond to the need for primary education of additional children;
- (vi) Providing mid-day meal, uniform etc could be used for encouraging additional enrolment.
- (vii) It is necessary to create least expensive pre-primary schools which provide confidence in smaller environment and feeder institutions for the primary schools;
- (viii) Regional or local physical, social and economic characteristics and aspirations may be given due importance.
- (ix) Out of school and the dropouts are the children who are not served by the governmental primary school systems. The NGOs may be allowed to operate schools for them.

The NGOs may also be advised to go for pre-primary schooling which may remove lack of interest in children's learning both among the children and their parents. In the relatively smaller area of operation, the NGOs may take intensive care and provide inputs both at

(x) It is necessary to ensure more of social control and supervision. There should be adequate provision for the union parishads for supervision and inspection of the primary schools, Ibtadia madrasahs and the Maqtabas. The recommendation of the union parishad and the Committee should have due weight in the management of primary schools by Upazila Parishad.

(xi) The entire management of primary education expecting recruitment of teachers and conducting of the 5th grade examination should be delegated to the Upazila Parishad. To ensure recruitment of qualified teachers selection should be made through competitive tests nationally.

(xii) There should be a uniform standard examination at the end of Class V. The examination should be based on specific competences in different subject areas. In order to ensure quality and uniformity of the primary school graduates, it is necessary to create ^{/an institution for} "Educational Testing Services" which will conduct nationwide testing services at different levels of education including that at the end of class V.

(xiii) Adult education should be geared through non-formal system of education. This will allow the recipient to participate as an active agent and enable them to value and need for primary education of the children.

(xiv) Since the government has raised the level of subvention in the Ibtadia Madrasahs in terms of salary of the teachers one may reasonably argue for their obligation to assume greater responsibility for implementing the universal primary education programme.

(xv) In Bangladesh the biggest network of education, though extremely feeble and weak, is provided by the Maqtabas. The Maqtabas should play their role as community learning centres and combine in their teaching some secular subjects in order to serve as pre-primary schools.

(xvi) The union parishad may be assigned with the organisation and management of pre-primary schooling facilities with the help of local youth and women who should follow the curriculum and teaching methods developed by the government or the NGOs.

home and school for psych.-social development of the child during the early years of life- which ... es a sense of trust, a tonomy and initiative.

(xvii) In designing a curriculum it has to be remembered that the goals of education is to provide a child intellectual, social and physical skills and abilities. To attain these goals, it is necessary to bring about appropriate changes in the knowledge-based curriculum which prevail in the primary schools in Bangladesh. This curriculum should have wider perception allowing the students to make thing rather than taking as a passive receiptent enjoy participation and experience success.

(xviii) The curriculum should be developed to have a teaching method which involves more and more active participation of the students and make them understand rather than memorising. Dogmatic and authoritarian teaching must go and the students should be encouraged to , develop critical attitude and cultivate scientific and experi bent of mind. This will make a big difference.

