

Achievement of Bangladesh towards EFA 2015 and the Contribution of Japan

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The People's Republic of Bangladesh has been working actively toward achieving universal implementation of primary education since the signing of "Education for All (EFA)" declaration in 1990. With a view to improve the quality of primary education, the Government of Bangladesh has undertaken an integrated sub-sector wide programme known as PEDP since 2005 in assistance with development partners. Now the Third Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP 3) for 2011-2016 (extended up to 2017) is running to improve the quality at all levels of the primary education sub sector. The following legislative, policy and planning actions have guided basic education development in the country since 1990:

1. Compulsory Primary Education Act 1990
2. National Plan of Action I and II (1992-2000, 2003-15)
3. National Non-Formal Education Policy 2006 and Act 2014
4. National Education Policy 2010
5. National Skill Development Policy 2011
6. The Sixth Five Year Plan 2011-15
7. Vision 2021/Perspective Plan 2011-21
8. The Seventh Five Year Plan 2016-20

In addition, there are other policies and laws. These include: Comprehensive Early Childhood Care and Development Policy 2013, National Women Development Policy 2011, National Children Policy 2011, and Disabled Persons Rights and Protection Act 2013.

Education For All (EFA) is a global movement led by UNESCO (United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), aiming to meet the learning needs of all children, youth and adults by 2015. Major Achievements toward EFA in Bangladesh are as follows-

- PEDP II (2004-11) and PEDP III (2011-16), one year of pre-primary education prior to school entry has been supported with every GPS having a pre-primary class.
- About 50 percent of preschool children were estimated to be receiving some form of pre-primary education.
- An operational framework and GO-NGO collaboration guidelines have been developed to promote pre-primary education with common quality standards.
- A Comprehensive ECD Policy was adopted in 2013.
- Remarkable progress has been recorded in enrolment reaching 97 percent by 2013.
- Progress also has been made in reducing dropout and improving completion.
- However, near about one-fifth of students do not complete the five year primary cycle due to dropout and grade repetition.
- Less than half of children aged 11-15 years are enrolled in school.
- High dropout at the secondary level results in less than a third of the age group completing the secondary school certificate

- Only around 11 percent of out-of-school youth participate in formal or non-formal work-related training, with informal apprenticeship counting for more than half.
- The Education Policy 2010 proposes raising compulsory primary education to grade 8 by 2018 and expanding vocational/technical training.
- Adult literacy rate reached 59.8% in 2010 (2010 Literacy Survey).
- A recently approved literacy project (February 2014) will be the first major adult literacy project since 2003 and is expected to serve 4.5 million young adults in 3 years.
- Bangladesh has overcome gender disparity in access to primary and secondary education over the last two decades.
- Female enrolment and completion rates in fact surpass males, raising a concern about disadvantage of adolescent boys who may be drawn into child labour to support their families.
- The gender gap in adult literacy and in vocational-technical education and training, though improving, still persists.
- Pupil-teacher ratio remains short of the interim target of 40:1.
- Efforts are continuing to establish competency-based assessment of learning and improve the skills and professionalism of teachers.
- For improving the quality of classroom teaching, a pilot project entitled “*Shikhbe Protiti Shishu*” – “*Each Child Learns*” – which is being implemented in selected schools in parts of the country.
- Professional Development of Primary School Teachers and SMC Members

Review of Achievement toward All Goals

- This summation indicates challenges in ensuring better learning outcomes.
- It is not merely a matter of accelerating current efforts and plans up to 2015. Substantial rethinking is required regarding priorities for action in the immediate future and beyond 2015.
- Review and assessment in current programs, such as PEDP III, implementation of skill development strategies, and designing actions regarding the comprehensive ECD policy offer new opportunities
- The discussion on the six EFA goals indicating progress and constraints as well as other recent analyses suggest a few key general policy and operational lessons.
- These lessons, among others, which merit special attention, relate to coping with economic and poverty effect on school participation, late enrolment of children, area-based planning and management of education access and participation, and disadvantages of children in urban slums.
- The priorities in the immediate future and the post-2015 agenda have to take these into account.

JICA's Involvement and Activities during 2003-2015 in Achieving EFA

- Overseas Training in Japan for Education Administrators from MOPME and DPE, and Math & Science Experts from NAPE and PTI organized at Hiroshima
- Teaching Package Development for Math and Science for grade 3 to grade 5.
- Technical Exchange Training in Philippines from NAPE and PTIs organized at Department of Education and NISMED at University of Philippines
- PTI Monitoring and its Superintendent and Instructor Training conducted
- Math & Science Curriculum and Textbooks Analysis conducted
- Curriculum Seminar and PTI Superintendent and Instructor Training
- DPED Resource Material revision (Math & Science) (JICA Experts attended workshops)
- Subject based Training Manual (Math & Science) developed
- Teacher Support Network through Lesson Study was assisted

- TV Drama “Rupantar Kotha 2” developed and School Diary and Community Radio piloted

External Cooperation Needed

Attention to regional and international cooperation: South Asia’s common concerns and circumstances, in contrast to East and South-East Asia, for example, sub-regional collaboration and exchange. There can be different areas and modalities of cooperation including the use of SAARC as the platform for pushing common agenda. Two areas stand out:

- a) inter-governmental as well as civil society cooperation to promote exchanges among national NGOs and academic and research institutions in the region in respect of common concerns;
- b) developing a common South Asia position on the post-2015 education agenda.

Challenges and Way Forward

- There are still issues and challenges which should be addressed to achieve the goals fully--
- Participatory decision making, supervision, monitoring and evaluation in basic education giving emphasis on accountability and transparency.
- The practical implications of management of education to promote effective governance
- Community participation in school improvement should be encouraged
- Greater and systematic efforts are needed to develop quality curriculum, teaching-learning materials (for students and teachers)
- Class size and contact hour should be appropriate for quality teaching.
- Classroom teaching-learning processes must be relevant to competencies.
- Multiple ways of teaching-learning in the classroom which will remove silent exclusion, and enable students to achieve learning outcomes
- including cognitive & non-cognitive (affective & psychomotor) capabilities.
- Student assessment policy and system should be revisited. Continuous, formative classroom assessment processes should be emphasized.
- Further effort is needed to removing the memorization culture, identifying students’ learning difficulties and helping them to achieve mastery.
- The number of teaching personnel has to be increased and their quality, competence and performance improved in a major way.
- Effective implementation of reform in teacher education and introduction of the new diploma-in-education would be important for this purpose.
- Government and development partners concerned about education need to engage in discussion about resource gaps and develop a viable plan with a timeframe to increase education resources.