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Principles and general objectives of education

Article 8 of the Constitution of 1972 (last amended in 2004) stipulates that the principles of absolute trust and faith in the Almighty Allah, nationalism, democracy and socialism meaning economic and social justice, together with the principles derived from them, shall constitute the fundamental principles of state policy. The Republic shall be a democracy in which fundamental human rights and freedoms and respect for the dignity and worth of the human person shall be guaranteed and in which effective participation by the people through their elected representatives in administration at all levels shall be ensured (Article 11). Article 17, which relates to education, specifies that the State shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of: (a) establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law; (b) relating education to the needs of society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to serve those needs; (c) removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law. The State shall endeavour to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens and shall adopt effective measures to remove social and economic inequality, and to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among citizens and of opportunities in order to attain a uniform level of economic development throughout the Republic (Article 19).

The Vision 2021 is to build Bangladesh into a resilient, productive, innovative, and prosperous nation with a caring society consisting of healthy, happy, and well-educated people. It is built on the enduring attributes of self-reliance, respect, tolerance, equity, and integrity. In line with constitutional obligations and international human rights commitments, society in 2021 shall be one in which (i) every citizen has equal opportunities to achieve his/her fullest potential; (ii) all citizens enjoy a quality of life commensurate with the national development stage where quality health care and adequate nutrition are assured for all; (iii) all citizens are assured of a modern, sound, and relevant education tailored to meet the human resource needs of a modern, progressive, and technologically advancing nation; (iv) sustainable development is ensured, along with optimal use of all resources; (v) there is respect for the principles of democracy, rule of law, and human rights, ensuring gender equality, the rights of indigenous populations and of all the other disadvantaged people including persons with disability and autism; and (vii) the diversity and creativity of all people are valued and nurtured. (Government of Bangladesh, 2010).

The development priorities of the Perspective Plan 2010-2021 are: ensuring effective governance; promoting an innovative people for digital Bangladesh; creating a caring society; addressing globalization and regional cooperation challenges; ensuring broad-based growth and food security; providing energy security for development and welfare; building a sound infrastructure; and mitigating the impacts of climate change. In terms of education, training and skills development, the Vision 2021 is “an informed, knowledge-based, technologically-oriented, gender equitable



learning system for all has been established. Every school age boy and girl has access to primary level institutions with the necessary facilities; they also continue in school to receive quality education. All opportunities are provided to pre-primary children, young person; and adults to meet their learning needs in a competitive world, both in formal and non-formal subsectors of education, without any discrimination based on gender, income, ethnicity, livelihood, geographical location, disability, and autism. (*Idib.*).

Laws and other basic regulations concerning education

The **Constitution** of the Republic of Bangladesh (1972) provides for establishing a uniform, mass-oriented, universal system of education, and extending free and compulsory education to all children. It also provides for relating education to the needs of society, producing trained and motivated citizens to serve the needs of society and removing illiteracy. According to the Constitution, the official language is Bangla (sometimes called Bengali).

Under the **Primary Schools (Taking Over) Act** of 1974 the government nationalized primary schools with effect from October 1973 and made the teachers government employees.

The Private Universities Act No. 34 of 1992 regulated the establishment of private universities. The new **Private Universities Act**, promulgated in July 2010, envisages the establishment of an independent National Accreditation Council. The Open University was created under the **Act No. 38** of 1992.

The National Curriculum and Textbook Board was established under the **Ordinance No. LVII** of 2 October 1983.

Primary education has been made compulsory for children aged 6-10 years by the **Compulsory Primary Education Act** of 1990, which stipulates that unless there is a valid ground, the guardian of each child living in an area where primary education has been made compulsory shall have his/her child admitted to the nearest primary education institution located in that area. The Act was implemented in 1992 on a limited scale and has been extended throughout the country since 1993. Along with the introduction of CPE, a strong social mobilization process has been initiated to create awareness and elicit participation of all.

Administration and management of the education system

The principal management institutions in the education sector are: the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education; the Ministry of Education; the Directorate of Primary Education; the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education; the Directorate of Technical Education; the Directorate of Inspection and Audit; the National Curriculum and Textbook Board; the Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education; the Madrasah Education Board; the Technical Education Board, the National Academy for Primary Education; the National Academy for Educational Management; the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics; the Facilities Department; and the University Grants Commission.



The **Ministry of Education** (MOE) has overall responsibility for planning, guiding and controlling the development of education. There is a growing feeling among educators that, as the principal policy-making body in education, the MOE should focus its efforts on developing policies and programmes rather than routine matters. While post-primary and post-secondary education are under the MOE, the Primary and Mass Education Division was established in August 1992 and upgraded as a **Ministry of Primary and Mass Education** in 2003. The Ministry is responsible for policy formulation, planning, evaluation and execution of plans and initiating legislative measures relating to primary and mass education, as well as non-formal education. Mass education in Bangladesh refers to non-formal education for out-of-school children, youth and adults in basic literacy, simple numeracy and life skills.

At the central level, the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) executes the policy decisions and controls, coordinates and regulates the field administration of primary education. Under the DPE there are five divisional offices headed by deputy directors, sixty-four **District Offices** headed by district primary education officers, and 481 **Thana (Upazila) Education Offices** headed by *thana* (small administrative unit, one step lower than the district, now called *upazila*) education officers. The Directorate of Non-formal Education executes the programmes in this area. It controls and regulates the field level administration of non-formal education.

The **Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education** (DSHE), under MOE, is the principal agency for implementing government policies in secondary education. It has under its control secondary schools (including junior high schools and colleges—intermediate, degree and madrasah). In recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of educational institutions. The increasing number of institutions not only creates pressure on the public exchequer but also brings in its wake administrative and management problems and increased workload. In addition, problems have resulted from the nationalization of a number of secondary schools and colleges. The country has been divided into nine educational regions, with Regional Offices of DSHE, for effective management of secondary education at the field level. Under these regions there are 64 District Education Officers (DEOs) and an equal number of Assistant District Education Officers (ADEOs) to monitor and supervise the secondary schools. Although all institutions at the secondary level are under the responsibility of DSHE, responsibility for actual implementation and management lies with the governmental bodies at various levels, depending on the level of secondary education. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2007).

The **National Academy for Primary Education** (NAPE) is the principal institution of primary teacher education, conducting training and research in the field of primary education. NAPE also looks after the academic programmes of the Primary Training Institutes (PTIs) and conducts the final examination for the one-year certificate in education course for primary school teachers. The PTIs also conduct action research. The **National Academy for Educational Management** is responsible for in-service training of senior administrators and teachers at the secondary and higher secondary levels.

The **National Curriculum and Textbook Board** (NCTB) is responsible for curriculum development, printing and supply of all textbooks for the primary, secondary and higher secondary levels. The **Bangladesh Bureau of Educational**



Information and Statistics (BANBEIS) is responsible for the collection, compilation, publication and dissemination of information and education statistics at all levels.

The seven **Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE)** independently administer the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and the Higher School Certificate (HSC) examinations in their own regions. The **Madrasah Education Board** administers the Madrasah system of education.

The Madrasah system represents an alternative to government education. The origin of the Madrasah system can be traced back to 1780, when the Calcutta Madrasah (the first government college in the Indian sub-continent) was set up. The original purpose of establishing the Madrasah was to produce officials well-versed in Islamic laws. Over the years the number of madrasahs operating as religious institutions increased, although the original purpose of establishing them has been lost.

Madrasah education, as a parallel system, has drawn considerable attention in recent years. The number of madrasah has grown as a result of increased government salary subsidies to non-government institutions. The Ministry of Education issued circulars equating the *Ebtedayee*, *Dhakil*, and *Alim* madrasah levels with the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels, respectively. It is possible for a student passing the *Dakhil* Examination of the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board to be admitted to the HSC course in a college. Similarly, a student passing the *Alim* Examination with science subjects can pass an admission test to be admitted to an agricultural college, a medical college, or an institute of technology. The Madrasah system includes two additional stages: *Fazil* (two-year course, equivalent to bachelor's degree level) and *Kamil* (two-year course, equivalent to master's degree level).

The **Technical Education Board** has full academic control over the technical and vocational education institutions. It organizes, supervises, regulates, controls and develops technical and vocational education (TVE). The Board develops and prescribes TVE courses and curricula; arranges for development of learning materials; grants recognition to educational institutions offering its courses; prescribes the conditions governing admission of students; monitors the teaching and learning activities; holds, conducts and regulates examination of affiliated institutions; and awards diplomas and certificates to the successful candidates. The Institute of Marine Technology and Technical Training Centres, run by the Ministry of Manpower (now the Ministry of Labour and Employment), are affiliated to the Board for academic purposes. Public examinations are held for various types of courses under the auspices of the Board. The Ministry of Agriculture operates Agricultural Training Institutes also affiliated to the Board.

Traditionally, the management role in education has been performed exclusively by the public sector. However, since 97% of the secondary schools are privately managed non-governmental institutions, their involvement in planning, execution and management has to be secured, in order to ensure their participation in the development efforts.

Structure and organization of the education system

Bangladesh: structure of the education system

THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE OF BANGLADESH

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

Source: Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics.

Pre-school education

Preschool education is available mostly in the cities and some of the district headquarters. Preschool education caters to children aged 3-5 and is not part of the formal education system.

Primary education

Primary education extends over a five-year period (grades 1 to 5) and the admission age is 6. Primary education is tuition-free and compulsory as of 1992. A school-leaving public examination at the end of grade 5 has been introduced in 2006 on a

pilot basis. The Education Policy 2010 envisages the introduction of primary (basic) education from grade 1 to grade 8 (e.g. incorporating junior secondary education).

Secondary education

Secondary education consists of three stages: junior secondary (grades 6 to 8), secondary (grades 9 and 10) and higher secondary (grades 11 and 12). Secondary education (grades 6-10) is offered in junior secondary schools and high schools; higher secondary (grades 11 and 12) is offered in intermediate colleges and intermediate sections of degree colleges. Starting from grade 9, in general secondary education there are three streams: humanities, science and business education. The first public examination at the end of grade 10, the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination, must be passed by all candidates seeking to move to the two-year higher secondary level. At the end of grade 12 students sit the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination; the HSC is required for admission to first-degree courses and appointment to secretarial positions in government services. There is a separate stream for imparting technical and vocational education and training. After completing the junior secondary level (grade 8), students may enter into vocational training institutes for two-year SSC (vocational/science) courses; holders of SSC vocational/SSC (science) may enter into vocational training institutes and polytechnic institutes offering two-year HSC (vocational) or three-year Diploma in Engineering courses. The Madrasah education system functions parallel to the government system, with similar core courses as in the general stream (primary, secondary and post-secondary) but with additional emphasis on religious studies. It is possible for a student passing the *Dakhil* Examination of the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board to be admitted to the HSC course in a college.

Higher education

Higher education is offered in the universities (both public and private) and post-HSC level colleges and institutes of diversified studies in professional, technical, technological and other special types of education. HSC holders are qualified to enrol in three-year degree pass programmes while for honours, they enrol in four-year bachelor's degree (honours) programmes in degree-level colleges or universities (bachelor's degree programmes in the field of architecture, dentistry, medicine and traditional medicine last five years). For SSC holders, programmes leading to a professional diploma (in the fields of agriculture, civil engineering, computer science, food science, etc.) normally take four years to complete; diploma holders can enroll in one-year programmes leading to the diploma in technical teacher education. After successful completion of a pass/honours bachelor's degree, students can pursue a master's degree. Programmes leading to the award of a master's are of one year duration for bachelor's degree (honours) holders and two years for pass bachelor's degree holders. For those students pursuing a M.Phil and Ph.D in selected disciplines or areas of specialization, the duration is of two years for M.Phil and three to four years for the doctoral degree. The minimum requirement for admission to the higher level of Madrasah education is the *Alim* (equivalent to HSC) certificate. *Alim* pass students are qualified to enroll in two-year *Fazil* education. This level of education is imparted in *Fazil* madrasah and in *Fazil*-level of *Kamil* madrasah. After the successful completion of the *Fazil* degree students can enrol in two-year *Kamil*-level education. There are four streams of courses in *Kamil*-level education (*hadis*, *tafsir*, *fiqh* and



adab). The Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board administers the examinations and awards certificates.

The school year consists of 37 (six-day) weeks on the average. According to a study conducted on a sample of primary schools and commissioned by USAID, 238 days of school were scheduled in 2003. The schools operate on a six-day week (Saturday-Thursday) and are off on Friday, a day of religious observance for the Muslim population. It is difficult to estimate the number of days schools do and do not operate with accuracy. However, it is clear that all of the schools visited did not operate for all 238 days in 2003 for a variety of reasons (including 'disasters' during three-month monsoon season). For example, the academic year commences slowly as educational authorities and school personnel organize the demanding logistics of registering students, receiving and distributing materials, and understanding new government policies or programmes. The end of the school year is also characterized by very little—if any—instructional contact time. Therefore, at least two months or 45 days (nearly 20%) of potential instructional contact time is allocated to primarily administrative purposes. The study estimated that the best case school is likely to routinely lose 45 days or 19% of its scheduled school days merely to institutional demands, while the worst case school, beset by flooding, is likely to lose 130 days or 55% of the scheduled days. (CAI, 2004).

The educational process

Pre-primary education

Preschool education (baby class, playgroup, KG-1, KG-2) is for children aged 3-5. The government is committed to improving child health care, nutrition, living environment, etc. Most of these activities are carried out under the supervision of the government agencies through various ministries; non-government and community service organizations are also involved in the delivery of these services.

In Bangladesh, the concept of early childhood development (ECD) and the need for early childhood education (ECE) as well as other supportive activities for the development of the child has not been well established. There are many primary schools that have 'baby' (or preschool) classes and many privately-owned kindergartens that have playgroup/nursery group sections, but their impact on the children's development has not been studied in details. The 'baby class' is a pre-primary education arrangement attached to primary school. Although this arrangement is recognized by the government, this type of education is not properly administered, nor is systematically supervised. Teaching and learning materials are not designed through any scientific process. This is a sort of loose form of education arrangement, helping children become school-oriented. The child development focus is not obvious in this arrangement. Thus, the existence of the 'baby class' as a form of pre-primary education is the weakest part of the education system. At its best, it is an activity for familiarizing children with schooling; but its weakness is that it is not carefully managed. Moreover, in its nature it is not oriented toward child development in the true sense of the term. (Government of Bangladesh, 1999).



ECE/ECD has been identified as one of the major intervention in the National Plan of Action (NPA) approved by the government in June 2005. There are four ministries that provide early childhood services: the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (baby class in primary schools and playgroups); the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs (day care centers and pre-primary education); the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (immunization and nutrition); and the Ministry of Social Welfare (orphanage and children's home). Recently the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs has made an effort to mobilize actors across different sectors in the government as well as actors in the field to implement the Shishu Academy, which runs integrated pre-primary education for 4-5-year-old children.

In the light of experience during the period 1995-2003, ECCE programmes and activities under the national policy can be categorized into three groups, namely: school-based pre-primary education (play groups/baby class) run by NGOs with approval of government and assistance of national and international donors; informal 'baby classes' in government primary schools/kindergartens and religious schools; limited home- and community-based ECD programmes managed by families, communities, and NGOs. In 2005, the official age-group population eligible for enrolment (3-5 years) was 9.67 million and the total enrolment was 1.1 million. The percentage of new entrants to primary grade 1 who have attended some form of organized ECCE programme has been found to be 37.57% of all new entrants (36.34% for boys and 38.82% for girls). Primary (and pre-primary) school teachers are supposed to have one-year certificate in education (C-in-Ed) that prepares them in pedagogical discipline, before taking classes independently. A baseline survey (June 2006) revealed that 71.9% of teachers (74.8% male and 67.2% female teachers) at government primary schools and registered non-government primary schools had a C-in-Ed. (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2008).

Until recently, ECCE has been provided by a rich array of organizations without a strong overarching framework. The Operational Framework for Pre-primary Education, developed by a coalition of stakeholders under the guidance of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MPME) and released in March 2008, marks the beginning of a common vision and shared standards. (UNESCO Dhaka, 2008).

Pre-primary education has been defined as the developmental and educational support provided to the child in the age range of 3 to less than 6 years in order to ensure the child's right to protection, care, survival and preparation for school education. For effective implementation of the pre-primary education programme throughout the country, the MPME has taken an initiative to bring all pre-primary education activities under a framework. The specific objective of pre-primary education is to provide all necessary care and education to young children for their development through physical, cognitive, linguistic, social and emotional growth. The operational framework will provide a matrix of developmental domain, curricular framework and operational strategies with a future direction. The MPME will act as focal point for pre-primary education and coordinate the activities of all stakeholders and service providers and set standards for child-friendly facilities and teaching and learning activities. Pre-primary education centres will be established either within the primary schools or in separate houses adjacent to the existing primary schools. The pre-primary education centre will be managed by a separate centre management committee. (MPME, 2008).



The bulk of ECCE activities at present (2008) consist of pre-school education programmes of NGOs supported by government and with funding assistance from development partners. They follow varying objectives, methodology and curricula with inadequate coordination. They do not necessarily focus on children with special needs or in highly disadvantaged circumstances. The teacher/facilitator tasks are defined differently in different projects and are not comparable. A framework for planning, designing, coordinating and managing the pre-primary activities nationwide is necessary for developing the programme, ensuring the learning outcomes and extending its reach to serve eventually all children. On the basis of the Operational Framework for Pre-primary Education of 2008, the overall goal of pre-primary education is to fulfil the right to children's education by ensuring their development and preparation for entry into primary education, enabling them to get benefit fully from educational opportunities and to grow and develop in order to realize their human potential. Pre-primary education programmes will serve children aged 5 to below 6 years all over Bangladesh with priority given to children of poor families, children from disadvantaged communities, children of ethnic minorities, children with various disabilities, and children living in geographically remote areas. (*Ibid.*).

In terms of learning outcomes, participant children in the pre-primary education, on completing the course, will be able to: say own name, name of parents, address of family and own date of birth; say names and function of different parts of the body, follow social practices and engage in appropriate social interaction with relatives/friends; recite children's rhymes, sing children's songs, national anthem and tell stories: categorize similar objects/articles and differentiate dissimilar objects/articles; draw and name circle, triangle, rectangle; recognize and tell the names and functions of natural objects around them; show creativity by making objects, toys/ play materials by self choice; count, recognize, read and write numbers from 0-20; do simple addition and subtraction (with numbers below 10); recognize, read and write Bangla letters; read and write words composed of two Bangla letters; describe events from picture; have an expressive vocabulary of words presented in grade 1 reader; and recognise or say opposite word for known word. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) will develop a core pre-primary curriculum. During this process, all existing materials for preschool and school readiness programmes including the primer developed by NCTB in 1995 will be reviewed. NCTB would develop the pre-primary curriculum in consultation with service-providing and academic organizations which have been engaged in preparing ECD and pre-primary learning materials. Priority will be accorded to expanding coverage following the present pattern of the one year course; daily 2 to 3 hours for 5-6 days a week. The first three months should be devoted to pre- reading, pre-writing and pre-mathematics only; introduction of Bangla letters, writing and reading would be from the fourth month onwards, and mathematics from the fifth month. Ideally, there should be no more than 20-30 children in each class with preferably two teachers/facilitators. Participatory methods using standard tools (to be developed) should be used for assessment of learning achievements. These will be based on existing methods and tools in use in different programmes, which will be reviewed and further developed as appropriate. Community participation will be encouraged through monthly parental meetings where other interested community members may also be present. In 2005 over 25,000 pre-primary classes run by the Ministry of Women and Children Affairs, the Ministry of Hill Tracts Affairs, the Ministry of Religious Affairs and NGOs like BRAC, Plan Bangladesh, and Save the Children



USA were serving 1.1 million children. There was also large number of private kindergartens with approximately 20,000 having pre-primary classes. (*Ibid.*).

According to the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2009, the preschool attendance rate among children aged 36-59 months increased from 15% in 2006 to 23% cent in 2009. This increasing trend can be found in both girls and boys, and across areas. While the rate was higher in rural areas than in urban areas in 2006, this pattern was reversed in 2009. The preschool attendance rate was the highest in Chittagong division at 26.8% while Rajshahi had the lowest rate at 15.6%. At district level, the rate ranged from 7.2% in Gaibandha to 44.6% per cent in Gazipur. (UNICEF, 2009).

Primary education

There are three types of primary schools: government primary school, registered non-government primary schools and community schools. In addition, there are satellite schools for grades 1-2 children in un-served and remote areas. Government primary schools are fully financed by the government and managed by the local School Management Committee (SMC), while registered non-government primary schools receive only salary subvention at a maximum rate of 80% of the basic salary of a primary school teacher. Community schools also receive a partial salary subvention to the teachers. Satellite schools are housed in rented houses in the villages, the teachers having a fixed honorarium from the government.

Primary schools are run in two shifts: the first for the larger enrolment of grades 1 and 2 for two hours; the second shift of three and a half to four hours, for grades 3 to 5. The medium of instruction at the different grades of the primary level is Bangla (mother tongue). Textbooks are supplied to the students free of cost.

The primary school curriculum has been revised to make it need-based and life-oriented. By 1995, textbooks were reviewed, revised, tested and introduced up to grade 4. Revised textbooks for grade 5 were introduced in 1996. The textbooks for grades 1-2 include Bangla (or Bengali, the official language), mathematics and English. Textbooks for grades 3-5 include Bangla, mathematics, English, science, social studies and religious education (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Christianity). There are no prescribed textbooks for environmental studies in grades 1-2 or for music, art and crafts, and physical education for grades 1-5. All these subjects are compulsory. The average amount of weekly teaching hours in each grade is three hours for Bangla; three hours for mathematics; thirty minutes for music, art and crafts, and physical education; and two and a half hours for all the other subjects. Religious education has an important place in the school curriculum. It is a compulsory subject of study up to grade 8 and can be studied as an elective subject at higher levels.

Grades 1-2 pupils should receive twenty-four periods of instruction per week, each of thirty minutes' duration, for a total of 444 intended contact hours per school year (raised to 595 hours in 2000) of thirty-seven working weeks. Grades 3-5 pupils should receive 34 periods (35 minutes long) per week, for a total of 734 intended contact hours per year (raised to 863 hours in 2000). However, the actual contact hours are far less due to many unforeseen interruptions, such as rains, floods, festivities, sports, illnesses, etc. (Government of Bangladesh, 1999). Some reports say



that effective contact time does not exceed 15 minutes of the 35-minute period. (MPME, 2003).

According to a study conducted on a sample of primary schools and commissioned by USAID, the schools operate on both a single-shift and double-shift format, the latter introduced throughout the 1990s in order to accommodate the growing numbers of students. Today, about 90 percent of the government primary schools are double-shift schools, and the relatively few single-shift schools are generally located in urban areas. The government has established a well-defined class timetable and academic programme that all government schools are supposed to observe. Grades 1-2 pupils in double-shift schools are expected to spend approximately 16 hours and 30 minutes at school per week compared with the 22 hours and 30 minutes per week expected of their peers in single-shift schools. Similarly, grades 3-5 pupils in double-shift schools are expected to spend 23 hours and 30 minutes per week, while their single-shift counterparts are expected to spend 38 hours and 25 minutes. On average, grades 1-2 pupils in single-shift schools are provided 37% more contact time than pupils in double shifts. The gap widens in the upper grades: grades 3-5 pupils in single-shift schools are provided 63% more contact time than those in double-shift schools. Moreover, it appears that the number of contact hours prescribed per week by the government (18 hours for grades 1 and 2, and 26 hours for grades 3 to 5) cannot be achieved in the double-shift schools given their official operating hours. (CAI, 2004).

Each school is expected to follow the weekly academic programme geared to the official primary school curriculum established by the government. The primary school curriculum consists of five core academic subjects: Bangla, English, mathematics, social science/civics, and general science. The prescribed amount of time spent on these subjects varies according to grade level, although the greatest number of instructional hours is devoted to Bangla, mathematics, English and—for the upper grades—science. Other subjects covered are: religious studies, physical education, general health education, art, and handwriting. Cultural studies—which include music, dance, and special programmes—are generally scheduled for upper grade pupils (grades 3-5) toward the end of the school day. In double-shift schools, the first shift—running from 9:30 am to 12:00 noon—is generally dedicated to classes for pre-primary, grades 1 and 2 pupils, and comprises four 30-minute class periods. Following a 15-minute interval for an assembly, the second shift begins at 12:15 pm for grades 3, 4, and 5 and continues until 4:15 pm when the school day concludes. The programme for the upper primary grades consists of six 35-minute class periods, punctuated by a 30-minute break for lunch or *tiffin* scheduled between 2:00 to 2:30 pm. The teachers usually work both shifts, shifting between grade levels and subjects. Single-shift schools operate from 9:30 am to 4:15 pm. Following a 20-minute assembly to open the school day, classes continue until 1:15 pm, when the lower grade students (pre-primary and grades 1 and 2) are dismissed, and the upper grade students (grades 3 to 5) and teachers are allowed a 30-minute break for lunch. Classes for grades 3-5 pupils resume at 1:45 pm and conclude at 4:15 pm, except on Thursday when they are also dismissed at 1:15 pm. As in double-shift schools, teachers move between grade levels and subjects. (*Ibid.*).

On average, teaching or ‘instruction’ occupied 63% of the class time in the classes observed, and 75% of the classes observed spent more than 50% of their time



on instruction. While the time allocated to the observations varied according to the class schedule of the school, it is clear that less than two-thirds of the class time is spent on teaching or instructional activities by the teacher, indicating the reductions of already short class periods to alarming levels. The differences between urban and rural schools are notable. On average, teachers in rural schools in the classes observed spent 56% of class time on instruction, while teachers in urban schools spent 72% of class time on instruction. Several analyses of the primary curriculum in Bangladesh point out that it is very tightly sequenced and requires all (or more) of the contact time allowed by the academic calendar and school schedule. This leaves no scope for repeating lessons or addressing either general or individual student lack of mastery of the prescribed skills. The curriculum warrants the teacher to inexorably move ahead, regardless of student needs or levels of learning. The inability of the schools to adequately impart to their students the fundamental competencies identified in the national curriculum has been well documented. For example, the Education Watch 2000 report found that only two percent of the students tested that had completed five years of primary education acquired all (27) cognitive competencies. (*Ibid.*).

The study estimated that grades 1 and 2 pupils in double-shift schools under ideal circumstances receive only 2.75 hours of potential contact time (654 contact hours per year) and 2.5 hours of potential instructional time (excluding the 15 minutes for assembly). At rural schools, which start at 10:00 am rather than 9:30 am, these students potentially receive only 2.25 hours of contact time and two hours of instructional time. Similarly, grades 3-5 pupils in many double-shift schools are likely to receive less than the daily 4.25 contact hours (932 contact hours per year) and 3.5 instructional hours (excluding assembly and tiffin break), as many schools close early—particularly in rural areas—or do not follow a rigorous teaching schedule for the late afternoon classes. Under the best of circumstances observed at schools during the study, total annual contact hours for grades 1 and 2 are estimated at 419 and total annual instructional hours at 301. The numbers are notably lower if the worst of circumstances observed are used: 227 total annual contact hours and 104 total annual instructional hours. Similarly for grades 3 to 5, the best-case scenario estimates total annual contact hours at 729 and total annual instructional hours at 435. The numbers are shockingly lower if the worst of circumstances observed are used: 523 total annual contact hours and 99 total annual instructional hours. In either case, the estimated contact hours fall far short of the 444 hours previously identified in earlier studies, and do not approach the 654 contact hours estimated for grades 1 and 2 (64% at best, 35% at worst) and the 932 contact hours for grades 3 through 5 (78% at best, 27% at worst). Contact hours are dramatically less than the 750 hours recommended by PEDP II. (*Ibid.*).

The curriculum is competency-based. To facilitate teaching and learning, 53 learning competencies have been identified for primary education. Teaching materials such as teacher's manuals and the annual lesson plan have been developed on the basis of the new learning objectives. Teaching aids and instructional materials have also been prepared. Because the effective use of these materials depends on the teachers' understanding and competencies, a nationwide curriculum dissemination programme has been implemented. Government and non-government primary school teachers receive an orientation that provides adequate exposure to the materials, thereby permitting them to translate curriculum objectives into reality.



New curricula were introduced in 2003. Within the framework of the National Plan of Action (NPA)-II it is envisaged to review, improve and restructure the curricula and re-orient them to the new knowledge-based and technology-oriented society and its demand for occupationally and professionally skilled people; curricula must include everyday science matters and promote critical learning and higher order of thinking, gaining knowledge and ability to use them in real life instead of rote learning or copying. (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2008).

The summative assessment (in the form of an annual examination in each grade) has been abandoned. Instead, a system of continuous pupil's assessment has been introduced. The system requires teachers to assess pupils regularly for every competency acquired in a particular lesson (through observation, oral/written assessment) and to record achievement on a monthly basis using three scales (namely grades A, B and C). There is a policy of automatic promotion in grades 1 and 2. In grades 3 to 5 pupils are promoted on the basis of their achievement in the annual examinations. At the end of the primary cycle (grade 5) there are school-leaving examinations and successful students are awarded school-leaving certificates by the concerned school. There is no public examination at the end of the primary cycle, but a scholarship examination is held annually for 20% of grade 5 pupils—on the basis of which a scholarship is awarded to successful pupils. The Primary Scholarship examinations are conducted and managed by the Directorate of Primary Education. In 2005, the pass rate was 67.2%.

The introduction of free education for girls up to grade 10 and the provision of financial aids for girls in rural areas have accelerated enrolment and improved the completion rate of girls, both at the primary and secondary levels of education. Private primary schools are also providing education that varies in duration and curriculum. In 2002, nearly 38% of the primary school teachers were women. (MOE, 2004).

The gross enrolment ratio in primary education was estimated at 93.7% in 2005 (91.2% for boys and 96.2% for girls). The net enrolment ratio was estimated at 87.2% (84.6% for boys and 90.1% for girls). The transition rate to junior secondary education (grade 6) was estimated at 83.3% in 2004, 80% for boys and 86.6% for girls. In 2005, the pupil-teacher ratio in government primary schools was 58:1, while in government-supported registered non-government primary schools and community schools it was 46:1 respectively and an average of 54:1 (in some district the ratio was 87:1 in government primary schools). Nationally, the percentage of qualified teachers (e.g. holders of the certificate in education) was estimated at 71.9%. (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2008).

The results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2009 indicate that the proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5 was 79.8% in 2009 (78.7% for boys and 81% for girls). The overall rate increased from 63.6% in 2006, and by more than 16 percentage points for both boys and girls. The 2009 MICS calculated both the primary and secondary school drop-out rates for the first time. The data have been analyzed by gender to provide evidence for action on gender disparities on access to education, especially for girls. In both rural and urban areas, boys tended to have a slightly higher drop-out rate at primary level than female students. In rural areas, 1.4% of boys dropped out of primary school between the 2008 and 2009 school years, compared with 1% for girls. In urban areas, the gap between male and female



dropout doubles to 0.8%. The highest drop-out rate was recorded in the slum areas where it is more than six times higher than the national level. The drop-out rate of primary school increased with the pupils' grade for both boys and girls, reaching its peak at grade 5 (3.2% for boys and 2.3% for girls). Boys were more likely to drop-out from the primary school at each successive grade. The gap between boys and girls also increased with each grade. The repetition rate in primary school was 4.8% nationally. Overall, the rate in rural areas was slightly higher than in urban areas. Slum areas had the highest repetition rate (8.1% for girls and 7.5% for boys). The rate was highest at grade 1 (10.6% for boys and 10.8% for girls) and grade 5 (7.5% for boys and 7.3% for girls). (UNICEF, 2009).

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), in 2009 there were 37,672 government primary schools with 182,803 teachers (of whom 99,615 were female) and 9,755,362 pupils enrolled (of whom 5,003,840 were girls). Furthermore, there were 43,836 non-governmental and other primary-level institutions with 178,647 teachers (of whom 57,456 were female) and a total enrolment of 6,784,001 pupils (of whom 3,294,497 were girls).

Secondary education

The main objectives of secondary education are to: extend and consolidate primary education; provide students with knowledge of various subjects and develop their potentials and abilities; prepare skilled manpower for the country's economic development; and enable the students to take an active part in society as good and responsible citizens. The main subjects taught at the secondary level include: language, mathematics, science, religion, history, geography, economics, civics, home economics, environment, art and crafts. Post-primary education in the general stream is imparted by junior secondary schools (grades 6-8), senior secondary schools (grades 6-10), and higher secondary schools, known as intermediate colleges (grades 11 and 12). Many higher secondary schools also offer courses leading to degrees in liberal arts and sciences. Institutions offering grades 1-12 (primary to higher secondary) are few in number. Post-primary level madrasah are known as Dakhil madrasah (grades 6-10) and Alim madrasah (grades 11-12).

There is a separate stream for imparting technical and vocational education and training. After completing the junior secondary level, students may enter into vocational training institutes offering two-year Secondary School Certificate–SSC (vocational/science) courses; holders of SSC vocational/SSC (science) may enter into vocational training institutes and polytechnic institutes offering two-year HSC (Vocational) and three-year Dip-in-Engineering courses. (MOE, 2004).

In terms of ownership and management of secondary schools, there are two major types: government and non-government secondary schools (including Dakhil madrasah). Nearly 98% of the post-primary (secondary and higher secondary) institutions are owned and managed by private sector. However, these institutions are private only in name because 90% of their salaries and wages, and the costs of their physical infrastructure development, durable educational supplies and equipment are provided by the government.



The secondary curricula and guidelines for preparing textbooks were developed in 1977. The corresponding textbooks for grades 6-8 were produced during 1980-1982 and those for grades 9-10 in 1983. Science is compulsory at the junior secondary level and the integrated science curriculum is followed. At the secondary level (grades 9 and 10), science education is optional and the general science curriculum is followed. Curriculum specialists, teachers' educators and planners have strongly advocated making both general science and social science required subjects in grades 9 and 10. Practical work in general science has been identified as a weak area. Secondary school teachers are rarely involved in the process of curriculum development and textbook writing, and this may be one of the causes for the lack of interest in using the teaching guides. The curricula were reviewed in 1995-1996.

It has been recommended that work-oriented education, as a practical subject, should be compulsory in grades 6 to 10. A field survey of 170 secondary schools in five *thanas* revealed that 39% of the schools provided some form of work-oriented education at the junior secondary level. While 12% of the schools reported availability of work experience in grades 9-10, 90% of the head teachers would be in favour of including productive work in grades 6 to 10.

At the end of grade 8 there is no general public examination but a Junior Scholarship Examination is taken by about 10% of the students. In order to meet the admission requirements for grade 9 (the first grade of secondary education), students need to secure minimum prescribed marks from their junior secondary schooling. The respective schools and local education authorities make the decisions regarding student promotions. The annual promotion to the next grade is based on the results of the assessment examinations, which are held three times a year at the end of each semester. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2008). The first public examination at the end of grade 10—known as the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) examination—must be passed by all candidates seeking to move to the two-year higher secondary level (grades 11 and 12). At the end of grade 12 students sit the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) examination; the HSC is required for admission to first-degree courses and appointment to secretarial positions in government services. There is heavy competition to enter into first-degree courses, especially for subjects like medicine and engineering. The scores obtained by the candidates in both of the public examinations play an important role in the selection process. Parents send their children to science teachers for private lessons and spend a considerable amount of money for the purpose of improving their children's performance on these public examinations. For Madrasah students, the parallel for SSC is known as Dakhil, and for HSC it is known Alim examination and certificate.

Secondary education is largely examination-oriented. Job chances depend on educational qualifications, because employers use educational qualifications in the recruitment and selection of personnel. Students and teachers follow strategies of learning and teaching which maximize students' chances of gaining the qualifications which will secure them a job. The majority of students who choose general science as an elective subject enrol for higher secondary classes in the science group (either pre-medical or pre-engineering) after passing the SSC Examination.

As mentioned, there are seven Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE), one Madrasah Education Board, and one Technical Education



Board. These Boards are responsible for accreditation of non-government secondary education institutions, supervision for quality assurance and administration of public examination at the secondary (SSC) and higher secondary (HSC) levels. These Boards are autonomous bodies.

One major weakness of the present examinations is that they do not adequately attempt to measure the wide range of learning outcomes. The syllabi of the public examinations made available to the secondary schools through the BISEs show that the topics included and the distribution of marks do not correspond to the course objectives or expected learning outcomes. The examinations mostly test knowledge or ability to recall facts and information. Hardly any attention is given to the higher abilities of reasoning, understanding, application, analysis and synthesis. In most cases, the affective and psychomotor domains are not addressed at all.

Traditionally, both public examinations and internal assessments use essay tests exclusively. Scores on essay tests, however, vary greatly from examiner to examiner and from subject to subject, and generally such tests have low validity and reliability. Consequently, efforts have been made to gradually introduce objective test items. The 1992 examination assigned 50% of the total marks of each paper to essay examination and the remaining 50% to multiple-choice test items. The present proportions of essay and objective tests are now being widely discussed. The wisdom of including, in each of the 1999 SSC papers, fifty objective items from among the 500 already supplied to schools has been seriously questioned. It has been argued that the introduction of objective tests will result in a larger percentage of passes with a concomitant larger number of students entering the higher secondary and first-degree levels. It has also been argued that the introduction of objective tests will further reduce the quality of secondary science education. Grades 9-10 students may become less interested in classroom lessons, both in theoretical and practical sessions (though practical classes are not being conducted at all in some schools).

Up until 2005, approximately 2,728 technical and vocational education and training (TVET) institutions existed in the country. The total enrolment was 241,336 students, of whom 48,267 students enrolled in public institutions. Private institutions, which were numbering 2,548, had enrolled 193,069 students, i.e. 80 % of the total enrolment. (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2008).

In 1999, the gross enrolment ratio (GER) at the lower and secondary levels was estimated at 41.2%, and at less than 20% at the higher secondary level. In the same year, the drop-out rates at the lower secondary and secondary levels were estimated at 21.3% and 52.1%, respectively. Repetition rates were 10.5% and 15.1%, respectively. Less than half of the students taking the SSC and HSC examinations during the period 1988-2000 passed the examinations. (JBIC, 2002).

According to the Ministry of Education, in 2002 the secondary education system consisted of the following: 16,562 secondary schools (with 8,162,134 students enrolled and 186,949 teachers); 5,536 madrasah (with 2,168,441 students enrolled and 70,247 teachers); and 1,562 technical and vocational education institutions (with 134,016 students enrolled and 8,623 teachers). (MOE, 2004).



In 2005, the GER in junior secondary was estimated at 48% for boys and 52% for girls; at the secondary level, it was estimated at 49% for boys and 51% for girls. In the same year, it was estimated that only 53.5% of secondary teachers (grades 6-10) were trained. (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2008).

The results of the Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) 2009 indicate that girls were more likely to drop out of secondary school irrespective of area. In rural areas, the female drop-out rate (4.1%) is some 1.1 percentage points higher than that for males. In urban areas, there is not a big difference between female (3.6%) and male (3.3%) drop-out rates. The slum areas recorded the highest drop-out rate for secondary schools, especially for girls (16.3%; for boys the rate was 10%). In the first two grades of secondary school, boys seemed more likely to drop out. In the last three grades, however, the pattern is reversed with more girls dropping out of school. The last grade of secondary school (grade 10) saw the highest drop-out rate for both sexes (8.6% for girls and 5.2% for boys). Nationally, the repetition rate in secondary school was 3.7%. For boys it was 3.8% compared with 3.6% for girls. The rate did not fluctuate much in the different areas, although it was the highest in the slum areas (5.5% for boys and 4.4% for girls). (UNICEF, 2009).

According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), in 2009 there were 3,494 non-government junior secondary schools with 25,185 teachers (of whom 7,094 were female) and 536,754 students enrolled (of whom 312,454 were girls); 317 government secondary schools with 7,038 teachers (of whom 2,456 were female) and 216,211 students enrolled (of whom 98,951 were girls); and 15,272 non-government secondary schools with 181,259 teachers (of whom 43,813 were female) and 6,603,828 students enrolled (of whom 3,385,133 were girls). In addition, there were 6,771 *Dakhil* madrasah (grades 6-10) with 64,282 teachers (of whom 6,663 were female) and 1,198,180 students enrolled (of whom 687,597 were girls); and 1,487 *Alim* madrasah (grades 11-12) with 21,124 teachers (of whom 1,907 were female) and 358,756 students enrolled (of whom 149,027 were girls).

Assessing learning achievement nationwide

Within the framework of the Education For All 2000 Assessment, a study was carried out to measure learning achievement in three major areas: reading and writing (in Bangla), mathematics and life skills. Specially designed tests were administered to pupils who had completed grade 4. Defining the achievers—in overall terms considering the three areas under test—as those who scored at least 50% of the total marks, the study has found 51.3% of the pupils to be achievers in the continuum of competency. The percentage of boys achievers was somewhat higher (53.2%) compared to girls achievers (49.6%).

Variation by region ranged from 36.3% to 59.8% of achievers. There were no significant differences between urban and rural areas, the achievers being 50.2% in urban areas and 51.7% in rural areas. Girls achievers were somewhat lower than boys. Considering the competency by subject area, the percentage of achievers was low in Bangla but considerably higher in life skills—the percentages being 30 and 75%, respectively. Competency in mathematics stood in between. (Government of Bangladesh, 1999).



Another assessment found that the mean achievement of grade 5 students of 150 schools was only 33%, with a standard deviation (SD) of 10%, in mathematics only 18% (SD 9%). Subject-wise performance was no better, only 18% (SD 9%) in mathematics. Findings of another study are still worse, where achievement was only 1.6% in the 27 objectively assessable of the 53 curriculum competencies. Subject-wise the highest score was only 36.5 in Bangla and English 9.4 (some 34% of the children did not answer any question). These findings reflect the very poor quality of primary education and consequent poor achievement of children. The teachers are stated to have preferences for the subjects, Bangla and mathematics. Interestingly, the results of examinations do not reflect any effect of teachers' preferences in the test scores of the pupils. Their preferences do not seem to be based on mastery of knowledge of these subjects but for the ease of handling them in classes without preparation or using teaching aids. (MPME, 2003).

Teaching staff

The government policy requires that 60% of the new teachers recruited be female (for whom the education qualification has been relaxed). The entry qualification for a newly recruited teacher is the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) for female candidates and the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) for male candidates. The salary, status and opportunities for promotion of male and female teachers are the same. Teachers have a respectable position in the society and female teachers are widely revered in the family and society, which helps ensure greater enrolment and retention of girls. Only 20% of the teachers were female in 1990; this figure increased to 27% in 1995. Assistant teachers have opportunities for promotion to the post of head teacher on the basis of seniority, and a 20% quota has been established for recruitment of head teachers to the post of Assistant Thana Education Officers.

There are several institutions for imparting education and training leading to the award of certificates as well as degrees for teachers at different levels of the education system. Public-sector Primary Training Institutes (PTIs) offer one-year certificate in education (C-in-Ed) programmes for primary school teachers. Public and private Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) offer one-year Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) programmes and one-year M.Ed programmes for secondary school teachers. The Bangladesh Open University also offers B.Ed. programmes through distance education mode. The Institute of Education and Research (IER) of Dhaka University offers four-year programmes leading to the bachelor's degree with honors in education, followed by a one-year Master of Education programme, as well postgraduate studies leading to M.Phil and Ph.D in education. Higher Secondary Teachers Training Institutes (HSTTIs) conduct in-service training for both the secondary school and college teachers. For the technical and vocational stream, there are Vocational Teacher Training Institutes (VTTIs) offering one-year programmes for the teachers of VTIs. There is also a Technical Teacher Training College (TTTC) which offers a one-year diploma in technical education and a two-year B.Ed. (Technology) programme for teachers (technical diploma holders) employed in the polytechnic institutes. (MOE, 2004).

For government-aided non-public institutions, which constitute the majority of schools at the secondary level, teacher recruitment and deployment is under the responsibility of the management committee of each school, which includes a

representative from the MOE Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) for junior secondary and secondary education. Teachers are recruited from those registered in the Teacher Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA). The minimum academic qualification is a bachelor's degree or equivalent for junior secondary and secondary education, and a master's degree for higher secondary education. Although there is no pre-service training needed for all, teachers can complete the training offered in respective training institutions prior to recruitment and receive a higher wage after the appointment. In addition to the minimum qualification, teachers who wish to be recruited by government-aided non-public institutions are required to take and pass a competitive examination held annually. They must also be registered in NTRCA in order to be eligible for recruitment. This regulation does not apply to fully-independent non-public institutions. (UNESCO Bangkok, 2007).

Like other government employees, teachers in government schools receive a monthly salary based on the national pay scale. Teacher salary subventions are provided to non-government registered primary schools and selected Ebtedayee madrasah. The number of teaching hours per week at the primary level is 36 hours. Also, seven and a half hours are spent for the teacher's preparation of the lesson plan, making contact with parents and community members and making the annual survey of the primary school-age population.

Inspection and supervision play an important role in improving the quality of education. Field level officers have been given inspection targets. An inspection cell has been set up in the Directorate of Primary Education for the regular monitoring of inspection and supervision functions of field officers. The inspection performances of field officers have been linked to their promotion. Increasing responsibilities are being devolved to the local level committees, such as the school management committee, Thana Education Committee, etc.

To ensure that standardized and transparent criteria are adhered to in the recruitment of teachers at the secondary level, the Ministry of Education has established an autonomous National Teacher Registration and Certification Authority. The main function of this authority is to screen and certify a pool of qualified teachers. All schools that receive a subvention have to recruit new teachers from the pool selected by the Authority. The certification will be based on academic qualifications and a standardized examination conducted on an annual basis. The list of certified teachers will be published and flexibility to recruit teachers will have to be selected from the pre-qualified pool. This reform is expected to lead to teachers meeting basic entry standards, and will make the selection of teachers more transparent. (UNESCO & UNICEF, 2008).

In-service training of teachers has been recognized as one of the important means to upgrade the quality of primary education in the country. With this objective, a mechanism has been established to run an effective, sustainable national in-service primary teacher training system and to raise the quality of instruction with a cluster of fifteen to twenty schools under the direct supervision and guidance of an Assistant Thana Education Officer (ATEO). The training programme at the cluster has been modified to make its operation more practical and effective and is held at sub-cluster level. Under this programme, about fifteen to twenty teachers from four to five



schools assemble every two months in a particular school. The concerned ATEO conducts a one-day training session based on educational science modules. A long-term training programme of one year's duration—known as the Certificate in Education—is also ongoing in the Primary Training Institutes of the country. The course content has been revised along the lines of the newly introduced primary school curriculum.

Teacher education should be revised and reformed in order to improve the quality of education. The B.Ed. diploma in the education programme has become obsolete. It is considered inadequate for meeting the content deficiency of the students in science subjects and providing them with adequate experience in educational theory and practice. The content component of the programme is particularly weak, especially in science and mathematics.

The need for recruiting men and women of the highest abilities at all levels of the teaching profession has been recognized. It is also believed that the issue of salary, salary subsidies and service conditions of teachers needs in-depth examination by a high-level committee. Instead of a uniform pay scale for all teachers, without regard to their qualifications, a policy of higher salary corresponding to higher qualifications should be considered. By allowing them to qualify for the pay scales afforded to college lectures, in-service secondary teachers could be encouraged to pursue a higher degree in education (M.A./M.Ed.). Higher secondary level teachers having a professional diploma in education could be provided with advance increments in pay. To generate a sense of security among the teachers of non-government institutions, provisions need to be made for a provider fund and retirement benefits. A trust fund for teachers of non-government schools could be created. A system of registration/certification for all secondary-level teachers could also be implemented.

A good academic background and subject relevance are two important factors in improving classroom teaching in secondary schools. It would, therefore, be desirable to recruit well-qualified persons, although they may not have a degree or diploma in education. Such teachers may be assigned to a TTC after one year's teaching experience. The responsibility for the recruitment of teachers of non-government secondary and higher secondary schools and madrasah may be given to an Education Improvement Trust (functioning as an autonomous body), an Education Service Commission, or District Selection Committees to be comprised of the proposed District Education Boards. The implications of these alternatives need to be closely examined by the Government. The main purpose of an Education Improvement Trust, an Education Service Commission, or a District Selection Committee is to eliminate academically weak candidates, so that subsequent training becomes meaningful and leads to quality enhancement.

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For updated links, consult the Web page of the International Bureau of Education of UNESCO: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org/links.htm>