
**Country Analysis
Education**

Bangladesh



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2007

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1 General educational situation

1.1 Educational history

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

During British rule, education was mainly reserved for the wealthy class. The language of pedagogy was English, as religious nuns and other British people ran the schools. The few natives who were fortunate to receive education were either from wealthy families (Nawabs) or whose family had ties with the British governing body. For one to receive higher education, such as a university degree, to become a professional, one had to attend schools in England. Such was the case of Mahatma Ghandi, who travelled to London to study law. As native people were treated as second-class citizens, education was largely withheld from the general population. After the British had left the Indian subcontinent, the territory currently known as Bangladesh came under Pakistani regime as the state of East Pakistan. Education during this period was still very scarce but those who had the means of acquiring it were no longer considered second-class citizens. The state language, however, was Urdu, the mother tongue of Pakistan. In East Pakistan, however, the native language was Bengali. Hence, a conflict over language was imminent. During that period school systems largely functioned in the English language and a few such schools, like the Holy Cross and numerous Catholic schools and colleges, were still taught by Christian missionaries.

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

1.2 formal educational system

Education in Bangladesh has three major stages-primary, secondary and higher education. Primary education is a 5-year cycle while secondary education is a 7-year one with three sub-stages: 3 years of junior secondary, 2 years of secondary and 2 years of higher secondary. The entry age for primary is 6 years. The junior, secondary and higher stages are designed for age groups 11-13, 14-15 and 16-17 years. Higher secondary is followed by graduate level education in general, technical, engineering, agriculture, business studies, and medical streams requiring 5-6 years to obtain a Masters degree. In the general education stream, higher secondary is followed by college/university level education through the Pass/Honors Graduate Courses (4 years). The masters Degree is of one year's duration for holders of Bachelor Degree (Honors) and two years duration for holders of (Pass) Bachelor Degree. Higher education in the technical area also starts after higher secondary

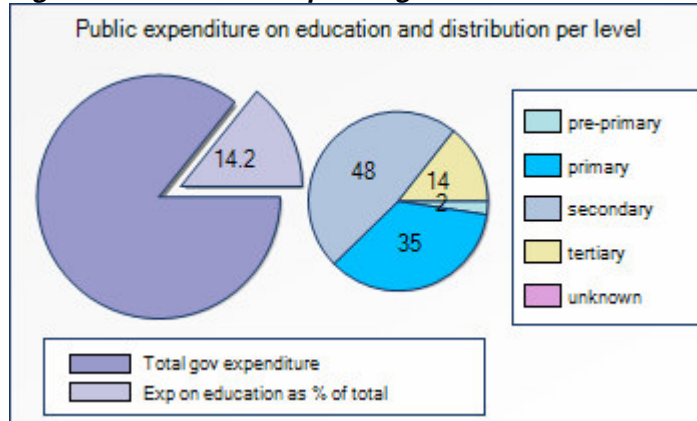
level. Engineering, agriculture, business, medical and information & communication technology are the major technical and technological education areas. In each of the courses of study, except for medical education, a 5- year course of study is required for the first degree. Different Steams in Education Primary level education is provided under two major institutional arrangements (stream)-general and madrasha, while secondary education has three major streams: general, technical-vocational and madrasha. Higher education, likewise, has 3 streams: general (inclusive of pure and applied science, arts, business and social science), madrasah and technology education. Technology education in its turn includes agriculture, engineering, medical, textile, leather technology and ICT. Madrashes (Arabic for educational institution), functional parallel to the three major stages, have similar core courses as in the general stream (primary, secondary and post-secondary) but have additional emphasis on religious studies.

Figure 1: Flow of the Bangladesh educational system

Age	Grade															
26+																
25+	XX					Ph D (Engr)	Ph D (Medical)									
24+	XIX			Ph. D	PostMBBS Dipl				Ph D in Edu.							
23+	XVIII		M. Phil		M.Phil(Medical)											
22+	XVII	MA/MSc/MCom/MSS/MBA			LLM	MBBS BDS	MSc (Engr)	MSc (Agr)	MBA	M.Ed & MA (Edn)	MA (LSc)					
21+	XVI	Bachelor (Hons)	Masters (Prel)	LLB (Hons)	BSc. Eng BSc. Agr BSc. Text BSc. Leath	BSc Eng	BSc (Tech Edn)	BBA	B.Ed & Dip. Ed	BP ED	Dip. (LSc)	Kamil				
20+	XV		Bachelor (Pass)													
19+	XIV															
18+	XIII															
17+	XII	Secondary	Examination		HSC	Diploma (Engr)	HSC Vocational	C in Edu	C in Agri	Diploma in Comm	Diploma in Nursc	Alim				
16+	XI		Higher Secondary Education													
15+	X		Examination	SSC	TRADE Certificate/SSC Vocational								ARTISAN COURSE e.g. CERAMICS			
14+	IX		Secondary Education													
13+	VIII	JUNIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION														
12+	VII															
11+	VI															
10+	V															
9+	IV															
8+	III	PRIMARY EDUCATION														
7+	II															
6+	I															
5+																
4+		PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION														
3+																

1.3 Government education policy

Figure 2: Government spending on education



- Human resource development is at the core of Bangladesh's development efforts and access to quality education is critical to poverty reduction and economic development. The Government is committed to undertaking structural reforms that are expected to bring significant improvements in the education sector. Bangladesh's commitment to education has been clearly stated in its *Constitution* and development plans with education being given the highest priority in the public sector investments. Education sector allocations are currently about 2.3 percent of GDP and 14 percent of total government expenditure. Maintaining this commitment to the education sector is imperative in order to achieve *Education for All* (EFA) and the *Millennium Development Goals* (MDGs).
- The management of the education system falls under two ministries - the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME, responsible for primary education and mass literacy) and the Ministry of Education (MoE, responsible for secondary, vocational and tertiary education). Overall there are more than 17 million students at the primary level, and over 8.0 million at the secondary level. Enrolments at the tertiary level are relatively small but growing very rapidly.
- Bangladesh has made significant progress, especially in regard to increasing access and gender equity, both at primary and secondary levels. Gross primary enrollment rates rose from 90 percent in the late 1990s to 98 percent in 2003, while a corresponding increase in enrollment rates at the secondary level rise to 44 percent. Gender parity in access to primary and secondary education has also been achieved. These achievements are particularly spectacular when compared to countries in the South Asia region and other countries at similar levels of per-capita income.
- The Government is strongly committed to alleviating the existing problems in respect of management and quality through reforms across the education system. At the primary level, MoPME is supported by a multi-donor group through the Primary Education Development Program II (PEDP II), which aims to strengthen educational access, quality and efficiency.
- In order to address issues at the secondary and higher levels, MoE has developed a medium-term framework for the secondary education sub-sector,

focusing on quality improvements, policy measures and specific actions needed to reform the system. The development of this medium-term framework has benefited from an extensive range of consultations and workshops with stakeholders at the central, district, and upazila levels. The main objective of reforms being proposed is to address systemic governance issues aimed at raising the quality and cost-effectiveness of service delivery, and improve equity of access in secondary education.

- MoE is aiming to move towards a devolved system of governance within the current administrative structure. In this system the central government will be responsible for formulating policies, financing, setting quality standards, and monitoring and evaluation etc., while lower levels of government will be responsible for administering the system. MoE is empowering officials at the district and upazilla levels to take greater responsibility in monitoring school performance and ensure public disclosure of information (e.g., SSC passing rates, teacher absenteeism, class sizes, etc.) related to school quality.
- To ensure appropriate financial controls, MoE is implementing a *Financial Management Reform Program* (FMRP). This is intended to increase accountability and transparency in the use of resources

1.4 Religion within education

Alongside the general system of education parallel system known as Madrasha education which offers Islamic education to Muslim boys and girls. Hindus and Buddhists also receive religious education at institutes called Tol and Chatuspathi.

1.5 Literacy

Table 1: Literacy rates

	Youth literacy			Adult literacy		
	15 – 24 year: total	15 – 24 year: male	15 – 24 year: female	15 and older: total	15 and older: male	15 and older: female
2004	51,5 %	59,4 %	43,1 %	42,6 %	51,7 %	33,1 %

For the latest rates see: <http://gmr.uis.unesco.org/ViewTable.aspx>

1.6 Teacher education

Teacher education in Bangladesh according to NEP 2000 is “simple, conventional, incomplete, certificate oriented, heavy with theories and light in practice, dependent on rote learning and an imitation of old examination system”. There are ten Teachers Training Colleges, one Technical Teachers Training College, and one Institute of Education and Research in the public sector and 5 Teachers Training Colleges in the private sector. The Bangladesh Open University offers B.Ed through distance mode of learning. These cater to secondary sector. For the primary sector, there are 53 government and 2 non-government Primary Teachers Training Institutes offering Certificate in Education course. The NGOs have their own model for training of teachers which are non-formal in character. The Education Watch 2000 Report on

the state of primary education indicate that 95.8% of government primary school teachers received basic training while only 32.5% of non-government primary school teachers had such training in 2000. At the secondary level, 43.6% of all teachers had received teacher education; over 90% in public sector schools while it is around 40% for private sector schools. At the college level such teacher education has not been required, nor is it required for other tertiary level institutions. The percentage of trained teacher in the Madrasah system is only 7.3%. *Access:* The existing arrangement for teacher education is considered inadequate. The demand, especially from the private sector institutions, has not received sufficient attention. To encourage private sector participation in teacher education, it is important to devise individual and institutional motivation and incentive.

Quality: Quality of teacher education has been questioned in NEP and by researchers. Conventional orientation does not create quality nor does it create consciousness about creative quality. Theoretical and didactic methods used in teacher training do not prepare teachers for creative and interactive practices in the classroom. Inadequacy of learning inputs and facilities, while real impediment, is too often used an excuse for accepting poor quality and not making an effort to apply quality criteria.

Relevance: It raises many issues. One is adaptation of the theories to the local surrounding. Second is opportunity for practice and evolution of creative alternatives. Third is balance between grounding on subject content and pedagogic skills as well as between subject specificity and general orientation. Fourth is creating awareness about commitment to education and social development. The present training curricula need changes not only for upgrading learning but also for creating consciousness about purpose and use of learning. Madrasah teachers should not need separate teacher training institutions; they should be integrated within the system except for the religion component of their training, if the aim is to move towards better integration of the two systems.

Effectiveness: Not much research has been done on teacher education. There are two contrasting schools of thought. One is that no one would join or benefit much from prevailing modes of teacher education except for the compulsion created by government subvention requirements. The other is that teacher education creates sensitivities which mature with age and opportunity, but which is often constrained by resource availability and management environment in schools.

Efficiency: Efficiency of teacher education both at C-in-Ed and BED/MED levels are high if the passing out ratio is considered. External effectiveness, in a narrow sense, is also high in the sense that trained teachers are mostly employed. But if effectiveness is to be judged by impact on the system; adoption of relevant techniques, tools and knowledge; and improvement of the quality of education; then the outcome remains questionable. The explanation of the poor or ineffective outcome lies, most people believe, in the rigidity of the system that does not encourage creativity and insufficient resources for essential inputs, such as, learning aids and books and classes that are too large in the training courses. Another factor affecting outcome is the lack of hands-on teaching experience with children of teacher-trainers themselves.

1.7 Conclusions

Current government projects to promote the education of children in Bangladesh include compulsory primary education for all, free education for girls up to grade 10,

stipends for female students, a nationwide integrated education system and a food-for-education literacy movement. A large section of the country's national budget is set aside to help put these programs into action and to promote education and make it more accessible. Recent years have seen these efforts pay off and the Bangladesh education system is strides ahead of what it was only a few short years ago.

2 Primary education

2.1 School attendance

The participation of children in primary school in Bangladesh is measured by the gross enrolment ratio and the net enrolment rate.

The gross enrolment rate (GER) is the number of pupils enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education.

The net enrolment rate (NER) is the number of pupils of the theoretical school-age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age-group.

Table 2: Participation in primary school in 2004

	Total	Male	Female
GER	108,9 %	107,3 %	110,7 %
NER	94,1 %	92,6 %	95,8 %

For the latest rates see: <http://gmr.uis.unesco.org/ViewTable.aspx>

Drop-outs

There are a lot of drop-outs in primary school. In table 3 you can see the drop-out rates for 2003 per grade.

Table 3: Drop-out rates per grade in primary school (2003)

	Total	Male	Female
Grade 1	14,6 %	17,6 %	11,2 %
Grade 2	9,9 %	11,4 %	8,3 %
Grade 3	5,8 %	5,2 %	6,4 %
Grade 4	7,2 %	5,5 %	8,9 %
Grade 5	unknown	unknown	unknown
Grade 6	unknown	unknown	unknown
Grade 7	unknown	unknown	unknown
Total	34,9 %	36,9 %	32,7 %

For the latest rates see: <http://gmr.uis.unesco.org/ViewTable.aspx>

2.2 Providers of primary education

There exists a substantial number of NGO-run non-formal schools, catering mainly for the drop-outs of the government and non-government primary schools. Very few NGOs, however, impart education for the full five-year primary education cycle. Because of this, on completion of their two-to three-year non-formal primary education in NGO-run schools, students normally re-enter into government/non-government primary schools at higher classes.

There are Non-Governmental Schools (NGO) and Non-Formal Education Centers (NFE) and many of these are funded by the government. The largest NFE program is

the much reputed BRAC program. However, all NFE graduates do not continue on to secondary school.

NGO-run schools differ from other non-government private schools. While the private schools operate like private enterprises often guided by commercial interests, NGO schools operate mainly in areas not served either by the government or private schools, essentially to meet the educational needs of vulnerable groups in the society. They usually follow an informal approach to suit the special needs of children from these vulnerable groups.

Similarly, in NGO-run schools there does not exist any SMC. The style of management differs depending upon differences in policies pursued by different NGOs. Some are centrally managed within a highly bureaucratic set-up, while others enjoy considerable autonomy.

Different NGOs pursue different policies regarding recruitment of teachers. Some prepare a panel of prospective teachers on the basis of a rigorous test and recruit teachers from this panel. Other NGOs recruit teachers rather informally from locally available interested persons.

2.3 School accessibility

Though primary school enrollment is higher in urban areas than it is in rural areas, this is largely because the majority of wealthy and middle-class Bangladeshis live in cities. The enrollment rate is very low for the urban poor, in some cases even lower than that of rural populations. It is estimated that only 9.4 percent of slums have primary schools within their reach (Sharafuddin); the problem therefore is one of both financial and geographical access. Many children are also prohibited from enrolling in government schools because they do not have an official address.

2.4 Tuition fees and other costs

Primary education is free. The government provided materials for the schools.

2.5 Curriculum

The primary education level is from year 1 to year 5. The primary curriculum is a competency based curriculum developed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) implements the curriculum and also manages the system of primary education. There is no nationwide examination at the end of the fifth year. However, the government education boards conduct a scholarship examination at the end of year 5.

2.6 Teachers and management

2.6.1 Teachers

In order to teach at a government school in Bangladesh, teachers have to attend a yearlong training at a Primary Teacher Institute (PTI). This training period is significant compared to the 15 day teacher training required by BRAC, and it is meant to assure a high standard of teacher competency. However, teachers often do not use most of what they learn and there is little supervision and few refresher training sessions after the initial year training (Kabeer, 296). Teachers in government schools have been found to be passive and interact little with students.

2.6.2 Management

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

The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) and its subordinate offices in the district and upazila are solely responsible for management and supervision of primary education. Their responsibilities include recruitment, posting, and transfer of teachers and other staff; arranging in-service training of teachers; distribution of free textbooks; and supervision of schools. The responsibility of school construction, repair and supply of school furniture lies with the Facilities Department (FD) and Local Government Engineering Department (LGED). The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) are responsible for the development of curriculum and production of textbooks. While the Ministry of Education (MOE) is responsible for formulation of policies, the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) under the Ministry of Education is responsible for implementing the same at secondary and higher education levels. The NCTB is responsible for developing curriculum and publishing standard textbooks.

The primary and secondary levels of education are controlled by the six General Education Boards, each covering a region. The boards' headquarters are located in Barisal, Chittagong, Dhaka, Jessore, Rajshahi and Sylhet.

2.7 Infrastructure

Mismanagement, delays and corruption have plagued production, printing and distribution of textbooks. For a large part of the academic year students, especially in rural areas, go without textbooks, which is the only learning aid most students have to rely on. Supplementary reading material and other teaching aids are virtually non-existent in formal schools. Such basic items as paper, pencils, crayons, pictures, and maps are in short supply, especially for children from poor families, since these have to be bought by them with scarce cash.

2.8 Quality indicators

The low performance in primary education is a matter of concern. School drop-out rates and grade repetition rates are high. Poor school attendance and low contact time in school are factors contributing to low level of learning achievement. Further, the system lacks a sound Human Resource Development and deployment system (Sedere 2000) and this has demoralized the primary education sector personnel, including the teachers, and contributes to poor performance. Poverty is a big threat for primary education.

A nationwide sample survey of primary school students completing class five carried out by Education Watch in 2000 showed that 1.6 percent of the children acquired all of 27 basic competencies tested in the survey. Half of the children failed to achieve 60 percent or more of the basic competencies. This finding is consistent with earlier results. Education Watch 1999 reported that under one-third of the children aged 11-12 years performed at a qualifying level in the test of basic competencies. There has been no independent and objective evaluation of internal efficiency and functionality and sustainability of learning outcome of literacy campaigns under non-formal education. There is widespread scepticism about the claimed achievement of 65 per cent literacy rate.

2.9 Family and community involvement

Students are given large amounts of homework to be completed at home, and parents who are illiterate or uneducated are not able to help their children. Children from poor families who do not have the money to hire tutors often fail to complete their work which leads to child and teacher frustration, failure and high drop out rates (Kabeer, 296).

2.10 Results

Figure 3: Statistics on Primary Scholarship Examination

Year	Appeared			Passed (%)
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1996	269,871	162,636	107,235	12.1%
1997	256,736	153,940	102,796	22.4%
1998	258,302	148,841	109,461	25.2%
1999	335,745	188,959	146,786	31.7%
2000	370,372	205,817	164,555	26.34%
2001	380,814	210,223	170,591	36.99%
2002	411,774	222,804	188,970	44.19%

2003	409,075	220,714	188,361	51.94%
2004	447,462	236,598	210,864	54.21%
2005	547,987	285,358	262,629	67.25%
2006	510,874	265,602	245,272	70.43%

2.11 Government assistance

Bangladesh has been trying relentlessly to uphold the cause of education for all since its emergence as an independent country. Article 17 of the Constitution of Bangladesh stipulates that primary education shall be the responsibility of the State. To bear this responsibility primary education in Bangladesh underwent a great deal of changes and development during the last few years. Bangladesh is a signatory to the world declaration on education for all held at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990. Bangladesh is also a signatory to the summit of 9 high populous countries held in Delhi. To facilitate and formulate planned programme for universal primary education and to remove illiteracy from the country, Government had created a separate division named Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) in 1992. PMED was made a Ministry in 2003. Hon'ble Advisor Mr. Ayub Quadri is in charge of this Ministry. All these steps reflect the commitment and determination of the government to improve primary education in the country both in terms of quality and quantity. The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) has allocated nearly 15 percent of the national budget to the education sector of which the share of primary and mass education is nearly 60 per cent.

National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) is the only national level institute of training and research for primary education in Bangladesh. It was founded in 1978 as Academy for Fundamental Education and was renamed in 1985 as NAPE. It was planned to be the co-ordination and information centre to facilitate training for the Primary Education Officers as well as centre for professional development of the concerned personnel in the field of educational management, research and academic supervision. Recently NAPE has got autonomy to contribute more towards the quantitative and qualitative improvement of primary education. It has been functioning as an autonomous body since October, 2004.

2.12 Future plans

On-going Projects:

Primary Education:

1. Primary Education Development Program II (PEDP II)
2. Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC) Project
3. Primary Education Stipend Project
4. IDB Assisted Govt. Primary School Construction Project (2nd Phase)
5. 2004 Flood Affected Primary School Rehabilitation Project
6. Establishment of Primary Teachers Training Institute (PTI) at Panchagar District

More information about these projects is available at:

<http://www.mopme.gov.bd/List%20of%20projects%20of%20MoPME%202006-07.htm>

2.13 Conclusions

Following the EFA, the government of Bangladesh made primary education compulsory for all children between the ages of six and ten. This has had a major impact on the system and the gross enrolment rate has increased since from 75% to 95% by 1996 (Sedere 1996).

Bangladesh has 18 million children in 62,000 primary schools; this is one of the largest primary systems in the world. Over 65% of the primary schools are government primary schools; the rest are registered non-governmental schools but assisted by the government. The government of Bangladesh distributes free books and education kits to the students of primary schools. There are private schools; however, the number of students enrolled in private schools is much fewer, and these schools largely cater to the social elite. Many schools in the secondary level also have primary sections.

3 Secondary education

3.1 School attendance

The participation of children in secondary school in Bangladesh is measured by the gross enrolment ratio and the net enrolment rate.

The gross enrolment rate (GER) is the number of pupils enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education.

The net enrolment rate (NER) is the number of pupils of the theoretical school-age group for a given level of education, expressed as a percentage of the total population in that age-group.

Table 4: Participation in secondary school in 2003

		Total	Male	Female
GER	Lower secondary education	68,9 %	63,2 %	74,9 %
	Upper secondary education	37,2 %	37,1 %	37,2 %
	Total	51,3 %	48,7 %	54,0 %
NER	Total	48,0 %	45,5 %	50,6 %

For the latest rates see: <http://gmr.uis.unesco.org/ViewTable.aspx>

3.2 Providers of secondary education

There are two types of non-public education institutions in Bangladesh: fully independent, non-public schools and government-subsidized schools. While the former enjoys full autonomy in regard to almost every aspect of school administration, the latter type of school is required to comply with the national standards regarding establishment, permission, recognition, staing pattern, curriculum and teacher recruitment process that are described below.

3.3 School accessibility

Transition from primary to secondary school

To go to high school you should have a certificate of primary education. In table 7 you can see that 95,4% of the children, who go to the 7th grade of primary school, are going the next year to secondary school.

Table 5: Transition from primary to secondary school in 2003

	Total	Male	Female
Transition from primary to	95,4 %	91,8 %	98,9 %

secondary school in % from total			
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For the latest rates see: <http://gmr.uis.unesco.org/ViewTable.aspx>

Figure 4: GER by Geographical Areas and Sex, 2005

	Lower Secondary			Upper Secondary		
	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female	GPI
Barisal	74.34%	78.35%	1.05	39.37%	39.65%	1.01
Chittagong	57.81%	68.18%	1.18	30.65%	30.99%	1.01
Dhaka	49.10%	57.07%	1.16	27.79%	28.50%	1.03
Khulna	69.54%	77.84%	1.12	39.41%	37.55%	0.95
Rajshahi	69.45%	76.20%	1.10	35.70%	32.80%	0.92
Sylhet	41.07%	45.15%	1.10	19.98%	20.63%	1.03

Note: Gender Parity Index (GPI) was calculated by UNESCO Bangkok on the basis of BANBEIS statistics
Source: BANBEIS.

Figure 5: GER by Geographical Areas and Sex (Urban-Rural), 2006

	Lower Secondary			Upper Secondary		
	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female	GPI
Urban	47.3	52.1	1.10	37.5	31.8	0.85
Rural	62.7	71.4	1.14	30.1	31.2	1.04
Total	59.2	67.0	1.13	31.9	31.3	0.98

Source: BANBEIS.

3.4 Tuition fees and other costs

In Bangladesh, only education at the primary level is compulsory and provided free of charge. For secondary education, tuition is collected from students. The Government sets the amount for all public schools. Currently, the tuition ranges from Bangladesh Taka (BDT) 10-15 (equivalent of US\$ 0.14-0.22) for junior secondary and from BDT 15-40 (equivalent of US\$ 0.22-0.58) for secondary and higher secondary schools. With the exception of a limited number of fully private schools in urban areas that collect a relatively high rate of tuition fees, the majority of government-aided private institutions collect tuition amounts similar to public institutions. Fully private institutions, however, set their rates independently, and the amount tends to be very high and expensive.

3.5 Forms of secondary education

The secondary and higher secondary level is between year 6 and year 12. This level is further divided into two sub-levels - the secondary and the higher secondary. The schools in the lower secondary levels have students from year 6 to year 10. The schools in the higher secondary level are called "colleges".

3.6 Curriculum

In terms of some major subjects, the curriculum puts more emphasis on improving students' English communication ability (especially at the junior secondary and secondary levels) by replacing the conventional English courses with communicative English courses, introduces agriculture education at the junior secondary level, and omits arithmetic from secondary-level mathematics for its discontinuity to higher secondary education.

Figure 6: Statutory School-opening Days and Teaching Weeks per Year, And Teaching Hours per Week

	School opening days per year	Teaching weeks per year	Teaching hours per week
Junior secondary	233 days	42 weeks	42 hours
Secondary	233 days	42 weeks	42 hours
Higher secondary	233-240 days	42 weeks	24 hours

Source: MOE.

More comprehensive and detailed description on the curriculum is available from "World Data on Education" database by IBE. (Visit the country specific webpage from here: [Education system in Bangladesh, 2003](#))

3.7 Teachers and management

3.7.1 Teachers

A small proportion of teachers, about a third, in non-government schools, which constitute over 95 percent of secondary schools, has professional teacher training. But the large class size, the curriculum focus on factual knowledge, and the generally dispiriting environment in school perhaps render professional training by itself irrelevant.

Figure 7: Number of Teachers and Key Indicators, 2004

	Number of teachers	Percent of female teachers	Percent of trained teachers	Pupil-teacher ratio
Secondary education	369,076	18.1%	31.5%	27.4
- Lower secondary	186,247	17.2%	37.6%	33.7
- Upper secondary	182,829	18.9%	25.6%	21.2

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2007a.

3.7.2 Management

Six region-based Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) are responsible for conducting the two public examinations, SSC and HSC, in addition to granting recognition to non-government secondary schools.

At the school level, in the case of non-government secondary schools, School Management Committees (SMC), and at the intermediate college level, in the case of

non-government colleges, Governing Bodies (GB), formed as per government directives, are responsible for mobilizing resources, approving budgets, controlling expenditures, and appointing and disciplining staff. While teachers of non-government secondary schools are recruited by concerned SMCs observing relevant government rules, teachers of government secondary schools are recruited centrally by the DSHE through a competitive examination.

In government secondary schools, there is not a SMC. The headmaster is solely responsible for running the school and is supervised by the deputy director of the respective zone. Parent Teachers Associations (PTAs), however, exist to ensure a better teaching and learning environment.

3.8 Infrastructure

Recent expansion in enrollment in secondary education has not been matched by increase in physical capacity and human resources, which already had been under pressure. Schools typically lack sufficient classrooms, libraries, laboratories, sports grounds, teachers' offices and sanitary facilities. Students per class and per teacher have more than doubled to an untenable level of around 60 in ten years since 1990. (BANBEIS data).

3.9 Quality

Six out of 100 entrants to secondary education survive to the end of the cycle. The quality challenge is: If 94 percent of those who enter secondary education are not going to have a place in higher education, how can secondary education become relevant for this vast majority who drop out or do not complete secondary education and the 50 percent or so of the completers who cannot go on to institutions of higher education?

3.10 Results

Figure 8: Progression Indicators, 2004

Gross Primary Graduation Ratio ⁽¹⁾	67.4%
Transition rate from Primary to Secondary (general programmes) ⁽¹⁾	89.3% ⁻¹
Gross Enrolment Ratio in Total Secondary ⁽¹⁾	47.3%
Percentage of Repeaters in Total Secondary ⁽¹⁾	8.9%
Upper Secondary Gross Graduation Ratio ⁽²⁾	12.1% ⁻¹

Source:⁽¹⁾ UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2006a. ⁽²⁾ BANBEIS.

3.11 Certificate

On completion of primary education, students (11+) enrol for junior secondary education that spans 3 years. At the end of this phase of education, some students branch out to join the vocational stream, offered at Vocational Training Institutes (VTI)

and Technical Training Centres (TTC) run by the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Labour and Employment respectively. Students in the mainstream continue in government and non-government secondary schools for a two-year secondary education in their respective areas of specialization, i.e. humanities, science, commerce, etc. At the end of their secondary education, the students sit for their first public examination (SSC) under the supervision of six education boards.

The students of religious education and English medium streams also sit for their respective public examinations, Dakhil and 'O' level, conducted by the Madrasah Education Board, and London/Cambridge University respectively, facilitated by the British Council in case of the latter.

After 10 years of schooling at primary and secondary level, students (16+) who succeed in passing the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination have the option of joining a college for a two-year higher secondary education in their respective areas of specialization, or enrolling in technical or polytechnical institutes. After the two-year higher secondary education, one has to sit for another public examination called Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) Examination conducted by the Education Boards to qualify for further education.

Students of religious and English medium streams also sit for their respective public examinations, Alim and 'A' level, conducted by the Madrasah Education Board and London/Cambridge University respectively to qualify for further education.

3.12 Government assistance

The Government of Bangladesh (GOB) lays special emphasis on raising the female literacy rate and ensuring female participation in all spheres of social as well as economic development. In view of this, Female Stipend Programmes (FSP) have been launched at the junior secondary and secondary levels since 1994. Having started with female students in targeted areas, the programme has now expanded to cover most parts of the country. It has also expanded in terms of education level to include higher secondary education. These stipend programmes generally include the monthly tuition fee, which is given directly to the institutions; monthly stipends; book purchase subsidies for female students in grades 9 and 11; and examination fees for female students in grades 10 and 12. The primary objectives of the stipend programmes are: (a) to increase female enrolment rates at the secondary level; (b) to assist girls in passing the SSC/Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination (or equivalent) so that they become qualified for employment; and (c) to hold girls in studies and retain them from early marriage. Certain conditions apply for the programmes: (a) to attend at least 75% of school days during an academic year; (b) to secure marks of at least 45% on average or a GPA of 2.5 in the semi-annual and annual examinations; and (c) to remain unmarried up to the SSC/HSC or equivalent. The programmes are currently funded by the Government of Bangladesh (GOB), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) and the Islamic Development Bank. (IDA).

In addition, there are three merit-based scholarship programmes in place at the secondary level: (1) the Junior Scholarship by DSHE, which is given to high-performing students in the annual Junior Scholarship Examination; (2) the Secondary Scholarship, funded by BISE and the Madrasah Education Board, which is given to

students performing well in the SSC or Dakhil Examination; and (3) the Higher Secondary Scholarship, also sponsored by BISE and the Madrasah Education Board, given to high performers in the HSC and Alim Examination.

3.13 Future plans

The Government is implementing the Secondary Education Sector Development Plan 2000-2010. The overall objectives of the SESDP is to contribute to poverty reduction in Bangladesh by improving the relevance of secondary education to the needs of the labor market. SESDP is aimed at achieving strengthened management, enhanced quality, and improved equity of access to secondary education. SESDP will support the implementation of the updated SESDP. Relevant and quality education will support the continued social and economic development of Bangladesh, which will, in turn, expand employment opportunities for its population.

Components of the Program

- Strengthening of management and Transparency in secondary education management
- Improving the quality of secondary education, and
- Enhancing of equity of access to secondary education.

More about this project is available at:

<http://www.dshe.gov.bd/Background%20and%20Advertisement-SESDP.pdf>

3.14 Conclusions

The amount of pupils in secondary education has grown the last years. This brings some problems. There are not enough teachers available and the quality of education is low. The Government tries to improve the quality now.

Higher education and university

4.1 School attendance

The participation of student in tertiary education in Bangladesh is measured by the gross enrolment ratio and the net enrolment rate.

The gross enrolment rate (GER) is the number of pupils enrolled in a given level of education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population in the theoretical age group for the same level of education.

Table 6: Participation in tertiary education in 2003

	Total	Male	Female
GER	6,5 %	8,6 %	4,3 %

For the latest rates see: <http://gmr.uis.unesco.org/ViewTable.aspx>

Figure 9: Tertiary education in Bangladesh (2007)

		Unit	Public	Private	National	Total
N of Institutes		N	28	54	*	83
Enrolment	Male	N	86,922	68,086	464,904	619,912
	Female	N	29,475	20,583	290,684	340,742
	Share of Fem	%	25.3	23.2	38.5	35.5
	Total****	N	116,397	88,669	755,588	960,654
	Share	%	12.1	9.2	78.7	100.0
N of Students Per Teacher		N	17	16	10	
N of Teachers				5638		
Per Student Expenditure			37090	**	***	

* There is 1 National University in Bangladesh catering around 1500 tertiary colleges; ** Ranges from 35000 to 1,80,000 BDT

*** information is not available; **** Excludes Open University

Figure 10: Percent of Enrolment in TVE Programmes, 2000-2005

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005 ⁽¹⁾
Secondary education	1.0%	1.2%	1.1%	1.2%	1.62%	1.9%
- Lower secondary	na	na	na	na	na	na
- Upper secondary	2.5%	2.9%	2.9%	2.9%	4.1%	5.0%

Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics. 2007a. ⁽¹⁾ BANBEIS. 2005.

4.2 Providers of higher education and university

There are 18 government and 36 non-government universities in the country. The number of government and non-government medical colleges stand at 14 and 11 respectively. There are 3 dental colleges, 4 engineering colleges (institutes of

technology), 2409 general colleges, 4 institutes of technology (BIT), 64 vocational training institutes 22 polytechnic institutes. Besides, there are other institutes for technical and vocational education.

4.3 School accessibility

To make higher education accessible to all, an Open University has been set up in the country. A National University has also been set up to serve as an affiliating university colleges across the country.

Figure 11: Student progression after graduating from Higher Secondary Level, 2005

Of all graduates from HSC (general) examination	
Bachelor degree course in general colleges	48.3%
Bachelor degree course of general education in the universities	12.8%
Bachelor degree of Engineering, Medical, Agriculture, Computing in the technical colleges, medical colleges and universities	10.4%
Of all graduates from HSC (alim) examination	
Fazil degree courses in madrasah	70.6%

Source: BANBEIS. 2006a.

4.4 Student fees and other costs

The implication of high fees charged by private universities to generate large surplus may be serious for their long-term growth. These universities have been attracting students mainly from the rich families who fail to get places in public universities. It is generally known that DU, BUET and medical colleges admit most of the top students that pass HSC public exams. The rest get places in other public and private universities, depending on their financial status. The result is that bright students in public universities do not get quality education as indicated above and suffer from session jams extending for three to four years mostly at public cost. On the other hand, students from wealthy families and with lower academic credentials are registering in private universities of high cost, most of which are not offering quality education.

Tuition fees for private universities are high. As tuition fees a student has to spend a sum of Tk. 312,000 (US\$5,474) for an MBA degree in NSU to tk. 494,623 (US\$8,678) for a computer science (BSc) in the same university. In USTC, an MBBS student has to spend a sum of Tk. 650,000 (US\$11,403) to obtain a degree.

4.5 Curriculum

Undergraduate education

Undergraduate education of various duration (two to four years) is offered to age 18+ students at a number of public and private universities, degree and honours colleges,

technical colleges, and specialized institutions. Successful completion of a degree course is a prerequisite for appointment to a white-collar civilian job.

Post-graduate education

Post-graduate education, normally of a one- to two-year duration, is provided at universities and affiliated colleges and institutions under National University

Figure 12: Bangladesh private universities: courses on offer, 2003

A.	More frequent:
	Undergraduate courses
(i)	BBA
(ii)	Computer science
(iii)	Computer science & engineering
(iv)	Computer science & informatics
(v)	English language & literature
	Post-graduate courses
(i)	MBA
B.	Growing/less frequent:
	Undergraduate courses
	Civil engineering
(i)	Architecture
(ii)	Electrical and electronic engineering
(iii)	Law (LLB)
	Post-graduate courses
(i)	Development studies
(ii)	Economics
(iii)	Medicine
(iv)	Others (e.g. Islamic studies, Bangla, history)

Source: Based on brochures/Annual Reports of different private universities, 2004.

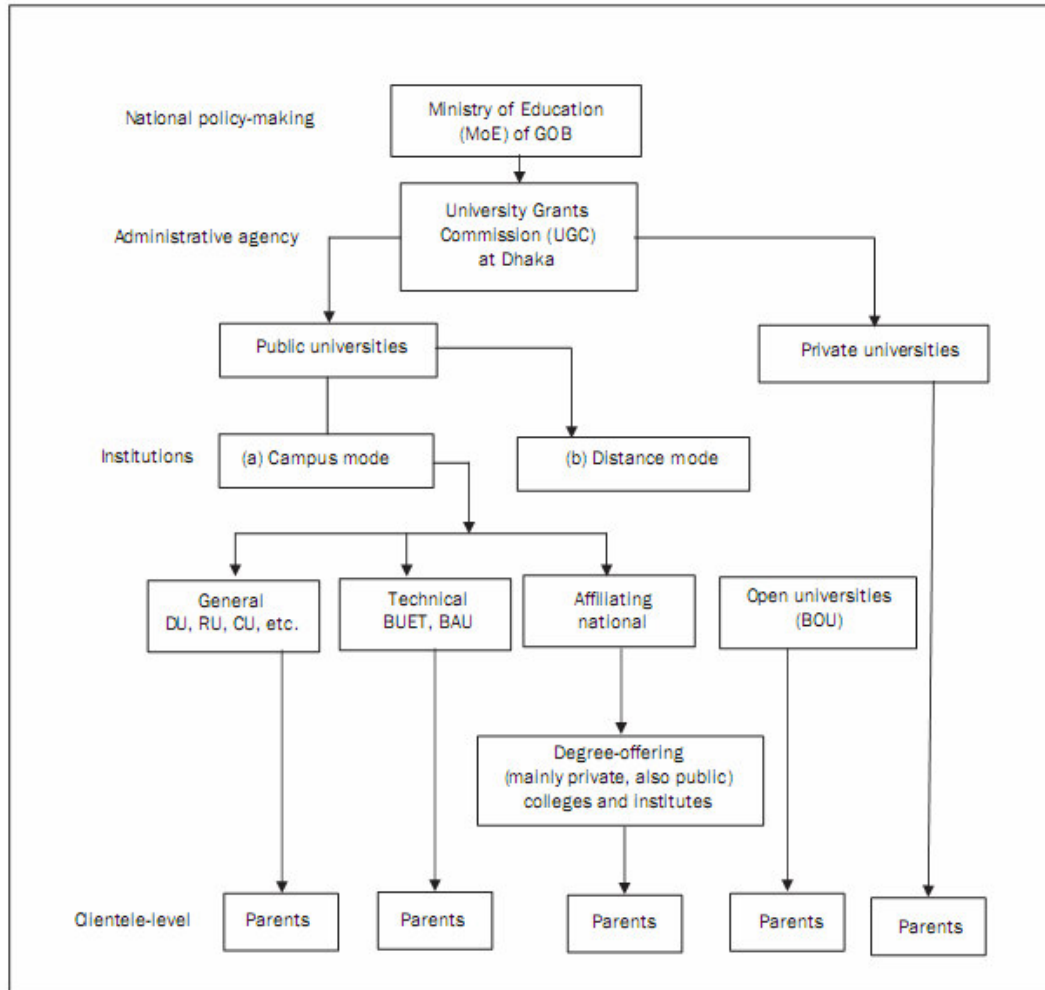
4.6 Teachers and management

4.6.1 Teachers

In the public universities, on average 49 percent of teachers have a doctorate degree and another 28 percent have a second master's degree from abroad. Thus in terms of qualification, this seems to be satisfactory. In terms of professional progression, nearly half the faculty are Professors or Associate Professors. The age profile is quite young indicating that they are at the prime of their creative age. The teacher student ratio varies between 1:11 to 1:18. This is quite favorable. This, however, increases somewhat as 15 percent of teachers are on leave for various reasons, but the overall teacher-student ratio remains favorable. This positive element is not reflected in the quality of the teaching-learning process.

4.6.2 Management

Figure 13: Organisation of the tertiary-level (first degree and above) education system in Bangladesh, 2004



University

At the tertiary level, universities are regulated by the University Grants Commission. The colleges providing tertiary education are under the National University. Each of the medical colleges is affiliated with a public university. Universities in Bangladesh are autonomous bodies administered by statutory bodies such as Syndicate, Senate, Academic Council, etc. in accordance with provisions laid down in their respective acts.

Technical and vocational education

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

4.7 Infrastructure

A lack of resources and facilities also contributes to unhappiness. The colleges and universities are often understaffed and ill-equipped, leading to frequent cases of student unrest where politically misguided and academically unsuccessful students channel their frustrations into destructive activities.

4.8 Quality indicators

No one would dispute that there has been a serious depletion of quality in higher education, in different senses of the term, especially in recent decades; and that it is not caused just by the large growth of the system. The quality differential is reflected in the low percentage of students who obtain high grades/first division. Secondly, it is also seen from the results of examinations given by Public Service Commission for entry into government service and market employability of graduates. The average waiting period for first regular employment has increased from 1 year in the 70s to over 3 years in the 90s. The causes for deteriorating quality include political intrusion in academic management, lack of accountability at all levels, and inadequacy of necessary inputs and resources for maintaining acceptable quality.

4.9 Results

Bangladeshi universities turn out almost 450,000 skilled graduates annually.

The average waiting period for first regular employment has increased from 1 year in the 70s to over 3 years in the 90s. This is a reflection of available employment opportunities, excess supply of graduates as well as mismatch of learning and competency required for employment.

4.10 Government assistance

A National Science and Technology policy has been formulated and adopted by the government. It has laid down the directions for S and T activities and research, institutional and manpower development, dissemination and documentation facilities. The National Council for Science and Technology (NCST) determines S and T policies reviews the activities of different institutions and provides directions towards S and T research and development.

Taking into account the importance of information and communication technology in the global economy, the present government has renamed the Ministry of Science and Technology as the Ministry of Science, Information and Communication Technology. Different programmes such as setting up of an Information Technology Institute, IT Villages and Incubators and Hi-tech Parks are also being taken up.

4.11 Future plans

Bangladesh has recently developed a National Strategic Plan for Higher Education for the next 20 years. The strategic plan highlights major challenges facing the sector in Bangladesh and recommends strategies to address the issues. The strategic plan recognized, among others, limited access, weak governance and management of institutions, and low quality of higher education are the major issues which need to be addressed. The Plan proposed a number of policy reforms and interventions to be implemented in three consecutive phases.

Some of the key recommendations made by the Plan are: (i) depoliticization of public universities; (ii) setting up a national search committee for selecting Vice-chancellors and other senior officials; (iii) strengthening of UGC; (iv) establishment of accreditation council; (v) enhanced support for research; and (vi) development of strategies for retaining and developing quality teaching staff.

4.12 Conclusions

Access is very limited with a little more than 4% of the 17-23 age cohort receives higher education. Higher education also has a low quality, particularly in some of the newer private universities and in the affiliated colleges. There are difficulties in recruiting, retaining and offering adequate professional development to academic staff. Another problem is lack of internal and external quality assurance measures

5 Informal education and literacy

5.1 Forms of informal education

There exists a substantial number of NGO-run non-formal schools, catering mainly for the drop-outs of the government and non-government primary schools. Very few NGOs, however, impart education for the full five-year primary education cycle. Because of this, on completion of their two-to three-year non-formal primary education in NGO-run schools, students normally re-enter into government/non-government primary schools at higher classes.

5.2 Providers of informal education

The Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE) (level-1 & 2) under the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (level-1) is the central coordinator of NFE programs for youth and adult in Bangladesh. Under BNFE, there are 54 District Coordinating Officers located at various districts, who are responsible for coordinating and monitoring NFE activities at the district level. BNFE implements its NFE programs through over 300 contracted national NGOs/Local Branch of National NGOs/Local NGOs across the country.

5.3 Curriculum

NGO-run schools differ from other non-government private schools. While the private schools operate like private enterprises often guided by commercial interests, NGO schools operate mainly in areas not served either by the government or private schools, essentially to meet the educational needs of vulnerable groups in the society. They usually follow an informal approach to suit the special needs of children from these vulnerable groups.

According to the recently approved national NFE policy the objectives of NFE are as follows:

- i) Provide quality and relevant NFE programs and skill training, which meet the assessed learning needs of the identifiable and potential clientele groups.
- ii) Provide opportunities for individuals and groups of persons with learning and skills needs to develop self-reliant, productive and empowered citizens through engaging in income generating and life skills related activities.
- iii) Establish a working mechanism of government, NGOs and broader civil society including the private sector for policy co-ordination, planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluation to reduce illiteracy, poverty and promote human resource development.
- iv) Establish an organization for management and governance of NFE sub-sector.
- v) Institute a decentralized operation system involving local bodies, NGOs, CBOs and communities including learners to ensure community ownership and sustainability of NFE program, structures and facilities for lifelong learning.

5.4 Attendance

Between 1990 and 2000, according to the information available from the government, 13 million people were exposed to basic literacy and numeracy programs.

From 2000 onwards, under the mainstream government-run PLCE (Post Literacy and Continuing Education) total of 1565,100 learners have been brought under the basic literacy, numeracy and livelihood programs. A total of 1459,800 learners are at present undergoing basic literacy, numeracy and livelihood intervention. 50% of the target population under this project is women, and 50% districts have been covered under the project. The government is implementing this project with the assistance from the World Bank. The government is also looking forward to initiate a new project with the assistance from ADB, DFID and SDC, which is presently being negotiated.

5.5 Accessibility

The target group for NFE program for the period between 1990 and 2000 was illiterate youth and adult males and females, who never had the chance to attend school. The target group also included the dropouts, who had relapsed into illiteracy. The age group for the NFE program was between 11 and 45 years.

From 2000 onwards, the target group is the neo-literates, who are exposed to at least 9 months of basic literacy program. The age group is the same as before (males and females between 11 and 45 years). This target group is exposed to basic literacy, numeracy and livelihood intervention.

While the government has specified age limit, in reality the age factor is not emphasized. Ultimately, it is the learners' interest and commitment to learn that decides their participation in the NFE programs.

Given the reality that most of population in Bangladesh is economically poor, and also the fact that generally, the demographics are quite homogenous, with agriculture as the main source of livelihood, the target-groups are largely similar across the country. They are largely rural farm and non-farm workers in case of males, and homemakers in case of females.

5.6 Quality indicators

Observers and external development partners have pointed out the weak management capacity and lack of experience in running educational programs by implementing NGOs as a major cause of poor performance by learners. For example, according to the formative evaluation of NFE-3 on urban working children, about two-thirds of the NGOs, contracted as implementing organizations, fell short of meeting performance criteria satisfactorily, and half of them did not have previous experience in running education programs. The criteria of effectiveness applied to NGOs were their ability to enrol and retain targeted children in the course and to help them attain acceptable learning achievement. The emphasis seems to have been on meeting the numerical target of enrolment and retention, on which depended disbursement of

funds to NGOs. This issue is linked with the question of criteria of selection of NGOs and the application of the criteria, which have led to the selection of a large number of NGOs as implementing organizations. All of them are not necessarily experienced and capable. External development partners have argued for a small number of NGOs with demonstrated management capacity and educational program performance to be given the implementation responsibility. They have emphasized the importance of quality control, creativity and responsiveness to learners' situation, experience in community mobilization and bringing additional pedagogic and other resources for clientele, for all of which only a limited number of NGOs could be relied upon. Dealing with a much smaller number would also reduce the management burden of DNFE. The option of a comprehensive network of non-formal learning serving a wide clientele would require commensurate rethinking of organizational and management structures and functions. Major elements of such a rethinking would include various aspects of organizational arrangements, management roles and functions at different levels and the relationships between the principal government non-formal education agency and all other stakeholders and potential partners and their respective roles.

5.7 Infrastructure

Even though the government primers were used during the adult NFBE program, which has ended by the 2003, they exert considerable influence in the post literacy scenario, since the PLCE programs strives to retain and upgrade the literacy skills of the learners based on what they have been taught during the literacy phase. The extent of distribution supports the fact that these learning materials have been widely used in Bangladesh. These materials have been developed by experts from government and NGOs under BNFE's facilitation.

5.8 Government assistance

Non-Formal Education:

7. Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development Project-1 (PLCEHD-1)
8. Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development Project-2 (PLCEHD-2)
9. IDB Assisted Post Literacy and Continuing Education Project (PLCEHD-3)
10. Basic Education to Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (2nd Phase)

More information about these projects is available at:

<http://www.mopme.gov.bd/List%20of%20projects%20of%20MoPME%202006-07.htm>

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5.5 Accessibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001555/155577e.pdf
5.6 Quality indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.jbic.go.jp/english/oec/environ/report/pdf/eban.pdf
5.7 Infrastructure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001555/155577e.pdf
5.6 Government assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.mopme.gov.bd/List%20of%20projects%20of%20MoPME%202006-07.htm

