

EDUCATION FOR ALL

EFA MID-DECADE ASSESSMENT, 2007

GOAL 5

GENDER PARITY AND EQUALITY

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BANGLADESH EFA MID-DECADE ASSESSMENT, 2007

MEASURING PROGRESS TOWARDS EFA GOAL 5: GENDER PARITY AND EQUALITY

- Professor Mahbuba Nasreen PhD.

Goal Statement

Measuring progress towards EFA Goal-5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015 with a focus on ensuring females' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality

Gender refers to “the roles and responsibility of men and women that are created in our families, our societies and our cultures. The concept of gender also includes the expectations held about the characteristics, attitudes and likely behaviors of women and men” (UNESCO). Gender is clearly distinguished from sex to the extent that sex describes the biological differences between men and women (which can not be changed), while gender refers to a position of equality between men and women having equal conditions for realizing their full human rights and for contributing to, and benefiting from, economic, social, cultural and political development. Gender equality is, therefore, equal valuing by society of the similarities and the differences and their roles they play (UNESCO).

Gender is an issue which runs across all the EFA Goals, and there is a risk that by featuring it in a single goal it can be isolated from others. Goal-5: Gender Parity and Equality seeks to main stream Gender Indicators throughout the six goals, ensuring that all aspects of Education For All are brought into consideration.

International Commitment of and Gender Status in Bangladesh

Article 3, section 3 of the World Declaration on Education for All states that “The most urgent priority is to ensure access to, and improve the quality of, education for females and women, and to remove every obstacle that hampers their active participation. All gender stereotyping in education should be eliminated (Jomtien 1990).

The Dakar Framework for Action Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments (adopted by the World Education Forum, Dakar, Senegal, 26-28 April 2000) is based on the most extensive evaluation of education ever undertaken, the Education for All (EFA) 2000 Assessment. Called by the World Conference of Education for All ten years earlier, the assessment produced a detailed analysis of the state of basic education around the world. Number 5 of the six specific goals of the Dakar Framework outlines that: eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015 with a focus on ensuring females' full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality. Following the World Declaration along with other international commitments Bangladesh has attempted to ensure gender equality in different arena of development. Bangladesh has enjoyed success in achieving gender parity and significantly increasing enrolment. The gender gap in primary and secondary education is closing at an impressive pace (PEDP II, DPE, MoPME, 2007; SESIP II, DSHE, MOE, 2006)¹.

¹ Baseline survey in PEDP II, DPE, MoPME, 2007; in the ADB PPTA of SESIP II (implemented as SESDP, DSHE, MOE, 2006).

However, there is still a gender gap in achieving quality in education sector. A number of factors contribute to the gender gap in achieving quality education such as extreme poverty, social customs, religious sanctions, lower socio-cultural status of females as compared to males, early marriage, insecurity specially with regard to abuse, lack of transport or communication facilities, lack of toilets, lack of drinking water facilities, insufficient number of female teachers and others. All of these factors are related to females' gender identity, which also contributes to the dropouts of females from education system (Nasreen and Tate, 2007)².

Though Bangladesh has much to be proud of in terms of educating females, it is also clear that women's development has not kept pace with social development. The gender empowerment measure of 2004 ranks Bangladesh 76th out of 78 countries in women's development, which is clearly shows that increased enrolment has contributed little towards women's empowerment.

Educating women had not always been a goal of education in Bangladesh. However, current conventions on education are focused on quality, giving females dignity, empowerment, and equality through their schooling. One of the main factors that hinders progress of female students is a lack of equal education. Many disruptions to the country, such as, famine, flood and the like have meant increase in violence against women (UNICEF, June 2006, Females' Education Network in Bangladesh).

5.1.1 Policy/ System Indicators

Legislative, policy and institutional reform exist that are in conformance with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

The Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal opportunities for all women and men in the country, which led to gradual reforms within the national policy environment towards gender equity. These are –

- Formation of National Council for Women's Development (NCWD) and National Policy for Advancement of Women (NPAW) within the framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and a follow up of Beijing Conference on Women
- Formation of National Action Plan for Women's Advancement (NAPWA) as a follow-up to the Beijing Platform of Action (PFA)
- Establishment of Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA)
- Appointment of Parliamentary Standing Committee for MoWCA.
- Constitution of Inter-ministerial Coordination and Evaluation Committee
- Institutional Review of WID Capability of Government of Bangladesh/WID Focal Points
- Constitution of WID Coordination Committees at the District and Upazilla Levels
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP).

National Council for Women's Development

² Nasreen, Mahbuba and Sean Tate. 2007. Social Inclusion: Gender and Equity in Education SWAPs in South Asia (Bangladesh Case Study), UNICEF: Dhaka, Bangladesh.

In context of CEDAW significant policy reforms include formation of a National Council for Women's Development (NCWD) in 1995, consisting of 49 members with the Prime Minister as Chairperson. The members include Ministers, Secretaries of line Ministries, representatives of civil society and women's organizations.

National Policy for the Advancement of Women

A National Policy for the Advancement of Women (NPAW) has been adopted within the framework of CEDAW and as a follow up of Beijing Conference on Women. The policy goal was to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women by empowering them so that they can be equal partners in development.

There are 14 areas in the National Policy for the advancement of Women:

- Implementation of women's human rights and basic freedom
- Elimination of all forms of discrimination against the females child and enactment of necessary new laws towards that goals
- Elimination of all forms of oppression against women
- Armed violence and women's stand
- Education and training
- Sports and culture
- Ensure women's active and equal rights in all activities of the national economy
- Alleviation of women's poverty
- Political empowerment of women
- Administrative empowerment of women
- Health and nutrition
- Housing and shelters
- Women and the mass media
- Specially distressed women

National Action Plan for Women's Advancement (NAPWA)

Fourth Five Year Plan (1991-95) incorporated the objectives of Women in Development (WID) into both micro and macro framework to bring women into the mainstream of socio-economic development. The WID strategy of the Fourth Five Year Plan stresses adoption of multi-sectoral approach to the problems of women to make them explicit within the framework of sectoral planning. The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) also incorporates 'bringing women into the mainstream of development activities', as a major goal of the government. The NAPWA has delineated concrete measures in line with the national policy for women's advancement (March 1997) and the guidelines provided in the Fifth Five Year Plan.

The Government of Bangladesh endorsed without any reservation the Platform for Action (PFA) of the Fourth World Conference for Women, which took place in Beijing in September 1995. The PFA recommends that states prepare national plans of action for the implementation of the PFA. The Government of Bangladesh prepared such an action plan supported by CIDA, Danida and UNICEF. The PFA emphasizes the strategy of mainstreaming of women's development into government policies and programs. It states, 'Government and other actors should promote an active and visible policy of mainstreaming a gender perspective in all policies and programs so that before decisions are taken, an analysis is made of their effects on women and men respectively'. All such statements clearly indicate the commitment of the Government of Bangladesh not only

towards women's development, but also viewed women's development as an integral part of the responsibilities of all line ministries. All ministries and agencies of the government have a definite responsibility for women development because women are a major part of the total population that each agency is commissioned to serve.

The Platform for Action (PFA) of the Fourth World Conference for Women recommends that States prepare national plans of action for the implementation of PFA. The PFA is structured into 12 critical areas of concern, which include: *women and poverty, women and the economy, education and training, health, violence against women, environment, media, human rights, power and decision-making, and the girl child*. Based on the 12 critical areas of concern, twelve ministries/divisions have been selected on a priority basis. Each critical area of concern necessarily involves more than one ministry and the same ministry's activities may cover several areas of concern. NGOs, human right groups, women's organizations, etc. are to be invited to contribute to the implementation of the NAPWA. To facilitate this process and to create conditions for closer collaboration, each sectoral and line ministry is required to maintain rosters of various types of NGOs, working in relevant field at different levels, including grass-roots level. In terms of implementation of 12 areas of concern, the past decade has been both a time of hope and a time of despair. In some critical areas, there are positive achievements and in some areas there are despairs.

Ministry of Women and Children Affairs

The Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA) has emerged as lead ministry to ensure gender governance. As the focal ministry for women's advancement, MoWCA has been implementing different projects as envisaged in various plans including Five Years Plans. MoWCA acts as the catalyst on the issues related to women's equality. It coordinates women related activities and policies of government ministries and departments as well as numerous women's organizations, NGOs and women activists. MoWCA has revised the Allocation of Business and Project Monitoring Format used by the Ministry of Planning. In 1990 a WID Focal Point (WIDFP) has been introduced in all ministries to ensure that gender issues are incorporated in the policies, plans and programs. It is also responsible for the implementation of NAP. MoWCA plays the facilitating role for networking of WIDFP.

Although the policy of GoB seems to ensure equality, there are some constraints to address the issue of inequality from gender perspective. Women in Bangladesh, as a group, are disadvantaged, if compared to men. They are poorer, less healthy and less educated as compared to men. Although they contribute a lot to the society, they enjoy less freedom because of their gender identity.

The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS), Bangladesh 2006 stated that as a group more than two thirds of women aged 15-24 years are illiterate. Variations between geographical regions are marked with the slum areas reporting a literacy rate of 38 percent for women in the same age group (UNICEF, 2006)³.

Nevertheless, the United Nations Human Development Report, 2004, ranked Bangladesh as 138 out of 177 countries on the Human Development Index (HDI), 110 out of 144 on the Gender-related Development Index (GDI) and 76 out of 78 on the Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM). The formation of gender policy, increasing percentage of female students' education, improved in the

³ Progotir Pathey, UNICEF, 2006

health indicators and women's employment generation are some of the issues for the basis of the UN report (Nasreen, CPE, BMZ, 2006)⁴.

Millennium Development Goal and Women

MDGs are accompanied by 16 target goals and 48 global indicators. A time has been fixed to achieve the MDG goals: indicators of 2015 are to be compared with 1990. The Declaration pledges explicitly "to combat all forms of violence against women and to implement the Convention of the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women" (CEDAW). It recognizes the importance of promoting gender equality and women's empowerment as an effective pathway to combat poverty, hunger and disease and for stimulating truly sustainable development. Bangladesh has shown improvement in context of achieving some of the MDG goals such as reducing poverty by 1% since 1990; increased enrollment in Primary and Secondary education and reducing gender gap in certain sectors. However, there are some challenges in achieving MDGs by 2015.

Challenges in achieving MDG

- Gender equality is not well reflected in the global targets and indicators as a cross cutting issue
- More far reaching obligations and commitments embodied in CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action and other globally and regionally agreed documents have been poorly represented
- There is a place secured for women's empowerment and combat gender inequality in MDG but within its broader global framework these come in a very simplified form
- Reservation on Article 2 and 16 © of CEDAW Convention.

These challenges are specifically true in achieving some of the core indicators of goal 5: Gender Parity and Equality. It is evident in the lower representation of female students completing SSC; lower female enrolment in vocational and technical education and less number of female teachers in primary, secondary and vocational institutions.

PRSP and Women's Empowerment

It has been stated earlier that at the 4th International Women's Conference special attention has been focused on gender and poverty. Gender equity has been viewed as a human rights issue, as a condition for the existence of social justice. At the Conference it has been argued that achievement of social, cultural, political and environmental protection and security for all the population application of gender perspective to poverty programs and policies is crucial.

Poverty drives women into situations where they become vulnerable to disasters, harassment and abuse, economic impoverishment of their households, environmental degradation and many more. Women are particularly affected by the feelings of 'powerlessness' due to their gender identity.

The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in Bangladesh (2005) is divided into four strategic blocks with other supporting blocks. Prior to PRSP, there was an interim Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (IPRSP). IPRSP was criticized for given less emphasizing less or overlooking the

⁴ Nasreen, Mahbuba, Country Program Evaluation (CPE) on German Assistance to Health Sector, Bangladesh, BMZ, 2006.

factors related to women's empowerment such as eliminating all forms of discrimination against women; combating violence against women; access to resources, reproductive health services, equity in wage, women's increasing participation in politics and decision making. Moreover, Government's commitment to mainstream gender has not been properly understood. In the revised PRSP some of the issues related to such limitations have been addressed, such as adopting multi-sectoral, mainstreaming approach to eliminate gender disparity, women's issues are addressed in context of agriculture, rural non-farm economy, infrastructure, energy, ICT, Education, health, environment, governance, etc. Violence against women, good governance and women's political empowerment have been given special attention.

Legal provisions to combat violence against women

Following are the laws, which are directly or indirectly involved to protect women's right and to prevent violence against them.

- Penal Code, 1860
- The Birth, Death and Marriages Registration Act, 1886
- The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929
- The Suppression of Immoral Traffic Act, 1933
- The Vagrancy Act, 1943
- Muslim Family law ordinance, 1961.
- Muslim Marriages and Divorces Registration Act, 1974
- The Children Act, 1974
- The Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980
- The Acid Crime Control Act, 2002
- Suppression of Violence Against Women and Children Act, 2000 (Amended in 2003)

Challenges

Some progress towards women's empowerment and gender equality has been achieved through introducing new laws, amendments of discriminatory laws, access to primary and secondary education, access to sanitation and some other areas that have achieved after the Beijing Platform. Issues addressed in PRSP are steps forward to empower women. However, gender parity is still a challenge in many respects as many women are not at all or less informed about such issues/actions.

It is the responsibility of state to inform women about their rights such as legal rights, reproductive rights, rights to be educated, right to maintain security, health rights, right to information, participation in governance and other vital entitlements. As women do not enjoy equal rights as those of their men counterparts, attention must be given on the issues contributing to women's inferior status. Sensitizing men and women on gender perspective is needed to face the constraints of strict gender division of labor. Lobby by NGOs, women activists and organizations are needed to implement the PRSP.

In Bangladesh violence against women is an acute social problem that has become a common and widespread issue across the country. The grim picture reflected in the daily newspapers only shows

further rise in the rate of reported cases of violence against women. Violence against women (VAW) takes place both in the domestic and work places. The legal process to combat gender based violence is complicated⁵.

The campaign against VAW as a human rights issue started from late eighties. There have been difficulties in accessing women to justice. The legal awareness training is contributing towards increasing importance to women's need at the same time. As a result the Government sought comments and inputs from human rights organizations from time to time on policies and existing laws which results in passing such legal instruments as Dowry Prohibition Act, 1980, Women and Children Prevention (Special provision) Act, 1983. Some NGOs reviewed existing laws that are discriminatory to women and have recommended some policy change. The Government has positively responded to these recommendations and enacted the Acid Crime Control Act, 2002, and amended the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act, 2000.

The Government has duly recognized the role of women organizations and NGOs in national development efforts, specially to prevent violence against women. In the post Beijing/ CEDAW period NGOs have noteworthy contributions towards advancement of women. A number of NGOs are providing legal aid, mobilising women for preventing action against dowry, wife abuse, organizing rallies, workshop, seminars demanding equitable justice to women, lobbying for revision and reformulation of existing laws, arrange rigorous campaigns against violence against women. Many marginalized women could reduce their poverty line through NGO offered micro credit program⁶.

Challenges remain

The gains against disparities are substantial; but more gains are called for in areas, such as:

- Violence against women is increasing despite efforts to curb violence.
- Implementation of Women and Children Prevention Act and all other laws designed to combat violence.
- Absence of law against domestic violence
- Absence of law against sexual harassment
- Reservation on Article 2 and 16 of CEDAW Convention.
- Perpetrators get political protection.
- Low social status of women.
- Gender insensitivity of the law enforcing agency and judicial bodies.
- Non-availability of service providers to the repressed women.
- Lack of awareness about government services and legal aid fund.

5.1.2 Percentage of the budget dedicated to gender programming within relevant Ministries

A budget is a consolidated statement of sources of fund and their allocation amongst various ministries. It has been generally perceived that the current procedure of preparation is not gender sensitive. Many projects run inefficiently due to poor allocation of budget. The NAP which cuts across various line ministries has not been followed up with policy formulation and the resources

⁵ Nasreen, Mahbuba, 2005, Monitoring State Interventions to Combat Violence Against Women, Dhaka: Oxfam, GB

⁶ Bangladesh National Women lawyers Association (BNWLA), The Alternative Report on Beijing+ 10 Implementation of PFA, 2005

allocation for targeting the desired objectives in action has been inadequate. The FMRP's report on Gender and Poverty Reporting (2005) in four line ministries indicate that the gender focal point in these ministries have not been functioning effectively due to lack of disaggregated data and insufficient reporting. Despite the information that is available, there is no owner or user of the information. It has been argued that the budget has been observed as a technical document and as such is gender neutral. It has also been reported that the lobby for women is weak. MoWCA is not efficiently staffed and the traditional bureaucratic mindset has not changed in recent years and has not incorporated the gender issue despite the approval of NAPWA. A study sponsored by MoWCA on Engineering National Budget (2001) shows that in 1988-89 only 10.7 percent of the total annual development budget was allocation were gender sensitive and 7.9 percent were gender focused. While in 1999-2000, the allocation decreased by 2.7 percent to 8.0 percent.⁷

Table 1: Percentage and Budget dedicated to gender programming within relevant Ministries: The Gender-based Distribution of Public Expenditure

Sectors	Revenue Expenditure		Development Expenditure		Total Expenditure	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Agriculture	3.37	96.63	16.83	83.17	11.70	88.30
Education	21.18	78.72	49.20	50.80	34.76	65.24
General Administration	4.40	95.60	32.70	67.10	15.50	84.50
Health and Nutrition	24.72	75.28	58.00	42.00	33.40	66.60
Total Sectors	13.66	86.34	36.91	63.09	24.21	75.79

Source: Evers, B, 2006⁸

This is evident from the Table-1 above that in context of public expenditure gender inequality is highest in the agricultural sector, followed by general administration. Despite women's valuable participation in the agricultural production, only 17 percent of Development expenditure benefits women. Women account for only 3 percent of Revenue expenditure. General administration expenditure is also highly skewed towards men and only 16 percent benefits women. In education, there is nearly gender balance in the allocation of development expenditure, it is, however, substantially imbalanced in context of Revenue expenditure. Women's lower status can be linked with the poor representation in Revenue budget.

In conclusion, it can be said that the current practice of program/ activity planning is not gender sensitive. Projects for women do not receive adequate allocation of fund. Moreover, the gender

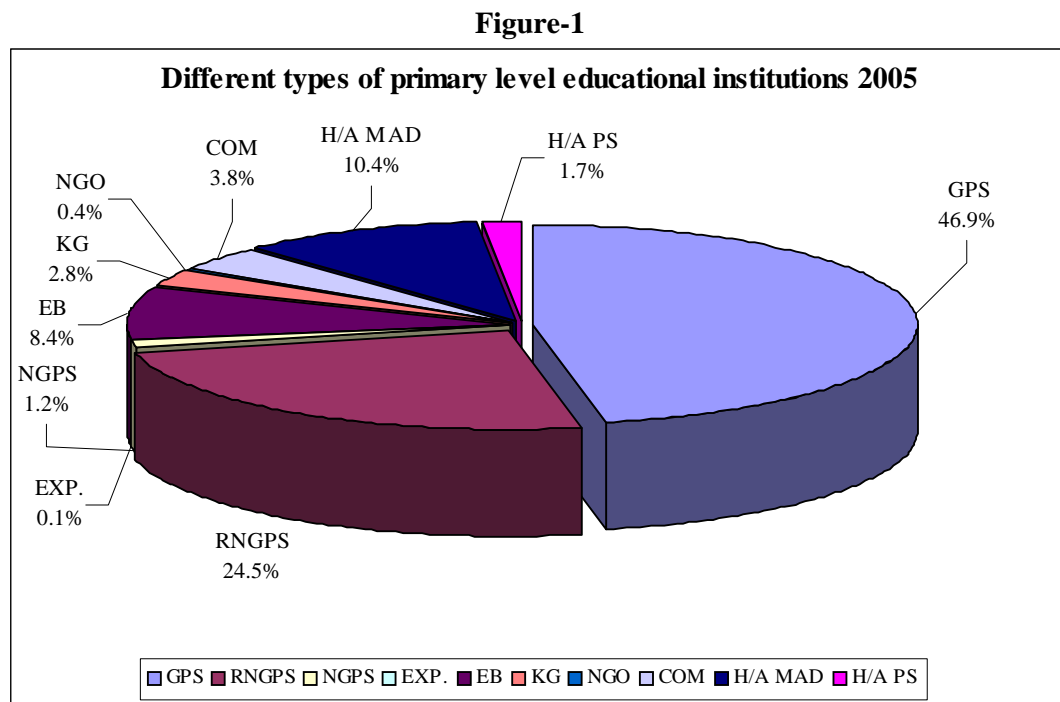
⁷ Ahmad Muzaffar and Salma Begum, 'Public Expenditure Analysis of Bangladesh' in Barbara Evers and Kaniz Siddique (eds.) Who Gets What: A Gender analysis of Public Expenditure in Bangladesh, Dhaka: UPL, 2006

⁸ Evers, Barbara, 2006, 'Key findings and Recommendations' in Barbara Evers and Kaniz Siddique (eds.) Who Gets What: A Gender analysis of Public Expenditure in Bangladesh, Dhaka: UPL, 2006.

focal point in various ministries faces problems to perform effectively due to lack of disaggregated data and insufficient reporting. It has also been reported that the lobby for women is weak. MoWCA is not sufficiently staffed and the traditional mindset of functionaries has not changed much and has not incorporated the gender issue despite the approval of NAP. In short it can be said that current policies and programs are required to be re-organized to be pro-active to gender issues.

5.1.3 Existence of Policies to Encourage Females’ Participation in School: Primary and Secondary Education

Distribution of educational institutions by types shows the distribution of different types of primary level educational institutions in terms of percent of total primary level educational institutions in the country. This figure shows that 46.9% of total primary level educational institutions in the country are Government Primary Schools, another 24.5% are Registered Non Government Primary Schools and 3.8% are Community Schools, which are all controlled by the Directorate of Primary Education⁹.



There is no discrimination against female students for enrolment in schools of all types; but some schools are specifically meant for boys and some for girls. The present trend is to open all schools for all students without any specific gender reservation.

Bangladesh has enjoyed success in achieving gender parity and significantly increasing enrolment. The gender gap in primary and secondary education is closing at an impressive pace, which is also

⁹ Baseline Survey, PEDP II, DPE, MOPME

noted in the draft Baseline Survey in PEDP-II (DPE, MoPME, 2007) and in the data from SESIP-II/ SESDP (DSHE, MOE, 2006).

Factors contributing to *narrowing gender gap in Primary Education enrolment* are enlisted below:

- Universal Primary Education: Constitutional Obligation (1973)
- Convention on the Rights of The Child 1990
- Bangladesh Primary Education (Compulsory) Act 1990
- Establishment of PMED, 1992 and later on making the Division into full Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), 2003.
- Participating in all International Initiatives on EFA
- Implementing MDGs
- Membership of E-9 Countries
- Signatory to Dakar Declaration on EFA, 2000
- Poverty Reduction Strategy for education
- Formulation of PEDP-II as a program approach initiative.

Gender Equality in Primary Education

The Government of Bangladesh has taken a good number of initiatives to ensure gender equality and primary education. Some of these initiatives, included in PEDP-II, are mentioned below:

- 60 percent post of teachers are reserved for female teachers;
- Overall percentage of female teachers in primary school has already reached to 38 percent;
- Separate toilets for female students are being constructed in primary schools;
- While students are enrolled, the names of both mother and father are registered with school management for further documentation;
- Massive social mobilization programs have been undertaken to encourage guardians to send girl child to schools;
- Present males and females ratio is 51: 49; and
- Increase in the education of females decreases the rate of early marriage.
- For payment of stipend money to the students, provision made to open the bank account in mother's name

Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II): Move towards Inclusive Education

Recently, there seems to be more emphasis placed on evaluating and promoting inclusive education initiatives in Bangladesh. An assessment of inclusive education initiatives, commissioned by UNESCO in 2006, examined their impact on inclusion. It revealed that the benefits of inclusive education have not reached all marginalized groups (including females) uniformly, and that there is a lack of reliable and consistent data on the magnitude and educational status of marginalized children. It also found that exclusion within the classroom is prevalent in the form of limited sensitivity and non-recognition of marginalized groups' needs. Finally, the assessment revealed that in Bangladesh, inclusive education as a policy, concept and practice is primarily understood as only including children with physical disabilities. The assessment did not really focus on learning achievement. An evaluation of the BEHTRUC Project, commissioned by the Government of Bangladesh, examined inclusion, educational outcomes and learning achievement, in accordance with the project objectives of inclusion and quality education. The evaluation revealed that children's retention and learning achievement was low, and that the project focused on enrolment rather than quality of education. This demonstrated that innovative interventions are needed to

address the issue of access to education by poor children, especially working children. Finally, in 2006 a study was commissioned in order to prepare a curriculum framework integrating the components of inclusive education. Inclusive education has also been incorporated as one of the major components of PEDP-II, and an Access and Inclusive Education Framework under PEDP-II has been developed (Kean, UNESCO, 2006). Since its inception PEDP II have been working towards bringing all excluded children to school through its equitable access components. The strategies under inclusive education framework so far have achieved:

- Operation of Gender Action Plan and Action Plan to Mainstream Special Needs Children
- Preparation of Inclusive Education Framework
- Action Plans for the education of Indigenous and Vulnerable Groups have been prepared and in action

A Baseline Survey has been conducted by PEDP II which for the first time collected gender data under the inclusive education framework. The data has been collected based on gender, and disaggregations by urban- rural, ethnicity and disability. The Monitoring and Evaluation Division (M& E) of the DPE has also collected data from all 64 districts on basic education parameters.¹⁰

Key Findings of Baseline Survey on Primary Education

- More than 75 % schools are controlled by the MOPME, and around 83% of total children enrolled in primary level educational institutions go to these schools. Similarly, more than 70% primary teachers are working in the MOPME controlled schools.
- Overall gross intake in the formal primary education system at the national level in the year 2005 was found to be 108% whereas net intake rate at national level in the same year was 95%. This indicates that some children getting enrolled in the formal primary education system are under- or over-aged from the beginning, but it also indicates that even if a little late, more and more parents are sending their wards to schools.
- The overall gross and net enrolment rates in the primary education system in the baseline year 2005 were found to be 94% and 87% respectively, clearly indicating a narrower gap between gross and net enrolment rates compared to the gap in gross and net intake rates as mentioned above.
- Contrary to somewhat satisfactory levels of access and participation (although the quality of access needs much improvement to reach PSQL standards), the Baseline Survey has revealed an unsatisfactory situation with regards to internal efficiency of the primary education system and level of wastage. This is indicated by the overall repetition rate of around 11%, rate of survival to grade 5 of only about 54%, a co-efficient of efficiency at merely 56% level (it goes to as low a level as 37% in one district, and it is less than 50% in ten districts in the country), and average number of years-input per graduate at 8.2 years in contrast to the ideal years-input of 5 years (with comparatively more wastage on males' side than females throughout the country– years-input per graduate is higher for males than females in almost all the districts).

¹⁰ Data on basic Education Parameters-2006, M & E division, DPE, December 2006

- This unsatisfactory efficiency of the system will be explainable if we look at some of the process indicators calculated from the baseline survey database. Some of these are: national average pupil-teacher ratio of 54:1, overall average pupil absenteeism of 23%, average number of pupils per classroom of 68 in government primary schools and 63 in non-government primary schools (overcrowded classrooms almost every where), and more than 90% schools running double-shift staggered system. This can also be attributed to the fact that there are around 28% untrained teachers working in the system.
- Total children with mild disabilities enrolled in the primary schools are 45,680 out of which 25,833 were males and 19,847 were females.
- Thirty seven percent government primary schools reported availability of separate toilets for females whereas 32% GPS reported separate toilets for males. Sixty two percent schools reported common toilets.
- Around 90% of all schools reported availability of potable water supply, majority of them tubewells. However, 56% of these tubewells were in non-working condition. Sixteen percent schools reported of not-having arsenic-free water, whereas 29% had not got the water tested.
- With reference to in-service training, only 27% of the teachers working in GPS and 30% of those working in RNGPS had received subject-based training, whereas 35% of all teachers had received training in teaching methods in classrooms.
- The head teachers are provided training in three areas, namely, school management, teacher support and supervision, and community mobilization and participation. The baseline data show that the percentage of head teachers having received training in these areas was 43%, 34%, and 30% respectively in GPS, and 38%, 38% and 27% respectively in RNGPS.

Gender Equality in Secondary Education

Although the gender gap in primary education was closing at an impressive pace, there was considerable gender gap in enrollment in age group 16-20 in 90s

A number of factors contributed to the gender gap in secondary education (discussed earlier). However, significant efforts have been made for narrowing gender gap, especially to increase females' enrolment.

Narrowing Gender Gap in Secondary Education: Historical Overview

The process of reducing gender gap in secondary education has been emphasized by both the Government of Bangladesh and development partners since mid 1980s. This is reflected in different programs and projects of which stipend programs for females are contributing most for increasing enrolment of females in secondary schools.

- Female Education Scholarship Project (FESP-1984)
- Secondary School Females' Scholarship Project (SSGSP-1990)
- Female Education Stipend Project (FESP-1990; 1992)
- Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP01993)

- Female Secondary Stipend Project (FSSP), Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP), Secondary Education Development Program (SEDP), 1994,
- SEDP, FSSAP, 1995
- SEDP, 1997
- Secondary Education Sector Development Plan (SESDP) FSSAP, SESIP, 1999
- 30% quota for women teachers in secondary schools, madrasahs and colleges, 1999

As a result of these programs females' enrolment in secondary schools has been increased from 44.94 percent in 1990 to 50.13 in 2005.

The Fifth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) incorporates bringing women into the mainstream of development activities as a major goal of the government. Reforming and restructuring the secondary education sector has been given due attention in the plan. Following are some of the major initiatives adopted by the Government:

- The Secondary Sector Improvement Project (SESIP)
- The Secondary Education Sector Development Plan (SESDP)
- The Teaching Quality Improvement Project in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP)

Initiatives to increase number of women teachers

In 1999 MoE issued 30 percent quota for women teachers in secondary schools, madrasahs and colleges, which also has an impact on females' increased enrolment. However, although the number of females has increased and the overall picture of the numbers of women teachers in rural and urban schools is an optimistic one, there are some socio-cultural constraints, which hinder to achieve the government target on having 30 percent women teachers. The number of women teachers has increased from 13.88 percent in 1995 to 20.28 percent in 2005 (BANBEIS Educational Statistics, 2006).

The recently ended project PROMOTE has achieved long term employment for 1,309 women teachers, 442 are MPO vacant posts and 867 are newly created posts. Between 1999 and 2005 PROMOTE has provided fellowships for B-Ed training to 6798 graduate women in 11 government TTCs and of these 727 have obtained B Ed 1st class. 2745 previously unqualified MPO women teachers have received fellowships from PROMOTE. A study of 134 schools in Barisal division, where a total of 250 PROMOTE fellows have been employed in the last three years, demonstrates that 18% of these schools employed a woman teacher for the first time. A further 12% schools achieved their 30% target for the first time by employing women teachers. Unfortunately all recruitment was stopped in March 2005 while the Non Government Teachers Registration Agency's organization, management and recruitment processes are finalized. The PROMOTE fellows are scattered all over Bangladesh and the status is yet to be known with regard to employment. Currently PROMOTE has an estimated 2500 women teachers still looking for work, many B Ed qualified, others waiting for B Ed results since 2004-5, when they appeared for examination. In order to ensure these B Ed women teachers are not lost to the nation there is a need to ensure that they are encouraged to take the public exam as soon as results are published and be registered onto the NTRCA.

PROMOTE has built 180 hostels for women teachers. Hostels have been completed and furnished in 90 upazilla and these provide safe and comfortable accommodation for women teachers in secondary schools, colleges as well as primary schools. However, some hostels are misused or not

fully occupied by women teachers or information regarding hostels is not available to women teachers.

It is also evident that women are having various socio-cultural obstacles including transportation and child caring problems, especially while working in the remote rural areas (Nasreen, 2007, TQI-SEP).

TQI-SEP, Inclusive Education and Gender¹¹

To increase the quality of education and to have an inclusive gender friendly secondary education system, Ministry of Education (MOE) has launched a project *Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Program* (TQI-SEP). It has been designed to address the problems of quality of teaching, equitable access under the gender and inclusive education framework, improve enrolment and students' achievement.

It has been stated by the researchers that failure in retaining females is still the most challenging issue for various education programs. It is evident that quality of secondary education, especially of females did not improve as it was expected. The lower completion rates of females in SSC are mostly related to their gender identity and to socio-cultural factors like *extreme poverty, lower socio-cultural status, early marriage, and insecurity while moving to and from school, lack of transport facilities, lack of toilets and drinking water facilities and insufficient number of women teachers*. Furthermore, there is less scope for females to participate in co-curricular activities. It is also evident that women teachers are facing gender specific problems such as no appropriate common room or separate toilets. Moreover, only a little proportion of women teachers has received training relevant to the position they hold¹². Moreover, some children are either been dropped out or remain excluded from the secondary education system for various reasons: gender identity, poverty, living in disaster prone areas, having minor problems in hearing, speaking or physically challenged. Data shows that children of these categories do not have a transition from primary to secondary (Tables- 2 & 3).

Table 2: Dropout rates in Secondary level (Grade 6 to 10)

Sex	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Female	11.98	13.24	14.95	33.82	49.06
Male	11.78	10.75	10.99	35.38	37.49

Source: BANBEIS, 2006

Table 3: Completion rates in Secondary level (Grade 6 to 10)

Sex	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Female	88.02	86.76	88.05	66.18	50.94
Male	88.22	89.25	89.07	64.62	62.51

Source: BANBEIS, 2006

The major aim of the TQI-SEP Gender Action Plan (GAP) is to minimize the gender gap in secondary education both quantitatively and of qualitatively. Through addressing a number of issues related to gender it will attempt to stimulate a significant increase in enrolment and retention of females in secondary schools so that they are capable of participating fully in economic and social development of the country.

¹¹ Nasreen, Mahbuba, May 2007, TQI-SEP Gender action Plan (working document)

¹² For more see Draft report, TA SESIP 2, ADB-BAN, 2005, Section 'Gender and Underserved Communities by Nasreen, Mahbuba.

The detailed GAP for TQI-SEP will become a tool or guide for all TQI-SEP components as well as for DSHE, MOE, Teacher Training Institutions, Schools and SMCs. Through a systematic approach, GAP will, if followed, ensure that practical and strategic needs of females and women are addressed (Table-4).

Table- 4: Number of Female Teachers

Institutions	Year 1995	Year 2005
	Female Teacher	Female Teacher
Primary	31.94	38
Secondary	13.88	20.28
Madrasah	5.96	10.55
College	18.57	19.24

Source: BANBEIS, 2006

One of the specific focus areas is '*Strengthening the capacity of schools to provide more effective learning environment for females*' of which the major outputs are:

- i) Women and girl friendly school physical infrastructure: The responsibility to make school infrastructure girl friendly is officially assigned to the Department of Public Health and Engineering (DPHE) of GoB. However, TQI-SEP Components play role as advising and monitoring body within this area.
- ii) Inclusion of information on gender issues in all written teacher training materials: Component 3 will ensure that topics on gender and inclusion are discussed during all training events arranged by TQI-SEP
- iii) Women-participation in school management committees: Quota for women in SMC is already proposed in the Government policy. Component 4 will address the issues through its activities (Output 4) 'Awareness creation in communities and stakeholders'.
- iv) Increasing the number of female teachers to 30% in secondary schools: To achieve the GoB target of the 30% quota for women teachers the combined efforts of DSHE, NTRCA, TQI-SEP and SMCs of each school are needed. To increase the number of women teachers Component 4 will:
 - a) Collect and disseminate information on accommodation for women teachers (e.g. providing information on PROMOTE hostels);
 - b) Arrange training for women teachers through setting quota for women teachers in training, giving training to women teachers in the subjects where students' performances are weak and number of women teachers is small (e.g. in English, Mathematics, Science and IT);
 - c) Make advocacy for women teachers and community awareness raising regarding the policy of recruiting 30% women teachers through media, consultation, discussion meeting, campaigning, workshop, meetings, networking/linkage with Go/NGO;
 - d) Improve institutional awareness through workshop, consultations, and training, meetings for SMC, head teachers, elected representatives, and staff of employment authorities (at school and community levels);
 - e) Increase women teachers in rural schools through getting up to date list of unemployed eligible women PROMOTE fellows, distribution of the list to

district education offices, advertise to recruit women teachers through well circulated newspapers, decentralization of interviews with selected women teachers,

- f) Develop a system for qualified women teachers to be matched with secondary school vacancies.

Teacher's Training Institutions: All components of TQI-SEP will address the gender issues at organizational level. As component 1, 2 and 3 are mostly concerned with NAEM, HSTTI and TTCs these components will consider gender as a cross cutting issue while reviewing documents, developing training materials, providing physical facilities to training institutions (e.g. to TTC, MTTI, NAEM and HSTTI), providing data (BANBIES) etc. Component 4 will assist through providing 1) guidelines; 2) GAP 3) matters to be included in training documents and other suggestions as required.

The following are some of the ongoing and planned activities based on gender action plan

- Monitoring activities of TOT (SMC, Teachers) in context of gender and equitable access
- Developing materials for IE with special focus on gender and ethnic communities
- Organizing workshops to share GAP with different stakeholders
- Follow up activities of all components to address gender issues
- Follow up that gender indicators are included and statistics are sex-disaggregated where appropriate and incorporate gender disaggregated requirements in EMIS
- Collect gender related gender disaggregated data from available sources on number of women teachers, toilets, common rooms and drinking water facilities
- Prepare gender study reports on the situation of children of ethnic communities
- Prepare gender study report to explore the social, cultural and educational barriers faced by especially able children (children with 'disabilities') in attending secondary schools, addressing gender differences and making recommendations that will better accommodate the needs of these students

Follow up PROMOTE activities include:

- Collection of data on women's employment in secondary schools through a prescribed format (in collaboration with component 3)
- Collection of data on the barriers which prevent women from fully achieving the 30% quota for the recruitment of women in vacant positions (including the recruitment process and transfer mechanisms) and suggest strategies to ensure women's full participation.

Inclusive Education in TQI-SEP

Component 4 of TQI-SEP is particularly working for Improving Equitable Access and Community Involvement through the following Subcomponents under Component 4:

Increased Access: The importance of improving teaching quality in the remote and underserved areas will be emphasized by giving priority for both initial and in-service training to teachers from those areas, including ethnic minorities. The supply of good quality teachers will be ensured by a

policy providing for additional, or enhanced, training grants and other incentives for teachers from those areas.

Three outreach stations and mobile satellite teacher resource centers will be established as pilots to improve access to in-service teacher education and the centers will have appropriate professional linkages with the nearest training institutes. The pilots will include school cluster-based distance education for teachers on professional development.

Improved Teaching and Learning for Disadvantaged Children: Special teaching and learning materials will be prepared to ensure inclusion of children from various disadvantaged groups such as females, children with disabilities ethnic minorities and those living in poverty. In the initial and in-service training for all head teachers and for district and other government officials, a training component will be developed on ways of enhancing the teaching and learning of all children including those from disadvantaged groups.

Female Teachers and Teacher Educators: The Project will build on successful interventions made by various development partners to further develop measures to encourage the participation of women teachers in secondary education.

Social Awareness and School Management Committees: Community and parent participation, together with general public awareness of educational change, will be promoted through a social awareness and information program disseminated in meetings, newspaper articles, letters to parents, and television and radio media campaigns. The program will seek to promote a genuine dialogue and build support for proposed changes in attitudes, and to encourage community and parent participation, particularly in support of teachers attempting to improve teaching quality through an inclusive approach. An awareness training program will be developed for use with SMCs, and other parent and support groups, including NGOs, to promote understanding and support for change in schools and improvement in teaching quality.

There are some other projects such as SESDP (an extension of SESIP) is also working to achieve gender parity in secondary education. However, the focus is mainly to improve the quality of secondary education such as assessing school based performance (SPBMS, SBA). Under SESDP school related information such as gender, urban- rural variation, school infrastructural facilities, geographical locations etc. have already been collected for 13,000 schools (as of October 2007) through online (out of 17,000 secondary schools). The rest of the data will also be available within a short time. Whereas BANBEIS collect data through papers and endorse centrally, the online data collected by SESDP are directly entered in the field by the Upazilla academic supervisor. However, the data does not enter the ethnicity or disability related information.

There is a strong need for collecting data on student's diversity in secondary education, as is done by PEDP II. Component 4 of TQI-SEP has already submitted proposal to collect data on students' diversity. It must be mentioned here that there is lack of cooperation not only between two ministries (MoPME and MoE) in Bangladesh; coordinated efforts are missing from within the various projects of Ministries as well.

5.1.4 Gender review of education plan including review of the curriculum, textbooks, education facilities etc.

In Bangladesh there has been a considerable gap in designing the curriculum to familiarize the stakeholders, especially the students, teachers, families, communities and others. Of these gender

issues were the most neglected areas in the curriculum. This is evident adolescent males and females are suffering from knowledge gap or having narrow understanding on the issues related to gender. Such limitations are contributing to the already existing gender discriminatory practices against females in the society. It has also been revealed that the examples cited in the texts are presenting males as strong and involved in public spheres and females as dependents and engaged in private sphere. However, there is lack of systematic study to identify these gender gaps in the curriculum, especially of secondary education.

A study (UNESCO, 2006) conducted on the review of curriculum of Primary and Secondary education from gender perspectives shows that gender imbalance is prevalence in the text book in general. Particular examples have been given from illustrations as well. Such as in the book ‘Introduction to Environment’ of Grade 5 the book is quite biased towards male (11 male as oppose to 2 illustrations on of female).

Men or males have been shown in almost all the ‘productive’ works such as: push cart, ring bell, through arrow, ride bicycle, carry post, work in forest, spray insecticide, build house, etc. The only work shown in the book done by women is lifting water. Females are also shown involved in relaxed activities such as listening to radio, watching TV or in telephone conversation. Moreover, there is no woman’s involvement in the writing, editing or publishing of most books (e.g. Lower Secondary Mathematics of Grade VII, Agricultural education of Grade IX and X).

In ‘General Science’ 12 men or males have been shown as opposed to 3 women or females in illustration. Men are shown in real life activities. It is most important to mention that a man’s body is explained as ‘human body’ and not a woman’s body to show the differences. A woman is shown as a gender patient.

This analysis identifies that illustration and examples used in the books of primary school children are not gender friendly. Through portraying gender stereotypes the text reinforce females and males to think of women as lower status than those of men. Similar tendencies are reflected in the illustrations in the books of other grades such as in the ‘General Science’ book of Grade VII and Grade VIII. The ‘Agricultural education’ of grade IX and X can be taken by both males and females as oppose to the ‘Home-economics’, which can only be taken by females. In almost all the schools only males study Agricultural education. In our FGD done in Faridpur many males and females suggested that there should be a combination of both the subjects and be studied by both females and males.

A review done by the researcher (Nasreen, 2007) on the selected text books on gender stereotypical examples other than illustrations or examples of lower secondary and secondary education is presented in Table-5.

Name of the book	Grade	Examples of gender bias towards male	Page/Chapter
Lower Secondary Mathematics	VII	Mr. Azam has distributed more property to his son than his wife and daughters	40-41
Agricultural Education	Grade IX and X	From the beginning to end the book discuss on the agricultural techniques and methods. No specific job is meant for women or men. However, in the illustrations two women are shown in milking cows and two men are shown as Veterinary doctors.	191-200
Secondary Economics	Grade IX and	Although women are contributing more in the agriculture	Chapters 4

X and industry in Bangladesh there is no discussion on and 5 women in chapter 4 and 5. In Chapter 5 discussion on industrial economy must have to give special focus on women's contributions in small and cottage industries and most importantly garment industries.

Table-5: Examples of Gender Bias

Source: Nasreen, 2007

Male's presentation in active and public roles and female's presentation in passive and domestic roles in the text books are some of the examples of reinforcing gender stereotypes which should be noted and reconstructed from gender equity perspectives.

Summary: In general gender imbalance is prevalence in the text books of primary and secondary education. Examples and illustrations of books are quite biased towards male.

Men or males have been shown in almost all the 'productive' works such as: push cart, ring bell, through arrow, ride bicycle, carry post, work in forest, spray insecticide, build house, etc. and females are shown in 'non-productive' works e.g. involved in relaxed activities such as listening to radio, watching TV or in telephone conversation. The only work shown in the book done by women is lifting water. Moreover, there is no woman's involvement in the writing, editing or publishing of most books (e.g. Lower Secondary Mathematics of Grade VII, Agricultural education of Grade IX and X).

Educational Institutions

Students of Pre-Primary, Primary, and lower Secondary study in 10 types of schools under three streams of education. Table-6 below provides total number of schools covered, teachers working therein, and pupils enrolled in those schools.

Table -6: Number of primary schools by type, teachers and enrolment in 2005

Type of School	Number of Schools	No. of Teachers		Number of students	
		Total	Female	Total	Females
Govt. Primary Schools	37672	162084	71740	9483891	4848049
Registered NGPS	19682	76566	22833	3572686	1802605
Non-registered NGPS	946	3456	2200	158059	78186
Experimental Schools	54	223	84	9828	4762
Ebtedayee Madrasahs*	6768	28294	2986	849755	401624
Kindergarten	2281	18937	10108	246286	105658
NGO Schools	289	1175	713	37690	18867
Community Schools	3027	8773	6368	425992	218939
Primary Sections of High Madrasahs*	8329	32206	2218	1146138	499649
Primary Sections of High Schools*	1353	13075	5740	295333	156098
Total:	80401	344789	124990	16225658	8134437

Source: BANBEIS

Enrolment in Schools

Baseline Survey of PEDP-II indicates that the Gross and Net Intake Rates in grade 1 and Gross and Net Enrolment Rates (grades 1 to 5) have been calculated from the enrolment figures reported in the baseline data using the above mentioned national and district level single-year age populations. Table-8 shows indicators of access and participation with Gender parity index all over the country.

Table-7: Intake and Enrolment Rates and Gender Parity Index

Statistical measures	Gross Intake Rates			Net Intake Rates			Gross Enrolment Rates			Net Enrolment Rates		
	Males	Females	Gender Parity Index (G/B)	Males	Females	Gender Parity Index (G/B)	Males	Females	Gender Parity Index (G/B)	Males	Females	Gender Parity Index (G/B)
National average:	105.9%	111.0%	1.05	93.3%	96.1%	1.03	91.2%	96.2%	1.05	87.1%	91.6%	1.05
Highest value at district level:	117.6%	118.8%	1.16	99.9%	100.0%	1.09	115.1%	113.7%	1.20	99.8%	99.9%	1.20
Lowest value at district level:	86.6%	90.0%	0.96	80.0%	86.7%	0.98	70.8%	74.8%	0.91	65.4%	70.2%	0.91
Range:	31.0%	28.8%	0.20	19.9%	13.3%	0.11	44.3%	38.9%	0.28	34.4%	29.6%	0.29
SD	7.2%	6.8%		4.1%	2.9%		9.0%	8.2%		7.1%	6.9%	

Source: Baseline Survey, PEDP-II, 2006.

Both the intake and enrolment rates are usually estimated on gross and net basis.

5.2 Core EFA MDA indicators

5.2.1 Gender Parity Index for Adult Literacy

Literacy in Bangladesh is defined as “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 individual to develop their potentials and knowledge-base and to participate fully in community affairs and wider social and developmental context (MoPME, 2006).”

Following this definition Adult Literacy Rate in Bangladesh is 54.8% with 60.31% males and 48.90% females. The ALR in urban areas is 82.18% for both sexes, with 86.33% males and 77.41% females. The ALR in rural areas is 52.40% with 57.95% males and 48.50% females. The Gender Parity Index is 0.81 (*Source: Child Education and Literacy Survey, MoPME, 2006*).

5.2.2 Gender Parity Index (GPI) for GER in ECCE

Bangladesh children of the age-group 3-5 are considered target population of ECCE. The population of this age-group has been found to be 9657954 with break-up of 4945069 males and 4712885 females. The total GER for ECCE has been found to be 11.40% in 2005 with a break-up of 11.26% males and 11.55% females. The GPI is 1.03.

5.2.3 Gender Parity Index for GIR in Primary Education

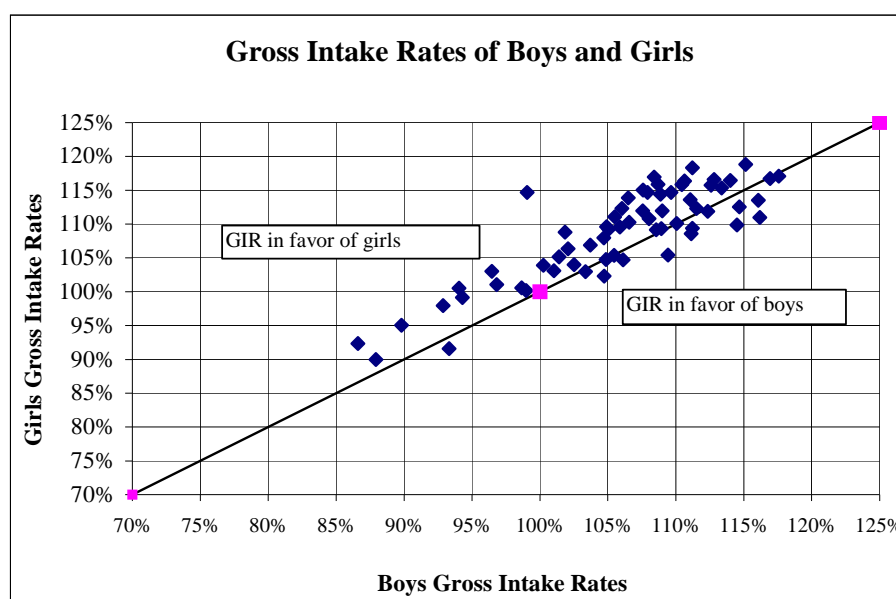
The GIR¹³ reflects the level of access to primary education. The Baseline Survey revealed overall GIR of 108.4%, (males 105.9% and females 111.0%). The GIR was higher for females than for males all over the country with the exception of few districts i.e. Panchagarh, Kurigram, Meherpur, Narail, Satkhira, Khulna, Jamalpur, Noakhali, Jhalokathi, Patuakhali, Bhola and Moulvibazar districts. Gender gap is in favor of females by 5.1% at national level.

The highest GIR for males was found in the island district of Bhola (117.6%) followed by Tangail (116.9%), Meherpur (116.2%), Satkhira (116.1%), Kurigram (114.7%), Narail (114.5%) and Gaibadha (114.0%) in descending order and the highest GIR for females was in the northern district of Thakurgaon (118.8%) followed by Rangpur (118.3%), Bhola (117.1%), Sunamgonj (116.6%) and Mymensingh (116.4%).

The GIR was the lowest for males in Gazipur and for females in Chittagong districts; it was 86.6% and 90.0% respectively.

The figure-2 compares GIR for males and females through plotting the points of intersection of the two; the closer the two rates are to each other, the closer the point of intersection will be to the diagonal (line of equal rates). If the point of intersection is away from the diagonal it indicates that the two rates are not equal. As in the figure below, GIR for males is shown on the X-axis and that for females is shown on the Y-axis, the points of intersection appearing below the diagonal line mean higher GIR for males than that for females, and vice versa. The same explanation applies to Figures 4, 5, and 6.

Figure-2



¹³ Total number of new entrants in the first grade of primary education, regardless of age, expressed as a percentage of the population at the official primary school-entrance age. (EFA, the year 2000 assessment, technical Guide, UNESCO, 1998)

Source: Baseline Survey, PEDP-II, 2006.

Disaggregation of Children from religious minorities

Table-8: Enrolment of children by religion

Religion	GPS			RNGPS		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Islam	4220089	4438112	8658201	1593889	1630907	3224796
Hinduism	396490	386859	783349	167637	161080	328717
Buddhism	35817	31277	67094	12963	11196	24159
Christianity	5067	4642	9709	2605	2436	5041
Others	1663	1592	3255	1785	1733	3518
Total	4659126	4862482	9521608	1778879	1807352	3586231

Further data collection might be needed to ascertain the rate of enrolment of and percentage of out-of school children by religious groups.

Distribution of Children by Ethnicity

Tribal children (Indigenous children)

The Table below provides enrolment of tribal children by gender in GPS and RNGPS.

Table-9: Enrolment of tribal children

Type of schools	Males	Females	Total
GPS	53068	47271	100339
RNGPS	26534	25847	52381
Total	79602	73118	152720

It seems from the data that contrary to general trend in Bangladesh of higher enrolment rates of females compared to males, lesser females are enrolled in schools compared to males in case of special needs children, be it physically disabled children, or children from religious minorities or tribal children.

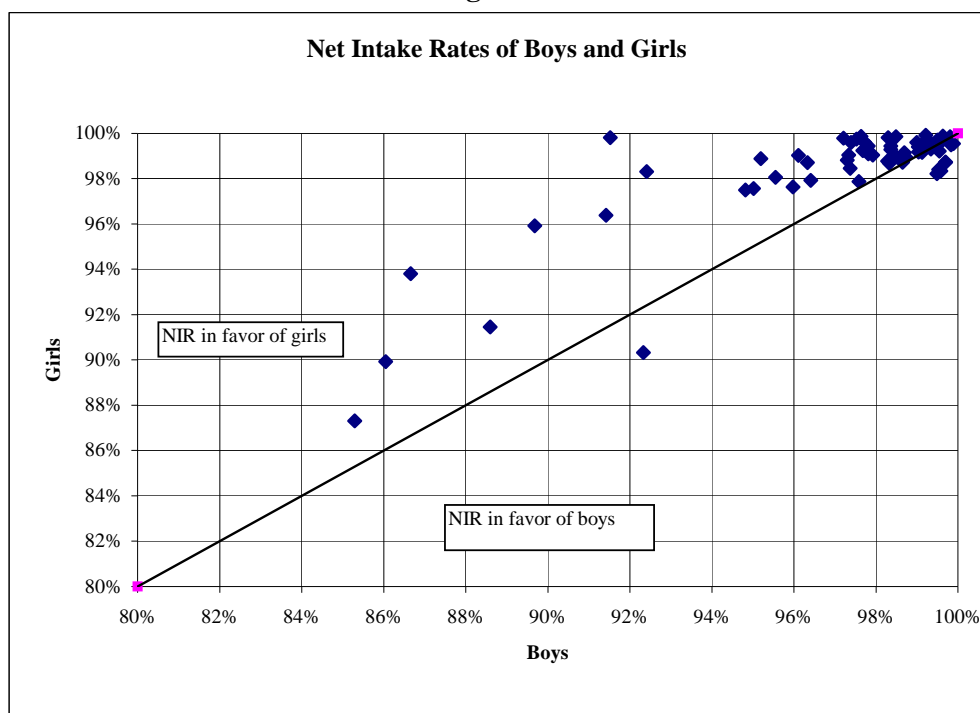
However, the percentage of female enrolment in Technical and Vocational institutions is much lower than males (14.32% in Votech Training Institutions and 10.63% in Polytechnic Institutions). Percentage of female teachers in Primary education is only about 38 (DPE) and far behind achieved the GoB target (60%). The target for recruiting female teachers in Secondary school is 30 percent whereas there only 20.28 percent female teachers have been serving the schools. The percentage of women teachers in the vocational and Technical education presents a gloomy picture: where about 10 to 11 percent of women are engaged in teaching.

5.2.4 Gender Parity Index for NIR in primary Education

NIR¹⁴ gives a more precise measurement of access to primary education of the eligible primary-age population than does GIR. This survey indicated that NIR was 94.7% (males 93.3% and Females 96.1%). Same as the GIR, the NIR is higher for females than for males all over the country, with the exception of Rangpur, Lalmonirhat, Kustia, Satkhira, and Habigonj and Moulvibazar districts. Again, the national gender gap incase of NIR was in favor of females by 2.8%.

The NIR was the highest for both males and females in Mymensingh district. It was 99.9% and 100.0% respectively and the lowest for both males and females in Gazipur district where it was 80.0% and 86.7% respectively. Figure 3 below provides a comparison of NIR for males and females

Figure-3



Source: Baseline Survey, PEDP-II, 2006.

Range of GIR was about 31.0% for males and 28.8% for females whereas the range of NIR for males was 19.9% and the range of NIR for females was 13.3%. Dispersion as measured by the standard deviation (SD) is about 7.2% for males and 6.8% for females in case of GIR, and 4.1% and 2.9% for males and females respectively in case of NIR meaning that the magnitude of difference with respect to GIR and NIR among districts is not significant.

5.2.5 Gender Parity Index for GER in Primary Education

Gross Enrolment Rate expresses the extent of participation and involvement of children in primary or secondary education, regardless of their official age. In 2005, the population of the age-group 6-

¹⁴ New entrants in the first grade of primary education who are of the official primary school-entrance age, expressed as a percentage of the population of the same age. (EFA, the year 2000 assessment, technical Guide, UNESCO, 1998)

10 years has been estimated to be 17315296. The GER has been estimated at 93.7% with break-up of 91.2% males and 96.2% females. The GPI has been 1.05.

Gender Parity Index for GER in Secondary Education

In 2005, the population of the age-group 11-15 years has been estimated to be 17341888. Out of this population 10531392 are in junior secondary and 6810496 are in secondary.

Gross Enrolment Rate for junior secondary students is 48.05% for males and 51.95% for females. The GPI is 1.08.

Gross Enrolment Rate for secondary students is 49.15% for males and 50.85% for females. The GPI is 1.03. (*Source: BANBEIS, 2006*)

5.2.6 Gender Parity Index for NER in Primary Education

The Net Enrolment Rate (NER) determines the number of official age-group children enrolled in primary education. In 2002, the NER in Bangladesh was 85.07% which rose to 87.2% in 2005. The NER is 84.6% for males and 90.1% for females with a GPI of 1.07.

Gender Parity Index for NER in Secondary Education

With regard to junior secondary education (grades 6-8) the NER for males is 48.17% and 51.83% for females with a GPI of 1.08. In case of secondary education (grades 9-10) the NER for males is 49.27% and for females 50.73% with a GPI of 1.03.

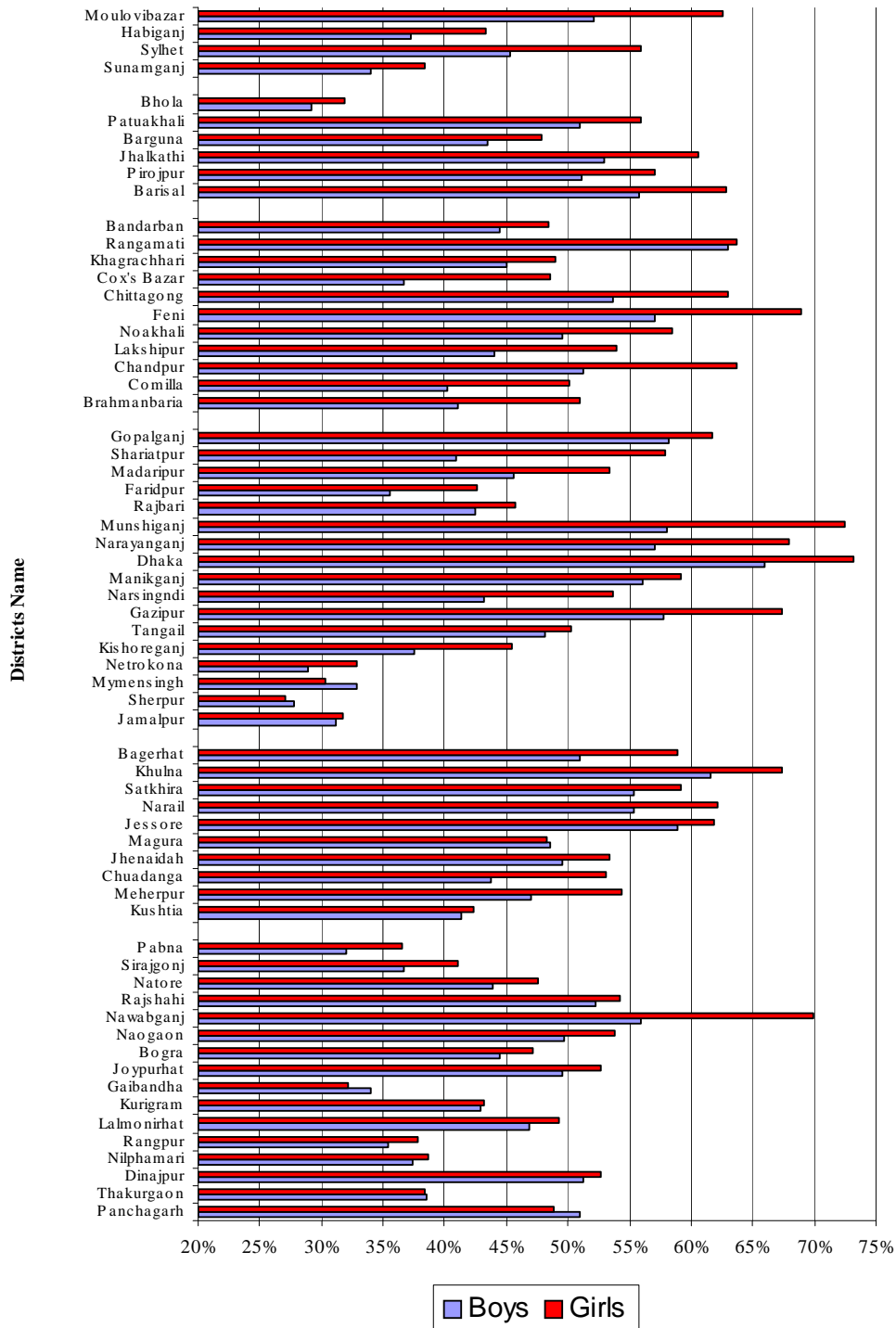
5.2.7 Gender Parity Index for Survival Rate to Grade-5

Survival rate¹⁵ to grade 5 of the primary education is of particular interest because the completion of at least four years of schooling is commonly considered a pre-requisite for a sustainable level of literacy. Figure-4 on the following page provide district-wise comparison of survival rates for males and females.

Figure-4

¹⁵ Survival rate is the percentage of a pupil cohort who enrolled in the first grade of primary education in a given school-year and who eventually reach grade 5. (EFA, the year 2000 assessment, technical Guide, UNESCO, 1998)

Districts wise Survival Rates



Source: Baseline Survey, PEDP-II, 2006.

Thus, it can be seen that overall survival rate is 53.9% (males 51.7% and females 56.1%). The survival rates are generally higher in case of female students all over the country, with the

exception of Panchagarh, Gaibandha, Sherpur and Mymensingh. It may mean that female students have higher possibilities of completion of primary cycle as compared to male students.

The highest survival rate was 69.5% in Dhaka (male students 65.9% and female students 73.1%) followed by Munshiganj (65.0%), Khulna (64.4%), Rangmati (63.3%), Feni (63.0%), Chapai Nawabganj (62.9%), Gazipur (62.5%), Narayangonj (62.4%), Jessore (60.3%) and Gopalganj (60.0%). The top ten districts with the higher survival rates included 5 districts of Dhaka division, 2 districts of Khulna division, 2 districts of Chittagong and 1 district of Rajshahi division.

The lowest survival rate was 27.1% in Sherpur district (male students 27.8 and female students 27.1%) followed by Bhola (30.5%), Netrakona (30.8%), Jamalpur (31.3%), Gaibandha (33.0%), Pabna (34.1%), Sunamgonj (35.9%), Mymensingh (35.9%), Rangpur (36.6%) and Nilphamari (38.0%) It indicates that the survival rate was lower in some river eroded and economically disadvantaged districts.

The survival rates vary between the highest 70% and the lowest 27% (range of 43%). The standard deviation (SD) shown of survival rate for male and female students was 9% and 11% respectively.

5.2.8 Gender Parity Index for Transition Rate to Secondary Education

Transition from primary education¹⁶

Although Bangladesh has successfully expanded access to the majority of their children to primary and secondary education, some children are still remaining as minority (globally, sometimes called the “last 10%”, though it might be more or fewer). They are termed as “hard to reach” category, not responsive to general “pro-poor” policies. Certainly, these children are poor, and a disproportionate number are females. However, almost without exception, they are also affected by different forms of social exclusion, for example on the basis of caste, ethnicity, language, disability or citizenship status (e.g. refugee). These are the *multiple-vulnerable* children, often living in isolated communities with languages and cultures that differ from the mainstream. Many live in severely stressed families (subject to natural disasters, people in ‘char’, ‘haor’ areas, remote rural areas, migrated to urban slums, indigenous communities) in families constantly displaced or on-the-move (subject to river erosion, *bedey* community)¹⁷, in refugee camps, as orphans in women-headed households, in other people’s families, in institutions, or alone on the street. They are almost certainly be working for survival, but many are “hidden” from public view: e.g. caring for younger siblings, working as migrants in the informal economy, working as bonded laborers, is in prison or correction homes, abused and exploited as child sex workers or domestic servants, or even trafficked across international borders. Others are disabled children, kept hidden away at home. Some may have access to the ‘special need schools’ (under the Ministry of Social Welfare). These groups are at greater risk for drop- out and non completion of education, as well as learning less, and benefiting less from education.

Students are in the transition

- Socially excluded
- With any type special needs

¹⁶ Nasreen, Mahbuba, 2007, Preparing the Skill Development Project, GoB, Technical Assistance (PPTA), Asian Development Bank TA 4799 - BAN

¹⁷ Nasreen, Mahbuba and Sean A. Tate, 2007, Social Inclusion: Gender and Equity in Educational SWAPs in South Asia: Bangladesh Case Study, UNICEF, Dhaka.

- Who are shifting their education setting
- Who are leaving educational institution
- Who are entering in the job market
- Adolescent students

Data collected by the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), shows that although there is a gradual improvement in the dropout situation, almost half of the students in primary education is still dropping out. The average dropout rate was 12 percent in each grade (Table-10).

Table-10: Dropout Rate

YEAR	DROP OUT RATE (COHORT)
1998	49.90
1999	49.60
2000	48.30
2001	47.20
2002	46.40
2003	49.40
2004	48.00

Source: DPE, MOPME, 2005.

These children are always at transition stage and vulnerable to exploitation. They are not absorbed in the skilled formal or informal labor market. Whereas in the developed world transition stage and generating employment opportunities are the responsibility of the state, in Bangladesh such doors are closed. Without any linkage with vocational training these children are growing as ‘unproductive’ citizen of the country. The primary education in Bangladesh does not provide life skill and therefore the dropout children (more form grade IV-16.1%) have to look for their own livelihood. Moreover, the entry point into the formal or informal vocational training institutions is class eight, which do not include the vulnerable children. Below is a case study of a child who is keen to have vocational training but is unable due to his poor academic level. In Kaosar’s story one can see the need of technical and vocational training in the transition period.

Kaosar Mia, a 12 years old boy, is working at an automobile workshop. His father is a rickshaw mechanic and earn very little to run a family of six: Kaosar, his mother, two sisters and a brother. All of his siblings are younger than Kaosar. His parent migrated to Dhaka from Kishoreganj before Kaosar was born. They live in Duari Para of Pallabi, Mirpur. Kaosar completed his primary education from Dhaka Ahsania Mission School but failed to enter in to secondary school as his parent could not afford it. His mother became a member of NGO, borrowed loan, which was spent on family sustenance. Kaosar had to give up the hope of further education and had to enter in the automobile workshop as helper. He gets about 10 to 15 Taka per day. “I have to do all type of works, whatever *malik* (the employer) says as I don’t have training on specific area”, Kaosar said. He wishes to get enrolment in the UCEP school, continue his study up to class eight and later get training on technical education. Seeing others in the locality, Kaosar already talked to a person at UCEP. Kaosar believes that if he “learns the work properly he will get a good job or *chakri*” with high salary. He knows that Government provided technical education is far more expensive than UCEP and that is why he is keen to have admission under UCEP, which is “free and of good quality”. (Nasreen, *Case Study*, 13 April, 07).¹⁸

¹⁸ The Baseline Survey on child workers in road transport sector in Bangladesh revealed that 85,619 child workers are engaged in road transport activity across 9,873 locations/sites across the

Transition from secondary education

Researchers¹⁹ pointed out that there is a relatively high transition rate from primary to secondary level, however, effective participation beyond initial entry into secondary schools remains low. The study identified four zones of social exclusion and vulnerability:

Zone 1: Children without Access

Zone 2: Dropout/ Push out

Zone 3: Virtual/ Silent Dropout

Zone 4: No transition to/Early Dropout from Secondary Stage

It has been pointed out that there are many reasons for no transition to or early dropout from Secondary education²⁰. Overall 11 percent more females are enrolled in the Secondary schools but more males complete the education than females. Gaps are also observed in the rural and urban areas: 43.6 percent net enrolment in the rural areas and 54.0 percent in the urban areas. Only 18 percent of the children living in urban slums are enrolled. Seventy five percent of the children of mothers, who are educated up to secondary level, are enrolled in the secondary schools whereas only 31% children of mothers with no formal education are enrolled. The reasons for not enrolment are also of many folds of which poverty (48.1%), child dislikes the school/ classroom practices (23.6%), child working outside the homes (11.1%) and disability (2.3%).

Adolescents of the developing countries who are not in school or dropout from education sector are neglected by the state. The labor markets of Bangladesh do not provide promotional opportunities for this group to transform them as human capital. As a result they hold a lower status in the society and can make a meaningful choice of career. There is an urgent need of bringing the adolescents to help their transition in a productive manner. Study²¹ shows that rural female adolescents were 9 percent less likely to be involved in employment than the urban adolescent females. These rural female adolescents remained both out of school and out of employment.

Below is a case study of a dropout girl working in a Garment factory.

Moni, a 16 years old girl, hailed from a poverty prone district Gaibandha of Northern part of Bangladesh. Her father, who was a farmer, died when she was only 7/8 years old. Her mother had to sell the property to continue the education of their two daughters. However, she (her mother) could not continue the support for

country. The sector is predominantly in urban areas and only male children are engaged in this sector (Shamim, Ishrat and Hossain, K.h. Mokaddem, The Perception of Parents towards the Education System and its relative benefits for themselves and their children and why they would consider early employment as preferred option), ILO, 2006.

¹⁹ Ahmed, Manzur et al. 2007, Access to Education in Bangladesh: Country Analytic Review of Primary Education, BRAC University, Institute of Educational Development.

²⁰ Also see Education Watch 2005, CAMPE. It has been mentioned in the report that there is lack of data on the transition or state of participation in the Secondary education.

²¹ Rahman, Mahjabeen and Munshi Sulaiman, 2006, Transition to the Labor Market: What Opportunities does it hold for Adolescents in Bangladesh?, Research and Evaluation Division, BRAC.

her daughters' education as she had to sell her land to marry off the eldest daughter and to run the family. Moni's elder sister studied up to SSC but she had to leave school while she was in grade seven. Her mother left the village to look for work at Dhaka leaving Moni with her relatives. It was difficult for her to bear the educational expenses of Moni. Moni's mother returned to home with the news that she could be involved in the garment factory as her sister's daughter was also doing the same. Currently the mother and daughter are living in the Beribadh areas of Adabar with her aunt (mother's sister). Moni does not have any training as she joined the factory from the next day she has migrated to Dhaka. She is not aware of any training. "I have not seen a single sun rise or sun set since I am in Dhaka", Moni grieved. She does not think that she could develop her career doing such a monotonous job. She believed that she can go back to 'normal' life if she gets higher level skill training. (Nasreen, Case Study, 13 April, 2007).

Challenges remain

Failure in retaining females is still the most challenging issue for various education programs. It is evident that quality of secondary education, especially of females did not improve as it was expected. The lower completion rates of females in SSC are mostly related to their gender identity and to socio-cultural factors like *extreme poverty, lower socio-cultural status, early marriage, and insecurity while moving to and from school, lack of transport facilities, lack of toilets and drinking water facilities and insufficient number of women teachers*. Furthermore, there is less scope for females to participate in co-curricular activities. It is also evident that women teachers are facing gender specific problems such as no appropriate common room or separate toilets²². Moreover, only a little proportion of women teachers has received training relevant to the position they hold²³. An integrated monitoring and Tracer study revealed that both parents and dropout females are suggesting for technical and vocational training as a part of secondary education so that students, especially females can find a meaning of being educated²⁴.

5.2.9 Percentage of Female Enrolment in Primary Education

In 2005, the total number of students in primary grades 1-5 was 16.2 million of whom 8.13 million were females, that is 50.13% (Source: Table-2, Bangladesh Educational Statistics, BANBEIS, 2006).

Percentage of Female Enrolment in Secondary Education

In 2005, the total number of students enrolled in secondary education was 7.4 million of whom 3.9 million were females, that is 52.28% (Source: Table-14, Bangladesh Educational Statistics, BANBEIS, 2006).

Percentage of Female Enrolment in Vocational and Technical Education

In 2005, total number of students enrolled in technical and vocational education institutions was 241336 of whom 62562 were females, that is, percentage of female enrolment in TVET was 25.92% (Source: Table-7, Bangladesh Educational Statistics, BANBEIS, 2006).

²² Nasreen, Mahbuba, 2007. Summery of *Gender Action Plan, Teaching Quality of Improvement of Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP)*, MOE

²³ For more see Draft report, TA SESIP 2, ADB-BAN, 2005, Section 'Gender and Underserved Communities by Nasreen, Mahbuba.

²⁴ Integrated Monitoring and Tracer Study on Female Secondary Program under Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP), 2005, Ministry of Education, Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh.

5.2.10 Percentage of Female Teachers in Primary Education

In 2005, the total number of teachers in primary level schools/ institutions was 344789 and the number of female teachers was 124990, that is 36.25% (Source: Table-1, Bangladesh Educational Statistics, BANBEIS, 2006).

Percentage of Female Teachers in Secondary Education

In 2005, the total number of teachers in junior secondary and secondary level institutions was 232929 of whom 26983, that is, female teachers were 9.65% (Source: Table-12, Bangladesh Educational Statistics, BANBEIS, 2006).

Percentage of Female Teachers in Vocational and Technical Education

In 2005, the total number of teachers in TVET institutions was 18191 of whom 3208 were females, that is, the percentage of female teachers in TVET was 17.64% (Source: Table-7, Bangladesh Educational Statistics, BANBEIS, 2006).

5.2.11 Percentage of repetition of females and males in primary and secondary levels

In 2005, the repetition rate in primary education grades was 10.5% with break-up of 10.7% males and 9.6% females (Source: Table- 3/ 4 of PEDP-II, Baseline Survey, 2006).

In 2005, the repetition rate in secondary education level was 8.14% with a break-up of 8.23% males (Source: Table-17.1, Bangladesh Educational Statistics, BANBEIS, 2006).

Additional EFA MDA Indicators

5.3 Additional Indicators

5.3.1 Percentage of female school principals/ administrators

Number of teachers in Primary Schools and other Primary level institutions is 182705, of whom 53250 or 29.1% are females. At the secondary level, the number of teachers is 238158 of whom 48290 or 20.27% are females.

It is not known how many of these female teachers are in management of schools/ institutions; but an intelligent guess is that 10% of female teachers work as Head Teachers/ Principals, and 100% of schools for female students are managed by female Head Teachers/ Principals.

5.3.2 Percentage of female staff holding senior positions within the Ministry of education

Participation of females in management and teaching jobs in MoE, MoPME, DHSE and DPE are high- it is about 20%.

5.3.3 Percentage of female teachers vis-à-vis percentage of male teachers who have participated in in-service teachers training programs

There are two categories of teachers training institutions for the teachers of primary and secondary levels. These are Primary Training Institute (PTI) for primary and Teachers Training College (TTC) for secondary teachers. All of the PTI (54) are managed by government whereas most TTC

are managed by private institutions. It is evident from Table 3 that out of 99 TTC only 14 are managed by government and the rest (85) are privately run. In both teachers training categories percentage of female is lower than male. However, the number of private TTC are high, the quality of training of most of the private TTC are questioned and is currently under investigation (TQI-SEP, 2007).

Table-11: Teachers participation in in-service teachers training

Number of teachers participated in in-service training institutes in 2005			
Institution (Number)	Female	Male	Total
Primary Training Institute (public-54)	5176 (39.74%)	7849 (60.26%)	13025
Teachers Training College (TTC for secondary; Private-85; Public-14)	7237 (39.86%)	10919 (61.14%)	18156

Source: BANBEIS, 2006

5.3.4 Gender Development Index (GDI):

Life expectancy at birth is 61 years for both men and women and, hence, the GDI is 1: 1. The Adult Literacy Rate is 54.8% with 60.31% males and 48.9% females, which indicates women's unequal access to education resulting from their lower status in the society (BBS, 2003).

5.3.5 Gender Empowerment Measure (GEM)

The gender empowerment measure of 2004 ranks Bangladesh 76th out of 78 countries in women's development, which clearly shows that increased enrolment has contributed little towards women's empowerment.

5.3.6 Percentage of schools with separate toilet facilities for females and males

It is evident from the PEDP II Baseline Survey that thirty seven percent government primary schools reported availability of separate toilets for females whereas 32% GPS reported separate toilets for males. Sixty two percent schools reported common toilets.

5.3.7 Ratio of females to males in enrolment in:

In ECCE the total number of students is 1101395 with a break-up of 544558 females and 556837 males, indicating a female to male ratio of 49: 51.

In Primary Education the total number of students is 17315296 with a break-up of 8446486 females and 8868810 males. This indicates a female to male ratio of 49:51.

In Secondary Education the total number of students is 2865863 with a break-up of 1457395 females and 1408468 males. This indicates a female to male ratio of 51: 49. The ratio of females in secondary education is higher because of incentives, like scholarship/ stipends and enactment of law against early marriage (18 years).

Literacy and Non-Formal Education

Contrary to the overall and general trend of females' enrolment in schools being higher than or at par to that of males, the enrolment of females with physical disabilities is lower than that of males both in GPS and RNGPS. Perhaps, females having physical disabilities are more unlikely to be sent to schools compared to males having similar disabilities.

Table-12: Enrolment of children having physical disabilities

Type of disability	GPS			RNGPS		
	Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total
Physical handicap	4601	3190	7791	1774	1335	3109
Poor eyesight	2364	1765	4129	795	678	1473
Short of hearing	1355	1198	2553	599	500	1099
Problem in speech	4851	3128	7979	1888	1323	3211
Intellectual/mental	5554	4965	10519	1777	1592	3369
Others	196	129	325	79	44	123
Total	18921	14375	33296	6912	5472	12384

Although the data about number of 6-10 years old children by gender and by type of physical disabilities were also collected for the catchments area of each school but the same have not been used for reporting %ages of physically disabled children enrolled or %age of physically disabled children out of school for the reasons of quality of data.

Table-13: Core EFA MDA indicators

	Indicators		
1	Gender Parity Index for: Adult Literacy	0.81	
2	Gender Parity Index for: GER in ECCE	1.02	0.98 (indigenous community)
3	Gender Parity Index for: GIR in Primary Education	1.05	
4	Gender Parity Index for: NIR in Primary Education	1.03	
5	Gender Parity Index for: ● GER in Primary Education ● GER in Secondary Education	1.05 1.03	
6	Gender Parity Index for: ● NER in Primary Education ● NER in Secondary Education	1.05 1.02	
7	Gender Parity Index for: Survival Rate to Grade 5	1.04	

8	Gender Parity Index for: Transition Rate to Secondary Education	1.08	
9	Percentage of Female enrolment in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Primary Education (%) ● Secondary Education (%) ● Vocational and Technical Education (%) 	50.13 51.35 14.32 (Votech Training Inst) 10.63 (Polytechnic)	
10	Percentage of Female teachers in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Primary Education (%) ● Secondary Education (%) ● Vocational and Technical Education (%) 	38 (DPE)/36.25 (BANBEIS) 36.25 20.28 9.47 (Votec Training Inst) 10.94 (Polytechnic)	
11	Percentage of repetition of females and males in primary and secondary levels	Females: 9; Males: 10.7 (Primary)	

Source: BANBEIS EDUCATIONAL STATISTICS, 2006; Statistical Year Book, 2002; Baseline Survey, PEDP II, MoPME, 2006

Summary

Bangladesh has enjoyed success in achieving gender parity and increasing significantly enrolment of women in primary and secondary schools. The gender gap is closing at an impressive pace. For example, the total number of female students in all types of institutions of primary education is 8134437 or 50.13% of all students.

The Baseline Survey of PEDP-II, DPE, 2005 and Bangladesh Educational Statistics, BANBEIS, 2006 show that indicators of access and participation of female students at the national level have Gross Intake Rate (GIR) of 111% as against 105.9% male students, with a Gender Parity Index (GPI) 1.05. The Net Intake Rate is also impressive - 96.1% of females as against 93.3% males, having GPI of 1.03.

The Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) of female students at the national level has been found to be an impressive 96.2% as against enrolment of 91.2% of male students, with GPI of 1.05. Net Enrolment Rate (NER) of female students is 91.6% as compared to net enrolment of 87.1% of male students, having GPI of 1.05.

Survival Rate to Grade-5 of the primary education is of particular interest because the completion of at least four years of schooling is commonly considered a pre-requisite for a sustainable level of literacy. It has been found that overall Survival Rate to Grade-5 has been 53.9% with a break-up of females at 56.1% and males at 51.7%, having a GPI of 1.09.

Transition Rate to secondary education is also in favor of achieving gender parity. For example, TR for female students is 86.6% as compared to TR for male students at 80%, having a GPI of 1.08.

Enrolment of female students in Technical and Vocational Education Training (TVET) institutions is much lower than that of male students. In Polytechnic Institutions enrolment of female students is 14.32% and that in Vocational Training Institutions is 10.36%.

Appointment of female teachers in primary, secondary, and vocational and technical institutions is not contributive to gender parity. For example, in primary education, secondary education, and

vocational and technical education, female teachers are 38/ 36.25%, 20.28%, 9.47% and 10.94% respectively.

Bangladesh has been trying to ensure gender equality in different sectors of development since several World Declarations and International commitments. The result of such attempts has been reflected in achieving gender parity in education, especially in primary and secondary education. However, gender gap is still observed in providing quality education to females. Researchers pointed out several factors, such as extreme poverty, lower socio-cultural status of females than males, early marriage, insecurity, lack of transport or communication facilities, lack of toilets and drinking water facilities, insufficient number of female teachers and others, which has been contributed to such gender gap in achieving quality education. These factors are related to females' gender identity, which also contributes to the dropouts of females from education system.

The constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal opportunities for all women and men in the country. Since then there have been gradual reforms within the national policy environment towards gender equity. The specific policies are: Formation of National Council for Women's Development (NCWD) and National Policy for Advancement of Women (NPAW) within the framework of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and a follow up of Beijing Conference on Women; National Action Plan (NAP) as a follow-up to the Beijing Platform of Action (PFA); Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (MoWCA); Parliamentary Standing Committee for MoWCA; Inter-ministerial Coordination and Evaluation Committee; The Institutional Review of WID Capability of Government of Bangladesh/WID Focal Points; WID Coordination Committees at the District and Upazila Levels; The Fifth Five-Year Plan (1997-2002); Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Bangladesh has also ratified CEDAW with reservation on two of its article (Article 2 and Article 16 ©. Although there are reservations Bangladesh has adopted different policies and taken some actions towards achieving CEDAW goals.

Significant policy reforms in context of CEDAW have been done for achieving gender equality such as formation of National Council for Women's Development (NCWD). NCWD consists of 49 members and Prime Minister as the Chairperson, the National Council for Women's Development (NCWD) was established in 1995. The members included Ministers, Secretaries of different Ministries, representatives of civil society and women's organizations. Another strategy is adoption of National Policy for the Advancement of Women (NPAW). The National Policy for the Advancement of Women had been adopted within the framework of CEDAW and as a follow up of Beijing Conference on Women. The policy goal was to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women by empowering them so that they can be equal partners in development.

There is an inter-Ministerial Coordination and Evaluation Committee and women in Development Coordination committees at the District and Upazilla levels which can monitor and assess Gender related activities, encompassing various sectoral programs.

The National Council for Women's Development is the most appropriate institution for policy formulation across Ministries/ agencies with regard to gender issues and work as coordination agency.

The NAP of MoWCA and that of MoPME are two different instruments, and it is necessary to integrate the two as national NAP encompassing ministerial bifurcations. These could be combined as EFA NAP, incorporating all NAPs into MoPME's NAP-II.

There are 14 areas in the National Policy for the advancement of Women: Implementation of women's human rights and basic freedom; Elimination of all forms of discrimination against the females child and enactment of necessary new laws towards that goals; Elimination of all forms of oppression against women; Armed violence and women's stand; Education and training; Sports and culture; Ensure women's active and equal rights in all activities of the national economy; Alleviation of women's poverty; Political empowerment of women; Administrative empowerment of women; Health and nutrition; Housing and shelters; Women and the mass media and Specially distressed women. There are also laws to combat violence against women such as Dowry Prohibition Act 1980, Women and Children Prevention (Special provision) Act 1983 and so on. Some NGOs reviewed existing laws that are discriminatory to women and have made recommendation to change the policy. As a result government enacted laws against acid throwing (The Acid Crime Control Act 2002) and amended the Women and Children Repression Prevention Act 2000.

Some progress towards women's empowerment and gender equality has been achieved in context of access to primary and secondary education (PEDP II, Stipend Programs, TQI-SEP, Inclusive Education) access to sanitation, introducing new laws, amendments of discriminatory laws and some other areas has been achieved after the Beijing Platform. Issues addressed in PRSP are steps forward to empower women and reinforce gender parity.

In context of core EFA MDA indicators it is evident that gender parity has been achieved especially in Gross Enrolment Rate in ECCE (1.02), Gross Intake Rate (1.05) and Net Intake Rate (1.03) in Primary education, Gross and Net Enrolment Rate in both Primary (1.05) and Secondary (1.02) education. Data also shows that Survival Rate to Grade 5 (1.04) and Transition Rate to Secondary Education (1.08) are also in favour of achieving gender parity. In Secondary education transition rate of females is much higher than males due to policy initiatives taken by the GoB and Development partners, for example, introduction of females stipend program. This is also evident in context of percentage of females' enrolment in Secondary education (51.35%). The repetition of females and males in primary level is 9 for females and about 11 (10.7) for males.

However, the percentage of female enrolment in Technical and Vocational institutions is much lower than males (14.32% in Votech Training Institutions and 10.63% in Polytechnic Institutions). Percentage of female teachers in Primary education is only about 38 (DPE) and far behind achieved the GoB target (60%). The target for recruiting female teachers in Secondary school is 30 percent whereas there only 20.28 percent female teachers have been serving the schools. The percentage of women teachers in the vocational and Technical education presents a gloomy picture: where about 10 to 11 percent of women are engaged in teaching.

The present policies and programs thereunder are not gender sensitive towards gender parity and equality. These need to be re-organized to be pro-active to gender issues.

Budget for gender-specific activities of the government is not noteworthy, except in education sector, while the national inter-sectoral distribution of expenditure is 24.21% is for females as against 75.79% for males' development expenditure on education is 49.20% for females as against 50.80% for males.

Gender-gap in education enrolment is narrowing because of policy encompassing female students for participation. The present ratio of male and female students is 51: 49. The overall percentage of female teachers is 38%, as against 60% of posts of all teachers is reserved for female teachers.

The Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II) has placed extra emphasis on Inclusive Education in favor of the disadvantaged segment of population.

The Ministry of Education has launched a project, Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Program (TQ- SEP), addressing problems of quality teaching, equitable access under the gender and inclusive education framework, improve enrolment and students' achievement.

It can be concluded that although some progress towards women's empowerment and gender equality has been achieved after the Beijing Platform, gender parity is still a challenge in many respects due to weak implementation, abuse and misuse of laws and women's lower socio-economic status in society.

GOAL 5: GENDER PARITY AND EQUALITY AT A GLANCE

1. Gender Parity and Equality runs across main stream Gender Indicators throughout the six goals of FEA.
2. Constitution of Bangladesh guarantees equal opportunities for all men and women.
3. Bangladesh is signatory of CEDAW.
4. The Ministry of Women and Children's Affairs articulates interests of women.
5. Percentage and budget dedicated to gender programming 24.21% for women
6. Gender Equality in Primary Education

i) Student enrolment	GPI	1.0
ii) Quota for Women Teachers		60%
iii) Present Ratio of teachers	Males	51%
	Females	49%
7. Gender Equality in Secondary Education

i) Student enrolment	GPI	1.09
ii) Teacher employment	GPI	0.25
8. Gender review of education plan
(review of curriculum, textbooks, facilities)

Gender bias towards males		
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9. Gender Development Index

i) Life expectancy at birth	GDI	1: 1
ii) Adult Literacy Rate	GPI	0.81
10. Gender Empowerment Measure

Bangladesh ranks 76 th out of 78 countries		
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11. Ratio of females to males in enrolment

ECCE		49: 51
Primary Education		49: 51
Secondary Education		51: 49
12. Gender Parity Index
(ECCE, Primary, Secondary, Vocational)

On average		1.03
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