

*EDUCATION FOR ALL*  
*EFA MID-DECADE ASSESSMENT, 2007*

*GOAL 4: LITERACY*

Consultant: Professor Muhammad Sirajuddin

*UNESCO, Dhaka Office*  
*November, 2007*

**BANGLADESH EFA MID-DECADE ASSESSMENT, 2007**  
**MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS EFA GOAL 4: LITERACY**  
**- Professor Muhammad Sirajuddin**

**4.0 Statement of EFA Goal 4: Literacy**

- ❖ **Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.**

Illiteracy and poverty are closely related, one being the cause and the other consequence. Poverty has many a facet. Dakar EFA goals were framed in the backdrop of more than 880 million adult illiterates in the world, two-thirds women, most of them living in developing countries; more than 400 million in South Asia alone<sup>1</sup> and currently 46.38 million<sup>2</sup> in Bangladesh.

The level of literacy reflects the state and human resources capability of a nation for development and sustained growth. Literacy is the major tool for promoting continuing education, lifelong learning, sustainable livelihoods, good health, clean environment and active citizenship to improve the quality of life for all, individuals and communities, societies and indeed the world (UNLD, 2002).

EFA takes the rights-based approach, in context of Human Rights<sup>3</sup> and emphasizes that all illiterate adults, as human beings, should have an inherent right to literacy and continuing education. It also devolves on the duty-bearers, generally the State as enjoined by the Bangladesh constitution, to ensure that all rights-holders, particularly the ‘unreached’ illiterate and disadvantaged adults are identified and provided access to quality adult learning, which gives them learning and earning skills to enhance their social and income capability to improve the quality of their of lives.

The concept of literacy is changing beyond its earlier notion of mere ability to read, write and make simple calculations (UNESCO, 2004). Mentioned in three of the six EFA goals, literacy assumes a growing emphasis on its role in development. The *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning, 1997*<sup>4</sup> highlighted the nature and the need for literacy in empowering and promoting participation of people in development. Indeed, the Hamburg Conference’s motto was *Adult Learning - a key for the 21st century*<sup>5</sup> (UNESCO, 1996). This has been topped with the

---

<sup>1</sup> Haq M and Haq K, *Human Development in South Asia, 1998*, Oxford University, Karachi.

<sup>2</sup> BBS: Statistical Pocket Book Bangladesh, 2006

<sup>3</sup> As enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted by the UN General Assembly on 10 December 1948

<sup>4</sup> *Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (FICAE) (or CONFINTEA V), Hamburg, July 1997*

<sup>5</sup> “*Learning: The Treasure Within*”, Report of the UNESCO International Commission on Education for the Twenty First Century, chaired by M. Jacques Delors. The Report postulates that “Education throughout life is based on four pillars: learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and learning to be”. It states further that “Formal education systems tend to emphasize the acquisition of knowledge to the detriment of other types of learning; but it is vital now to conceive education in a more encompassing fashion”.

declaration of the United Nations Literacy Decade, 2003-2012, calling for universal pluralist literacy with the motto “Literacy as Freedom”. Ministers of E-9 countries, meeting in Monterrey, Mexico in 2006, declared: “We recognize the crucial nature of adult literacy in pursuing socio-economic and cultural development and the links between literate adults and enhanced primary school enrolment” (UNESCO, 2006). The meeting acknowledged the need for greater commitment and funding for adult literacy in the member countries.

This EFA Goal-4 addresses the literacy and learning needs of all illiterate adults (aged 15 years and over) who missed schooling. Bangladesh National Plan of Action (NPA), 2001-2015, seeks to include within literacy program the primary school dropouts and completers without having acquired adequate proficiency in language, calculation and primary school subjects due to poor quality teaching and learning or poor performance of the system.

### **Definition of Literacy**

In Bangladesh literacy is defined as follows:

*“Literacy is the ability to read, understand, interpret, communicate and compute in verbal and written forms in varying contexts. It involves a continuum of learning that enables individuals to develop their potentials and knowledge-base and to participate fully in community affairs and wider social and developmental context”* (The national NFE Policy Framework, MoPME, 2006).

### **Bangladesh Experience in Adult Literacy**

In post-Jomtien era, Bangladesh has implemented five (5) Literacy/ NFE projects under its first EFA: National Plan of Action (NPA-I), 1992-2000. The projects targeted together to make 35.7 million out-of-school children<sup>6</sup>, and illiterate youth and adults literate. By October 2003 some 18 million illiterate persons had attended the literacy and non-formal basic education courses.

The government had set up a separate Primary and Mass Education Division in 1992, renamed as Ministry of PME in 2003. A separate Directorate of Non-formal Education (DNFE) was established in 1995 to steer the Literacy and NFE towards achieving the goal. Bangladesh made a commitment at the Fifth International Conference on Adult Education (FICAE/ CONFINTEA V), Hamburg, 1997 to eradicate illiteracy in 10 years, by 2006, in the context of *Hamburg Declaration on Adult Learning*, 1997. As a follow-up, the Government started implementation of a massive basic literacy project, named Total Literacy Movement (TLM), from 1997 to make literate 22.889 million 11-45 year-old illiterates into literate persons. Both TLM and DNFE were discontinued from 2003 for reasons of administrative convenience and created a more autonomous Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE).

Bangladesh is basically a mono-linguistic country where ninety percent of the population speaks and communicates in Bangla, the official language of the country with rich dialects. Two percent of the populations comprising some 45 ethnic groups have their own languages, some with scripts and some without.

---

<sup>6</sup> Included the never-enrolled and primary school dropout children. It also gave the children a second chance to study and return to school.

There are some- on-going efforts in northern regions, inhabited by indigenous people and in Chittagong Hill Tracts inhabited by tribal people, at developing “non-formal literacy courses in local languages and with instructional materials. One strategy used is to hire teachers from among ethnic groups to facilitate the national non-formal literacy courses in local languages (also in formal primary schools).

During 1974-2001, the rate literacy among 15+ years population rose from 25.8% (1974) to 47.5% in 2001 (Table-1).

**Table-1: Adult Literacy Rate (Population Aged 15 +Years) by Sex and Locality, 1974-2001**

Locality	1974			1981			1991			2001		
	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female	Both sexes	Male	Female
<b>Bangladesh</b>	25.8	37.2	13.2	29.2	39.7	18.0	35.3	44.3	25.8	47.5	53.9	40.8
<b>Urban</b>	48.1	62.5	33.1	48.1	58.0	34.1	54.4	62.6	44.0	64.3	70.3	57.1
<b>Rural</b>	23.4	34.6	12.1	25.4	35.4	15.3	30.1	38.7	21.5	41.9	47.9	35.9

*Source: BBS 2003 (Census 2001)*

## **EFA NPA-II**

Began in 2001, on the heels of Dakar, the second EFA: National Plan of Action-II, 2003-2015 (NPA-II), has the prime-mover goal to build the base for realizing the vision of establishing a knowledge-based and technologically-oriented globally competent society. It is a pro-poor plan, geared to ensuring access to quality and life-long learning for every citizen through a rights-based approach. Under the new approach Literacy/ NFE component has five sub-components targeted at selected age specific groups as below:

- a) non-formal basic education for post-primary 11-14 age group
- b) Out-of-school adolescent and youth (OSA/Y): 12-19 years (pilot project)
- c) Young adults: 15-24 years (50% of the illiterate group)
- d) Adults: 25-45 years (25% of the illiterate group)
- e) PLCE targets, no addition<sup>7</sup>; 30% of the remaining 11.6 million (who participated in basic literacy program of DNFE beginning in 1995).

The growth projection of adult population, between 2000 and 2015 suggests that as against a base-year (2000) 15+ years population of 84.64 million, the adult literacy target group population will grow to be 73.54 million by 2005, 79.83 million by 2010, and 84.87 million by 2015 (Table-2).

**Table-2: Projected Population of 11+ and 15+ age-groups, 2000-2015.**

<sup>7</sup> Of the 15.222 million 3.622 million will have been served by 2007/8 by the three PLCE projects; the target numbers include 3.622 million

Population groups by age ranges	Base Year	Projection by Selected Years (In 000s)		
	2000	2005	2010	2015
11-15	15822	15503	15728	15765
16-17	6364	6163	6096	6242
15-24	29683	31038	30784	30956
15-44	66066	73540	79831	84871
15+	84640	95800	106508	117106
<i>Source: BBS Population Census 2001 and other projections, 2003</i>				

The NPA-II relied on BBS growth projection (Table-2) without taking into account, the fact that during 2001-2004 period DNFE's basic literacy program remained suspended but population growth did not, meaning that the number of illiterate adults must have grown; re-enforced further by the rising dropout rates from primary education. BNFE is now busy in revising the number of population to be served and accordingly re-drawing basic literacy projects to meet the learning needs of growing illiterate population.

### NPA-II Targets

The NPA-II seeks to provide opportunities and facilities to meet the learning, life and livelihood skills needs of adolescents, young adults, adults and neo-literate adults to survive and thrive in a competitive world (Table-3).

**Table-3: Selected L/LNFE Targets by selected programs and NPA-II Phases**  
(Tk. in '000s)

Program Coverage by Age Groups	Benchmark	Clientele Targets by NPA-II Phases		
	-	1	2	3
	2000/2001	2005	2010	2015
ECCE: 3-5 (Hardcore 40% of total)	4132	1019	1868	1245
NFBE: 6/8-10 (50% of dropouts/ un-enrolled of 2001 base+)	6120	1545	2721	1854
NFBE: 11-14 (2001 base)	6031	1535	2600	1896
OSA/ Y: 12-19 (pilot project)	168	18	30	120
Young adults: 15-24 (50% of the illiterate group)	5369	1431	2339	1599
Adults: 25-45 (25% of the illiterate group)	2701	810	1081	810
PLCE targets, no addition, 30% of the remaining 11.602 million	3481	1044	1392	1044
<b>Total:</b>	<b>28001</b>	<b>7402</b>	<b>12031</b>	<b>8568</b>
<i>Source: Table-8.14.1 of NPA-II, (2001-2015), MoPME.</i>				

### Strategies to achieve the goals of NPA-II

NPA-II seeks to contextualize EFA and MDG targets in the framework of Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) into a realistic and harmonized approach, targets and shared responsibilities. The major strategies of implementing literacy program include the following:

- NGOs and CBOs to play the primary role in implementing L/NFE programs (Table-4)

- Public-private partnership in planning, implementation and monitoring the L/NFE component of the NPA II, avoiding individual agency initiatives without reference to the Plan or other actors and stakeholders.
- Effective coordination of activities within government (relevant Ministries), between government and development partners, and amongst development partners
- BNFE to establish literacy standards in consultation with public-private stakeholders
- BNFE to promote NGO/CBO capacities to achieve quality in L/NFE program formulation, implementation and monitoring
- Strengthen the professional capacity of BNFE, ensure appropriate qualification at recruitment and provide adequate training to staff to give them professional proficiency and a career path
- Organize and establish linkages with other relevant programs (skills training, micro-finance, employment outfits, etc) and organizations to assist NFE program participants to put their new-found learning, job skills and knowledge to work towards poverty reduction, income generation/augmentation, and
- Develop and maintain a regularly updated database and GIS map on literacy population, needs, location of services, agencies and linkages with marketing and input providing facilities.

**Table-4: Projected Literacy Rate to be achieved by 2015 by NPA II (in %)**

Non-Formal Education	Benchmark 2000	Targets for the Selected Years by phases		
		2005	2010	2015
NFBE – Access/Coverage (for school un-enrolled and dropouts)	11	19	48	33
Adult Literacy Rate (15-24 Age Group)	66	73	82	95
Adult Literacy Rate (25-45 Age Group)	56	70	78	90
<i>Source:</i> NPA-II, MoPME				

### **Financing of programs/ activities**

Cost calculation of expenditure for 9 types of activities for literacy from post-primary to post-literacy comes to an equivalent of US\$ 3.64 billion as against US\$ 6.51 billion for primary education up to the year 2015. The costs of activities are planned to be made from the GoB, ADB, DFID, SDC, IDA, UNICEF and CIDA. Financial supports are also expected from other sources.

Besides the government sponsored NFE activities, the NGOs complement GoB activities through a large number of activities, specially targeting the women, disadvantaged people like ethnic minorities, hard-to-reach people, disabled people, children etc. In addition, local bodies and civil societies participate in sharing responsibilities and costs in some form.

### **Post-Dakar activities**

In the post-Dakar period the government has abandoned the TLM project for administrative reasons, even though it had been the main basic literacy project. The present projects are as follows:

- PLCEHD-1 Project: started in 2001, went into operation in 2003 (cost Tk. 3651.6 million or US\$ 71.6 million @ Tk.51 for 1 US\$) the project operates in rural areas of 32 districts, has a target population of 1.36 million 11-45 year old neo-literates (graduates of basic literacy program), amended to include primary school dropouts, now due for completion in 2008.
- PLCEHD-2 project was approved, went into operation in 2002 and is projected to complete in 2011. It has a target population of 1.6 million neo-literates of age-group 11-45 with an approved cost of 601.4 million Taka (GoB component) and 4954.04 million Taka as Project Aid.
- PLCEHD-3 is a pilot project to be implemented for age-group 11-45 years population who have dropped out of schools and / or graduated from TLM. It has a cost of 1.53 million Taka to cover 96,000 target population.
- Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Working Children Project-2 (BEHTRUWC-2) project works in urban slums of the six major cities. It is second of the project with similar name that served 346,000 children. The current project is projected to serve 200,000 children. It follows a condensed primary education course. On completion the children gain grade-V level competency in Bangla and grade III level in mathematics. A summary on these projects and other previous similar project is shown at Table-5.

**Table-5: Description of Projects**

Name of Project	Targeted Age-group	Project Period	Project Cost (million taka)	Target Population (in million)	Course Duration (month)	Source of Funding
INFEP (Pre-primary)	4-5 years	1991-1997		0.075	CBA-12	UNDP, UNICEF, NORAD, SIDA
INFEP (Basic Education)	6-10 years	1991-1997		0.150	CBA-24	UNDP, UNICEF, NORAD, SIDA
INFEP (Adolescent Education)	11-45 years	1991-1997		0.30	CBA-24	UNDP, UNICEF, NORAD, SIDA
NFEP-1	15-24 years	1996-2001		2.96	CBA-10, TLM-9, PDA	GoB, WB, ADB, SDC
NFEP-2	11-45 years	1995-2002		8.179	CBA-10, TLM-9, PDA	GoB, SIDA, NORAD
NFEP-3	8-14 years	1996-2004		0.35	CBA-24	GoB, UNICEF, SIDA, DFID
NFEP-4	11-45 years	1997-2003		22.88	TLM-9	GoB
PLCEHD-1	11-45 years	2001-2007	3651.60	1.362	PL-3, CE-6	GoB, WB, IDA, SDC
PLCEHD-2	11-45 years	2002-2011	6010	1.60	PL-3, CE-6	GoB, ADB
PLCEHD-3	11-45 years	2001-2007	15.3	0.063	PL-3, CE-6	IDB
Hard-to-Reach	10-14 years	2004-2009	2060	0.20	40 in 8	UNICEF, SIDA

(HTR)					months each cycle	
<i>Source: BNFE</i>						

### Specific target groups (disadvantaged groups)

Bangladesh is also strongly committed to extending coverage of neo-literacy program(s) the educationally, socially and economically disadvantaged groups who missed schooling or dropped out of school. Specifically, the clientele groups to be covered by Literacy/ NFE programs include: primary school drop-outs, never-enrolled adolescents and young adults, children living in remote locations, disabled, ethnic minorities, population suffering social exclusion, and general illiterate adults.

### Ethnic Minorities

In fulfillment of its commitments in Dakar, the GoB has planned programs for the ethnic minorities by special arrangements. In Bangladesh the ethnic population is 1.4 million, that is, 0.99% of the total population. For the Chittagong Hill Tracts area special development projects have been undertaken. One such successful project is the Integrated Community Development Program (ICDP) being implemented in the Chittagong Hill Tracts with UNICEF assistance (Source: Muhammad Sirajuddin: Sample Survey on Education Status of Ethnic Minorities, UNESCO, 2007).

### Disability

Disabled persons constitute 5.6% of the population in Bangladesh. The numbers of persons with disabilities as well as the different types of disabilities that prevail vary from one to the other factor.

Prevalence of disability are found to be: visual impairment (32.2%), physical disability (27.8%), hearing impairment (18.6%), intellectual disability (6.7%), speech impairment (3.9%), and multiple disabilities (10.7%). Disability tends to be more widespread in rural areas (6%) than in urban areas (4.2%), as there is lack of medical services and community awareness. People living in Char and Haor areas in Bangladesh have a greater incidence in disability terms. Table-6 shows details (Source: Disability in Bangladesh, A Study on Prevalence, HANDICAP International, NFOWD, July, 2005).

**Table-6: Incidence of Disability in Bangladesh**

*(In percent)*

Geographical Variation	Disability Type						
	Hearing	Visual	Speech	Physical	Intellectual	Multiple	Total
<b>Area of Residence</b>							
Urban	14.1	26.7	5.9	31.9	12.6	15.6	100.0
Rural	19.6	33.5	3.4	26.9	5.4	13.4	100.0
<b>Divisions</b>							
Barisal	13.5	39.1	3.8	26.3	3.8	14.3	100.0
Chittagong	19.3	31.2	7.5	30.1	2.2	9.7	100.0
Dhaka	18.2	36.4	4.5	22.7	8.5	15.5	100.0



Khulna	22.9	19.3	1.2	38.6	8.4	12.0	100.0
Rajshahi	19.1	31.2	3.5	27.0	5.7	15.6	100.0
Sylhet	21.0	29.0	2.0	29.0	6.0	13.0	100.0
<b>Geographical Taxonomy</b>							
Hill Tracts	18.8	18.8	6.3	18.8	6.3	31.3	100.0
Char or Haor	16.7	38.1	-	28.6	7.1	14.3	100.0
Coastal	11.3	24.2	11.3	45.2	1.6	6.5	100.0
Plain Land	19.5	33.0	3.3	26.2	7.3	14.0	100.0
<b>Religion</b>							
Muslim	18.4	32.3	3.8	27.9	7.0	13.8	100.0
Hindu	20.0	34.3	5.7	31.4	-	8.6	100.0
Buddhist	30.0	20.0	-	10.0	10.0	30.0	100.0
Christian							-
<b>Ethnicity</b>							
Bengali	18.4	32.4	3.9	28.1	6.7	13.6	100.0
Tribal	30.0	20.0	-	10.0	10.0	30.0	100.0
<b>Area under Disability Service</b>							
Served Area	11.2	29.2	7.9	30.3	12.4	18.0	100.0
Non-served Area	19.6	32.7	3.3	27.5	6.0	13.2	100.0
<b>*Total Number</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>234</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>202</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>726</b>
Percentage Total	18.6	32.2	3.9	27.8	6.7	10.7	100.0
<i>Source: Disability in Bangladesh: A Study on Prevalence, 2005, HANDICAP International/ NFOWD.</i>							
<i>(* Except "Total Number", all number is accounted as a percentage)</i>							

## NGO Participation in Adult Literacy/ Skills

In Bangladesh international and national NGOs have undertaken a good number of initiatives in adult literacy/ skills, as strategy for empowerment of the poor. The Government of Bangladesh, in fulfilment of Dakar Framework, has accepted NGOs as partner in EFA and the GoB's principal organization, Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE), has been implementing its investment programs through partner NGOs (Table-5 above).

NGOs now operate activities on Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Pre-primary Education (PE), Education for Adolescents (EA), Adult Education (AE), and Post-Literacy and Continuing Education (PLCE).

International development partners, national/ multi-national/ international/ NGO, have been involved extensively and intensively in promotion of adult literacy/ skills throughout Bangladesh with direct assistance of donors, that is independent of GoB assisted BNFE activities.

### 4.1 Policy/ System Indicators

4.1.1 The Government of Bangladesh has approved a national Non-Formal Education Policy Framework (NFEPF), in February, 2006.

The GoB has also established a Directorate of Non-Formal Education in 1995. For administrative convenience, the Directorate has been converted into the semi-autonomous Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE), which now manages Non-Formal Education in Bangladesh.

The BNFE is now implementing 4 comprehensive investment projects with participation of NGOs as implementing agencies at outreach level.

#### **4.1.2 Presence of non-formal literacy courses in local languages and existence of instructional materials**

Bangladesh is a mono-linguistic country where 98 percent of the population speak and communicate in Bangla, the official language of the country. Less than two percent (1.42 million) of the population comprising some 45 ethnic groups or adivasi/ tribal people who live in the hilly areas of Dhaka, Sylhet, the Chittagong Hill Tracts and pockets of adivasi/ indigenous population of Rajshahi have their own languages/dialects, some with scripts and many without.

The official national school curriculum is in Bangla and the non-Bangla speaking population, specially the children of ethnic groups find it difficult to follow instructions in schools where the teachers also mostly speak Bangla. As a result, large number of children drop-out of schools in consideration of this phenomenon, and to reduce the number of school drop-outs in pockets of ethnic habitations, Multi-Lingual Education (MLE) is being developed with an objective to provide learners with a strong education foundation in their home languages and build a bridge with national or majority language (Multi-Lingual Education in Bangladesh, 2005, UNICEF).

These MLE efforts are being made to develop "non-formal literacy courses in some of these local languages, with instructional materials. Pending wider availability of such materials, one strategy being used is to hire teachers from among ethnic groups to facilitate the national non-formal literacy courses in local languages and vice versa (also in formal primary schools) and particularly, ECCE classes. In the same process, scripts are also being developed in some of the more known ethnic languages. Sets of scripts for three major languages are now available. Chakma script is already available on the computers. It is to note that there are not much written materials or literature available in the ethnic languages.

#### **4.1.3 Existence of laws, decrees stipulating literacy as a basic human right**

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (Article 17) recognizes literacy as a fundamental right of all citizens and enjoins on the state to take measures to remove illiteracy speedily. As a follow up the National NFE Policy Framework has issued guidelines to cover Literacy and NFE activities.

### **4.2 Core EFA MDA Indicators**

#### **4.2.1 Adult Literacy Rate**

In Bangladesh different criteria and target age-groups are used for determining the rates of literacy. For example, in the NPA-II provisions have been made to include children of age-

groups 3-5 years and 6-10 years, adolescents of 11-14 years, young adults of 12-19 years and adults of 25-45 years (Table-3 above).

The Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) considers a person as literate if s/he can “read and write a letter in any language.” On the basis of this criterion, literacy rate in Bangladesh was accepted to be 25.8% in 1974, immediately after promulgation of Compulsory Primary Education Act, 1974. The number of male adult literates was 37.2% and that of females was 13.2%. The rate increased to 35.3 percent in 1991, with 47.6 million illiterate adults. It rose to 47.5 percent in 2001 (BBS, 2003) and national literacy (7+ population) rate had increased to 51.9% in 2005 (BBS, HIES 2005, 2007), leaving 48.1% of the population illiterate. In addition, approximately 2.2 million out-of-school children (6-10 years) and a large number of dropouts (over 6 million) with inadequate literacy skills remain subjected to the problem of illiteracy and attended disadvantages. Table-3 provides the number of persons eligible to join adult literacy if they have not attended school or dropped out without acquiring adequate competency of primary school completers.

Education Watch found the literacy rates of population of different age groups a little more interesting. The finding suggests that the adolescent population of age-group 15-19 years has the highest rate of literacy (63.8%), while the next age-group (11-14 years) has literacy rate of 56.2% and the next age-group (20-24 years) has literacy rate of 51.6 %. (Education Watch, CAMPE, 2007)

Based on criteria of definition of literacy and age-group of population, the rate of literacy in Bangladesh has been accepted to be 54.80% with 60.31% males and 48.90% females. The Gender Parity Index is 0.81. The rate of adult literacy in urban areas for both sexes is 82.18% with 86.33% males and 77.41% females. The rate of adult literacy is 52.40% in rural areas with 57.95% males and 48.50% females (Table-7).

**Table-7: Adult literacy rate by Locality and Sex**

Sex	Rural	Urban	All Areas
Both Sexes	52.40	82.18	54.80
Males	57.95	86.33	60.31
Females	46.50	77.41	48.90
<i>Source: MOPME (CELS 2002), 2003</i>			

Regional distribution of Adult Literacy Rate suggests that Barisal division has the highest rate of literacy with 71.34% and Rajshahi division has the lowest rate of literacy with 49.42%. On locational distribution Dhaka division has the highest ALR among urban population (84.77%) while Sylhet division has the lowest (71.46%) (Table-8).

**Table-8: Regional differentials in ALR for both sexes in 6 Administrative Divisions**

Division	CELS-02			CELS-99
	Rural	Urban	Total	Total

Barisal	71.30	83.26	71.34	63.63
Chittagong	57.28	78.13	59.82	57.01
Dhaka	48.03	84.77	54.52	54.93
Khulna	51.10	81.12	52.83	60.74
Rajshahi	48.92	74.68	49.42	61.85
Sylhet	50.02	71.56 •	50.33	53.13
Bangladesh	52.40	82.18	54.80	58.20
<i>Source: MOPME (CELS 2002), 2003.</i>				

ALR by stratum and gender shows that metropolitan cities have the highest rate of adult literacy (68.2%) while rural Chittagong and rural Sylhet have the lowest (30.5%) (Table-9).

**Table- 9: Adult (15 years and over) literacy rate by stratum and sex**

Stratum	Females	Males	Both	Significance
Rural Dhaka Division	26.5 (671)	37.8 (653)	32.1 (1,324)	p<0.001
Rural Chittagong	27.3	35.2 (566)	30.5 (1,365)	p<0.01
Rural Rajshahi Division	25.1 (672)	43.2 (701)	34.4 (1,373)	p<0.001
Rural Khulna Division	32.3 (718)	52.7 (740)	42.7 (1,458)	p<0.001
Rural Barisal Division	40.9 (706)	51.3 (616)	45.8 (1,322)	p<0.001
Rural Sylhet Division	23.0 (813)	38.8 (743)	30.5 (1,556)	p<0.001
Metropolitan cities	60.5 (696)	76.1 (678)	68.2 (1,374)	p<0.001
Municipalities	49.0 (779)	64.7 (683)	56.4 (1,462)	p<0.001
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	
Figures in the parenthesis indicate number of individuals under the survey				
<i>Source: Education Watch National Literacy Survey (2002) Courtesy&gt; Education Watch, CAMPE, Dhaka, 2003.</i>				

### Literacy by Religion

Literacy rate for 7+ year population by religion (re census 2001) shows that Christian population had the highest literacy rate at 58.45% followed by the Hindus at 52.41%; Muslim literacy rate was 44.62% with the Buddhists coming last at 37.95% (BBS, 2003).

### Literacy by Ethnicity

Literacy among the ethnic population of Chittagong Hill	<b>Sex</b>	<b>Rural</b>	<b>Urban</b>	<b>National</b>
	<b>Both Sexes</b>	71.43	86.65	72.73
	<b>Male</b>	73.73	89.74	75.03
	<b>Female</b>	69.06	83.76	70.36
	<b>Gender Parity index</b>			
	<b>Gender Parity Index</b>	0.81 for adult literacy and 0.94 for youth literacy		
	<i>Source: Child Education and Literacy Survey (CELS), 2003.</i>			

Tracts (Chakma, Tripura, Marma, Pankho, Tanchangoia, etc.) and of Dinajpur district (Mahali, Santoal, Orao, Mahato, Mal Pahari, etc.) of the age-group 15-24 has a literacy rate 91.57% with break up of 91.01% male and 92.13 % females. (Muhammad Sirajuddin, 2007)

#### 4.2.2 Youth Literacy Rate (age-group 15-24 years)

Among the youths (15-24 years) the literacy rate has been found to be 72.73% with 75.03% of males and 70.36% of females. The Gender Parity Index is 0.94. It has also been found by the survey that young women were behind in all cases, but close, right on the heels. The stipend program, both at primary and secondary levels in cash or kind, extensive NFE interventions by both Government and NGOs seemed to have had a positive impact (Table-10).

**Table-10: Youth literacy rate (age-group 15-24 years)**

### NGO Literacy program

There are 1048 NGOs engaged in managing education program in the country. A recent study shows that on the basis of education programs, number of centers and learners and gender, the NGOs run 6,574 centers, attended to by 145,470 learners, with females being 119,277 by number and 82 by percentage. NGO programs take 33 learners per centre and aim for 70 percent female participation.

NGOs have their own curriculum, teaching learning, training and supplementary materials. They also have developed and use 45 different curriculum, which have the official primary education curriculum at its core. It creates difficulties if a learner wishes or is obliged to move to another NGO program because of the differences in the curriculum contents.

At one time more than 500 NGOs had worked as implementing partners of the DNFE projects. With the closure of DNFE many of them have gone out of existence; reportedly many new ones have come up (CAMPE, 2007). As the Government literacy program became inactive NGO programs also reduced in size or scope. In fact there has been a lull adult literacy program as NGOs have gone more for primary education (Table-11).

**Table-11: Distribution of Centers and Learners by Type of NGO Education Programs**

Programs	No. of Centers	No. of Learners		
		Females	Males	Total
Early Childhood Development (ECD)	6,109	80,808	69,202	150,010
Pre-Primary Education	29,789	4,58,131	3,19,140	777,271
Primary education	48,855	10,24,495	6,06,802	16,31,297
Adolescent Education	22,735	5,36,116	1,18,933	6,55,049
Adult Education	6,574	1,19,277	26,193	1,45,470
Continuing Education	18,307	6,92,079	5,12,911	12,04,990
Technical/Vocational Education	121	3,415	2,897	6,312
Others	714	11,701	10,919	22,620
<b>Total</b>	<b>133,204</b>	<b>29,26,022</b>	<b>16,66,997</b>	<b>45,93,019</b>

*Source: CAMPE, Directory of NGOs with Education Programs, 2007.*

#### 4.2.3 Gender Parity Index for Adult Literacy

The Gender Parity Index for Adult Literacy is 0.81 and the Gender Parity Index for the Youth Literacy is 0.94 (Table-10 above).

#### 4.2.4 Public Expenditure on Literacy and Non-formal Education as a Percentage of Total Public Expenditure on Education

Public expenditure on education is on rise since 1990-91 Financial Year (FY) when the Revenue and Development expenditure on all sectors was Taka 134312.4 million (Taka 69= 1 USD) and that on education was Tk. 14944.2 million, that is, 11.13% of expenditure of all sectors. In FY 2005-06 the expenditure on education was 94876.8 million or 14.18% of the expenditure of all sectors (Table-12).

**Table-12: Government Revenue Budget on Education by Sub-sectors, 2005-06**

*(Tk. in million)*

Sub-Sector	Budget Allocation	Percentage (%)
Primary and Mass Education	20743.4	32.68
Administrative (MoPME)	499.6	0.79
Secondary & Higher Education	33332.2	52.52
Technical Education	775.0	1.22
University Education	4998.6	7.88
Other Subsidiary Services (MoE)	1323.8	2.08
Administrative (MoE)	1412.4	2.22
Development Program from Revenue (MoE)	386.4	0.61
<b>Total (Education)</b>	<b>63471.4</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: BANBEIS: Bangladesh Educational Statistics, December, 2006

In FY 2005-06 the share of the primary education sub-sector on Revenue Budget of the education sector was 32.68% of the education sector. Similarly, the primary education sub-sector's share on Development Budget of the education sector in FY 2005-06 was 61.51% (Table-13).

**Table-13: Government Development Budget on Education by Sub-sectors, 2005-06**  
(Tk. in million)

Sub-Sector	2005-2006 (RB)		2006-2007 (BE)	
	Budget Allocation	%	Budget Allocation	%
Primary and Mass Education	16947.5	61.51	19927.8	52.65
Secondary & Higher Education	7459.6	27.07	9234.1	24.39
Technical Education	1252.3	4.55	1882.5	4.97
University Education	1878.2	6.82	1271.8	3.36
Own Project (MoPME)	-	-	2679.2	7.08
Own Project (MoE)	13.7	0.05	2857.6	7.55
<b>Total:</b>	<b>27551.3</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>37853.0</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, BANBEIS, 2006.

The development expenditure in FY 2005-06 on Literacy and Non-Formal Education has been Tk. 63.51 million as against the total ADP allocation of Tk. 1796.61 million, that is, 3.53% of allocation (Table-14).

**Table-14: Government Revenue and Development Budget, 1990-91 through 2005-06**  
(Tk. in million)

Year	Revenue and Development Budget		
	All Sector	Education	% of all sector
1990-1991 RB	134312.4	14944.2	11.13
1991-1992 RB	150500.0	19088.5	12.68
1992-1993 RB	166310.0	22674.3	13.63
1993-1994 RB	187500.0	27608.4	14.72
1994-1995 RB	214500.0	35262.6	16.44
1995-1996 RB	222609.2	35226.2	15.82
1996-1997 RB	242349.1	38473.2	15.88
1997-1998 RB	157000.0	41787.8	26.62
1998-1999 RB	307650.0	47190.0	15.34
1999-2000 RB	349440.0	52386.1	14.99
2000-2001 RB	371330.0	58517.0	15.76
2001-2002 RB	372891.8	58766.5	15.76
2002-2003 RB	419710.0	65037.8	15.50
2003-2004 RB	511014.8	67579.2	13.22
2004-2005 RB	579109.4	71301.2	12.31
2005-2006 BE	669116.8	94876.8	14.18

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, BANBEIS, 2006.

The development expenditure on Literacy and Non-Formal Education goes beyond the MoPME. Some other Ministries like the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Religious Affairs and the Ministry of Social Welfare implement projects related to L/ NFE. Taken expenditure outside MoPME, public expenditure on goes as on December, 2006 up to (63.51+957.1= 1020.61 million). This is 3.7% of the education sector (Tables-15).

**Table-15: Government Development Budget on NFE, 2000-01 through 2006-07**  
(Figure in Lakh Taka)

Year	Allocation to NFE	Total ADP Allocation
2000-2001	23899.00	137357.50
2001-2002	7754.00	122231.00
2002-2003	11867.00	148539.00
2003-2004	10718.00	107184.00
2004-2005	2769.00	86611.00
2005-2006	6351.00	169475.00
2006-2007	8343.00	179661.00

Source: MoPME

### 4.3 Additional EFA MDA Indicators

#### 4.3.1 Number of literacy related programs

The number of literacy/ Non-Formal Education related programs is 16 implemented by the BNFE and some organizations of other Ministries. Out of these, 7 projects of the BNFE, namely, Integrated Non-Formal Education (Pre-primary), Integrated Non-Formal Education (Basic Education), Integrated Non-Formal Education (Adolescent Education), NFEP-1, NFEP-2, NFEP-3, and NFEP-4 have been implemented. Four (4) projects of the BNFE are under implementation. Five (5) other projects of other Ministries are under implementation (Tables-5, 15 above & 16).

**Table-16: Investments in Development Projects Related to EFA Goals**  
**Goal: Literacy**

(Taka in Lakh)

1	2	4	5	12	14 (15)	17	10	11	19
ADP Page/ SL No.	Project	Approved Cost		Revised Budget for 2006-07			Expenditure (Up to 31/12/2006)		Source of Foreign Aid
	Project Period	Total (FE)	PA (Tk. Com.)	Total	Tk. (Rev.)	PA (Tk. com.)	Total (Tk.)	GoB Revenue	
288/20	Teaching Quality Improvement Secondary Education Project (7/05-11/011)	63019 (1087)	50409 (28845)	5422	1945 (1266) (3477)	5489 (4039)	4586	834	ADB CIDA
306/73	Associating Religious Leaders with HRD (1/06-12/2010)	844 (834)	834	201	- (201)	200 (200)	129	1	UNFPA
306/74	Mosque-based Child and Adult Education Program (1/06-12/08)	21600	-	6880	140 (6740)	-	4856	4856	GoB
306/76	Temple-based Child & Adult Education Program (7/06-6/09)	1320	-	1	- (1)	-	-	-	GoB
356/3	Bangladesh Institute for the Disabled (7/01-6/08)	451	-	238	238 -	-	-	-	GoB
<b>Total</b>	<b>Goal: Literacy</b>	<b>87234 (1921)</b>	<b>51243 (28845)</b>	<b>12742</b>	<b>2323 (1266) (10419)</b>	<b>5689 (4239)</b>	<b>9571</b>	<b>5691</b>	<b>All sources</b>

Source: Revised Annual Development Program, 2006-2007, Bangladesh Planning Commission, Summary of National Budget, 2007-2008, Ministry of Finance, and Annual Development Program, 2007-2008, Bangladesh Planning Commission.



### 4.3.2 Number of literacy program facilitators

Projects implemented/ projects under implementation (eg. TLM/ CBA/ PLCEHD) provide learning in centers with facilitators/ supervisor to the target population. Each project has its target, eg. PLCEHD-1 project has a target of 1.36 million learners to be trained by 36,000 facilitators in 16,215 centers. Similarly, PLCEHD-2 project has a target of covering 1.6 million learners to be trained in 5,600 centers by 1386 facilitators.

The total number of centers comes to 631,688 for 649,197 facilitators/332 supervisor to provide learning to 21 million learners (Table-17).

**Table-17: Literacy Centers, Program Facilitators (including supervisor) and Learners**

Projects	Center	Facilitator (Supervisor)			Learner		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
BEHDRUWC	3310	na	na	3310 (332)	33100	49650	82750
PLCEHD-1	16215	16215	16215	32430	486450	486450	972900
PLCEHD-2	5600	na	na	1386	na	na	1600000
Total Literacy Movement (TLM)	370706	185353	185353	370706	na	na	11106020
Center Based Approach (CBA)	158165	79080	79085	158165	na	na	4744950
Gram Sikhha Milon Kendro (GSMK)	915	915	-	915	na	na	27450
INFEP	82285			82285			2468549
<b>Total</b>	<b>631688</b>	<b>281563</b>	<b>280648</b>	<b>649197 (332)</b>	<b>519550</b>	<b>536100</b>	<b>21002619</b>

*Source: BNFE/ Development Project Proposa.*

The regional distribution of learners and facilitators by region shows that largest number of learners (360000) comes from Rajshahi division and the lowest number (31500) from Sylhet division (Table-18).

**Table-18**  
**PLCEHD Project-1**  
**(Target of Learners 1.3626 million/ all rural)**

#### 4.3.3 Percentage distribution of facilitators who attended training programs

The number of facilitators attending training programs is not available. However, 34230 facilitators have been trained under PLCEHD-1.

#### 4.3.4 Percent of facilitators who are teaching in the local language

Under the Integrated Community Development Program in Chittagong Hill Tracts 3085 facilitators (Para Center worker/ teacher) are teaching in mother-tongue of tribal population. (Mitra and Associates, 2005)

#### 4.3.5 Number of learners participating in literacy programs

Under various project at least 21 million have been participating in literacy programs of BNFE and other organizations of the government (Table-15 & 17 above).

#### 4.3.6 Number of completers out of the total learners in literacy programs

The number of completers have been estimated to be 4.5 million.

#### 4.3.7 Percent of people who passed the basic literacy test after taking part in the programs

The number of persons graduating from non-formal programs and getting through the basic literacy test is yet to be found out after evaluation. However, BRAC, an NGO, is running 20 community centers where school drop-outs are admitted for possible re-admission in school.

Age-group 11- 45 years	No. of Centers	Learners			Facilitators		
		Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
National	16215	486450	486450	972900	16215	16215	32430
Barisal	720	21600	21600	43200	720	720	1440
Chittagong	1470	44100	44100	88200	1470	1470	2940
Dhaka	5250	157500	157500	315000	5250	5250	10500
Khulna	2250	67500	67500	135000	2250	2250	4500
Rajshahi	6000	180000	180000	360000	6000	6000	12000
Sylhet	525	15750	15750	31500	525	525	1050

Source: BNFE

#### Observations on Goal 4: Literacy

The process of change over from the Directorate of Non-Formal Education to the Bureau of Non-Formal Education took a few months, resulting in loss of data on achievements of literacy program activities during the DNFE period. The present Assessment collected data from a number of sources, which are mostly from outside BNFE.

During reorganization of the BNFE no Management Information System (MIS) has been created and hence collection, analysis, storage and retrieval of data are not done at central point in the BNFE. At present data are collected project wise, and there is no arrangement for data

dissemination. *It is now necessary to assemble data and store the same at one point in the BNFE. For the purpose, an MIS Cell is necessary to be created.*

L/ NFE has made it difficult to collect consolidated data. *The projectized approach may better be replaced by a program- approach, similar to PEDP-II of DPE. Alternately, Director General of BNFE may have a coordination point for the purpose of preparation of an Action Plan for the period 2008-2015 and in March every year the BNFE should set **one annual** activity program, with mechanism for disbursement of money in time and collection of periodical data. The MIS Cell or the coordination point should be made responsible for collection, analysis, storage, retrieval and dissemination data.*

Officially, the BNFE has an arrangement of partnership with NGOs, especially with the BRAC. But in actual practice, there is no real coordination between the BNFE and NGOs with regard to Non-Formal Education of ECCE or Literacy Goals. *A formal arrangement for exchange of data between NGOs and DPE for progress in ECCE activities and between NGOs and BNFE may be arrived at.*

Due to change in management of literacy programs progress of activities was retarded to some extent. *It is now necessary to redraw the implementation plan of literacy programs by the MoPME agencies. With regard to NGOs inter-organization meetings are necessary to re-plan literacy programs.*

In course of Assessment it has been found that some NGOs work on literacy for the advantaged and disadvantaged target population; and receive separate funds from the international NGOs, bilateral and multilateral donors as well as from the Government of Bangladesh (for example, MoPME, MoWCA, MoYDS, etc.). Some of the NGOs also work for target population who are disabled. There is no intra/ inter NGO coordination or between these organizations and the government. *It is now necessary that the funding organizations make it obligatory for the recipient NGOs to report progress to the national EFA Coordinator in the MoPME.*

The present system of data collection does not take into account disaggregations consistent with the EFA Indicators on gender, region, ethnicity, disability, inaccessibility, income distribution, etc. *It is suggested that data collection, analysis, storage, retrieval, and dissemination are reorganized to the requirement of information related to EFA Assessment.*

Budgeting for and expenditure on literacy are not made or maintained according to the EFA Indicators. That makes it difficult for assessing public expenditure on literacy. *The BNFE may have an MIS Cell to collect information on literacy in accordance with EFA Indicators, including information on expenditure on literacy by the NGOs.*

## LITERACY AT A GLANCE

**Goal-4: Achieving a 50 percent improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.**

**4.1.1** Definition of Literacy in Bangladesh: *“Literacy is the ability to read, understand, interpret, communicate and compute in verbal and written forms in varying contexts. It involves a continuum of learning that enables individuals to develop their potentials and knowledge-base and to participate fully in community affairs and wider social and developmental context.”*

**4.1.2 Presence of non-formal literacy courses in local languages and existence of instructional materials:**

Multi-lingual education is being practiced and Non-Formal literacy courses in mother languages of ethnic minorities have been prepared for the purpose.

**4.1.3 Existence of laws, decrees stipulating literacy as a basic human right:**

The Constitution of Bangladesh makes Literacy a basic human right. National NFE Policy Framework provides guidelines on Literacy and NFE activities.

**4.2.1 Adult Literacy Rate:**

Total: 54.8%      Males: 60.31%      Females: 48.90%      Gender Parity Index: 0.81

**Literacy by religion:**

Christian: 58.45%      Hindu: 52.41%      Muslim: 42.62%      Buddhist: 37.95%

Ethnic minorities: 91.57%

**4.2.2 Youth Literacy Rate:**

Total: 72.73%      Males: 75.03%      Females: 70.36%      Gender Parity Index: 0.94

**4.2.3 Gender Parity Index:**

Adult literacy: 0.81      Youth Literacy: 0.94

**4.2.4 Public Expenditure on Literacy and Non-Formal Education as a Percentage of Total Public Expenditure on Education:**

Public Expenditure on L/NFE is 3.70% of the education sector.

**4.3.1 Number of literacy related programs:**

GoB: 16      NGOs: 100

**4.3.2 Number of literacy programs facilitators:**

Centers: 631688      Facilitators: 649197      Supervisors: 332

**4.3.3 Percentage distribution of facilitators who attended training program:**

PLCEHD-1: 34230      PLCEHD-2: na      PLCEHD-3: na      BEHTRUWC-2: na

**4.3.4 Percent of facilitators who are teaching in local languages:**

Chittagong Hill Tracts: 3085 facilitators or 100% under ICDP

Other ethnic minorities' areas: not available

**4.3.5 Number of learners participating in literacy programs:**

At least 21 million

**4.3.6 Number of completers out of the total learners in literacy programs:**

Estimated to be 4.5 million

**4.3.7 Percent of people who passed the basic literacy test after taking part in the programs:**

Evaluation not made as yet.