United Nations
Educational, Scientific and
Cultural Organization

UNESCO Bangkok
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
Office of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics
Regional Advisor - Assessment, Information
Systems, Monitoring and Statistics (AIMS) Unit

Japanese
Funds-in-Trust

Asia and the Pacific Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment

SOUTH ASIA

Synthesis Report

Asia and the Pacific Education for All (EFA)
Mid-Decade Assessment

South Asia Sub-Region Synthesis Report

Jennings, James

Asia and the Pacific Education for All (EFA) Mid-Decade Assessment: South Asia Sub-Region Synthesis Report. Bangkok: UNESCO Bangkok, 2009.
xiv + 224 pp.

1. Educational system. 2. Early childhood education. 3. Basic education. 4. Primary education. 5. Life skills. 6. Literacy. 7. Girls education. 8. Gender equality. 9. Education quality. 10. EFA Assessment. 11. Bangladesh. 12. Bhutan. 13. India. 14. Maldives. 15. Nepal. 16. Pakistan. 17. Sri Lanka.

ISBN 978-92-9223-276-4 (Print version)
ISBN 978-92-9223-277-1 (Electronic version)

Published by
UNESCO Bangkok
Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
Mom Luang Pin Malakul Centenary Building
920 Sukhumvit Road, Prakanong, Klongtoey
Bangkok 10110, Thailand

Editor: Leotes Lugo Helin
Design/Layout: Sirisak Chaiyasook

Printed in Thailand

AIMS/08/OP/008-1000

Contents

List of Boxes

List of Tables

List of Figures

Acronyms

ADB	:	Asian Development Bank
AIDS	:	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
AIE	:	Alternative and Innovative Education (India)
AJK	:	Azad Jammu and Kashmir (Pakistan)
BBS	:	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BEHTRUC	:	Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Children (Bangladesh)
BEHTRUWC	:	Basic Education for Hard To Reach Urban Working Children (Bangladesh)
BISE	:	Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (Pakistan)
BNFE	:	Bureau of Non-Formal Education (Bangladesh)
BPEP	:	Basic and Primary Education Project (Nepal)
BRAC	:	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CBO	:	Community-Based Organization
CBSE	:	Central Board of Secondary Education (India)
CCE	:	Centre of Continuing Education (Maldives)
CDC	:	Curriculum Development Centre (Nepal)
CEDAW	:	Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
CHT	:	Chittagong Hill Tracts (Bangladesh)
CIDA	:	Canadian International Development Agency
CLC	:	Community Learning Centres
CPE	:	Compulsory Primary Education
CPEIMU	:	Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Unit (Bangladesh)
CRC	:	Convention on the Rights of the Child
CTEVT	:	Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (Nepal)
DDA	:	Dzongkha Development Authority (Bhutan)
DFID	:	Department of International Development (United Kingdom)
DNFE	:	Directorate of Non-Formal Education (Bangladesh)
DPE	:	Directorate of Primary Education (Bangladesh)
DPEP	:	District Primary Education Programme (India)
ECCD	:	Early Childhood Care and Development
ECCE	:	Early Childhood Care and Education
ECD	:	Early Childhood Development
ECDU	:	Early Childhood Care and Development Unit (Maldives)
ECE	:	Early Childhood Education
EFA	:	Education for All
EGS	:	Education Guarantee Scheme (India)
EMIS	:	Education Management Information System
ESQI	:	Educational Supervision and Quality Improvement (Maldives)
FANA	:	Federally Administered Northern Areas (Pakistan)
FATA	:	Federally Administered Tribal Areas (Pakistan)
FSP	:	Female Stipend Programme (Bangladesh)
FTI	:	[EFA] Fast Track Initiative
FYP	:	Five Year Plan
GDI	:	Gender-related Development Index
GDP	:	Gross Domestic Product
GER	:	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GIR	:	Gross Intake Rate
GNH	:	Gross National Happiness
GPA	:	Grade Point Average
GPI	:	Gender Parity Index
HDI	:	Human Development Index
HIV	:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus

HSC	:	Higher Secondary Certificate (Bangladesh)
HSEB	:	Higher Secondary Education Council and Board (Nepal)
HSSC	:	Higher Secondary School Certificate (Pakistan)
ICDS	:	Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (India)
ICT	:	Information Communication Technology
IDA	:	International Development Association
IDP	:	Internally Displaced Person
ILO	:	International Labour Organization
INEE	:	Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies
IOM	:	International Organization for Migration
ISCED	:	International Standard Classification of Education
IT	:	Information Technology
KAP	:	Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (Maldives)
KGBV	:	Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (India)
KSY	:	Kishori Shakti Yojana (India)
LEAP	:	Lifelong Education and Awareness Programmes
LDC	:	Least Developed Country
LIFE	:	Literacy Initiative for Empowerment
MCDWE	:	Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment (Sri Lanka)
MDA	:	[EFA] Mid-Decade Assessment
MDG	:	Millennium Development Goals
MOE	:	Ministry of Education
MOES	:	Ministry of Education and Sports (Nepal)
MOPME	:	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (Bangladesh)
NACO	:	National Aids Control Organization (India)
NCCI	:	Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries
NCTB	:	National Curriculum and Textbook Board (Bangladesh)
NDP	:	National Development Plan (Maldives)
NEC	:	Non-Formal Education Centre
NFBES	:	Non-Formal Basic Education Schools (Pakistan)
NFEC	:	Non-Formal Education Centre (Maldives)
NGO	:	Non-Governmental Organization
NEC	:	National Education Commission (Sri Lanka)
NEP	:	National Education Policy (Pakistan)
NER	:	Net Enrolment Ratio
NESP	:	National Education System Plan (Nepal)
NFE	:	Non-Formal Education
NIOS	:	National Institute of Open Schooling (India)
NIR	:	Net Intake Rate
NLM	:	National Literacy Mission (India)
NLSS	:	Nepal Living Standards Survey
NORAD	:	Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation
NPA	:	EFA National Plan of Action
NPA-I	:	National Plan of Action (1992-2000) (Bangladesh)
NPA-II	:	National Plan of Action (2001-2015) (Bangladesh)
NPEGEL	:	National Programme for Education of Girls for Elementary Level (India)
NSO	:	National Statistical Office
NVQSL	:	National Vocational Qualifications Framework of Sri Lanka
NWAB	:	National Women's Association of Bhutan
NWFP	:	North Western Frontier Province (Pakistan)
NYKS	:	Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangthan (India)
ODL	:	Open and Distance Learning
OECD	:	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

PCL	:	Proficiency Certificate Level (Nepal)
PEDP II	:	Second Primary Education Development Programme (Bangladesh)
PMED	:	Primary and Mass Education Division (Bangladesh)
POA	:	Programme of Action (India)
PPC	:	Pre-Primary Centres
PPP	:	Purchasing Power Parity
PRI	:	Project for Residual Illiteracy
PRSP	:	Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme
PSQLS	:	Primary School Quality Level Standards
PTA	:	Parent Teacher Association
SAARC	:	South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation
SDG	:	SAARC Development Goals
SIDA	:	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SLC	:	School Leaving Certificate (Nepal)
SMC	:	School Management Committee
SRC	:	State Resource Centre (India)
SSA	:	Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (India)
SSC	:	Secondary Schools Certificate
STD	:	Sexually Transmitted Disease
SWAP	:	Sector-wide Approach
TEVT	:	Technical Education and Vocational Training (Sri Lanka)
TLC	:	Total Literacy Campaign (India)
TRC	:	Teacher Resource Centre
TU	:	Tribhuvan University (Nepal)
TVET	:	Technical-Vocational Education and Training
TWG	:	Thematic Working Group
UBE	:	Universal Basic Education
UGC	:	University Grants Commission (Nepal)
UIS	:	UNESCO Institute for Statistics
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNFPA	:	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	:	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	:	United Nations Children's Fund
UNPD	:	United Nations Population Division
UPE	:	Universal Primary Education
UT	:	Union Territory (India)
VEP	:	Village Education Plan (Nepal)
WEI	:	World Education Indicators
WHO	:	World Health Organization
WFP	:	World Food Programme

Acknowledgement

This report came about after a long process of capacity building workshops at the regional, sub-regional, national and sub-national levels; bilateral and sub-national consultations; technical visits to the countries; and validation by the countries and EFA partners. Gathering data and analyzing the educational disparities within the country was a tedious task that needed much time, concentration and patience. The dedication and commitment showed by the South Asian countries in carrying out the national assessment and sharing the results with the UIS-AIMS Unit, UNESCO Bangkok was crucial to the completion of the sub-regional report. We thus thank, first and foremost, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka for sharing with UNESCO various drafts of their national EFA Mid-Decade Assessment reports, which is a core component of this sub-regional report. Country representatives also reviewed and validated this sub-regional report.

Our heartfelt appreciation also goes to members of the Regional Thematic Working Group on EFA, co-chaired by the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office for the technical and financial support extended to the countries as part of the MDA. For each EFA Goal area, a Technical Support Group was formed to advise and review the national and sub-regional reports. The following are members of the various support groups: Cliff Meyers, Maki Hayashikawa, Kishor Shreshta, Qasim Jadoon, Bachrudin Musthafa, Marilyn Manuel, Nirmala Rao, Soo Boon Ng, Junko Miyahara, Koto Kanno, Hyunjoo Soon, Silje Rajander, Maliphone Virachith Abhay, Hoa-Phuong Tran, Aya Aoki, Mita Gupta, Qin Hanyin, Darmiyanti Muchtar, Susan Durston, Nyi Nyi Thaung, Jon Kapp, Tin Nyo, Upala Banerjee, Ibtisam Abu-Duhou, Toshiyuki Matsumoto, Le Thu Huong, Miki Nozawa, Ochiroo Gankhuyag, Urmila Sarkar, Emmanuelle Abrioux, David Clarke, Darunee Riewpituk, Kiichi Oyasu, Joel Bacha, Subramaniyam Venkatraman, Abdul Hakeem, Aruna Anand, Ko-Chih Tung, Leotes Lugo Helin, Anna Favalli and Raquel Castillo. Additional comments to the national reports and this report were also given by: Els Heijnen, Ram Balak Singh and Susan Durston. James Jennings synthesized the national reports and wrote this sub-regional report.

The Education staff of the UNESCO Offices in Dhaka, Islamabad, Kathmandu and New Delhi also played a crucial role in the completion of the national reports and this sub-regional report. The UNESCO Institute for Statistics Education Indicators and Data Analysis Section reviewed and validated the data used in this report.

The whole EFA Mid-Decade Assessment process and the publication of this report was led by Ko-Chih Tung who brought his expertise and experience from the Global and Regional (Sub- Saharan African) EFA Technical Advisory Groups to Asia-Pacific in carrying out the assessment. UIS-AIMS staff past and present who have contributed greatly to the completion of this report include, Nyi Nyi Thaung, Leotes Lugo Helin, Subramaniyam Venkatraman, Alexandra Denes, Garnett Russell, Panuwat Cholbushpakul, Minori Yamada, Norihide Furukawa, Anna Favalli, Ngamnet Aektasaeng, Fujika Mawatari, Debbie Wong, Malisa Santigul, Megha Kapoor and Takamasa Uesugi.

We also thank the Japanese Funds-in-Trust for UNESCO and the multi-donor programme Capacity Development for Education for All (CapEFA) for their funding assistance for the whole EFA Mid-Decade Assessment, the main results of which are summarized in this report.

Foreword

As the 2015 target of meeting the Education for All (EFA) goals approaches, it is imperative for all concerned to focus efforts and resources on reaching the unreached and the disadvantaged in education. Identifying who these groups are, where they are, and why existing policies are not effective and/or continue to leave them excluded is, thus, equally as important as assessing the overall national progress in meeting the EFA goals.

In the first decade of EFA implementation (1990-2000), most of the monitoring and assessments were done by external agencies and consultants, except for countries in sub-Saharan Africa. These reports focused mostly on national achievements and did not delve much on sub-national disparities in education, an analysis of which is crucial for targeted strategic programming.

Working with members of the Regional Thematic Working Group (TWG) on EFA, UNESCO Bangkok, in particular the Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics (AIMS) Unit, which is the office of the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) Regional Advisor for Asia-Pacific, assisted countries in carrying out the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA). Advised and supported by the Regional TWG on EFA, the AIMS programme developed the strategy, methods and tools, for the MDA and oriented the country-leadership, trained the national teams and mobilized the participation of country teams, organizations and institutions across the region.

The assessment came at the mid-way point of the current decade. It examines progress and gaps in the achievement of national and global EFA targets. The MDA also aims to identify and locate the remaining gaps in terms of quality and equity **sub-nationally**, with a focus on **disadvantaged and excluded** populations.

As part of the Asia-Pacific EFA Mid-Decade Assessment process, countries carried out their national assessments with technical advice and support from EFA partner organizations at the national, sub-regional and regional levels.

Thus, the Asia-Pacific region is unique with regard to the active role of country-led EFA coordination, monitoring and evaluation in the process of the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment and Mid-Term Policy Review. The Asia-Pacific approach to the assessment became a model for other regions around the world.

This sub-regional report is a compilation of the national reports specific to the sub-region, supported by sub-regional and regional studies and use UIS data for international comparison. It is hoped that this report will be used to sharpen the focus and update policies and strategies for attaining the EFA goals and the related Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

Sheldon Shaeffer

Chair, Regional Thematic Working Group on EFA
Director
UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education
December 2008

Preface

Since its creation in 2003, the Office of the UIS Regional Advisor - Assessment, Information Systems, Monitoring and Statistics (UIS-AIMS) Unit has focused on developing regional and national capacity for monitoring, evaluation and assessment in support of evidence-based policy and strategies.

In response to the need for information on EFA progress beyond the national achievements and the importance of carrying out a country-led assessment, the UIS-AIMS Unit developed the strategy, methods and tools for the Asia-Pacific EFA Mid-Decade Assessment: Reaching the Unreached in Education. This was carried out in collaboration with other Education Units within the UNESCO Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education and in coordination with members of the Regional Thematic Working Group on EFA.

The Asia-Pacific MDA encouraged country ownership and the institutionalization of EFA monitoring, evaluation and assessment in the Ministries of Education. Technical Support Groups that focused on each EFA goal were also formed at the regional and national levels as part of the assessment. Collection of data and information on the unreached groups and analysis of subnational disparities in education was the main focus on the whole assessment as well as identifying critical factors and obstacles to achieving the EFA goals.

Working together with the TWG on EFA and the regional Technical Support Groups, the UIS-AIMS Unit also developed the *Guidelines of the Asia-Pacific EFA Mid-Decade Assessment: Identifying and Reaching the Unreached,* which became the main reference for countries undertaking the assessment.

After nearly three years of capacity building trainings, technical consultations, data collection and analysis, and countless regional, national and sub-national consultative meetings, countries in Asia- Pacific have produced their respective national EFA MDA reports. Nearly 40 countries in the region, spanning from Central Asia, South and West Asia, East Asia, South-East Asia to the Pacific Island States have rigorously prepared national assessment reports focusing on the unreached in education.

Acknowledging, however, the various differences within the region, it was decided to prepare sub-regional reports to synthesize the national reports. Thus came about the sub-regional reports for:

- **The Mekong Sub-Region** covering Viet Nam, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Myanmar
- **The Insular South-East Asia Sub-Region** covering the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia
- **The South Asia Sub-Region** covering Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan
- **The Central Asia Sub-Region** covering Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

China and Mongolia for East Asia, and several Pacific Island States (Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Palau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu), and the Islamic Republic of Iran are also in various stages of finalizing their national reports.

The sub-regional synthesis reports are designed to provide a comparative assessment of progress towards EFA in each of the sub-regions, focusing on successes and remaining challenges in reaching the unreached. The sub-regional reports have also been reviewed and validated by the concerned countries and EFA partner agencies, organizations and civil society education coalitions. It is hoped that by highlighting the contextual background of education in each of the sub-regions, the synthesis reports can provide a framework for developing targeted policies and strategies that specifically address the unique challenges of each sub-region.

Ko-Chih R. Tung

UNESCO Institute for Statistics Regional Advisor for Asia-Pacific
Head, UIS-AIMS Programme Unit, UNESCO Bangkok
December 2008

Data used in this report come mainly from two sources, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) and the country-provided data, mostly from the Ministry of Education.

In observance of international standards, UIS data is used when making cross-national comparisons hence Part II of this report uses mainly UIS data. When making sub-national analysis, data provided by the countries are used. Part III of this report uses mainly country provided data.

However, gaps may be observed in some cases between the UIS and national data.

Data on pupils, students, teachers and expenditure used by UIS are based on survey results reported to and processed by the UIS. Most countries report their data directly to the UIS using standard questionnaires issued by the Institute or via surveys carried out under the World Education Indicators (WEI), or are provided by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the Statistical Office of the European Communities.

Population data

In calculating indicators on access and participation (e.g. enrolment rates), the UIS uses population estimates produced by the United Nations Population Division (UNPD), which is updated on the basis of the population-related information reported by the respective National Statistical Offices (NSO) of Member States. In this report as in the 2008 EFA Global Monitoring Report, the 2004 revision of population estimates by the UNPD was used for most countries.

On the other hand, Ministries of Education may calculate indicators on access and participation, using population estimates from sources other than the NSO, and a different reference year; hence MOE-calculated indicators may have different values as those calculated by the UIS. If the discrepancies are too large and remain unresolved, the UIS will not calculate or publish related indicators.

ISCED classification

Education systems differ from country to country to a varying degree; hence it is difficult to compare data between countries. To harmonize data and minimize these differences, the UIS calculate education indicators based on school data submitted by the MOE, and UNPD population estimates using a standardized taxonomy called the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED, 1997).

Some differences between nationally and internationally reported enrollment ratios may be due, therefore, to the use of these nationally defined education levels rather than the ISCED standard, in addition to the population issue noted above.

This report uses UIS data based on ISCED standards when making cross-country comparisons. This is confined to Part II of the report. Part III, however, examines progress in EFA within the country and hence uses mainly country-provided data.

PART I:
BACKGROUND OF SUB-REGION AND OVERVIEW OF THEMATIC ISSUES

1. Introduction to the EFA MDA South Asia Sub-Regional Report

1.1 Rationale for the EFA MDA Sub-Regional Reports

At the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand (5-9 March1990), delegates from 155 countries and representatives from over 150 organizations reaffirmed their collective commitment to education as a human right and pledged to work towards the universalization of primary education and the reduction of illiteracy by the end of the decade. Targets and strategies for providing universal access and improving equity and learning were enshrined in the Jomtien Framework for Action. By the year 2000, however, national assessments showed that the goals had not yet been achieved.

Thus at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000), 1,100 participants reaffirmed their commitment to achieving Education for All by the year 2015, specifically the six major goals and 12 major strategies identified in the Dakar Framework for Action. Moreover, the framework placed the main responsibility for achieving the EFA goals on Member States, which were encouraged and supported in their development of national plans of action.

In Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO Bangkok, UNICEF and the Regional Thematic Working Group (TWG) on EFA have been working together to assist countries in their monitoring and assessment of progress towards EFA and identifying remaining gaps in reaching the unreached. Thus, the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment (MDA) called for the implementation of national and regional assessments to identify problems, issues, policies and strategies to ensure that education will reach underserved groups. Where relevant data are available, statistical analysis for national EFA MDA reports focused on the gaps in access to various levels of quality education across the diverse strata and groups in the society.

During the third quarter of 2007, in the context of the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment and the mid-term review of education policies and reforms aimed at expanding the provision of education across various strata and groups in society, UNESCO Bangkok, in collaboration and consultation with Member States and the TWG on EFA, began the process of drafting the sub-regional synthesis EFA MDA reports for four sub-regions in Asia and the Pacific:

- The Mekong Sub-Region covering Viet Nam, Thailand, Lao PDR, Cambodia and Myanmar
- The Insular South-East Asia Sub-Region covering the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia
- The South Asia Sub-Region covering Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan
- The Central Asia Sub-Region covering Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan

China and Mongolia for East Asia, and several Pacific Island States (Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Palau, Tuvalu, Vanuatu), and the Islamic Republic of Iran are also in various stages of finalizing their national reports.

The overall objective of the sub-regional synthesis reports is to undertake a comparative assessment of progress towards EFA in each of the sub-regions, focusing on successes and remaining challenges in reaching the unreached. Sub-regional synthesis reports will serve four main purposes:

a) provide a framework for developing targeted policies and strategies that specifically address the unique challenges of each sub-region in achieving the goals of EFA by 2015 by highlighting the contextual background of education in each sub-region, as well as, their distinctive historical, socio-economic and cultural contexts;

b) provide an opportunity for comparative analysis of progress towards EFA within the sub-regions using statistical data and country examples;

c) raise the profiles of the sub-regions amongst UN agencies and donors; and

d) contribute to the Mid-term Review of National Education Policy and the regional synthesis report on EFA MDA in Asia-Pacific.

1.2 Overview of the Report Structure and Content

The Sub-Regional Synthesis Reports are divided into three sections with inputs from three different sources. The first section (Part I) presents the background and overview of the sub-region and key thematic and cross-cutting issues based on the findings from thematic reports and studies submitted by EFA partners, development agencies, and members of the TWG on EFA; the second section (Part II) summarizes achievements and challenges in attaining the six EFA goals for the sub-region using internationally standardized data from the UIS complemented with information from the country national reports and summary questionnaires; the third section (Part III) consists of country summaries of progress towards the six EFA goals focusing on sub-national analysis, based on the national reports. Moreover, Part II includes a sub-regional statistical profile (MDA core indicators, tables and graphs, and thematic maps). The Annex includes country statistical profiles and statistical tables. These statistical inputs were produced by UIS.

This report focuses on the South Asia Sub-Region with particular attention to Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka which all participated in the EFA Mid-Decade Assessment.

2. Overview of the Sub-Region

2.1 Background of the Sub-Region

South Asia for the purpose of this report covers Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Pakistan. It is acknowledged that the area may be defined differently in other contexts. It is a very diverse region of seven countries, covering the area from Pakistan in the west to eastern India in the east. It is an area of great contrast and diversity. It includes three of the world's seven most populous nations: India, the second most populous country in the world with over one billion people, and Pakistan and Bangladesh, both with populations of around 150 million. It also includes Bhutan and the Maldives, each with populations of less than one million. With a population of nearly one and a half billion, South Asia is home to around a quarter of the world's inhabitants. South Asia comprises of about 10% of the Asian continent, but its population accounts for about 40% of the Asian people.

South Asia is made up of five countries on the Indian Subcontinent, namely India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan, as well as the island nations of Sri Lanka and the Maldives off the coast of the Subcontinent. The Indian Subcontinent has long been recognised as a distinct entity both geographically and historically. It extends from the Himalayan Mountains in the north to the Indian Ocean in the south. The world's highest mountains are in Nepal and Pakistan, while countries such as the Maldives and Bangladesh are barely above sea level. The plains of the mighty Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra Rivers make up much of the land area. The Indo-Gangetic Plain supports roughly half the population of South Asia. It is characterised by heavy monsoon rains across much of the region as well as some arid and desert areas. The majority of the population are engaged in subsistence agriculture.

The region has a long and rich history which includes some of the world's earliest civilizations. The Indus Valley Civilization flourished in the north western part of the Subcontinent from about 3300 to 1700 BCE. The Subcontinent was united under the Maurya Empire during the fourth and

third centuries BCE but subsequently became fragmented before being reunited in the fourth century CE under the Gupta Empire. For the next several centuries both Hinduism and Buddhism flourished and spread across the region and to much of South-East Asia. Islam spread from the Middle East to the Subcontinent from the eighth century. The Mughal Empire was established in the sixteenth century and most of the Subcontinent was ruled by the Mughal emperors for over 200 years. Beginning from the middle of the eighteenth century, most of the Subcontinent was gradually annexed and ruled by the British East India Company before being taken over and ruled directly by the British Crown from the mid-nineteenth century. During the time of the Mughals and the British, there were also a number of smaller kingdoms which were governed by local rulers. In 1947, India and Pakistan gained their independence from Great Britain, followed in 1948 by Sri Lanka. East Pakistan seceded from West Pakistan in 1971 and became the independent nation of Bangladesh. The Maldives was a Protectorate of Britain from 1887 until independence in 1965. Nepal and Bhutan were independent kingdoms and were never under Colonial rule.

South Asia is an area of great cultural diversity. While the majority of the people are of Indo-Aryan or Dravidian descent, there is a multitude of other ethno-linguistic groups speaking over 500 different languages. All the countries in the region have ethnically and linguistically mixed populations. In Nepal alone there are almost 100 different languages spoken. Bangladesh, with 98% of the population speaking Bangla as their first language, is the most homogeneous of the populous countries in terms of ethnicity and language. However, even in Bangladesh there are speakers of around 30 other languages.

The major religions of South Asia are Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism. The predominant religion of India and Nepal is Hinduism. The majority of the people of Sri Lanka and Bhutan are Buddhist, while in Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Maldives the majority are Muslims. Besides the three major religions, there are also significant numbers of Christians, Sikhs and followers of other religions. Most of the governments in the region are secular with the exception of Pakistan, which is an Islamic republic. Nepal was, until recently, a Hindu kingdom.

2.2 General Level of Development of the South Asia Sub-Region

2.2.1 Economic Growth

Although poverty is widespread in South Asia, the region's economy performed well in the 1990s, and during the first few years of this century it has done even better. South Asia is well established on a high growth path with strong and improving macroeconomic fundamentals.[1] In 2005, Gross Domestic Product (GDP) for the region grew 8.1% compared to 7.6% for the whole of Asia, 3.2% for the United States and 1.3% for Europe. While inflation was somewhat higher than for Asia overall, there was strong export growth of 24.3% in 2005. India is by far the largest economy in the region, accounting in 2005 for about 80% of South Asia's GDP. It is expected that the current accelerated growth of the Indian economy will have positive effects for the neighbouring countries. Policies to increase economic integration with other South Asian countries and expansion of intra-regional trade, it is believed by economists, could offer immense opportunities for sustaining high growth and reducing poverty.[2]

2.2.2 Human Development Index and Other Indicators

The Human Development Index (HDI) is a comparative measure of life expectancy, literacy, education and standards of living for countries worldwide. It is prepared each year by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and is a standard means of measuring well-being, especially child welfare. It is used as a monitoring tool to measure the impact of economic policies

1 ADB, South Asia Economic Report, October 2006.
2 *Ibid.*

on quality of life. It covers 175 UN member countries (out of 192). The latest report is based on data from 2005.[3] The table below gives the HDI ranking of each country covered in this report along with some other important indicators of economic and social development. The Gender related Development Index (GDI) is a measure of human development that adjusts the HDI to penalize for disparities between women and men in the areas of a long and healthy life, knowledge and a decent standard of living.

The Gini Coefficient is a measure of income inequality with values ranging from 0 to 100. A value closer to 0 indicates more equal income distribution, with inequality growing as the value moves closer to 100. The level of a country's poverty is indicated by the percentage of the population living on less than US$1 per day. The Least Developed Country (LDC) status is based on the per capita income, human assets and economic vulnerability indicators.

Table 1: Indicators of Human Development, Gender-Related Development, Income Inequality, Poverty and Least Developed Country Status, 2005, South Asia

Country	HDI Ranking	GDI Ranking	Gini Coefficient (Income Inequality)	Poverty (% of Population below US$1/day)	LDC Status
Bangladesh	140	102	31.8	36	Yes
Bhutan	133	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Yes
India	128	96	32.5	34.7	
Maldives	100	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	Yes
Nepal	142	n.a.	47.2	24.1	Yes
Pakistan	136	105	30.6	17	
Sri Lanka	99	68	33.2	5.6	

Sources: UNDP, Human Development Report 2007/2008, November 2007 (HDI); UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, Statistical Pocketbook Socio-Economic Indicators for South Asia, 2007 (GDI, Gini Coefficient, poverty levels and LDC).
Note: "n.a." indicates not applicable.

Human Development: All the countries in the region are in the medium human development category. Sri Lanka is ranked highest in the region, while Bangladesh and Nepal are ranked lowest. Despite pervasive poverty in many of the countries, progress is being made in terms of health, education and other social indicators, particularly those relating to children. Except for Bhutan, all the countries rated lower in 2005 than the previous year. This is probably a reflection of improved status in other countries rather than a decline in conditions in the countries of the region. However, it is a worrying trend that could signify less than satisfactory progress in some of the key human development areas.

Gender Related Development: The ranking taking gender related factors into account is available for only four of the countries, of which Sri Lanka is rated the highest and Pakistan the lowest rank. Gender disparity is a major factor for development in most of the countries in the region. Except for Bhutan, which has a largely matriarchal society,[4] most of the societies are patriarchal and there are many barriers which inhibit the access of women and girls to basic services as well as their full participation in developmental activities.

Income Inequality: Of the five countries for which the Gini Coefficient Index is available, all show relatively high levels of income inequality. This indicates that the benefits of economic development are not reaching all the population in a consistent way. Some members of society are enjoying high incomes while others are living well below the poverty line. Nepal has the

3 UNDP, Human Development Report 2007/2008, November 2007.
4 Savada, M, ed, *Bhutan: A Country Study*, 1991.

highest coefficient, showing the highest level of income inequality. There is little difference in the coefficient for Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Sri Lanka (all slightly higher than 30). This represents a major challenge for all governments in the region.

Poverty: Of the five countries for which information is available, all except Sri Lanka have high levels of poverty with a significant percentage of their populations living on less than US$1 per day. While in Sri Lanka this represents only just over 5% of the population, in Pakistan it is nearly one fifth of the population, in Nepal it is nearly one fourth of the population, and in India and Bangladesh it is over one third of the population. High levels of poverty are a feature of the region. For South Asia as a whole, 32% of the population live below the poverty line. While significant progress has been made during the past decade to reduce poverty levels, poverty reduction remains a major concern for most of the governments in South Asia.

Least Developed Countries: Four of the countries in the region are considered LDCs. In economic terms, the countries are some of the farthest behind in the world with low per capita incomes and high levels of economic vulnerability. Bangladesh, Bhutan and Nepal have all made economic progress, but there are still substantial barriers to their full economic development. The Maldives has made remarkable progress in economic terms and is expected to graduate from the LDC category by 2011.

2.2.3 Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

The MDGs were derived from the United Nations Millennium Declaration, which was adopted by 189 nations in 2000. Most of the goals and targets are to be achieved by 2015 with the global situation in the 1990s used as the baseline. The MDGs represent a global commitment to ensure that development reaches all members of the population. Monitoring of the MDGs is done by specialised agencies using national statistics as well as surveys and studies carried out by international agencies.

The MDGs have been adopted by all the countries of South Asia. There is also a regional commitment and monitoring of the MDGs by the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC).[5] At the 13th SAARC Summit held in Bangladesh in 2005, the Heads of State or Government endorsed the SAARC Development Goals (SDGs), which are based on the MDGs and localised for the region. Results of a report on the progress of all the SAARC countries on each of the indicators as of 2004 are shown in Table 2.[6]

Table 2: Progress towards Achieving MDGs in South Asia as of 2004

MDG Indicators	Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Poverty, percentage of population below $1 per day (PPP values)			▲	●	▲	▲	●
Proportion of population below National Poverty Line	■	■	▲	●	■	■	■
Prevalence of children under-5 years of age who are underweight	■	●	■	▼	■	▼	■
Proportion of population below minimum level of dietary energy consumption	■		■		■		■
Net enrolment ratio in primary education	▲	■	■	●	■	■	▲

5 SAARC was established when its charter was formally adopted on 8 December 1985 by the Heads of State or Governments of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. SAARC provides a platform for the nations of South Asia to work together in a spirit of friendship, trust and understanding. It aims to accelerate the process of economic and social development in member states.

6 Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA), SAARC Development Goals (SGDs) (2007 – 2012), March 2007.

MDG Indicators	Bangladesh	Bhutan	India	Maldives	Nepal	Pakistan	Sri Lanka
Proportion of pupils starting grade 1 who reach grade 5	■	▲	■		▲	■	▲
Literacy rate of 15-24 year olds	■	■	■	▲	■	■	■
Ratio of girls to boys in primary education (girls per 100 boys)	▲	▲	■	■	▲	■	■
Ratio of girls to boys in secondary education (girls per 100 boys)	▲	▲	■	●	▲	▲	●
Ratio of girls to boys in tertiary education (girls per 100 boys)	■	■	■		■		▲
Ratio of literate females to males of 15-24 year olds (girls per 100 boys)	■		■	●	■	■	●
Under-5 mortality rate (per thousand live births)	▲	■	■	▲	▲	■	▲
Infant mortality rate (per thousand live births)	■	■	■	▲	▲	■	▲
Proportion of 1-year-old children immunized against measles	■	■	■	■	▲	■	■
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	■	▲	■	▲	■	■	▲
Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	■	■	■	▲	■	■	▲
Sustainable access to improved drinking water	●	●	●		●	▲	■
Proportion of population without sustainable access to improved sanitation	▲	●	■		■	▲	▲

● Target reached ▲ On track ■ Off track ▼ Backward

Source: Independent South Asian Commission on Poverty Alleviation (ISACPA), *SAARC Development Goals (SGDs) (2007 – 2012), March 2007.*

South Asia is one of the world's most dynamic regions and has made rapid progress towards many of the MDGs. However, not all the member countries are making progress at a similar pace. According to the SAARC assessment, none of the countries are currently on track to meet all the goals by 2015. Only the Maldives and Sri Lanka have already achieved, or are on track to achieve, over half the 18 indicators which are being monitored by SAARC. Most countries are on track for poverty reduction and most have already, or will achieve, the goal of access to safe drinking water. Most of the health and nutrition indicators are likely to be missed by nearly all the countries. Only the Maldives is likely to reach the goal for youth literacy. A number of other education goals may not be reached by the majority of the countries, although progress is being made in most areas.

According to a regional report prepared on progress towards the MDGs in Asia and the Pacific,[7] while progress is being made towards the MDGs, given the current trends, many countries are likely to miss some vital targets including those for infant mortality, Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) prevalence and access to water and sanitation in urban areas. Some countries are at risk of failing to reach even two-thirds of the targets. According to this joint assessment, South Asia as a whole (excluding India) is on target to achieve just over half the MDG indicators, while India should achieve close to two-thirds of the targets.

According to a global report on MDGs prepared by the United Nations in 2006 comparing the latest data with data from the 1990s,[8] rates of extreme poverty fell rapidly in much of Asia, where the number of people living on less than US$1 a day dropped by nearly a quarter of a billion people. However South Asia, along with sub-Saharan Africa, is one of the regions still worst-affected by hunger, and only modest declines in chronic hunger have been seen in the last decade and a half. An area in which South Asia leads the world is progress in universal primary education (UPE). While most of the countries in South Asia are still not on track to achieve UPE by 2015, enrolments rose in South Asia from 72% to 89% over the period 1999-2004, largely as a result of progress in India.

7 ESCAP, UNDP and ADB, The Millennium Development Goals: Progress in Asia and the Pacific 2006.
8 UN, The Millennium Development Goals Report 2006.

However, there are still major concerns about the gender gap in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, where almost 80% of the world's out-of-school children live. Another area in which South Asia is performing poorly is in gender equality. Women represent an increasing share of the world's labour force, over a third in all regions except South and West Asia and North Africa. For most health, nutrition and sanitation targets,[9] South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa remain the regions with the poorest performance.

2.2.4 Convention on the Rights of the Child

With respect to children's education, the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) sets high standards based on a rights perspective. Every country in South Asia has signed and ratified the CRC, making it a legal obligation to ensure primary education free of cost based on the principle of non-discrimination. While Article 28 of the CRC provides the general right of all children to education, Article 29 emphasises the wider goals of education. Other articles stress children's rights to information relevant to their lives, to be respected and listened to, to participate in decisions affecting them and not to be subjected to corporal and other demeaning punishment. Taken together, these articles define a rights-based vision of education, which is inclusive of and responsive to diversity, child-centred, protective and learning-friendly, relevant, participatory and transformative. The monitoring of countries' progress in relation to the EFA goals is one part of assessing how governments are performing as duty bearers with regard to fulfilling every child's right to education.

Box 1: The Convention on the Rights of the Child and Education

The CRC on the right to education for all:

Article 2 There shall be no discrimination based on race, ethnicity, religion, gender, disability, social group or any other grounds.
Article 28 All children have an equal right to education.

The CRC on children as citizens:

Article 12 Children have the right to have their views heard and respected and to participate in decision making on matters that affect their lives.
Article 29 The purpose of education is to (1) develop children's full potential, (2) prepare them to take responsible roles in a free society, in the spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, gender equality and friendship among all peoples, (3) develop their respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The CRC on content and style of education:

Article 17 Children have the right to information on all matters that affect them, e.g. health education (Article 24); drug and substance abuse (Article 33).
Article 28 School discipline should be in conformity with the child's human dignity.
Article 31 Children have the right to leisure and play.

Source: UN, Convention on the Rights of the Child. Adopted by the General Assembly of the United Nations on 20 November 1989 and came into force on 2 September 1990.

9 Els Heijnen-Maathuis, Education for Girls in South Asia – From Parity to Equality, UNICEF, 2007.

3. Educational Development in the Sub-Region

As part of the great civilizations which flourished in the region, the Indian Subcontinent had some of the first education systems in the world, including organised studies up to levels equivalent to university. Traditional, pre-modern educational systems in South Asia were mainly founded on and based around religion, but there were other subjects taught as well. While India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were under British colonial rule for a portion of their history and the Maldives was a British Protectorate for nearly 80 years, Nepal and Bhutan were never under any colonial power. Colonial governments introduced western education systems into the countries they had colonised, and the other countries followed the same models when developing their modern education systems. As a result, the education systems of the seven countries of South Asia bear remarkable similarities in structure and in content.

3.1 Bangladesh

3.1.1 Pre-Modern Era

Historically, education before the mid-nineteenth century was based on religious institutions of learning from the first stages of organized education up to the equivalent of university level. Although Buddhist and Hindu systems had existed, the predominant system before colonial rule was the Islamic madrasah system, which continues in Bangladesh today alongside other systems of education.

3.1.2 Development of Modern Educational Systems

Modern education, as commonly understood, in the territory presently constituting Bangladesh dates back to 1854 as a government initiative, while activities as individual initiatives for the advancement of literacy started around 1918. Bangladesh inherited at independence in 1971 a literacy rate of 16.8%. Before independence, education had been the almost exclusive preserve of the elite and was predominately male. Upon taking power, the new government considered education of the masses a high priority for modernisation and development.

The Government has taken a number of measures, including nationalisation of private primary schools in 1973 under the Primary Education (Taking Over) Act. Subsequently a programme of universal primary education (UPE) was initiated and a separate Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) was created in 1981 with an administrative structure down to the sub-district level. This was followed with the promulgation of the Primary Education (Compulsory) Act in 1990 and the creation of a separate Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) in 1992, which provided administrative support to policies and programmes for the universalization of primary education and the eradication of illiteracy. PMED was later transformed into the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME).

The Government created a Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Unit (CPEIMU) in 1990 as an integral part of the Ministry of Education (MOE) and later of PMED (now MOPME) to monitor the implementation of compulsory primary education (CPE) and also to carry out a Child Education and Literacy Survey biannually. CPE committees have been established at ward, union, sub-district and district levels. For the implementation and management of non-formal education (NFE), a separate Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE) was established in 1995, which has been redesignated as the Bureau of Non-Formal Education (BNFE).

3.1.3 Current Education System

Basic education in Bangladesh is delivered through both formal and non-formal systems. Both are sub-divided into a number of sub-systems with both private and public providers. The formal system provides education for the majority of children and adolescents while the NFE sector

provides opportunities for children and others who have never enrolled or who have dropped out of formal schools. Primary education is compulsory and officially free.

Normally about 16 years of regular study is required from entry into primary school to completion of a Masters degree for general education or a Bachelors degree for professional education (except for medicine which requires an additional year). Without repetition in any class or loss of any academic year for any reason, a student taking admission in Grade 1 at the age of 6 should complete a Masters degree at about 22 years of age. The stages of general education, duration of courses and official age-groups of students are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Stages of General Education in Bangladesh

Stage of General Education	Duration	Official Age
Early Childhood Education		3-5 years
Primary Education (Grades 1-5)	5 years	6-10 years
Junior Secondary Education (Grades 6-8)	3 years	11-14 years
Secondary Education (Grades 9-10)	2 years	15-16 years
Higher Secondary Education (Grades 11-12)	2 years	17-18 years
Bachelor Degree (General Education)	2, 3 or 4 years	19-22 years
Master Degree (General Education)	1 or 2 years	21-24 years

Entry into formal technical-vocational education usually takes place after the completion of Grade 8. Students are admitted into professional education courses in engineering, agriculture or medicine after completion of Grade 12.

A parallel system of religious education also exists with similarly advancing levels. The madrasah system is formal and is a well-established Islamic religion-based education stream. Madrasah education comprises five stages, i.e. ebtedayee, dakhil, alim, fazil and kamil levels, the duration of which is five, five, two, two, and two years respectively. For the other religious communities, the numbers are small but there are Sanskrit tols for Hindus, pali tols for Buddhists, and theological colleges for Christians.

In Dhaka and a few other urban areas, there is a small but influential parallel private English medium system leading to 'O' and 'A' levels. There are also a number of private universities using English as a medium. There is little regulation of the English medium schools and universities and no standardized, government-approved curriculum.

There are about 63,534 primary schools, 13,000 secondary schools, 10 cadet colleges, 1,700 general colleges and 27 government and non-government universities. There are 168 institutions offering technical and engineering education of different types and at different levels. The number of government medical colleges is 13 and there are five private medical colleges. In addition, there are 24 homeopathic, five ayurvedic and 10 unani system of medical colleges and 68 teacher training institutions of different categories. There are also a number of institutions for special types of education, including 239 Sanskrit and pali tols, about 3,000 kindergartens, 8,231 ebtedayee madrasahs and 78,821 mosque-based Maktabs institutions devoted to early years of religious teachings.

There are a variety of non-formal educational programmes in Bangladesh. Many of the NFE programmes cater to the same learning needs as the schools. The participants in NFE programmes are generally children who cannot or do not get enrolled in primary school, drop-outs from schools, and adolescents, young people and adults who have no or insufficient education. The NFE channel provides them with the educational opportunities to meet specific learning needs and/or to enter the formal system. Many non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are providers of

NFE, and there are extensive networks throughout Bangladesh covering over one million children and also a number of adolescents, young people and adults. The Government also sponsors NFE projects which are implemented by partner NGOs under the management of the BNFE.

3.1.4 Developments since the 1990 Jomtien Conference and the EFA 2000 Assessment

Recognising the challenges for the realization of the EFA goals, Bangladesh adopted a programme approach in the Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP II), which aims to expand equitable access to and improve the quality of primary education. The Government has also developed through an extensive participatory process a NFE Policy Framework to guide NFE activities and to promote quality. To bring all components within a common framework, the Government initiated an extensive participatory and professional process to review the achievements of the first National Plan of Action (NPA), which was formulated in 1992 in the wake of the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, and to prepare a second NPA for the coming decade in accordance with the Dakar Framework for Action. The NPA II contains the background, past achievements, future visions and targets up to 2015.

3.2 Bhutan

3.2.1 Pre-Modern Era

Although Bonism, an ancient religion of Bhutan, has claimed to have its own scriptures, it is generally recognized that this was only the case after Buddhism had been firmly established in Tibet and Bhutan. The Tibetan writings, from which Dzongkha is derived, were created by a Tibetan Buddhist scholar, Thume Sambota, based on the Brahmi script from India. As such, both scriptures and other literature came to be associated with Lamaism or Tibetan Buddhism. Therefore, it is generally assumed that any form of education before the establishment of Buddhism, if it existed at all, would have been informal, home-based, oral and ritualistic.

From the eighth century, with the advent of Buddhism in Bhutan, monastic education played a dominant role in the lives of the people, which continues to this day. Children in monastic schools are taught to read and write, although methods are quite different from secular education. Considerable time is spent in rote learning the prayers and scriptures and in practical courses, including the arts and crafts that are needed for performing rituals.

3.2.2 Development of Modern Educational Systems

A reference to the first secular education in Bhutan was made in 1914 when the first school was opened in Haa, which was then followed by a small number of students being sent to study in Hindi medium schools in India. The first batch of students came to be known popularly as 'babus,' a term denoting respect for the learned both in the Indian and Bhutanese contexts. However, it was only when the kingdom officially ended its isolation, with the start of the first Five Year Plan (FYP) in 1961 that concerted efforts were made to establish a modern education system. From 440 students in 11 primary schools in 1959, the education system in Bhutan has grown to include over 169,776 students in 1,158 institutions offering general and tertiary level education, vocational training and non-formal courses.

3.2.3 Current Education System

The general or secular education system has the largest enrolment of students and perhaps is the most widely known. It has three segments: basic education of 11 years, higher secondary education of two years and tertiary education of three years or more. Children begin their schooling at the age of 6 years when they enter the first grade of primary, known as pre-primary (Class PP). At the

end of the primary cycle, children are required to sit for a national level examination which is set by the Bhutan Board of Examinations but administered and assessed by the schools. If they pass this examination, they then continue to secondary education.

The secondary education programme consists of two years of junior secondary or lower secondary (Classes VII and VIII), two years of middle secondary (Classes IX and X) and two years of higher secondary (Classes XI and XII), which was previously known as junior college.

Students sit national examinations at the end of each level of education, namely at the end of Classes VIII, X, and XII. Those who are successful at Class XII may, based on merit, continue to study in a general degree programme. The rest either repeat the examination to get better marks, enrol in one of the training institutes or find employment. While education up to Class X constitutes basic education and is intended to be universal, post-basic education is presently more competitive and restricted to cater to the human resource needs of the country. A number of training options are available at this level, including engineering, agricultural extension, health sciences, office support services and teacher education. A major shift in recent years has been to make secondary education much more relevant by introducing basic skills training within the curriculum and by introducing career counselling to orient the youth to the world of work.

Tertiary education is provided in Sherubtse College, the two Colleges of Education at Paro and Samtse, the Institute of Language and Culture Studies, the Royal Institute of Health Sciences, the College of Science and Technology, and the National Institute of Indigenous and Traditional Medicine. A limited number of students are selected for government scholarships for professional studies abroad, while others who can afford it, arrange their further education abroad privately.

Because monks are held in great respect, there is still a demand for monastic schools, particularly from poor families. Monasteries have served as a sanctuary for orphans and children in crises, and their reputation as reformatory institutions is also well known. The number of students enrolled in the monastic schools has been estimated at about 15% of the total school enrolment.

NFE has been the principal strategy to reach out to dispersed and marginalized groups in the country, especially women. The combined efforts of the Dzongkha Development Authority (DDA) and the National Women's Association of Bhutan (NWAB) gave birth to the NFE programme in 1992.

The programme was taken over by the MOE in 1994 and has since then grown to over 646 centres with over 18,550 learners. Wherever there is a minimum of 20 learners, the Government provides a teacher and books to start a NFE centre. NFE consists of three levels with the first year being devoted to a basic literacy and numeracy course. This is followed by a post-literacy programme, which lasts from six to 12 months and enables learners to enhance their skills and to gain knowledge on health, farming and other useful enterprises. At the third level, there are opportunities for students to advance their learning by self study at the local schools or community learning centres (CLCs).

3.2.4 Developments since the 1990 Jomtien Conference and the EFA 2000 Assessment

In Bhutan, the FYP sets in motion all the development goals and strategies for all sectors in the country. Prior to setting the priorities, there are discussions at the National Assembly level and between the Planning Commission and main line ministries culminating in the formulation of macro policy guidelines. At this stage, only broad goals are set based on a situational analysis of the country, and these are shared with all the government agencies as well as with development forums. EFA goals also become part of the education sector plan and are mainstreamed so that the programme is holistic in its approach with all benchmarks clearly established and interventions laid out for the different stakeholders of the programme. In the past, plans were prepared by the central authorities and implemented with the help of the communities, but since 2002, local

people have had a greater opportunity to participate and contribute towards the development of their locality.

Although resources, financial and human, were stretched to meet the goals of Jomtien and Dakar, some notable achievements have been accomplished while at the same time new challenges have arisen. The Royal Government of Bhutan has tried to improve the quality of the education sector by increasing teacher remuneration and expanding training opportunities for teachers as well as by appointing temporary teachers. Simultaneously, however, the achievement of an expanded primary education sector is putting enormous pressure on secondary and post–secondary levels with an increasing number of students moving up in the system.

The Chief Coordinator of the EFA programme is the Secretary, MOE, who is assisted by the Planning and Policy Division which has the added responsibility of ensuring that the activities are complementary and monitored regularly. A weekly meeting is held to deal with any issues under the MOE. An extended task force, in addition to the various heads within the MOE, includes representatives from the National Commission for Women and Children, the Department of Aid and Debt Management, UNICEF, UNFPA, WFP and UNESCO. The MOE keeps in touch regularly with the other agencies and only very occasionally is the task force of EFA required to meet.

3.3 India

3.3.1 Pre-Modern Era

India has a long history of organized education dating back many centuries. Early systems were primarily oral and information was passed from one generation to the next. 'Gurukuls' were traditional Hindu residential places of learning, usually located in a monastery or the teacher's house. Education systems based around Buddhism and Islam also flourished.

3.3.2 Development of Modern Educational Systems

Universalization of elementary education has been accepted as a national goal since 1950. The last two decades, beginning with the launch of the National Policy in Education in 1986, has witnessed a large number of national initiatives towards the achievement of the goals of universal elementary education and total literacy. The 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 made education a fundamental right for children in the age group of 6-14 years by mandating that, "the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine."

3.3.3 Current Educational System

There are broadly four stages of school education in India: primary, upper primary, secondary and higher secondary. In pursuance of the National Policy on Education of 1968 and 1986, there have been attempts to evolve a uniform pattern of school education with 12 years of schooling, commonly known as the 10+2 pattern. The 'plus two' stage refers to Classes XI and XII, which constitute the higher secondary stage in all 35 states and union territories (UTs). In some states, higher secondary stage is part of collegiate education known as junior colleges. The organizational patterns of the first 10 years of schooling differ considerably across states and UTs. While in 22 states/UTs, secondary stage consists of Classes IX and X, in 13 states/UTs, it consists of Classes VIII, IX and X. The initial schooling stage up to Class VII or VIII (as is the case in many states/UTs) is also referred as the 'elementary stage'. Following Class XII, there are generally three years of graduate level study.

The 10+2+3 pattern of education introduced in the country envisages a broad-based general education for all pupils during the first 10 years of school education. The curriculum at this stage is largely undifferentiated and little attempt is made to introduce diversified courses. The focus

of the curriculum at the primary stage is on the development of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, study of the environment in terms of physical and social phenomena, participation in activities which develop productive skills, creative expression and habits of healthy living. In the initial years, the content and methodology are directed towards achieving communication and computational skills with a view to developing the basic tools of learning.

Under NFE, there are various projects and schemes which focus on the education of out-of-school children, the girl child and children in difficult circumstances. Two schemes focus on bringing children into the fold of education, namely the Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE), both of which are components of the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA), India's education sector programme. EGS centres are temporary facilities, each of which is to be replaced by a primary school within two years. The formal curriculum is taught and all enrolled children are provided with free textbooks and a mid-day meal. AIE offers a series of flexible options for children who cannot be directly enrolled in a school or EGS centre. The strategies include residential and non-residential bridge courses, back-to-school camps, seasonal hostels, drop-in centres and other alternative schools. AIE also provides support to madrasahs and maktabs. AIE has been effective in providing education to the older age group (11-14 years), children who have never enrolled or have dropped-out, children who migrate seasonally with their families, street and other deprived urban children, working children and other vulnerable children in difficult circumstances.

To enhance girl's education, various schemes, including the National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level (NPEGEL) and the Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalaya (KGBV), are being implemented. Both the schemes are integral but distinct components of the SSA. NPEGEL provides additional provisions for enhancing the education of underprivileged and disadvantaged girls at elementary level through intense community mobilization, the development of model schools in clusters, gender sensitization of teachers, development of gender-sensitive learning materials, early childcare and education facilities and provision of needs-based incentives such as escorts, stationery, workbooks and uniforms for girls. The focus of the programme is on educationally disadvantaged blocks. The KGBV is designed to encourage greater participation of girls in education at the upper primary level. The scheme has residential upper primary level schools for girls belonging predominantly to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other disadvantaged castes and minority communities with high gender gaps and low female literacy. Three-quarters of the seats are reserved for girls from marginalized or minority communities, and the remaining are available for girls below the poverty line.

For adolescent girls in the 11-18 age-group, Kishori Shakti Yojana (KSY) is implemented by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The scheme targets adolescents to address self-development needs in the areas of nutrition, health, literacy, numerical skills, and vocational skills, among others. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) provides continuing education to approximately 1.4 million learners through 2,945 accredited academic and vocational institutions. The NIOS offers the following courses of studies through open and distance learning (ODL) mode:

- Open basic education programme for children (up to 14 years), adolescents and adults at levels that are equivalent to Classes III, V and VIII of the formal school system;
- Secondary education course;
- Senior secondary education course;
- Vocational educational courses; and
- Life enrichment programmes.

The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was established in 1988 to impart functional literacy to 80 million adult illiterates by 1995, a target which was subsequently revised to cover 100 million adult learners. After trying out different models, the NLM has adopted the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) approach and post-literacy programmes as the dominant strategy for adult literacy.

3.3.4 Developments since the 1990 Jomtien Conference and the EFA 2000 Assessment

The last two decades, beginning with the launch of the National Policy in Education in 1986, has witnessed a large number of national initiatives to achieve the goals of universal elementary education and total literacy. Especially in the 1990s, following the commitments made during the Jomtien Conference, major programmes for improving the coverage and quality of school education in the country were undertaken. Simultaneously, the TLC under the auspices of the NLM orchestrated a massive mobilisation of people across the country in favour of education. These and several other efforts continued in the post-Dakar period culminating in the launch of the SSA, the national programme to ensure free and compulsory education for all children as a fundamental right. Other national initiatives include a programme of decentralized support to teachers at district, block and cluster levels, activities under the NLM and special programmes for the promotion of early childhood care and education (ECCE), and inclusive education. A major part of the EFA activities in India are undertaken by the respective states/UTs.

3.4 Maldives

3.4.1 Pre-Modern Era

The Maldives has had a long history of semi-formal religious-based education for the masses and this is still practised today. The traditional system consisted of children gathering in homes called 'edhuruge' to learn the Dhivehi language and the Arabic script and to learn to recite the Holy Quran. In addition, there were schools for young adults for navigation, languages, and Muslim theology. Although educational attainment in the traditional system is low in terms of performance in formal examinations, the system has contributed towards achieving many educational objectives, the most important of which is the relatively high rate of literacy and the preservation of the national culture and traditions.

3.4.2 Development of Modern Educational Systems

The Maldives has been an independent state for most of its history with the exception 15 years of Portuguese occupation in the sixteenth century. The Maldives became a British protectorate in 1887 and remained so until its independence in 1965. It was during this period that the first formal educational systems were introduced.

The initial challenge to the traditional system occurred in 1927 with the establishment of the first government school in Malé. The school was at first confined to the education of boys, but later in 1944 a section was opened for girls and young women. Instruction in the school covered the Dhivehi language, Islam, Arabic and arithmetic. By 1945, each inhabited island had a traditional Islamic school (maktab) providing instruction at the lower primary level. Rapid changes followed. In the 1950s the education system was remodelled to meet the requirements for trained people in a growing economy. In 1960, a dramatic change in the education system occurred with the introduction of two English medium schools in Malé as part of a conscious effort to prepare its citizens to meet the increasing development needs of the nation.

The most recent historic development in education in the Maldives occurred in 1978 with the decision to move to a unified national system of education and to promote a more equitable distribution of facilities and resources. The policy focus was on providing universal primary education for all and thus the strategies involved the formulation of a unified curriculum for Grades 1-7, improvement of teacher training and the establishment and upgrading of new schools in the atolls. Two government schools were established in each atoll and today these schools represent the availability of quality basic education for the children in their locales.

Recent educational development of the country is characterized by a very rapid increase in student enrolment and the number of educational institutions. The provision of basic education has remained the main priority of the sector for a number of years. Many schools have been constructed, a national curriculum was introduced with subsequent revisions carried out, and local textbooks and teacher guides have been developed to cover all the primary education grades (Grades 1-7). School enrolment has risen rapidly (from 15,000 in 1978 to 102,073 in 2005). Access to primary education (Grades 1-7) has been universalized, secondary education is being expanded at a very fast rate, access to tertiary education has been provided and various projects have been started that support students to go on to tertiary education locally and overseas.

3.4.3 Current Education System

There are three categories of schools in the Maldives: government, ward community and private schools. Although education is provided largely by the Government, the community and the private sector also play an active role. The Government supports community and private schools by providing a certain percentage of teachers depending on school size, and by providing infrastructure, facility support and financial subsidies. In order to minimize the differences in schools, 135 community schools in the atolls were converted into government schools in 2005. In the capital, Malé, formal schooling is preceded by two years pre-primary education in the lower and upper kindergarten. This form of pre-primary education is now increasing in the atolls, especially in highly populated islands. The alternative to this form of education is the edhuruge. Modern pre-schools and the traditional edhuruge provide the first organized learning opportunities for 90% of pre-school aged children.

Primary education begins at the age of 6, the age at which children enter a seven-year cycle, starting in Grade 1 and ending in Grade 7. Universalizing seven years of basic education was one of the landmark achievements of the country. Assessment in these grades is at school level on the basis of continuous assessment in Grades 1-3, and school-based examinations held three times a year in Grades 4-7.

Secondary education in the Maldives consists of Grades 8–10 (lower secondary) and Grades 11–12 (higher secondary). Secondary education was provided only in Malé until 1990, but it has since been extended to the atolls through the gradual addition of Grades 8–10 classes in some atoll education centres and atoll schools based on set criteria, and by the establishment of two regional secondary schools. In 2005, the criteria for introducing Grade 8 in existing primary schools were revised so that more students could get easy access to 10 years of formal schooling. Introduction of higher secondary schooling in the atolls began initially in two atolls in 2001, followed by another one in 2002. Further expansion of higher secondary education in the atolls has continued, and altogether 24 schools are currently offering higher secondary education across the country.

The MOE is responsible for the formal education system and for a large number of the non-formal and occupational training programmes in the Maldives. NFE has played a major role in establishing the high literacy rate of the country. Much of the tribute for this success goes to the Centre of Continuing Education (CCE), which coordinates and implements all NFE programmes in the Maldives.

3.4.4 Developments since the 1990 Jomtien Conference and the EFA 2000 Assessment

The EFA Action Plan drew on findings of the national consultation on Vision 2020 and the Sixth National Development Plan (NDP) (2001–2005) of the Maldives. The Plan of Action as developed is integral to the Vision 2020 activities, the Sixth NDP and the current Education Sector Master Plan (1995–2005). The Plan is also closely aligned to the national poverty reduction strategy in which education and employment-oriented training are considered critical. The strategies included a

focus on the learning needs of young people and adults and continuing education activities that assist people to secure suitable employment or skills for self-employment.

3.5 Nepal

3.5.1 Pre-Modern Era

Nepal underwent a major change in 1951 with the successful uprising of the people that overthrew 100 years of oligarchic rulers and introduced a multi-party democratic system. This was a landmark educational development in Nepal. Schools were for the first time opened for the general public. Before this, only a few religious and specialized schools had existed which catered to a tiny minority.

3.5.2 Development of Modern Educational Systems

From the mid-1950s, Nepal started a planned approach to development in various areas including the education sector. School education was opened for the general public only after 1951. The school system developed since that time followed the structure and pattern of schooling prevailing in the region, mainly in the Indian subcontinent. In 1952, the MOE was established to develop education in the country, mainly formal education. In 1954, a National Education Commission was formed to review the education situation of the country and to suggest strategies and policies for the overall development of education. It was realized that the country lagged far behind in educational development. The literacy percentage was estimated at only 2%. The commission report recommended for the first time that the Government take the responsibility of financing education in order to make primary education available for all children. It also suggested the development of an adult literacy programme as well as technical and vocational education with emphasis on civic education. The National Education System Plan (NESP) was initiated in 1971 to revise the school curriculum with a focus on vocational education. The national education system has been developed with district education offices and a supervision system in all the districts.

3.5.3 Current Education System

In Nepal, there is no provision for compulsory education although policy statements towards this have been made. However, basic and primary education is free. This connotes free tuition and free textbooks. Schools are, however, allowed to raise donations from the community and parents to meet development and maintenance costs of the schools. In many instances, the contributions are enforced by the schools. There is a view among some observers that such donations have no place in a system which is meant to provide free school education up to basic and primary levels. Such in-built costs could have the effect of excluding children who are already the most marginalized.

The concepts and practices regarding early childhood development and pre-primary education are emerging as important developments. However, they are not currently part of the formal national education structure.

Primary education, or the first level of education in Nepal, is comprised of five years of schooling. The minimum entry age for this level is 5 years. The second official level of education is secondary which is comprised of Grades 6-10 (five years). Grades 6, 7 and 8 are called lower secondary and Grades 9 and 10 are called secondary. A national centralized examination is conducted at the end of Grade 10. This examination is popularly known as the School Leaving Certificate (SLC) examination. Those who pass the SLC examination at the end of Grade 10 can apply to Proficiency Certificate Level (PCL) of university campuses or to Grade 11 of higher secondary schools operating under the Higher Secondary Education Council and Board (HSEB). Higher secondary education is a recent development in Nepal, initiated in 1994. There is also provision of higher secondary level technical education under the Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT). Currently,

the technical schools affiliated to the CTEVT offer skills training courses either to students who pass Grade 10 or to those having the Technical School Leaving Certificate. Technical and vocational education is offered through nine CTEVT constituent technical schools and 118 private technical training institutes. The courses offered are mostly of two years duration.

There are currently five universities in Nepal. Tribhuvan University (TU) is unique among the five because it was the first university in the country having started about 45 years ago as a teaching and affiliating university. It has constituent institutions and campuses all over the country. Almost 95% of higher education students and faculties are with this university. The University Grants Commission (UGC) coordinates the universities to ensure consistency with national plans and programmes. After university-based PCL or Grade 12 under the HSEB, students are eligible to apply for three-year Bachelors degree courses. The Masters degree is of two years duration and follows the Bachelors.

Besides formal education, there are provisions for NFE at the basic and primary education level. Out-of-school youths can enter Grade 3 upon completion of a nine-month course of a non-formal primary education programme, popularly known as the out-of-school programme. There are also provisions for flexible school programmes for those who cannot attend school during the regular hours, and school out-reach programmes for those who do not have access to regular schools. Various forms of adult education programmes, mainly adult literacy and functional education, are run by various agencies.

3.5.4 Developments since the 1990 Jomtien Conference and the EFA 2000 Assessment

The EFA campaign started by the World Conference on EFA held in Jomtien in 1990 has been an immense impetus for the development of education in the country. The current achievements of educational development in Nepal at the basic and primary level are largely attributable to this decade-long campaign.

The EFA vision of Nepal is to ensure that all children in Nepal have quality basic and primary education in a caring and joyful environment. Primary education should be available in the mother tongue for children, without them feeling any type of cultural, ethnic or caste discrimination. The schools and other educational venues must have gender balance in terms of teacher posts and student enrolment. It is also envisaged that almost all adults should not only have the opportunity to become literate but also to participate in continuous learning activities through CLCs. It is also important that a variety of appropriate learning and life skill education materials that are contextual and directly beneficial for youths and adults are made available through different modes.

The EFA goals are to be achieved gradually, phase by phase, by the year 2015. By then community-based as well as school-based early childhood development (ECD) centres should be providing services to most of the pre-primary age children. There should also be other ECCE service providers, such as private schools and NGOs. There should be provision of training made for the mothers and caretakers to provide home-based ECD services. With these service facilities in place, all pre-primary children should be provided with at least one year of special care services that addresses both pre-school preparation needs as well as the overall needs of the children of that age group.

3.6 Pakistan

3.6.1 Pre-Modern Era

The land which constitutes today's Pakistan has a deep and rich history of education. The Indus valley and Gandhara civilizations enjoy world recognition with respect to their culture and system of education. Later, Muslim conquerors brought with them their own religion and culture, along with their education system. Muslim rule in the Subcontinent was consolidated by the Mughal

rulers who established various educational institutions for Hindus and Muslims pre-dominantly attached to temples and mosques. Calligraphy, philosophy, art, medicine, arithmetic and science were part of their syllabi.

3.6.2 Development of Modern Educational Systems

After the fall of the Mughal Empire, British occupation introduced western education systems in the Subcontinent by promulgating various education acts and policies. English and western disciplines dominated the curriculum. To counterbalance the overwhelming British influence on their culture, particularly on their education system and values, a group of Muslim educationists started a reform movement to popularize education among Muslims. Although the reform movement had a significant impact on the socio-politico economic landscape of the Subcontinent, the education system which Pakistan inherited upon independence by and large had colonial roots.

There have been major reforms in the education sector in Pakistan since 2001. These include the development of a uniform academic session throughout the country, free education up to matriculation and the provision of free textbooks. The granting of scholarships and incentives for girl students has been introduced. English language study has been made compulsory from Class 1 onwards. Composite examination at matric level has been introduced throughout the country since 2007 through the Pakistan Education Sector Reforms. The subject of social studies for Classes VI-VIII has been replaced with history and geography. In general, there have been increased budgetary allocations for education. A regulatory authority has been established for the regulation of private educational institutions in Islamabad Capital Territory. The format of the question papers for the Board examinations has been revised. College level education has been transferred to provincial education departments. A system has been established to ensure that there are vocational schools in each sub-district and in industrial clusters, particularly for school drop-outs. The recruitment of female teachers has been given priority. A National Textbook Policy has also been formulated.

3.6.3 Current Education System

Pakistan has a decentralized system of education. However, there is a statutory requirement for all educational institutions to follow the same curricula.

Pre-school education contributes towards the development of the young child. A child of 3+ years is usually considered ready for pre-school education. There are pre-primary classes in the public sector. A kachi class is included in primary schools as a pre-primary stage of education. However, the pre-primary stage does not enjoy the status of a full-fledged level like primary and secondary education. In the private sector, the pre-primary stage is well organized and operational.

Elementary education is comprised of two distinct stages: primary and middle. The primary stage starts from Grade 1 and continues over five years. The medium of instruction in most of the schools is Urdu, the national language. There are English medium schools as well. In the public sector, the curriculum for primary classes is almost the same throughout the country. The major focus of this stage is on basic mathematical and literacy skills, appreciation of traditions and values, and socialization. Promotion to the next class depends on the results of the school examinations. The middle stage (Grades 6-8) is of three years duration and is offered in schools which have either primary or secondary classes. The curriculum is common for males and females as well as for urban and rural dwellers. The focus of this stage is to strengthen foundations of first and second languages, mathematics and science, and developing an understanding of family, community, environment, health and nutrition. Departments as well as schools conduct terminal examinations at this stage.

The secondary education stage is of two years duration comprising Grades 9 and 10. It covers the 13-15 years cohort of children. There is a Secondary Schools Certificate (SSC) examination at the end of Grade 10 which is conducted by the Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education

(BISE) throughout the country. Streaming of children starts at this stage and students opt for a stream of their choice from the science, humanities and technical groups.

Higher secondary education (Grades 11 and 12) is imparted at both Intermediate Colleges and Higher Secondary Schools. It covers the 15-16 years cohort. The students follow a two-year programme of study at higher secondary level, which leads to the Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSSC), the pre-requisite for entrance to university or an institution of higher education. The medium of instruction in science subjects is English. The BISE administers the examinations for HSSC.

The division of students takes place at various levels of school education. After the middle stage, students can follow either academic courses in secondary schools or a trade course at a vocational institution. After the secondary school stage, students can enter intermediate colleges or higher secondary schools for pre-university courses, or they can join polytechnic institutions to take up a three-year diploma course in a particular branch of technology or trade. After obtaining the HSSC, students can either join general universities or professional institutions. Pakistan has 120 universities/ degree awarding institutions of which 56 are in the private sector. More than 500,000 students are studying at university level and about 50,000 teachers are teaching in the universities.

3.6.4 Developments since the 1990 Jomtien Conference and the EFA 2000 Assessment

Realizing the importance of education, the Government is fully committed to providing quality education to its citizens. Several initiatives have been launched to further improve and develop the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the education system. The Government is also dedicated to the EFA and the MDGs global initiatives.

In order to institutionalize reforms and to enhance interaction between the provinces and administrative areas with the Federal Education Ministry, an Inter-Provincial Education Ministerial body has been reactivated. It was started as a regular forum for ensuring uniformity in decision making and to institutionalize education reforms. The forum meets quarterly under the chairmanship of the Education Minister.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 1998-2010 is under review to meet the new needs, trends and challenges. A NEP review team has conducted country-wide broad-based consultations with stakeholders in the education sector. The NEP review team visited 25% to 30% of the districts of each province and met different stakeholders. Moreover, a series of roundtable meetings and focus group discussions were held on different aspects of education. A national conference and six provincial/area education conferences were held to ensure real ownership of the policy by all federating units and other stakeholders. Thematic areas, including governance, quality education, textbook development, teacher education, literacy, access to education, gender equity, parallel systems of education and education relevance, were discussed in the conferences and the recommendations were finalized in a pre-policy document, "Education in Pakistan - A White Paper," prepared by the NEP review team.

The Government is trying to extend educational facilities to every member of society. Currently about six million children are left out of the formal education system. To meet the needs of this cohort, Pakistan has taken a number of steps to provide educational facilities for them. According to the EFA NPA, access to primary education, particularly for girls, will be improved through a network of Non-Formal Basic Education Schools (NFBES), especially in remote areas where either girls schools are not available or where girls' participation rates are low. A number of schemes for adult education have been launched in the country. Centres have been set up where education is given to the adults who have missed the opportunity to attend school. Arrangements for an integrated programme of adult education have been made at the Allama Iqbal Open University, Islamabad. This university provides education through ODL techniques while using information communication technologies (ICT).

3.7 Sri Lanka

3.7.1 Pre-Modern Era

From ancient times, education occupied a prominent place in the cultural tradition of Sri Lanka. Following the eastern traditions, learning was considered a valued treasure. The main purpose of education was to impart religious knowledge and practices. It was carried out in Buddhist temples or monastic colleges known as *pirivenas* by the Buddhist clergy.

3.7.2 Development of Modern Educational Systems

With the advent of the western colonial powers, the Portuguese in 1505 and subsequently the Dutch, the traditional educational structures were undermined. Under Portuguese rule, Roman Catholic missionaries established schools. The curriculum was mainly reading, writing and scriptures. The Dutch, who captured the Maritime Provinces by driving away the Portuguese, also followed a vigorous policy on education.

The British who succeeded the Dutch laid the foundation for a mass education system in the nineteenth century. To begin with, education was left in the hands of the clergy. But influenced by the Humanitarian movement in the home country and realizing the need to educate nationals to staff lower level positions in the public service and the emerging commercial sector, the Government started supporting education. In order to manage the government schools and to regulate the assisted schools, the Department of Public Instruction was established in 1869.

By the dawn of the twentieth century there was a national revival among the Buddhists and Hindus which resulted in the growth of a nationalist movement demanding self-government. In the wake of this revival, the Buddhist and Hindu organizations also established their own schools. With the inauguration of the Donoughmore Constitution in 1931, the representatives of the people were entrusted with a degree of autonomy in running the affairs of the country. During this period, from 1931 to 1947, a number of significant achievements were made in the sphere of education. Sri Lanka gained independence in 1948 and enlightened policies on social development in education, health and social services were followed by the successive governments. The use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction was extended to the secondary grades as well as primary. Another development in the 1960s was the takeover of the assisted schools, thereby creating a national system of education. By the last quarter of the twentieth century, the thrust of education policy was directed at improving quality since a considerable degree of success has been achieved in quantitative expansion. The reforms of 1972 attempted to carry this out through a major curricular revision. It introduced a common general curriculum of nine years duration including science, mathematics, social studies, languages, aesthetics and pre-vocational studies. However, due to political changes this attempt was not continued to a successful conclusion.

3.7.3 Current Education System

Sri Lanka provides free education to all children in government schools and some of the private schools. A very few private schools charge tuition fees from students. As such, the Government is responsible for the management of schools. But the community plays a participatory role through the School Development Societies. These welfare measures have contributed to better school attendance, higher participation and increased literacy rates.

At present there are 9,714 government schools and 93 private schools. There are also 653 Buddhist centres of learning called pirivenas. A new type of school known as 'international schools' teaching in English medium have come up recently, now numbering around 200. The overall teacher pupil ratio is 1:19, which is one of the most favourable teacher pupil ratios among the developing countries.

The education system is divided into various stages according to age and, at the highest levels, by types of education. All education is provided free by the Government except for pre-school education and some types of vocational education. Children progress through the various stages as follows:

- Pre-school education from 3 to 5 years is provided by the local authorities, religious bodies, voluntary organizations and the private sector.
- General education from 5 to 18 years is sub-divided into the following three levels:
  - Primary education from ages 5 to 9, covering Grades 1 to 5;
  - Junior secondary education from ages 10 to 13, covering Grades 6 to 9; and
  - Senior secondary education covering two years leading to the G.C.E. (O Levels) examination and followed by two years leading to the G.C.E. (A Levels) examination.
- Tertiary and university education after 'A Levels' is provided mainly at post secondary technical and professional institutes and universities.
- Vocational training for school leavers is provided in various types of training institutes run by the Government and private sector.

NFE programmes are conducted by the NFE Branch of the MOE. These programmes cater to the needs of out-of-school children and adult groups in the community, with a focus on the needs of the disadvantaged groups in society. These programmes are an important strategy to enhance access, equity and inclusion. This branch also conducts a few special programmes such as centres for street children and literacy centres for adults which are organized in places where there is a need.

3.7.4 Developments since the 1990 Jomtien Conference and the EFA 2000 Assessment

Recognizing the need for stability and continuity of educational reforms, the Government of Sri Lanka in 1991 established the National Education Commission (NEC) by an Act of Parliament, vested with the authority to formulate a national education policy. After wide public consultations and debate, the NEC formulated a national education policy. The policy led to the implementation of reforms from 1998 to 2003 which brought about changes in the instructional process in the classroom by making the curriculum more child-centred and activity–based.

The mandate for the planning, coordination, implementation and monitoring of the national EFA programme is entrusted to the MOE. The Ministry has set up an EFA Unit to be in charge of the task. However, the EFA programme covers a wide range of issues and all the components of EFA cannot be handled by one unit at the MOE or even by the MOE alone. The active participation and coordination of a number of ministries of the Government, the international community, NGOs and other community-based organizations (CBOs) is essential to achieve the EFA goals.

A NPA was prepared in 2001. The plan has been reviewed and modified in light of experience and the last revision was carried out in 2004. The work to be undertaken during the period 2004 to 2008 has been incorporated into the NPA. Elements of this plan are integrated into the plans of various agencies.

The EFA Unit carries out monitoring and evaluation of the activities in the NPA mainly through progress reports obtained from the implementing agencies. It also makes use of the data and information available in the published reports of organizations such as the Department of Census and Statistics, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, and the Annual Reports of Ministries. The EFA Unit also commissions studies on specific areas which it deems necessary, depending on the availability of funds.

4. Education Financing and Budget for the South Asia Sub-Region

4.1 General Trends in Education Spending

While all the countries in South Asia have made strong commitments to achieve the Education for All goals as well as the MDGs, the budgetary allocations for education are generally insufficient for the mammoth undertaking required to reach the targets. The amount spent on education as a percentage of total government expenditure in South Asia during the period 1994-2004 was only 4% compared to 2% for health, and 14% for defence.[10] The countries with the highest percentages spent on education during this period were the Maldives (20%) and Bangladesh (18%), while the lowest were India and Pakistan (both 2%).[11] It should be noted that the amounts for India and Pakistan may have been based on central budgets and therefore not fully reflect spending at the state and provincial levels (which would represent a considerable percentage of the overall spending on education in both countries). The other countries in South Asia all utilized 10% or more of total government expenditure on education during the period 1994-2004, including Nepal (17%), Bhutan (13%) and Sri Lanka (10%).[12]

The latest figures from the current decade show a range of spending on education as a share of the total public spending, ranging from 11% in India and Pakistan, to 15% in the Maldives and Bangladesh, while public expenditure as a percentage of GDP ranges from 2.25% in Pakistan to 7.72% in the Maldives.[13]

4.2 Incentive Schemes for Disadvantaged Groups

Most of the countries in the region have introduced various financial incentive schemes at different times in order to enrol children experiencing some type of disadvantage in school. The schemes have also been used to keep children in school. Some have covered very small groups of children and have been implemented within short timeframes. Others have been more comprehensive and longer term. Most countries in South Asia provide primary education without charging tuition as well as free primary textbooks. For some of them, this added considerably to the education budget. The Maldives and Bhutan provide tuition-free education through to Grade 10 as an incentive for students to continue their studies through the secondary level, and in Sri Lanka there is no tuition charged from primary through to university. Despite the free tuition and textbooks, other costs, for example transportation and stationery items, are often also barriers that prevent the poorest and most vulnerable from attending school.

The country with the most comprehensive programme to ensure that children from all economic groups can attend school is Sri Lanka. The state provides free textbooks to all students from Grades 1 to 11. School uniform materials are provided to all students. Through the Grade 5 scholarship programme, a subsidy for secondary education is given to students of low income families who perform well on the exam. School nutrition programmes are mainly focused on students in Grades 1 and 2 in schools in difficult areas. All these schemes have contributed to Sri Lanka's almost universal enrolment rates. The Maldives also has very high enrolment rates as a result of a number of incentives and a strong emphasis on making education available for all children.

In India, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme was originally launched in 1995 to support the universalization of primary education and to improve the nutritional status of children at the primary stage. In 2004,

10 UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia, Statistical Pocketbook Socio-Economic Indicators for South Asia, 2007.
11 *Ibid.*
12 *Ibid.*
13 UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2008.

in light of directives from the Supreme Court and the implementation of the National Common Minimum Programme of the Government, the programme was revised to ensure provision of a cooked mid-day meal for children studying at primary level in government, local body and government-aided schools as well as for children in certain government sponsored alternative programmes. The scheme has reached 120 million children enrolled in nearly a million schools and learning centres. Also in India, there have been a number of other schemes to encourage children to attend school, particularly for the most disadvantaged communities.

Nepal has included in its plans in the NPA strategies to provide incentives to needy students in the form of uniforms and scholarships. There is also provision for scholarship programmes for children from socially disadvantaged groups and for girls.

Over the years, Bangladesh has employed a number of incentive schemes both at the primary and secondary levels with a particular emphasis on the enrolment and retention of girls in secondary education. A Food for Education scheme, which covered up to 40% of children enrolled in primary school operated from 1993 until 2001, when it was replaced with cash stipends for children from poor families. From the early 1990s, there have been stipend schemes for girls in rural secondary schools implemented throughout the country, except for urban areas. There are also currently some pilot nutrition programmes providing snacks for all primary school children in selected areas. Until recently most of the incentive schemes have excluded urban areas, including the urban slums.

Pakistan has also introduced special incentives to encourage girls to continue their education through the secondary level. Scholarships and subsidies for girls' education are provided to low-income households to encourage continuation of education beyond the primary level, and particular emphasis is on provision for girls residing in geographic regions with high poverty concentrations. Scholarships are also given to girls to enhance their professional educational qualifications to become teachers.

For most of the countries other than Sri Lanka, incentive schemes have addressed only one or at most a few of the barriers to education. Accordingly, the success of such schemes is varied and the long-term sustainability of many of the schemes, except where they have been mainstreamed as part of the regular system, remains questionable.

Box 2: Female Secondary School Stipend Programmes in Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh places special emphasis on raising the female literacy rate and ensuring female participation in all spheres of social as well as economic development. In view of this, Female Stipend Programmes (FSP) have been launched at the junior secondary and secondary levels since 1994. Having started with female students in targeted areas, the programme has now expanded to cover most parts of the country. It has also expanded in terms of education level to include higher secondary education. These stipend programmes generally include the monthly tuition fee, which is given directly to the institutions; monthly stipends; book purchase subsidies for female students in Grades 9 and 11; and examination fees for female students in Grades 10 and 12.

The primary objectives of the stipend programmes are: (a) to increase female enrolment rates at the secondary level; (b) to assist girls in passing the SSC/HSC examination (or equivalent) so that they become qualified for employment; and (c) to keep girls in school and to discourage them from early marriage. Certain conditions apply for the programmes: (a) to attend at least 75% of school days during an academic year; (b) to secure marks of at least 45% on average or a GPA of 2.5 in the semi-annual and annual examinations; and (c) to remain unmarried up to the SSC/HSC or equivalent. The programmes are currently funded by the Government, ADB, NORAD and IDA.

Source: UNESCO, Secondary Education Regional Information Base: Country Profile Bangladesh, 2007.

5. Identifying the "Unreached" Population in the Sub-Region

5.1 Defining Disadvantaged and Marginalized Groups

Various terms, including disadvantaged, marginalized, deprived and vulnerable, have been used to describe children, adolescents and adults who are either outside the sphere of education altogether or who are not fully benefiting from the educational provision that is available. Typically they are the ones who never enrol in school or who enrol but drop-out before acquiring a sustainable level of basic education, and in some cases have the rudiments of education but need further studies to advance economically, socially and/or personally.

Usually the disadvantaged and marginalized are not simply isolated individuals who are not accessing education. More often than not, they are a part of a particular economic, social, ethnic, religious and/or linguistic group which has many members who are not accessing education to the same extent as the general population. Unreached, hard-to-reach, unserved and underserved are some of the expressions used to describe the groups which are not fully accessing education. The identification of such groups and their inclusion in educational programmes is crucial for the achievement of the EFA goals.

5.2 Barriers to Education for Disadvantaged and Marginalized Groups

The barriers to participation in education are common across the region, although some are more persistent and severe in some countries than in others. The barriers relate to the types of disadvantage and marginalization which the groups are experiencing. Besides preventing the enrolment of some children, for others, the barriers impede their retention, learning achievement and full participation in education.

Economic barriers: Throughout South Asia there are high levels of poverty. Accordingly, financial considerations constitute one of the major barriers to full participation in education. Poverty in itself should not be seen as an insurmountable barrier. A number of countries, despite high levels of poverty, have achieved impressive enrolment rates. However, poverty remains one of the most persistent problems facing many families in South Asia, and often, when combined with other factors, the result is non-participation or insufficient engagement to achieve sustainable basic education.

Social barriers: In South Asia, there is a history of exclusion of certain social groups and castes from education and many other activities of society. This is most pronounced in India and Nepal, but there are vestiges of this type of discrimination in all the countries. Despite policies of affirmative action and political commitment, discrimination persists in many communities. There are also socio-economic groups who are marginalized due to their low status in society.

Ethnic and linguistic barriers: Most of the countries have ethnic minority groups who have historically suffered from discrimination. In many cases, they are also speakers of languages other than the state or official languages. Over many years various types of barriers have been created, such as exclusion from and discrimination within schools. Some of these barriers are proving very difficult to break down so that children and others can participate fully in an education that is both relevant and appropriate. Often the groups face social and economic barriers as well.

Geographical barriers: South Asia is geographically a very diverse region. It has some of the highest mountains in the world as well as islands and deltas that are barely above sea level. The landscape has created a number of barriers which must be overcome in order for all children to benefit from education. In Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan there are isolated mountain communities which can only be reached by walking several days. The Maldives is made up of many small islands, and a number of them have very small populations. India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh also have islands off their coasts with similarly isolated small communities. Both these situations represent particular challenges for the provision of high quality education services.

Barriers related to disability: There are significant barriers for children and adults with physical or mental disabilities. Traditionally, they have been amongst the most marginalized regardless of other factors. Even those who do not fall into any of the other disadvantaged categories have been excluded from education until very recently. Governments are now trying to address this challenge, but in most cases the efforts are at a very early stage, and there are many children still excluded from school due to disabilities.

Barriers related to difficult circumstances: Significant numbers of the population are facing particularly difficult circumstances. In most cases these circumstances affect their access to all kinds of basic services, including education. Often the situations are considered temporary and this is frequently given as a reason for not providing services. But in many cases, children progress from birth to adulthood while in these difficult circumstances. Such groups include slum populations, refugees, displaced people, populations in areas of armed conflict, people affected by natural disasters and many others whose circumstances prevent them from accessing services.

Barriers related to gender: Despite significant progress in this area in a number of South Asia countries, many barriers remain that are related to gender, and in most cases it is women and/or girls who are disadvantaged and marginalized. Girls typically receive poorer nutrition in early childhood than boys and are less likely to be given the opportunity to enrol in and complete school. This leads to more limited opportunities in their adult lives. From birth to death, females suffer cumulative disadvantage. The gender factor exacerbates other barriers with the effect that females of most vulnerable groups suffer multiple disadvantages.

5.3 Strategies, Policies and Programmes to Reach Target Groups

The countries of South Asia have adopted a broad approach to address the issue of reaching the groups which are not fully accessing education. Governments have included a number of mutually supportive strategies which collectively, if implemented fully, should greatly increase the participation of disadvantaged and marginalized groups.

Rights-based education: Most of the countries in the region have adopted a rights-based approach to education. The state recognises its responsibility to ensure that all children enjoy their right to education, and measures are being taken to promote access for all. In Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Maldives and Sri Lanka there is legal provision for free education for all children in the primary or basic level. However, this is not yet the reality in most of the countries. In Nepal, the interim Constitution of 2007 enshrines the right to basic education, but its implementation is planned to be carried out in phases. There are plans to make education free and compulsory in the first phase.

In Pakistan, a compulsory primary education act has been enacted in three out of four provinces and in one out of three administrative areas, but enforcement is still pending. As all countries have ratified the CRC, no child should be excluded from mainstream education. In that regard, the CRC Committee has given the non-discrimination principle a dynamic interpretation. Developing legislation against discrimination however is not sufficient. Governments must take pro-active measures to ensure that all children enjoy equal rights and opportunities. The right to non-discrimination also specifies that states must respect and ensure non-discrimination "to each child within their jurisdiction." The CRC Committee interprets this to include children in the country who are not citizens or do not even have permission to reside there, such as children of (illegal) migrant workers and those in refugee camps.

Extending coverage: All the countries plan to continue extending coverage until every geographical area is reached. Infrastructure improvements continue to take a major part of education budgets. In many countries, classrooms are still overcrowded, and additional physical expansion is necessary not only to accommodate the number of pupils already enrolled but also to provide space to enrol those currently outside the system.

Improving the quality of education: In most countries, the number of children who drop out of the system before completion of basic education far exceeds the number of those who never enrol. It is recognized that one of the major reasons for low completion rates is the poor quality of education provided in schools. Often, children have to repeat grades, and in a number of studies it has been shown that many do not achieve the basic minimum competencies expected. For this reason, quality has to be improved in order to both attract and retain students.

Sectoral approaches: Increasingly, governments are taking a sectoral approach for the development and improvement of the education system. Instead of investing heavily in projects for a limited population, donors too are looking for ways to assist the entire education system to function more efficiently and effectively. In Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Sri Lanka sectoral approaches are being led by their governments with assistance from international donors.

Targeting: As systems become more effective in enrolling and retaining the majority of children, it becomes even more necessary to target interventions to reach the ones who are not participating. In most cases, these are children and young people who are facing one or more of the barriers described above. Simply encouraging their parents to send them to school will not be sufficient. Interventions have to be custom-made to meet their needs and to ensure their effective participation in educational activities.

Alternative education: While all the countries will maintain their emphasis on enrolling and retaining most children in the government supported mainstream system, it is recognized that for a small minority of children access will continue to be a problem. For these children, alternative

education programmes are being planned and implemented. In many cases these programmes are part of partnerships between government and communities, or they are implemented by NGOs. Such programmes are particularly important for adolescents and for children and young people who cannot attend school during the normal hours. Alternative education is also important for adult learners. Perhaps the most important principle for alternative education is that it should meet the specific needs of learners and quality should not be compromised. Official recognition and certification are also important.

6. Cross-Cutting and Thematic Issues in the Sub-Region

6.1 Ethnic, Linguistic and Religious Minorities and Indigenous Groups

South Asia is an area with diverse ethno-linguistic groups. At least 586 languages are spoken across South Asia.[14] Many language groups extend across national boundaries and are present in more than one country of the region. The exact number of languages in the region, as well as in several of the countries is disputed due to definitional differences, but multilingualism is a phenomenon in every country. Some of the countries, such as India and Pakistan, have large numbers, sometimes including all or most of the inhabitants of particular states or provinces, who speak as their mother tongue a language other than the national language.

Many speakers of minority languages are denied access to education in their mother tongue. In South Asia, a third of children (34%) are in schools in which the instruction is in a language other than their mother tongue.[15] Many of the children who do not have access to education in their own language are from linguistic minorities and indigenous groups. The groups and their languages are accorded low status in society, which complicates the issue of access to education in an appropriate language.

A mismatch between the language spoken at home and the language in school can have several negative consequences, including increased chances of repetition and dropping out.[16] There is inequality of opportunity in such learning situations because those who speak the language of the school can start learning from the first day, while the others must first learn the foreign code. The effectiveness of teachers may be seriously compromised by their lack of understanding of how children acquire a second language. Differences in language competence in school often remain unnoticed by teachers, especially where children are given fewer opportunities to speak and actively participate. Effective bilingual education starts with developing the child's reading, writing and thinking skills in the mother tongue. At the same time, the national or target language can be taught as a second language. Bilingual programmes must be well developed and implemented effectively so that children master the majority language as well as their mother tongue in order to be able to take full advantage of educational and other opportunities within the broader society. Research suggests that recognizing the importance of mother tongue languages in a bilingual or multilingual education structure results in improvements of educational attainment and helps to retain students from minority groups in school.[17] "When children continue to develop their abilities in two or more languages throughout their primary school years, they gain a deeper understanding of language and how to use it effectively. They have more practice in processing language, especially when they develop literacy in both, and they are more able to compare and contrast the ways in which their two languages organize reality."[18]

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14 SIL, *Ethnologue*, 2007. Online at www.ethnologue.com.
15 UNDP, *Human Development Report 2004: Cultural Liberty in Today's Diverse World*, 2004.
16 UNESCO, *Promoting Literacy in Multilingual Settings,* 2007.
17 UNESCO, *First Language First: Community-Based Literacy Programmes for Minority Language Contexts in Asia,* 2005.
18 Cummins, J, *Bilingual Children's Mother Tongue: Why Is It Important for Education?*, 2000.

While UNESCO and other international organizations promote the use of mother tongue and multilingual education, many of the countries are ambiguous in terms of both policy and practice. In a number of countries, national or official language of instruction has been seen as a unifying factor, so there has been a reluctance to encourage the use of other languages in schools. This attitude is much less prevalent in the twenty-first century, but it remains a fact that the speakers of most of the minority languages of South Asia do not have access to education in their mother tongue.

Box 3: UNESCO's Principles on Language and Education

Principle I: UNESCO supports mother tongue instruction as a means of improving educational quality by building upon the knowledge and experience of the learners and teachers.

1. Mother tongue instruction is essential for initial instruction and literacy and should be extended to as late a stage as possible.
2. Literacy can only be maintained if there is an adequate supply of reading material, for adolescents and adults as well as for schoolchildren.
3. Educational planning should include at each stage, early provision for training, and further training of sufficient numbers of fully competent and qualified teachers of the country concerned, who are familiar with the life of their people and able to teach in the mother tongue.

Principle II: UNESCO supports bilingual and/or multilingual education at all levels of education as a means of promoting both social and gender equality, as a key element of linguistically diverse societies.

1. Communication, expression and the capacity to listen and dialogue first of all in the mother tongue, then, in the official language in the country, as well as in one or more foreign languages.
2. Emphasis should be given to the formulation of strong national policies designed to promote language teaching in cyberspace to facilitate the development of freely accessible materials on language education in the electronic form and to enhance human capital skills in this area.

Principle III: UNESCO supports language as an essential component of intercultural education in order to encourage understanding between different population groups and ensure respect for fundamental rights.

1. Measures should be taken to eliminate discrimination in education at all levels on the basis of gender, race, language, religion, national origin, age or any other factor.
2. The education rights of persons belonging to . . . minorities, as well as indigenous peoples should be fully respected through:
   - The implementation of the right to learn in the mother tongue and the full use of culturally appropriate teaching methods of communication and transmission of knowledge;
   - The teaching of and through, not only the mother tongue, but also the national or official languages so that minorities and indigenous peoples will have the opportunity to participate in and contribute to the larger community.

3. Education should raise awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity, and to this end:
   - Curriculum should promote a realistic and positive inclusion of the minority history, culture, language and identity.
   - The cultural component of language teaching and learning should be strengthened in order to gain a deeper understanding of other cultures; languages should not be simple linguistic exercises, but opportunities to reflect on other ways of life, other literature, and other customs.

Source: UNESCO, *Education in a Multicultural World*, 2003.

Policy as well as practice varies greatly in the countries of the region. While Nepal now has a positive policy to promote mother tongue and multilingual education, the extent of provision is still quite limited. In Bhutan, with more than 18 languages, the medium of instruction in schools is primarily English with some classes conducted in Dzongkha, the national language. Within India, over 400 languages are spoken.[19] Of these, 22 are recognized as constitutional languages. In most states there is provision for education in the state language as well as in English and in Hindi, the national language.

Although not yet widespread, there is an increasing use of mother tongue as the medium of instruction for indigenous and other minority groups. There are currently a number of multilingual education programmes being developed where the medium of instruction is initially in mother tongue with a gradual transition to second and third languages. Mother tongue is maintained for as long as feasible and at least until the end of the primary cycle. Pakistan is a multilingual country with six major languages and at least 57 other languages, with the national language Urdu spoken as the mother tongue by 8% of the population.[20] Urdu is widely understood and spoken throughout the country and is used as the medium of instruction in most government schools. In Bangladesh, where over 98% of the population speak Bangla as their first language, there is no provision in government schools for using minority or indigenous languages as a medium of instruction. However, a number of innovative initiatives have been undertaken by NGOs to promote the use of mother tongue.

In Asia, millions of children are attending schools which ignore their mother tongue and which do not encourage the development of their multilingual skills. There is substantial research which indicates the importance of children having the opportunity to learn in their first language, and multilingual education is now recognized as a positive factor in children's overall social and academic development. A number of changes in societies in Asia may be necessary to promote policies for multilingual education and to see it put into practice. Attitudinal changes, acknowledgement of linguistic diversity, comprehensive data on the linguistic make-up of countries and national and local planning based on the actual situation are all key factors for taking forward the agenda for multilingual education.[21]

19 SIL, *Ethnologue*, 2007. Online at www.ethnologue.com.
20 *Ibid*.
21 UNESCO APPEAL, *Promoting Literacy in Multilingual Settings,* 2007.

Box 4: Bilingual Literacy Programme for the Rabha Community in Assam, India

There are many minority language groups in India, particularly in Assam, that do not have reading materials in their mother tongue. The Assam State Resource Centre (SRC) decided to prepare learning materials for minority language groups in Assam as a contribution to the eradication of illiteracy. For its first project, the SRC has begun developing materials in the Rabha language.

One of the main aims of the project has been to produce educational materials in the Rabha language. SRC Assam has produced five bilingual books and three primers with handbooks/ teacher's manuals. These have been well-received. This has motivated others to publish Rabha language materials. A significant outcome is that other ethnic minority communities have now approached SRC Assam to help facilitate activities towards the preservation of their languages and culture, including the production of literacy materials.

In order to promote local ownership and sustain the programme, the Rabha language project is integrated with the existing literacy programmes conducted by the Goalpara District Literacy Committee. In order to bring about economic empowerment in Rabha communities, self-help groups for women have been formed, thus involving the community as a whole in the project, and women in particular, as a means to build capacity, develop awareness of issues such as health, universalize primary education, prevent school dropouts, upgrade skills and support the literacy campaign.

The District Literacy Societies will be responsible for reprinting the teacher training manual that was prepared by SRC Assam. This will lead to greater independence for the district societies. The District Literacy Societies will be given training in conducting literary classes. There is a plan to complete an ongoing study of comparative learning abilities among the Rabha population in Goalpara District, Assam.

There are many languages in India that do not have written scripts. Mother tongue education will become feasible only when there are learning materials available. In the future, SRC Assam aims to participate in the preparation of learning materials in these languages.

Source: UNESCO, *First Language First: Community-based Literacy Programmes for Minority Language Contexts in Asia*, 2005.

6.2 Urban/Rural Disparities

Disparities in educational access by location persist in most of the countries of the region. The largest differences are often in terms of urban and rural populations. Generally, the indicators are more positive for urban than rural areas, and in most cases the rates for urban areas exceed the national averages. The rural populations most disadvantaged are usually poor, vulnerable, isolated and minority communities. Some communities have particular difficulty in accessing education, for instance remote villages in the mountains and isolated communities on small islands. A number of the countries have communities of this type. In general, services are more available in urban areas and there are higher levels of income and affluence that facilitate children having access to education.

The exception to the urban-rural divide is the very poor communities in many of the large slum areas of the mega-cities of the region. In some cases, children in these areas are the most disadvantaged in the country with many of the indicators for urban poor populations being far below the national average. It is particularly difficult for children from poor families to access education if they are

living on land which is considered illegally occupied. There are floating populations such as street children who do not have an established address and thus find gaining entry into formal education almost impossible. In general, there is a lack of schools in low-income high density population areas. The general services have not kept up with the massive growth in some of these areas. If EFA targets are to be achieved, innovative strategies and more flexible systems will be required to enrol and retain the children from the very poor urban communities.

6.3 Gender Disparities

Significant progress has been made in the past decade in the area of gender parity. Bangladesh, the Maldives and Sri Lanka have all achieved parity in enrolments and most of the other countries in the region have made significant progress in this area. However, in the area of gender equality, there is still much to be done. Because of deep-rooted gender inequalities as well as a large population, South Asia is the region with the highest number of out-of-school girls in the world. Even in countries such as Bangladesh, where gender parity has been achieved in primary and lower secondary enrolments, at higher levels of the system there are still large discrepancies in numbers as well as in achievement. Achieving gender equality at all levels remains a major challenge.

There are a number of gender specific issues that are common across most of the countries in the region which serve as barriers to girls' education. These include early marriage, sexual harassment, malnutrition and the low proportion of women teachers.[22] Combined with other constraints which are common for both girls and boys, these additional barriers often mean that girls, even if they manage to complete their basic education, do not progress to higher levels of education. In nearly all the countries of the region there remains an imbalance in female and male students at upper secondary and tertiary levels.

Box 5: "Eve Teasing" and Girls' Education

In South Asia, sexual harassment is often referred to by the innocuous sounding term "eve teasing," and it is widely reported in Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. A girl runs the risk of being harassed, assaulted, abducted or even murdered on the way to or from school, and she is by no means free from risk within the school. For this reason, many girls are withdrawn from school when they reach puberty. Girls who live at some distance from the school are particularly vulnerable; the farther they have to travel to school, the more remote the area, the greater the potential risk. Some parents compromise by sending their daughters to a nearby school, even if it is known to be of poor quality or does not offer the full range of subjects. The girls' brothers are allowed to go further afield to find a better quality education. In Madhya Pradesh, India, the EGS has initiated the practice of para-teachers or helpers collecting girl children from their homes and dropping them off each day at school to ensure enrolment and security. Schools are constructed within a one kilometre radius from homesteads on demand and the emphasis is on enrolment of all children.

Source: *Girls' Education in South Asia,* Education and Gender Equality Series, Oxfam GB, 2006.

6.4 Persons with Disabilities

Although there is little or no data available in most countries, it is estimated that in each country of South Asia, at least 10% of the population lives with a disability. There are large numbers of people who are disabled and lack basic support such as access to education. Disability and poverty are

22 Oxfam, *Girls' Education in South Asia*, Education and Gender Equality Series, Oxfam GB, 2006.

inextricably linked. Since disability often leads to poverty and poverty exacerbates disability, people with disabilities are some of the poorest and most vulnerable population in South Asia.[23]

While most countries have a small number of special schools catering for some specific physical disabilities (e.g. hearing and sight impairment), traditionally in school systems in South Asia, the vast majority of children with disabilities have been excluded. While this is changing, in a number of countries there is still a tendency to see disabilities as an insurmountable barrier to education. In a UNICEF study looking at Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka, it was reported that in all three countries, the enrolment of children with disabilities is well below the national average and many children continue to be out-of-school. In both Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, some evidence suggests that girls with disabilities are even more likely than boys to be out-of-school.[24]

Box 6: Dynamics of Disability and Education

Demand

- There is increasing demand for educating children with disabilities, in particular their inclusion in mainstream schooling which reflects growing international concern and commitments.

However

- Children with disabilities continue to suffer from discrimination and the belief that they are 'uneducable.'
- Many children with disabilities are hidden away at home and thus 'hard to reach.'
- Lack of knowledge of disability and back-up for poor families in supporting their children's development can lead to even further disadvantage (for example children with impaired mobility are not stimulated to play and explore their environment and thus their cognitive development is also affected).

Supply

- In Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka there is a commitment to include children with disabilities in education.

However

- Many schools remain physically inaccessible or un-usable for children with limited mobility or with sensory disabilities.
- In contexts where teachers' general skills for implementing effective teaching-learning approaches remains limited, where children with disabilities do gain access, schools might still be unable to respond appropriately to their personal or educational needs.
- In contexts where pupil assessment capacities are generally weak (and examination-focused), there is an even greater challenge in accurately diagnosing specific disabilities and assessing the educational level and needs of disabled children.
- There is a lack of general resources for quality improvement (to the detriment of the least academically able) and of specific resources needed to support successful inclusion of children with specific disabilities (e.g. Braille typewriters).
- As with other forms of discrimination, discrimination against children with disabilities, including active abuse, is often reproduced within the education system.

Source: Amanda Seel, Social Inclusion: Gender and Equity in Education SWAPS in South Asia Synthesis Report, UNICEF, 2007.

23 World Bank, Disability in South Asia, 2008.
24 Amanda Seel, *Social Inclusion: Gender and Equity in Education SWAPS in South Asia Synthesis Report,* UNICEF, 2007.

Most children with disabilities can be educated in mainstream classrooms. Some need additional assistance and/or aids, but with appropriate support, the vast majority can receive a relevant education sitting alongside their peers in regular classrooms. The governments of South Asia are beginning to adopt policies to accommodate children with disabilities within mainstream education. However, much more needs to be done to ensure that all children with physical and/or mental disabilities are enrolled in school, that their specific learning needs are met and that they are retained to complete basic education as well as higher levels in accordance with their overall abilities and potential.

Inclusion is one of the major challenges facing education systems in South Asia. The question of how schools can accommodate all children, including the disabled from the communities they serve and enable them both to participate fully and achieve their full potential is a pressing issue related to equity and social justice in contemporary and future society. Inclusive education is not an approach for the benefit of children with disabilities only. Inclusive education does not just focus on how some learners such as children with disabilities can be integrated in regular schools, but it looks into how mainstream systems can be transformed in order to respond to learners' differences and diversity in constructive and positive ways. This includes, but is not limited to, children with disabilities.

Box 7: What is Inclusive Education?

Inclusive education is based on the belief that the right to education is a basic human right for all children and is the foundation for social justice. All children, whatever their differences, have a right to belong to mainstream society, to mainstream development and therefore to mainstream education. Though there is a special focus on learners vulnerable to marginalization and exclusion, inclusive education increases the effectiveness of the system in responding to all learners!

Inclusive education is consistent with the CRC which has been ratified by most countries and is thus legally binding. Inclusive education is based on a rights and responsibility analysis showing that national education systems and mainstream schools are responsible for all children. Inclusive education takes the EFA agenda forward by finding ways of enabling schools to serve all children in their communities as part of a national education system.

Inclusive education is about transforming mainstream systems (policies and practices) into more responsive systems and is as such concerned with all learners providing equal opportunities in access, participation and learning.

Inclusive education recognizes that every child has unique characteristics, interests, abilities and learning needs and therefore, if the right to education is to mean anything, systems must be designed and programmes implemented to take into account the wide diversity of these characteristics and needs (e.g. children living in poverty, ethnic, linguistic or cultural minorities, children with disabilities, children from remote or nomadic populations, children of migrant workers).

Inclusive education seeks to understand all barriers to access learning and recognizes that many children may find learning difficult in ordinary schools as they are currently constituted. Repetition rates and poor learning achievements are importantly linked to what and how teachers teach and interact with learners. Children may find the curriculum uninspiring and irrelevant or they may have problems understanding the language of instruction.

Inclusive education recognizes that mainstream education needs to accommodate different styles and rates of learning while ensuring quality education for all children through appropriate and differentiated curricula, classroom organizational arrangements and flexible teaching strategies. Inclusive education is about transforming education focusing on: (a) effective teacher education; (b) respecting and responding to diversity; (c) appropriate teaching aids and equipment; (d) professionally supported schools and teachers; and (f) active involvement of parents and communities.

Source : Els Heijnen-Maathuis, "Effective Schools Are Inclusive Schools," *RABSEL*, Spring 2005.

6.5 Migrants, Internally Displaced Persons, Refugees and Stateless Persons

At the end of 2006, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), registered a total of 32.9 million "persons of concern" globally.[25] The persons of concern include refugees, asylum-seekers, internally displaced persons (IDPs), refugees who have returned home (returnees), IDPs who have returned home, stateless persons and other persons in a refugee or returnee-like situation. There were 9.9 million refugees globally, and a total of 12.8 million IDPs were receiving humanitarian assistance. The number of officially recognised stateless persons stood at 5.8 million and the worldwide total is estimated to be around 15 million. Nearly all the countries in South Asia have at least some of these categories of people living within their borders. Pakistan has the single largest number of refugees in the world. Pakistan and Iran together were home to one-fifth of the world's refugees. Sri Lanka has over 144,000 IDPs and the number of IDPs in Nepal is in excess of 100,000. The official Government estimate of stateless people within Nepal is 3.4 million.[26] Other countries in the region also have considerable numbers of refugees and stateless persons.

Where the responsibility lies for educating the children of most of these categories has been debated, globally, in the region and within countries. Often the host government has not felt it should bear the responsibility alone, and the response from the international community has been mixed. While in some places educational provision has been established for the children living in camps and other designated areas, in others the provision has been either non-existent or insufficient and of poor quality. This continues as a major issue to be addressed as part of the agenda to ensure that every child in South Asia enjoys the right to education.

Migration is also a factor that affects the education of children. The global migrant population was estimated to be between 185 million to 192 million people in 2005. In Asia, the number had increased from 28.1 million in 1970 to 43.8 million in 2000.[27] Reasons for migration, across countries as well as within countries, are complex and usually involve a number of overlapping factors including economic survival, war, refuge, government policies, personal problems and anticipated opportunities elsewhere. Although often viewed negatively, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) asserts that migration brings a range of benefits.[28] These benefits may include better educational opportunities for children. However, for children the consequences of their parents' migration will depend on the circumstances. Both or only one parent may migrate, children may join, go on their own or be left behind to be taken care of by family members. Each situation has a different impact on children and their education. Most internal migrants move from rural areas to urban centres within countries, and many of them end up in urban slums or on the street where there is little or no educational provision. In many countries of South Asia,

25 UNHCR, *2006 Global Trend: Refugees, Asylum-seekers, Returnees, Internally Displaced and Stateless Persons*, July 2007.
26 *Ibid.*
27 IOM, *World Migration 2005: Costs and Benefits of International Migration*, 2006.
28 *Ibid.*

internal migration, particularly from rural to urban areas, has not been accounted for in educational planning. This has resulted in an imbalance in educational provision with the result that schools are either not available or severely overcrowded in some areas, such as urban slums while in other areas the number of students is much more in line with the available resources.

6.6 Effects of Natural Disasters

South Asia is a region which is susceptible to natural disasters, and most of the countries in the region have been affected by major natural disasters during the first decade of this century. The tsunami in December 2004 severely affected Sri Lanka, the Maldives and parts of southern India.

The earthquake of October 2005 devastated northern parts of Pakistan and India. Both these events resulted in a massive loss of lives. In Bangladesh in 2007, there were two floods and a cyclone. While the loss of lives was fairly low (compared to such catastrophes in the past), they caused widespread hardship and disruption to the lives of hundreds of thousands.

Natural disasters often have a profound effect on education. Earthquakes, floods and cyclones all cause physical damage to the infrastructure of schools. Such catastrophic events also profoundly affect the lives of children and disrupt their learning. Often schools are used as shelters while other services are being restored, which means that they are unavailable for use for their educational purposes. The education of children can be interrupted for months and sometimes even years. In the worst cases, particularly in families of the very poor and the most vulnerable, the children never return to school following the disaster.

Governments and international agencies are becoming more aware of the educational needs of children following a natural disaster. Standards are being set for restoring education as quickly and as efficiently as possible. It is now recognized that reestablishing education after an emergency plays a critical role not only in minimizing the disruption to the children's education but also in normalizing the environment for children which helps children overcome the psychological impact of disasters. Also, education provides a protective environment for children who are more vulnerable to exploitation and abuse in the wake of emergencies.[29]

In 2000, the Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) was set up and its membership has since grown to over 100 organizations and 800 individuals. Its mandate is to share knowledge and experience, to promote greater donor understanding of education in emergencies and advocate for education to be included in emergency response. The INEE has facilitated the development of a widely agreed framework which provides programming guidelines for education in emergencies.[30] The Minimum Standards also provide a framework for promoting gender equality, ensuring that girls' and boys' rights to quality and relevant education are met and the education provided is gender responsive and empowering for all.[31] The guidelines have already been used in the aftermath of a number of natural disasters, including in South Asia following the 2004 tsunami and 2005 earthquake.

29 UNICEF ROSA, *Education in Emergencies Facilitators' Guide*, 2007.
30 INEE, *Minimum Standards for Education in Emergencies, Chronic Crises and Early Reconstruction*, 2004.
31 UNESCO, *Education in Emergencies: The Gender Implications*, 2006.

Box 8: Emergency Education Response in Sri Lanka

After the tsunami hit Sri Lanka in December 2004, an Emergency Education Desk was set up at the Centre for National Operations, and a task force was established to support the return of children to school by the end of January 2005. UNICEF provided major support, not only for the repair and cleaning of damaged school buildings, but also for rebuilding child-friendly facilities which prioritized girls' needs, based on the following criteria:

- Children of primary-school age should have a school within walking distance.
- Learning spaces should include room for extra-curricular activities, project-based learning spaces and individual learning spaces. Internal and external learning areas should be linked by verandas and decking.
- Communities (including children) should be involved in the locating, planning and management of schools.
- Teachers should be supported to build links with the community and community-development initiatives. Teachers should receive training in providing psychosocial support for children and their families and receive support themselves to cope with the trauma they have undergone.

Source: Oxfam, *Girls Education in South Asia*, Education and Gender Equality Series, 2006.

6.7 Persons Affected by HIV/AIDS

Since the first reports of HIV/AIDS in 1981, HIV/AIDS has reached pandemic proportions, resulting in more than 65 million infections and 25 million deaths worldwide. It is estimated that each day, 11,000 persons become newly infected with the virus, half of whom are women and 40% of whom are young people. It was estimated that at the end of 2006 approximately 2.3 million children under 15 years were living with HIV.[32] The overall prevalence of HIV in South Asia is relatively low, particularly compared to sub-Saharan Africa, where adult prevalence is 5.9%. All the countries in South Asia (except for Pakistan for which no information was available) reported adult prevalence rates of less than 1% in 2005.[33] However, due to the large populations of several of the countries in South Asia, even a relatively low HIV prevalence means that a large number of people are infected. In India alone, the estimated number of people living with HIV was 2.5 million while much lower numbers were reported for the other countries (70,000 in Nepal, 7,500 in Bangladesh, 5,000 in Sri Lanka and less than 500 in Bhutan and the Maldives).[34] However, the detection systems in most of the countries are not well developed, which means that the incidence of HIV could be considerably higher than the reported numbers. In any case, there is no room for complacency. This is an area that requires attention from the education systems in each of the countries. Children living with HIV must not be denied their right to education as a result of the infection, and there should be a concentration of preventative measures within schools, other education establishments and NFE channels.

6.8 Child Labour

The International Labour Organization (ILO) estimates that approximately 352 million children between the ages of 5 and 18 in the world are economically active with 246 million of them engaged in various forms of child labour, 179 million of whom are engaged in the worst forms

32 WHO, *HIV/AIDS in the South-East Asia Region,* March 2007.
33 *Ibid.*
34 *Ibid.*

of child labour.[35] With some 127 million working children, the Asia–Pacific region has the largest number of child workers in the 5 to 14 age group. It is estimated that in Asia, there are 104 million children aged 5 to 17 working and that 62 million of them are engaged in work considered hazardous. Based on data from surveys in the countries of the region, UNICEF estimates that 15% of girls and 14% of boys in South Asia are involved in child labour activities.[36]

Efforts to achieve EFA and the progressive elimination of child labour are inextricably linked.[37] There is generally a consensus that the most effective way to prevent children from entering child labour is to extend and improve access to school, particularly to schools offering good quality education. Conversely, child labour is one of the main obstacles to achieving EFA. Involvement in child labour is usually at the expense of the child's education. It is therefore vital to understand the interplay between child labour and education, and to simultaneously and comprehensively address both issues. In many of the countries of South Asia, the age range covered under compulsory education policies is considerably lower than the minimum legal age for entering the labour force. Besides efforts to enrol and retain all children in primary education, policies should support their continuation in education until at least the age when they can legally enter the labour force.

Box 9: Inter-Agency Working Group on Child Labour and Education

As part of the international response to the issues of EFA and the gradual elimination of child labour, an Inter-Agency Working Group on Child Labour and Education has been formed. The group is made up of members representing ILO, UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank and the Global March Against Child Labour. Based on world experience and expertise, several key underlying principles have been identified by the group that characterize best practice in the area of education and child labour. The principles include the following:

- Multi-sectoral approaches have a much more effective and sustained impact in the elimination and prevention of child labour, combining the involvement of relevant government line ministries, social partners and civil society.
- Education is a necessary but not sufficient intervention in the case of children in hazardous and exploitative labour. In addition to receiving education of good quality and relevance, working children also need to benefit from a protective rights-based environment and access to legal, health and other services.
- Combatting child labour must be mainstreamed into the country's Poverty Reduction Strategy Programme (PRSP), EFA national plans of action and other resource allocation frameworks.
- Partnerships within the broader framework of the UN system and other international organizations must be actively pursued and implemented.
- Particular attention should be paid to the situation of girls' work and education through gender-specific strategies, and to the situation of particularly vulnerable groups.
- Formal education strategies are vital to the long-term success of interventions.
- Practices should be grounded in country-specific realities when dealing with the issue of child labour, while recognizing broader issues that may go beyond one specific country.

Source: Inter-Agency Working Group on Child Labour and Education, E*merging Good Practices in the Elimination of Child Labour and Achievement of Education for All*, ILO, 2005.

35 ILO, *Combating Child Labour in Asia and the Pacific*, 2005.
36 UNICEF, *State of the World Children's Report 2006: Excluded and Invisible*.
37 Guarcello, LGS Lyon and FC Rosati, *Child Labour and Education for All: an Issue Paper,* UCW Project, 2006.

6.9 Addressing the Cross-Cutting Issues

South Asian countries are committed to education as a basic human right. Approaching education from a rights perspective has far reaching implications for the development and reform of educational systems based on the principles of nondiscrimination, participation and equality.

Enrolments have increased throughout the region, but access for children from low income and socially marginalized groups remains a challenge, contributing to the high number of out-of-school children in South Asia. Although the situation is different in each country, in South Asia, children not in school are likely to be girls, children affected by on-going conflict situations, children from ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities, children of migrant workers, nomadic populations, children with disabilities, children from socially and economically disadvantaged families and child labourers. In order to develop effective educational interventions, an understanding of the patterns of social exclusion is crucial. An analysis of how disparities are exacerbated by poverty is also essential.

Access, attendance and learning achievement have also been undermined by armed conflict and natural disasters in South Asia. Extra attention and care are warranted for vulnerable groups such as internally displaced children, children in refugee camps, learners with disabilities and those from ethnic and linguistic minorities. In situations of conflict or natural disaster, quality education is a necessity that can be both life-sustaining and life-saving, providing physical protection, psychological and social well-being and cognitive development.

The lack of reliable data on disadvantaged and socially excluded children generally constrains governments in South Asia from responding effectively. While diversity should be viewed as an asset for countries as well as for individuals, it is essential that differences do not result in discrimination and exclusion. Where this has happened in the past or is still the case, steps must be taken to redress the balance and to build fully inclusive systems of education.

In order to engage the groups most difficult to reach in educational activities relevant to their situation, special efforts are required, and in many cases extraordinary allocations will be necessary. It is imperative to keep such groups at the forefront of plans. Otherwise, whatever the successes with the general population, EFA will never be fully achieved.

PART II:
SOUTH ASIA SUB-REGIONAL PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

The indicators used for cross-country comparisons in this chapter are internationally standardized based on ISCED 1997 and verified by the UIS, permitting comparisons. The raw education data are reported by the Member States' MOE to the UIS and population data by the NSOs to the United Nations Population Division. Data used for sub-national analysis are from the MOEs unless otherwise indicated.

7. Introduction to the Data

All seven countries of South Asia included in this report have made progress towards the achievement of the six EFA goals. Each one also continues to face challenges and constraints, as is evident in the synthesis reports of each country which make up Part III of this report. In Part II each goal is presented with an analysis of common trends and patterns in South Asia, based on information from the seven national reports and correlated data from the UIS.

The discussion of each EFA goal follows a general outline which starts with a statement of the goal. Common definitions and variations in the definitions across the countries are discussed. Relevant national policies, strategies and programmes are highlighted. The main section for each goal is the presentation of the progress achieved for selected EFA MDA core indicators that compare the available baseline data (preferably for 2000) and the latest data (generally for 2005) for the countries of South Asia. Variations across and within countries are highlighted. Trends are also analyzed on the basis of sex-disaggregated data, and to the extent possible, differences in progress based on other factors are presented and analyzed to identify disparities and inequities within the populations of the countries. The efforts countries are making to improve quality and to address other cross-cutting issues are discussed, and some of the best practices and promising approaches in the region are presented. The chapter on each goal concludes with a consideration of the remaining challenges and the prospects for achieving the goal in the countries of South Asia.

8. Goal One: Early Childhood Care and Education

Goal One: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Dakar Framework for Action Expanded Commentary on ECCE

All young children must be nurtured in safe and caring environments that allow them to become healthy, alert and secure and be able to learn. The past decade has provided more evidence that good quality ECCE, both in families and in more structured programmes, have a positive impact on the survival, growth, development and learning potential of children. Such programmes should be comprehensive, focusing on all of the child's needs and encompassing health, nutrition and hygiene as well as cognitive and psycho-social development. They should be provided in the child's mother tongue and help to identify and enrich the care and education of children with special needs. Partnerships between governments, NGOs, communities and families can help ensure the provision of good care and education for children, especially for those most disadvantaged, through activities centred on the child, focused on the family, based within the community and supported by national, multisectoral policies and adequate resources.

Governments, through relevant ministries, have the primary responsibility of formulating ECCE policies within the context of national EFA plans, mobilizing political and popular support, and promoting flexible, adaptable programmes for young children that are appropriate to their age and not mere downward extensions of formal school systems. The education of parents and other caregivers in better child care are important elements in achieving this goal.

8.1 Background and Development of ECCE in South Asia

8.1.1 Definition of Goal One

Although not always recognized, ECCE is the right of every child in accordance with the 1989 CRC, which has been ratified by all the countries of South Asia. The CRC guarantees the rights of the young child for survival, development, protection and nondiscrimination. The EFA Dakar Framework stresses the need for all children to have a good start in life, to be nurtured in safe and caring environments that allow them to become healthy, alert and secure and able to learn. Supportive environments are needed both within and outside the home for the child's maximum development. ECCE provides the foundation for the fulfilment of the other EFA goals.

In South Asia, there is no common definition of ECCE and in a number of the countries the terms "early childhood care and development" (ECCD) or "early childhood development" (ECD) are more commonly used. In most cases there is a recognition that early childhood covers the full age range from birth to entry into formal primary school (age 6 in most countries of South Asia). While recognizing the importance of appropriate multi-sectoral interventions for children at all stages of early childhood, amongst educational planners and practitioners there is a tendency to focus on pre-school type interventions.

In India, according to the national policy and the major national strategy, the emphasis is on holistic early childhood development with the basic premise that education and care are inseparable issues and must be considered as one. In Nepal, under the EFA NPA various forms of early care and education programmes that include school-based, community-based and privately run pre-primary and kindergarten schools have been brought under the one title ECD. Nepal's Tenth FYP has highlighted ECD as the main initiative to prepare children for enrolment in primary schools and for holistic development. Sri Lanka uses the term ECCD to describe programmes that support children's development, learning, health, nutrition and other attributes. Services are similar in ECD centres, pre-schools and Montessori schools, while in day care centres and crèches children are taken care of for longer hours in the absence of their working parents. In Bangladesh, the NPA promotes an integrated approach combining all aspects of child care and development including health, nutrition and sanitation as well as pre-primary education.

8.1.2 National Policies and Legislation for Provision and Coordination of ECCE

Because of its cross-sectoral nature, policies and plans for ECCE in South Asia are generally included in a number of different documents. In addition to policies under the education sector, there are elements relevant to ECCE in the policies and plans of the health sector as well as of ministries and departments of women's and children's affairs. In general few countries have comprehensive policies which cover the full gambit of ECCE.

India is the only country in South Asia in which a clear constitutional provision for ECCE exists. According to the 86th Amendment to the Constitution (2001), "the State shall endeavour to provide ECCE for all children until they complete the age of six years." ECCE is recognized as a constitutional provision but not as a legal right of every child. The provision of ECCE services is governed by a plethora of policies and related action plans beginning with the National Policy on Education (1986) which viewed ECCE as "an integral input in the human resource strategy, a feeder and support programme for primary education and a support service for working women." The National Policy for Children promotes holistic early childhood development and is supported by a national strategy for implementation.

Early childhood education is an important part of the General Education Reforms enacted by the Government of Sri Lanka in 1997. The Reforms detailed the actions to be taken for ECCD and pre-school education. The National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development (2004) is being introduced in the provinces by the Children's Secretariat, which functions under the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment (MCDWE).

Box 9: Sri Lanka's National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development (2004)

Aims:

- to assure, for every child, the best start in life by ensuring access to adequate health and nutrition services along with the opportunities for responsive psycho-social stimulation;
- to promote the importance of the integrated approach that brings together health, nutrition, psycho-social stimulation, safe water, hygiene and sanitation services;
- to develop standards and guidelines that regulate the development and implementation of ECCD programmes, i.e. home based programmes, child development centres, etc;
- to clarify the roles and responsibilities of central, divisional and local government authorities in the provision and support of the ECCD services indicating their commitment to the care and development of the young child;
- to clarify the relationship between governmental, non-governmental agencies, the private sector, communities and families in the provision of ECCD services;
- to synchronize and coordinate the services provided by the different stakeholders in ECCD so as to maximize the availability and use by all sectors of the population;
- to mobilize and allocate increasing financial resources for and investment in ECCD programmes;
- to promote the importance of the roles of parents, caregivers and the community in the development of children; and
- to enhance the capacity of parents/caregivers and communities to be able to adequately support their children's development.

Areas of Action:

- build knowledge and skills of caregivers to promote optimal child survival, growth and development;
- improve and expand training opportunities for service providers;
- support community-based child development centres; and
- identify and support children with special needs.

Source: Sri Lanka EFA MDA Country Report, 2008.

In other countries of the region the policies are not as comprehensive, but most have some type of strategic framework. In Nepal, based on the ECD Strategic Plan (2004), an ECD Programme Implementation Guideline was prepared by the Department of Education under the Ministry of Education and Sports (MOES) in 2005. In Bangladesh, the NPA recognizes that a number of government ministries must be involved in the implementation of the integrated approach which is advocated, particularly those responsible for education, social welfare, women and children's affairs, health nutrition, water and sanitation. The MOPME has approved an Operational Policy Framework for Pre-Primary Education. Under the framework national standards are being set for monitoring developmental readiness in early childhood and learning programmes with age-based criteria. In the Maldives, while there is no separate policy for ECCE, pre-primary education is an integral part of the overall education policy and strategy. ECCD was included in the Fifth and Sixth NDPs, the Education Sector Master Plan (1995-2005), and has a clear focus in the Seventh NDP.

In Bhutan, there is no specific policy for ECCE but a pre-primary class is compulsory for all 6 year olds when they enter school, and pre-primary is fully integrated into the education system. In Pakistan, provision has been made in the National Education Policy (1998-2010) to reintroduce pre-primary as a formal class in primary schools, a practice which had been discontinued in the 1980s.

8.1.3 Strategies and Programmes for Disadvantaged Children

In most South Asian countries, a key strategy is to recognize the provision that already exists from the private sector and NGOs, to encourage the continuation of such provision and to extend the reach of ECCE through both public and private programmes. There exists a variety of programmes for ECCE in the region, but many of them are small scale and the combination of programmes does not provide full coverage for the eligible children. Most governments have not addressed their responsibility as duty bearers under the CRC to ensure ECD for all children.

In the Maldives, prior to the introduction of modern pre-schools, the traditional 'edhuruge' (a home-based education system provided by respected community members) discharged the function of developing basic literacy, numeracy, religious knowledge and awareness in children. Today, modern pre-schools co-exist with 'edhuruge' in most island communities. The overall strategy in the Maldives is to strengthen and expand ECCD, enhance enrolment and encourage and sustain community initiatives and participation. The MOE provides assistance for community initiatives and also promotes alternative non-formal ECCD programmes.

The strategy of the Government of Pakistan is to extend ECE into all public schools and to continue to encourage the private sector and NGOs to operate pre-schools. In Bhutan, pre-primary classes are already included in the education system from the age of 6, and the private sector is encouraged to make provision for children under the age of 6. In Nepal, there are two different modalities. There is partial support by the Government of Nepal for urban and accessible areas, and special support for the establishment and operation of ECD centres in deprived and disadvantaged communities. In Sri Lanka, the majority of centres are operated by the private sector including NGOs and religious groups, some for profit and some as charitable operations.

In India, there are three distinct channels for ECCE services – public, private and NGOs. Government sponsored programmes are largely directed towards the disadvantaged communities, particularly those residing in rural areas. There are over 130 programmes under the auspices of various departments and ministries which target the development of children aged 0-6 years. As a sequel to the adoption of the National Policy for Children, the Government of India initiated the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS) which has emerged as a major national strategy for promoting holistic ECD through one community-based service provider for all children from pre-natal to 6 years, as well as for pregnant and nursing mothers. The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme operates centres for the children of working mothers. Under SSA, the national education sectoral programme, strategies have been adopted for greater convergence of pre-school education initiatives, especially of ICDS, with that of primary schooling. There is also provision for setting up pre-school centres in areas with no coverage.

The Government of Bangladesh has adopted a partnership approach for ECCE. In addition to pre-primary classes already in operation in formal schools (which are allowed but not funded by the Government), NGOs, CBOs and other groups and individuals are encouraged to establish and operate pre-primary classes in schools as well as to operate ECCE centres through community-based programmes. The NPA envisages three types of ECCE: school-based pre-primary education classes, community-based ECCE centres located within primary school catchment areas, and home-based ECCE programmes. In Bangladesh, there are also arrangements by local mosques and communities for pre-primary Islamic instruction, which is a widespread practice in Muslim communities in Bangladesh and most other countries of South Asia.

In all the countries there are a variety of providers, and the private sector plays a major role. While this may reduce the burden on public resources, it may also promote inequitable provision such that children from poor and disadvantaged families are either excluded from services altogether or are provided with a separate service which may be inferior in terms of quality and accessibility.

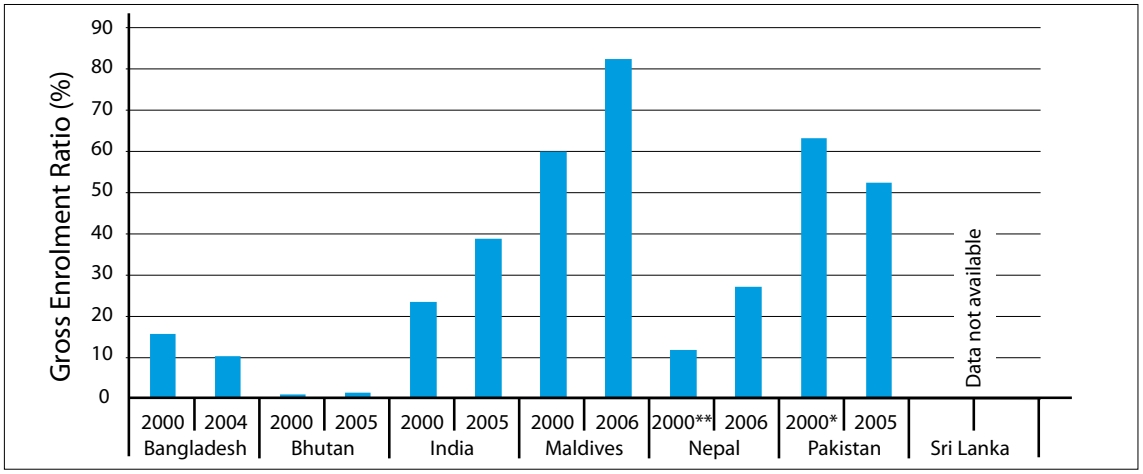
8.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

8.2.1 Progress of Countries in the Sub-Region

Major efforts have been made throughout Asia to improve child well-being, resulting in a decline in under-5 mortality rate of 22% in South and West Asia between 1995 and 2005. Rates declined by more than one-third in Bangladesh and the Maldives during this period. There are large differences in the under-5 mortality rate. The rate of deaths per 1,000 live births ranged from 16 in Sri Lanka to 100 in Pakistan in 2005. Very few children below age 3 in South Asia have access to ECCE programmes that comprehensively address their health, nutrition and learning needs.[38]

None of the countries in South Asia have set targets for the full range of ECCE. Most have set either no targets or modest targets for an increase in the provision of ECCE services, mainly pre-schools. Nepal has been the most ambitious aiming to provide ECD services to 80% of children aged 3 to 5 by 2015. In contrast, Pakistan has set a target of 50% coverage by 2015, which hardly exceeds current participation rates. Bangladesh has set a target to enrol 1.3 million children in the formal sector and 1.2 million through non-formal channels by 2015, resulting in a total of 2.5 million which is only 22% of the projected population of 3-5 year olds. In the Maldives, the target is to maintain a net enrolment of over 85% with a special emphasis to start pre-schools on the small islands where none currently exist.

Figure 1: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Pre-Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source : UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate.

38 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 Regional Overview: South and West Asia.*

Countries have charted uneven progress in the area of ECCE since 2000, as is illustrated by the gross enrolment ratios (GER) in Figure 1. As is the case for most of the goals, comprehensive comparisons of progress across countries cannot be made based on the available statistics. The criteria for what is considered ECCE provision varies greatly across countries, and in some cases within countries and for different reporting periods. For Sri Lanka, which along with the Maldives probably has the highest coverage, data is not available for a national rate, but coverage is about 80% in areas for which statistics have been collected. In Pakistan, it is unlikely that coverage has actually decreased, but there may be differences in how the data has been collected or in the definition of provision over the reporting period.

It is clear that ECCE has not been recognized as a right, and provision remains limited. No country has reported universal coverage, and, according to Figure 1, by any criteria, coverage is less than 50% of the age group in the majority of the countries. Generally low participation is also reflected in the information provided in the individual country reports on the percentage of children with ECCE experience upon entry in primary school. Of those that reported on this indicator using national data, only Sri Lanka and Pakistan recorded that more than half the children had ECCE experience before starting Grade 1. In Sri Lanka, national data showed that ECCE experience was reported for 90% of primary school entrants in districts for which data is available. It is likely that in the Maldives the percentage is also quite high based on the GER.

In most of the countries the private sector rather than the government is the main provider of ECCE services. In Sri Lanka, the majority of pre-school centres are operated by private providers, including NGOs and religious groups. In the Maldives, the other country with relatively high participation rates, only 12% of the children are enrolled in government operated pre-primary centres. According to the Maldives national EFA MDA report, there are 54 government-run pre-schools in the country, 48 community schools and 76 private schools. In India, about 10 million children are enrolled in fee charging initiatives, and there is also fairly large-scale coverage by NGOs. In Bangladesh, besides the commercial sector, which is relatively small-scale and limited mainly to urban areas, coverage by initiatives of NGOs exceeds the coverage through the formal sector. In Nepal, the highest proportion of pre-primary education is in Kathmandu Valley where private institutions dominate. In Pakistan, about 39% of ECE provision is through the private sector, compared to 33% involvement of the private sector in education overall.

8.2.2 Variations within Countries

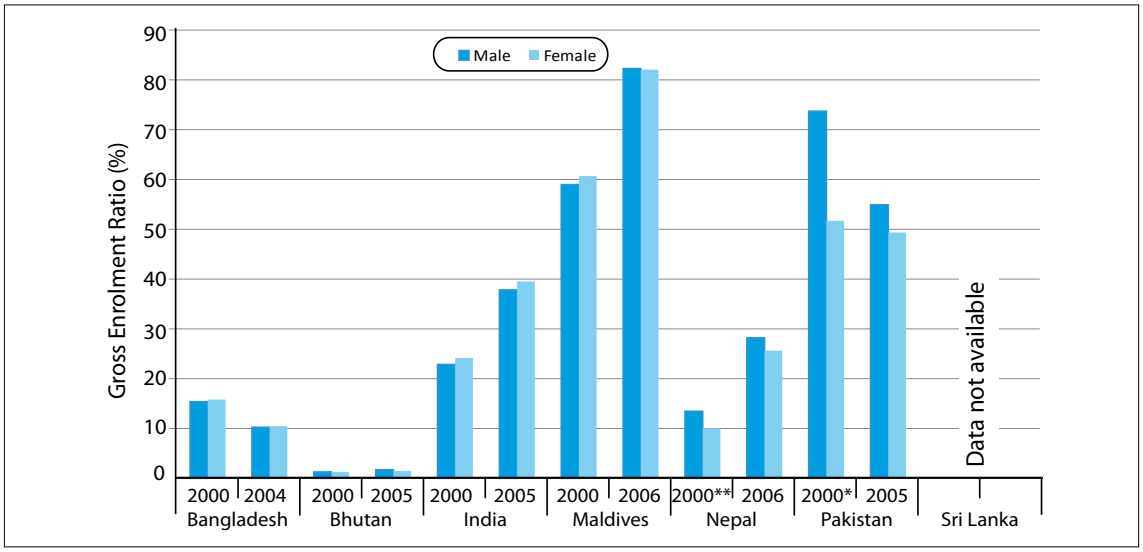
In addition to the differences in ECCE coverage across countries, there are also wide variations in rates within countries. Where the information is available, there are notable differences in participation rates by geographical location with particularly high differentials between urban and rural areas in some of the countries. There are also major variations in the rates for different sub-groups of the population.

8.3 Analysis of Disparities in Goal One

8.3.1 Progress in Achieving Gender and Social Equality in Goal One

ECCE appears to be the area in which South Asia is closest to achieving gender parity in enrolments in all the countries, although enrolment rates remain low except for in the Maldives. As can be seen in Figures 2, the enrolment of girls is almost equal to or exceeds the enrolment of boys in every country except Nepal and Pakistan. The gap between the sexes also narrowed significantly in Pakistan from 2000 to 2005, although enrolment rates for boys dropped significantly. In Sri Lanka, where complete data is not available, the enrolment of girls and boys in ECCE is reported to be approximately the same. This does not necessarily mean that girls have full equality within the classrooms, but gender parity in enrolment is an important first step.

Figure 2: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Pre-Primary Education, by Sex, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate.

Significant variations in GER were recorded in Pakistan for the four provinces and three administrative areas, and in some areas the gap between girls' and boys' enrolment was quite startling. For example, in the Federally Administered Tribal Area (FATA), the GER for boys was nearly double that of girls. In contrast to most of the other countries, Pakistan reported that gross enrolment in ECE was slightly higher in rural areas than in urban areas. In urban areas, private schools account for 73% of the enrolment compared to 22% in rural areas. No further breakdown is available to identify sub-groups of the population not participating in ECE activities.

In Nepal, there are regional differences in ECD coverage. The highest concentration of pre-schools is in the Kathmandu Valley. The overwhelming majority of institutional schools with pre-primary classes are located in urban areas. A number of districts have particularly low participation rates, mostly mountain, hill and some terai (plains) districts. There are 12 districts in which less than 5% of the children in Grade 1 had prior ECD experience.

In Sri Lanka, the national data available for 2005 has been disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, medium of instruction and geographical location. The percentage of Tamil children (80%) with ECCE experience at entry in Grade 1 is less than the Muslim children (85%) and both are lower than the majority Sinhala children (93%). The percentage of girls and boys is approximately the same for all three groups. The percentage of children with ECCE experience in Tamil medium (81%) is considerably lower than that of Sinhala medium (93%).

In India, the children uncovered and unreached by ECCE programmes are found in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas, many of them are located in isolated and remote hamlets, dalit hamlets and fishing hamlets and in temporary settlements of seasonal migrant workers. In urban areas, many of them live on the pavements and in unauthorized settlements and slums. Children living in difficult circumstances, such as children of long-term patients, children with special needs, children of sex workers and women prisoners, riot and disaster affected children, refugees and displaced children have been identified as children uncovered and unreached by ECCE programmes.

In Bangladesh, there is an emphasis on the provision of ECCE for the poorest and most vulnerable children, and this has been the focus of most of the work by NGOs. However, data is not available to identify geographical areas or sub-groups of the population in which participation in ECCE is particularly low.

In Bhutan, except for the pre-primary class required of all children entering school at the age of 6, ECCD is a small, urban initiative. It is recognized that interventions need to be developed to extend ECCD activities to rural areas and to the poorest and most disadvantaged.

In the Maldives, ECCD activities are very widespread, but there is a higher concentration in urban areas. Through intensive government efforts, modern pre-schools have been established on all but 12 of the inhabited islands.

Besides the variations across geographical locations, in most of the countries of South Asia there are also significant differences in the provision of ECCE according to the social and economic status of various sub-groups within the population. Because many of the services depend on the private sector, very poor and vulnerable groups are disadvantaged. Some governments have tried to address the balance by establishing programmes specifically for disadvantaged groups. NGOs have also been encouraged to set up initiatives for children who would otherwise miss out on ECCE.

8.3.2 Progress in Improving Quality of Goal One

In most of the countries very little has been done in terms of quality control and improving the quality of ECCE provision. Even in Sri Lanka, where the majority of children are enrolled in ECCE prior to admission in primary school, the quality of the programmes has not been evaluated. It is recognized that assessment is needed on how children experience child care and pre-school education, including the responsiveness of the caregivers, individualization of care and the use of language in the classroom. To improve and standardize quality, more training and support is required. Most of the other countries have made similar observations.

8.3.3 Cross-Cutting Issues in Addressing the "Unreached" and "Underserved"

Because ECCE coverage remains low in most countries of South Asia, there is a need to advocate for increasing the general coverage and particularly for governments to establish and implement policies ensuring ECCE provision throughout their countries. At the same time, most of the countries have recognized the need to target interventions, particularly for the most disadvantaged and vulnerable. Areas in which there is no ECCE provision, often the poorest and most remote areas of a country, are in particular need. In most of the countries there are ethnic and linguistic minorities for which programmes need to be tailor-made in order to enrol children and to give them relevant and appropriate learning experiences, which will prepare them adequately to enter the primary school system.

In India, government-sponsored programmes are largely directed towards the disadvantaged communities, particularly those residing in rural areas. Under SSA, pre-schools are being set up in areas with no coverage. The Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme was set up especially for the children of working mothers. Uncovered districts and tribal areas are given highest priority to ensure a balanced regional coverage. The ECCE services of NGOs play a vital role in providing education for young children in socially and economically deprived areas. The NGOs work primarily with special communities in difficult circumstances, such as tribal people, migrant labourers and rural children not accessing services.

While universal coverage is not planned for ECCE, the Government of Bangladesh has recognized the need to target activities to reach the poorest and most vulnerable. Most of the NGO interventions are designed to reach children form families who are disadvantaged and marginalized. The Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is implementing a project under which pre-school classes are run in neighbourhood centres. Most of the children are from linguistic minorities and do not speak Bangla prior to going to school. In the centres, both Bangla and mother tongue are used. A number of NGOs have similar programmes in the CHT and the northern parts of Bangladesh to facilitate the transition of children from linguistic minority groups into primary schools.

8.3.4 Best Practices and Promising Approaches for Achieving Goal One

Sri Lanka and the Maldives have the most firmly established ECCE programmes in South Asia providing coverage to the majority of children aged 3 to 5. For other countries in the region, there are a variety of providers including the government, the commercial sector and NGOs. Some training is available for teachers and caregivers.

For South Asia, as the universal provision of ECCE is not considered a state responsibility, partnerships between governments and civil society are particularly important to ensure that services reach the poor and vulnerable. In Bangladesh, the Government has authorized two NGOs to organize pre-primary classes in government and government-registered primary schools. By the end of 2006, the NGOs had organized over 22,000 pre-primary classes covering over 650,000 children in the premises or vicinity of schools. The pre-primary centres have strong links with the primary schools with the aim of having all the children admitted to Grade 1 of the formal schools upon completion of their ECCE classes.

Box 10: First Steps Pilot Initiative for ECCD in the Maldives

The First Steps programme was initiated by UNICEF in 1999 as a three-year complement to and extension of the Government of Maldives Fifth NDP. First Steps involved capacity-building designed to foster print, radio, and television media for and about children up to the age of 5.

Simple and practical information on ECCD that emphasized the right of all children to basic needs, participation and learning opportunities was provided in the materials, many of which featured children and adults with disabilities. The implementation process involved respecting and drawing on the indigenous culture and practices of local people. A larger goal was to raise the status of ECCD so that it might become both a key indicator for assessing progress and development within the country as well as a project belonging to and positively affecting all Maldivians.

Communication Strategies

A central strategy was building the capacity of local ECCD initiatives to advance positive and non-stereotypical images of children and their caregivers that were developmentally appropriate and culturally sensitive. To this end, First Steps sought to reach directly into the household (rather than depending on already burdened service delivery channels). To initiate the project, a baseline Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey was conducted. After a number of briefings, field visits and a workshop, a set of 12 core ECCD messages was developed.

The Institute for Health Sciences and the Institute of Teacher Education were trained in ECCD, which equipped them in turn to train local educators and media in sessions that emphasized the programme messages. This local team then designed a core curriculum for a proposed 52 week multi-media campaign and developed a wide range of prototype materials for and about children.

Several key components of the project were vital for the success of the initiative. Some of the key activities included:

- A multi-media campaign integrated numerous implicit and explicit messages about disability. People with disabilities were featured in the materials as much as possible as part of an effort to help address the absence of images of disabled persons and accompanying feelings of shame.

- Weekly ECCD radio and television spots featured caregivers in short dramas or simple stories demonstrating practical interactions and activities with children from birth to 3 years of age.
- In the final phase of the project, a group of pre-school teachers were trained to educate parents.
- Curriculum developers, textbook writers and producers of nonbroadcast educational media were also trained.

Directed by a five-member National ECCD Council formed by the President of the Maldives, First Steps was inter-sectoral, implemented under the joint auspices of the MOE and Information/Arts/Culture and represented and supported by the Ministries of Health, Atolls Administration, External Affairs, Planning, Women's Affairs and Social Security. The experience of the First Steps programme has informed the development of the ECCD strategy in the Maldives.

Source: Maldives EFA MDA Country Report, 2008.

8.4 Remaining Challenges and Issues in the South Asia Sub-Region

There are numerous challenges which are common across the countries of South Asia. The most obvious is the lack of political will to universalize ECCE. While a number of the countries have supportive policies and strategies for extending the coverage of ECCE, none have committed to the right of every child to ECCE. As a result there are gaps in provision in every country. Even in countries with the widest coverage, it is mainly dependent on parents paying for their children to attend pre-schools. In some countries, the government deliberately extends services to children whose parents cannot afford to pay for ECCE, and NGOs also play a key role in reaching the poor and disadvantaged, but there are still many children who are not accessing services.

Partly because services are provided primarily by the private rather than the public sector, there is a lack of reliable data on the type, scope and coverage of ECCE in most of the countries. While overall statistics have been provided, there is little scope for comparing data across countries, and even within countries comparability of data is a major problem. Effective planning is constrained by the poor quality of the data. The need to address this issue has been identified by a number of the countries.

The absence of a regulatory framework has also been noted as a major challenge to be addressed. In most countries there are no standards or norms established to assess the quality of the physical environment, teaching-learning methods, qualifications of facilitators/teachers, or expected learning outcomes. ECCE providers and the quality of the centres and pre-schools are not regulated at all in most countries of the region.

Several of the countries highlighted the need for appropriate training for caregivers, facilitators and pre-school teachers. In most cases there is very little in the way of appropriate training available, and there is no standardization or regulation of the type or quality of training provided. If ECCE is to be the foundation of every child's education, it is imperative that teachers and others involved in their care and learning are appropriately trained. A thorough understanding of child development is particularly important, but the requirement for this is largely unrecognized.

Although all countries in the region have renewed their efforts and considerable progress has been made in a number of the countries, in the absence of more strategic commitments, it is unlikely that ECCE will be comprehensively implemented across the region in the foreseeable future.

As part of the EFA MDA process, countries should reassess their commitments and strategies in order to strengthen ECCE as the foundation for the fulfilment of all the other goals, particularly universal primary education.

9. Goal Two: Universal Primary/Basic Education

Goal Two: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Dakar Framework for Action Expanded Commentary on UPE

All children must have the opportunity to fulfil their right to quality education in schools or alternative programmes at whatever level of education is considered 'basic'. All states must fulfil their obligation to offer free and compulsory primary education in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and other international commitments. The international agreement on the 2015 target date for achieving UPE in all countries will require commitment and political will from all levels of government. For the millions of children living in poverty, who suffer multiple disadvantages, there must be an unequivocal commitment that education be free of tuition and other fees, and that everything possible be done to reduce or eliminate costs such as those for learning materials, uniforms, school meals and transport. Wider social policies, interventions and incentives should be used to mitigate indirect opportunity costs of attending school. No one should be denied the opportunity to complete a full cycle of good quality primary education because it is unaffordable. Child labour must not stand in the way of education. The inclusion of children with special needs from disadvantaged ethnic minorities and migrant populations, from remote and isolated communities and from urban slums, and others excluded from education, must be an integral part of strategies to achieve UPE by 2015.

While commitment to attaining universal enrolment is essential, improving and sustaining the quality of basic education is equally important in ensuring effective learning outcomes. In order to attract and retain children from marginalized and excluded groups, education systems should respond flexibly, providing relevant content in an accessible and appealing format. Education systems must be inclusive, actively seeking out children who are not enrolled, and responding flexibly to the circumstances and needs of all learners. The EFA 2000 Assessment suggests a wide range of ways in which schools can respond to the needs of their pupils, including affirmative action programmes for girls that seek to remove the obstacles to their enrolment, bilingual education for the children of ethnic minorities, and a range of imaginative and diverse approaches to address and actively engage children who are not enrolled in school.

9.1 Background and Development of UPE/UBE in South Asia

9.1.1 Definition of Goal Two

The common terms used in South Asia are primary education, basic education and elementary education. The countries vary on the exact definition of terms as well as on the age range covered by each category. Table 4 illustrates the categories for each of the countries.

Table 4: Categories and Age Groups of Primary, Basic and Elementary Education, Sub-Region

Country	Primary Education		Basic (B) or Elementary (E) Education	
	Grades	Ages	Grades	Ages
Bangladesh	1 - 5	6 - 10	n.a.	n.a.
Bhutan	Pre-Primary - 6	6 - 12	Pre-Primary - 10	6 -16 (B)
India	1 - 5	6 - 11	1 – 8	6 -14 (E)
Maldives	1 - 7	6 - 13	1 – 10	6 -16 (B)
Nepal	1 - 5	5 - 10	1 – 8	5 -13 (B)
Pakistan	1 - 5	5 - 9	1 – 8	5 -12 (E)
Sri Lanka	1 - 5	5 - 10	1 – 9	5 -14 (B)

Note: "n.a." indicates not applicable.

Generally, primary education covers Grades 1–5 in five years starting from the age of 5 or 6. However, in Bhutan primary also includes a one-year compulsory pre-primary class and extends up to Grade 6, making it a seven-year cycle, and in the Maldives primary is also a seven-year cycle covering Grades 1–7. All the countries except Bangladesh also have a category of basic or elementary education extending past the primary cycle. In India, Nepal and Pakistan, basic or elementary education goes up to Grade 8, while in Sri Lanka it extends up to Grade 9. In Bhutan and the Maldives up to Grade 10 is included in the country's definition of basic education.

In addition to the basic education provided through schools, all the countries have provision for education outside the formal system. Various types of NFE and literacy programmes are also defined as basic education. The length and content of courses vary considerably, but as a minimum, basic literacy and numeracy is taught, often complemented with other topics.

9.1.2 National Policies and Legislation for Provision and Coordination of Goal Two

All the countries in South Asia are signatories of the CRC and thereby obligated to provide free education for every child. Accordingly, all the countries have included targets for achieving universal primary education in their respective NPAs. Some have extended the targets up to the basic or elementary education level. In general there is a positive policy environment in the region supportive of the achievement of universal primary education.

Sri Lanka has the longest history of policies that support universal basic education. The Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 provided enabling legislation to enforce compulsory attendance of the 5-14 age group but at the time, the government did not take the necessary steps to introduce regulations to enforce the policy. The Constitution of Sri Lanka (1978) provides "the assurance to all persons of the right to universal and equal access to education at all levels." Regulations to enforce compulsory education for the 5-14 age group were introduced with effect from 1998. The regulations require parents to ensure admission of their children to school and their continued attendance. The Maldives also has a long history of universal primary education and has extended the universalization of basic education to 10 years of schooling.

In India, the universalization of elementary education has been a national goal since 1950, and the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act (2002) made education a fundamental right for children in the age group of 6-14 years by providing that "the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine." The Bangladesh Constitution (1972) also recognizes the fundamental right of education and requires the state "to adopt effective measures for establishing a universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children." The Primary Education (Compulsory) Act (1990) made primary education compulsory.

In Nepal, the Education Act (2001) provides for all children free access to quality basic education and acknowledges the national obligation to fulfil this goal. The Interim Constitution (2007) enshrines the right to basic and primary education, and this is being implemented through a phased approach. In Bhutan, education is viewed as one of the basic elements to achieve the national philosophy of development, "gross national happiness," and has accordingly provided for free education up to the basic level (11 years of school).

In Pakistan, the Compulsory Primary Education Act has been enacted in three out of four provinces and in one out of three administrative areas. Although enforcement of the act is still pending, significant efforts are being made to get all children into school.

Box 11: Pakistan - Participation of Society in Policy Formulation

Education policy formulation, implementation and monitoring in Pakistan had remained invariably apolitical. It was confined to policy makers, consultants and government officials. It had never been placed into popular political discourse. Policy making embraced a top-down approach without consultation of stakeholders, i.e. civil society, teachers, communities and parents.

During the post-Dakar era, the Government of Pakistan decided that discourse about education policy making must be held in mainstream politics with commitment and dynamism. This paradigm shift at government level brought education policy making into popular public discourse involving civil society, teachers, experts, communities and parents. One can see the reflections of a shift in the policy formulation process during the course of the new education policy development. A thorough consultative process has been adopted since 2005. A team of consultants along with MOE officials visited 31 districts and consulted with stakeholders in detail. A series of roundtable discussions and national consultations were held spreading over a time span of two years. Green and white papers based on the inputs gathered from field visits and focus group discussions have been published for further input. Based on this detailed consultative process, a new education policy was formulated which will be endorsed by the cabinet from 2008.

Under the devolution of power initiative, financial management of the education sector has also been shifted to the district level from the provinces. Now it is the discretion of district governments as to where and how money is spent. School management committees are in place to manage school affairs with the participation of local communities. The Government has also ensured the presence of EFA forums and focal persons at national, provincial and district levels. The Government has achieved a substantial degree of success in ensuring the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of educational development programmes and projects in the country.

Source: Pakistan EFA MDA Country Report, 2008.

9.1.3 Strategies and Programmes for Disadvantaged Children

All the countries in the region have made massive efforts to extend the provision of primary education to all children. There has also been in the last decade a greater emphasis on improving the quality of education to raise the general level of achievement as well as to retain children in the system. These measures are generally beneficial for most children, but it has been increasingly recognized that there is also the need for specific strategies and initiatives targeting children who are not enrolled or being retained in school.

In four of the countries of the region, a comprehensive sector (or sub-sector) wide approach (SWAP) has been adopted for the effective implementation of primary education. India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have national programmes which cover all aspects of primary education, its expansion and qualitative improvement. Such programmes allow governments to plan for the overall development of their education systems as well as to implement effective strategies to address specific issues such as equity and inclusion.

As discussed in Part I (see "Incentive Schemes for Disadvantaged Groups"), most countries in the region have introduced various financial incentive schemes to enrol and retain disadvantaged children in school. Nearly all the countries provide free tuition and free textbooks for all children and some provide additional incentives such as free meals, school uniforms, stipends and/or stationery for all children or for children categorized as having some type of disadvantage.

9.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

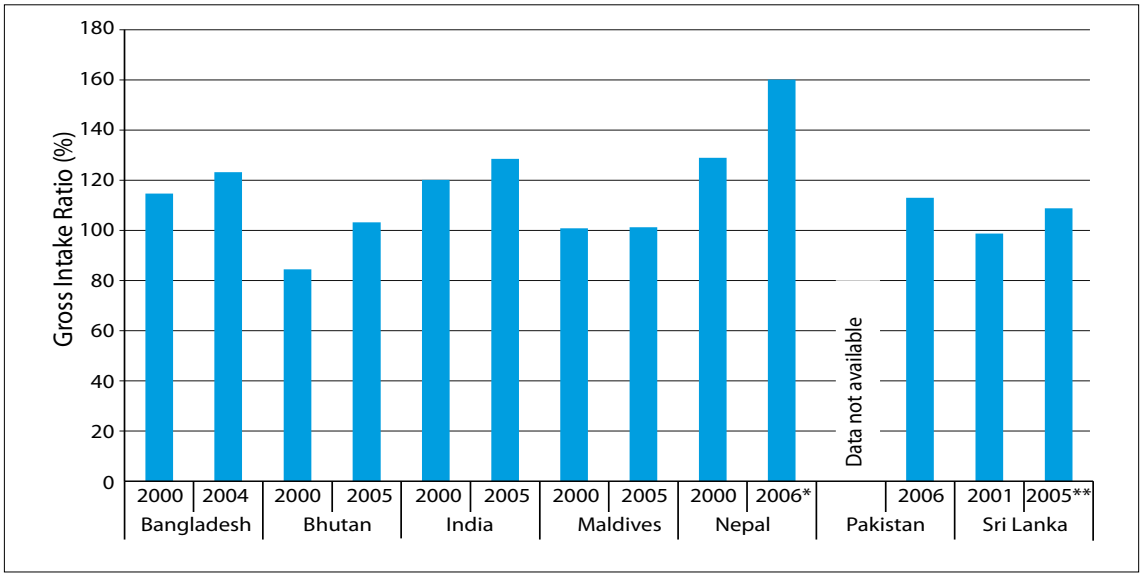
9.2.1 Progress of Countries in the Sub-Region

Overall there was impressive growth in primary education with improved performance on most of the indicators in the countries of the region. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, the number of new entrants into primary education in South and West Asia grew by more than 9% between 1999 and 2005 to 44 million, and there was a significant increase in primary enrolment by 35 million. This was a somewhat more rapid increase than for all developing countries. Although there were still 17 million out-of-school children in 2005 in South and West Asia, this represented a dramatic decline from 31 million in 1999. More than half the children not in school (59%) have never been in school, and it is recognized that they may never enrol without additional incentives.[39]

The percentage of children entering primary school increased in all the countries for which data is available. As can be seen from Figure 3, the gross intake rate (GIR) exceeded 100% in all countries of South Asia.

39 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 Regional Overview: South and West Asia.*

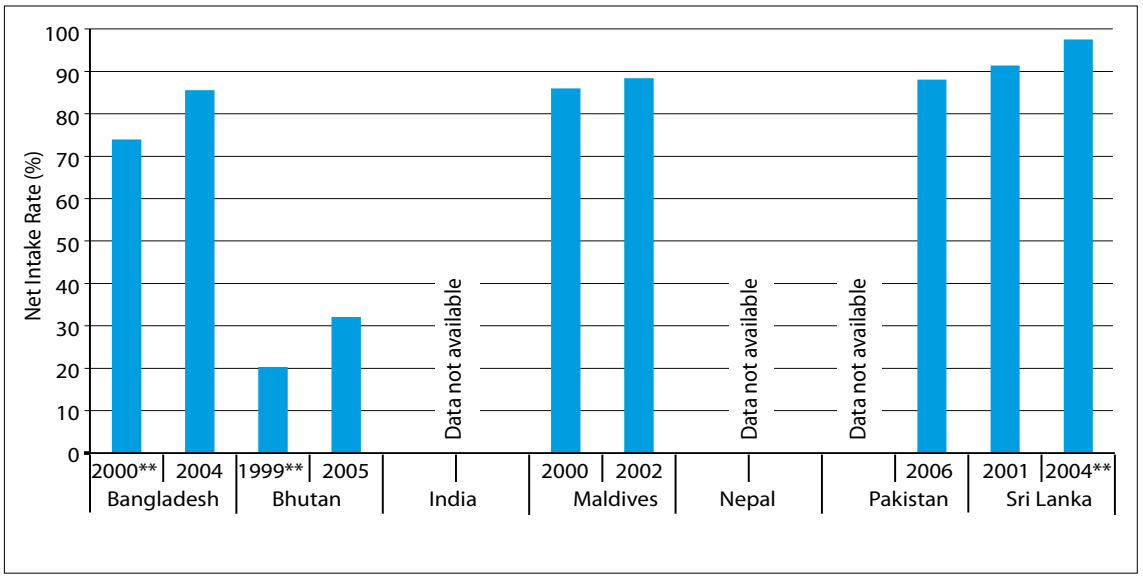
Figure 3: Gross Intake Ratio in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate.

Except for Sri Lanka with 97.5% net intake rate (NIR) in primary education, the high GIRs are not reflected in correspondingly high NIRs for the other countries. As illustrated in Figure 4, for many of the other countries, the NIR is much lower than the GIR, indicating that most children are entering school but many, at the time of entry, are either above or below the expected age. Bhutan for example, had a GIR of 103.2% in 2005 but its NIR was only 32.1% in the same year translating to difference of 71.1 percentage points. In Bangladesh, the difference between the GIR and NIR in primary education was 37.6 points and in Pakistan 24.9 points indicating high under- or over-age entry to school. In Bhutan, only 32% of children are enrolling in school at the designated age.

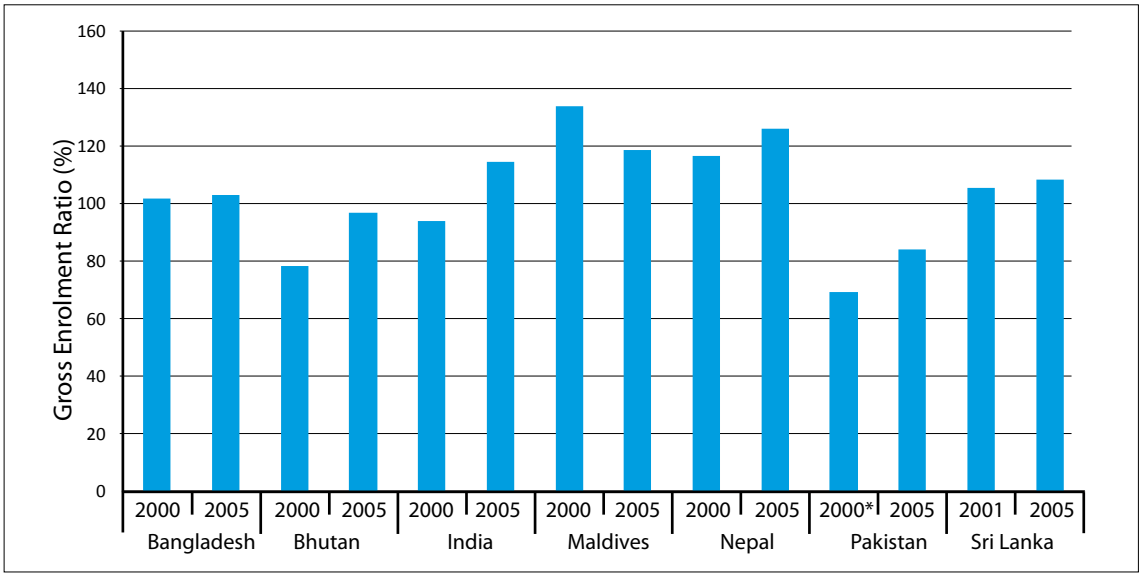
Figure 4: Net Intake Rate in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source : UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Note: "**" indicates UIS estimate.

Most countries in South Asia recorded an increase in the gross enrolment ratio (GER) in primary education, as shown in Figure 5. The GER in India jumped 21 percentage points in 2005 from 2000, 18 points in Bhutan, 15 points in Pakistan, and a modest increase in Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka also retained GERs of over 100%, indicating under- or over-age enrolment. The GER for the Maldives dropped from 133.7% in 2000 to 118.7% in 2005. This most likely represents an improvement in getting more children into school at the designated age rather than a decline in enrolments.

Figure 5: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education, 2000 and 2005, Sub-Region

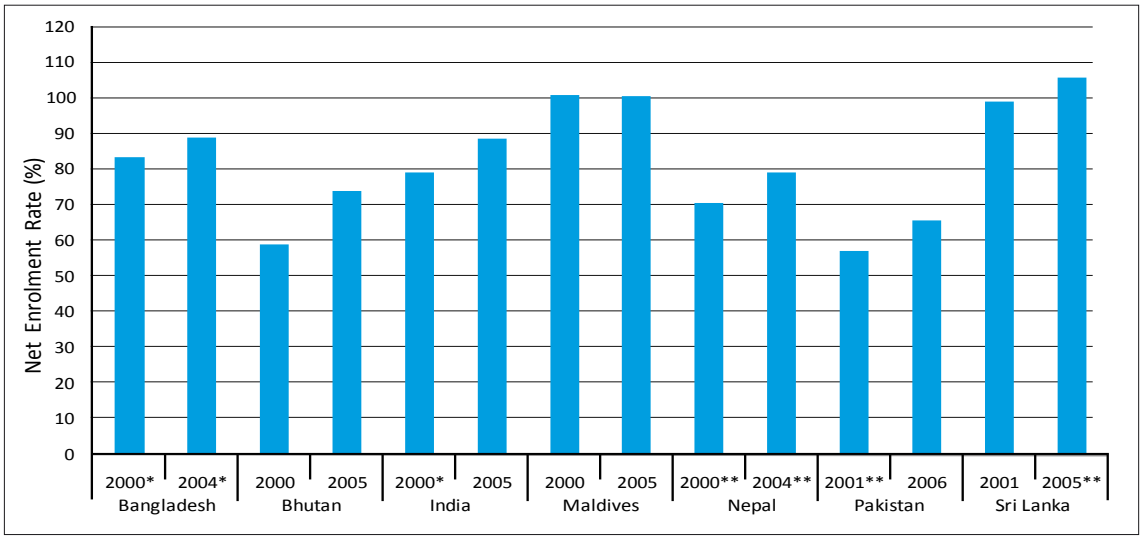


Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "*" indicates national estimate.

Except for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, the high GERs did not translate into having all children in school. However, as illustrated in Figure 6, the net enrolment ratio (NER) in the South Asian countries posted increases in 2005 from 2000. In most cases, the improvement in NER was noteworthy, signifying that most children in South Asia are now in school. The NER for primary education increased 15 percentage points in Bhutan and nearly 9 points in Nepal. However, most of the countries still have a long way to go to achieve universal primary education. Even with the increases, Nepal's NER was 79.2% and Bhutan's 73.9%.

Pakistan's NER for primary education improved only 8.4 points from 57% in 2001 to 67% in 2005, the lowest NER in the region. India, the second most populous country in the world, saw NER improve 9 points in five years, bringing the NER in 2005 to 88.5%. Bangladesh showed a modest improvement of 5.5 points in four years, bringing the NER to 88.9%. However, even for the countries with high NERs, it has to be remembered that enrolling and retaining the last 10% of children is usually the most difficult task of all.

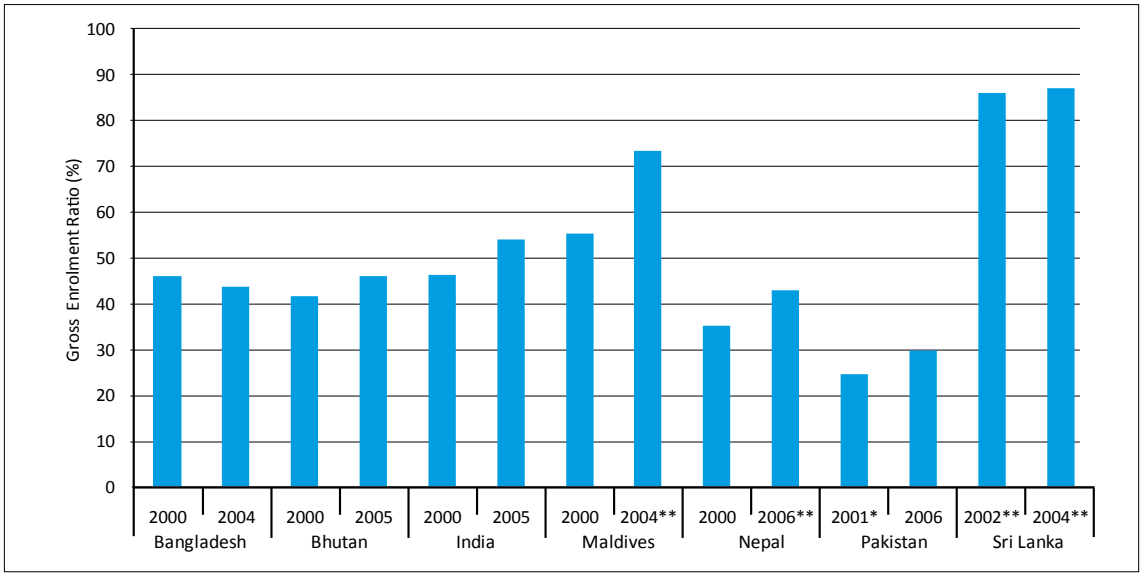
Figure 6: Net Enrolment Rate in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate.

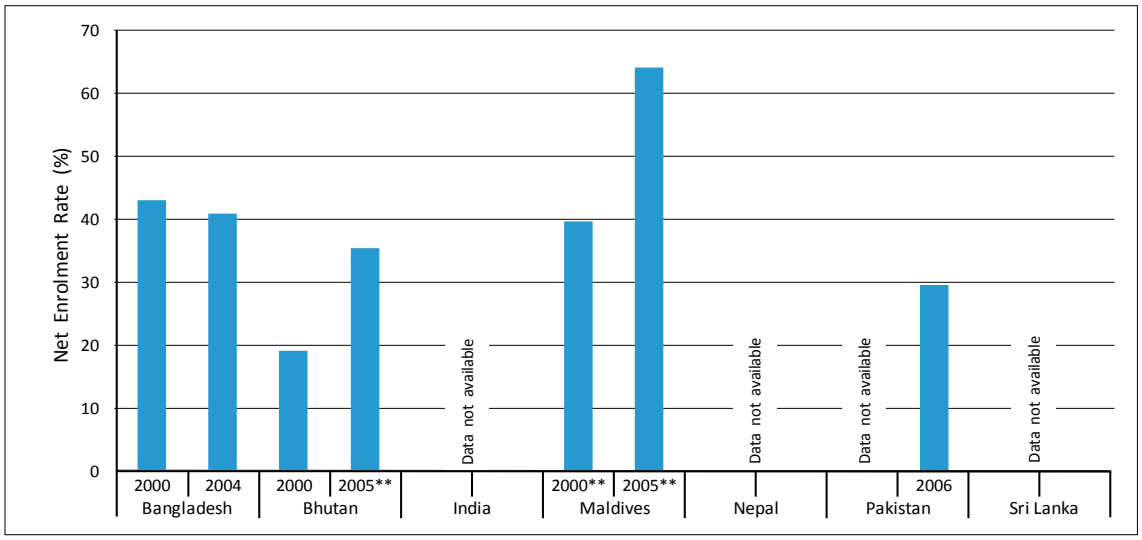
Across South Asia, enrolments in secondary education are much lower than in the primary level, as shown in Figure 7, which gives the GER for secondary, and Figure 8, which shows the NER. Although data on the NER is not available for all the countries, looking at both graphs, it can be seen that in five countries less than half the secondary age cohort is enrolled in secondary school. The exceptions are Sri Lanka and the Maldives. In the Maldives and Bhutan, secondary enrolments have increased remarkably during the last few years as a result of strategies to expand the sub-sector and to make secondary education more accessible to greater numbers of children, particularly those in remote areas. In each of the other countries, at considerably less than 10 percentage points, the increase in enrolment percentages in secondary education has been remarkably low.

Figure 7: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate. Data for Sri Lanka are provisional as of 4 June 2008.

Figure 8: Net Enrolment Rate in Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate.

Information on expenditure for primary education compared to a country's total educational expenditure is only available for five of the countries, and data which can be compared over time is only available for three countries: Bangladesh, India and Nepal. For these three countries, there was a decrease in the percentage of expenditure for primary education in Bangladesh and India, while Nepal registered a marginal increase. Only in the Maldives and Nepal is there an indication that expenditure for primary education exceeds 50% of the total educational expenditure of the country.

9.2.2 Variations within Countries

Within each of the countries there are also variations in the indicators. Where the information is available, in general, urban rates tend to have favourable rates, and the gender disparity is less in urban areas than in rural areas. The areas where the very poor live in the mega-cities are an exception to the usual urban-rural divide, and in some cases the rates for urban slums are lower than for rural areas. Most of the countries noted regional variations and differences across states, provinces and districts, but in many cases there is insufficient breakdown in statistics to locate accurately the areas of greatest need.

Pakistan can be used as an example of tremendous variations across the provinces and administrative areas. For instance, the NER for primary education is nearly 20 percentage points higher than the national average in one administrative area and over 20 percentage points lower in one of the provinces, giving a difference of more than 40 percentage points between the two. However, there was no reporting on indicators below the level of provincial or administrative area, and from the data it is not possible to compare different linguistic, ethnic and/or socio-economic groups.

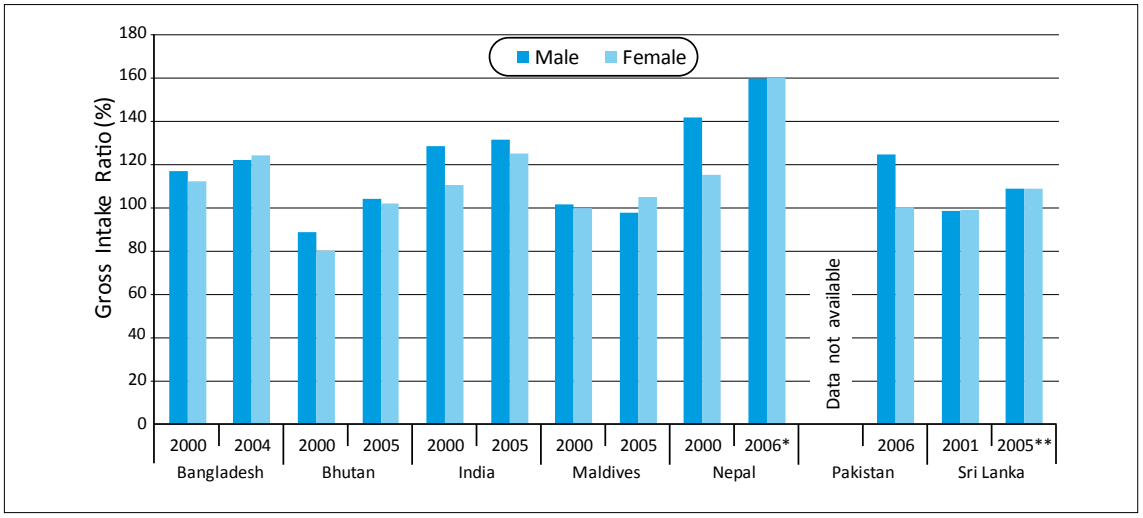
9.3 Analysis of Disparities in Achieving UPE/UBE

9.3.1 Progress in Achieving Gender and Social Equality in Goal Two

For most of the indicators, there was substantial progress in bringing more girls to school relative to the number of boys, but disparity against girls prevail in Pakistan (GPI of 0.80) and India (GPI of 0.95). Only Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and the Maldives have achieved gender parity or ratios in favour of girls for most of the indicators. For the three countries, this had been achieved for most indicators by 2000 and the ratios were maintained or further increased in favour of girls during the past five years.

A favourable sign, as shown in Figure 9, is that the differences in the GIRs of girls and boys in primary education have been considerably reduced in several countries. The most remarkable was Nepal, where the gender disparity in GIR was 26.5 percentage points in 2000 but had narrowed by 2006. In India, the disparity between the GIR for girls and boys was reduced from 18.1 points in 2000 to 7.2 points in 2006, and in Bhutan during the same period the difference decreased from 8.7 points to 2.3 points. However, at least in some of the countries, this trend may mask a preference for boys' education in that the boys enrolled in private schools may not be included in the official figures.

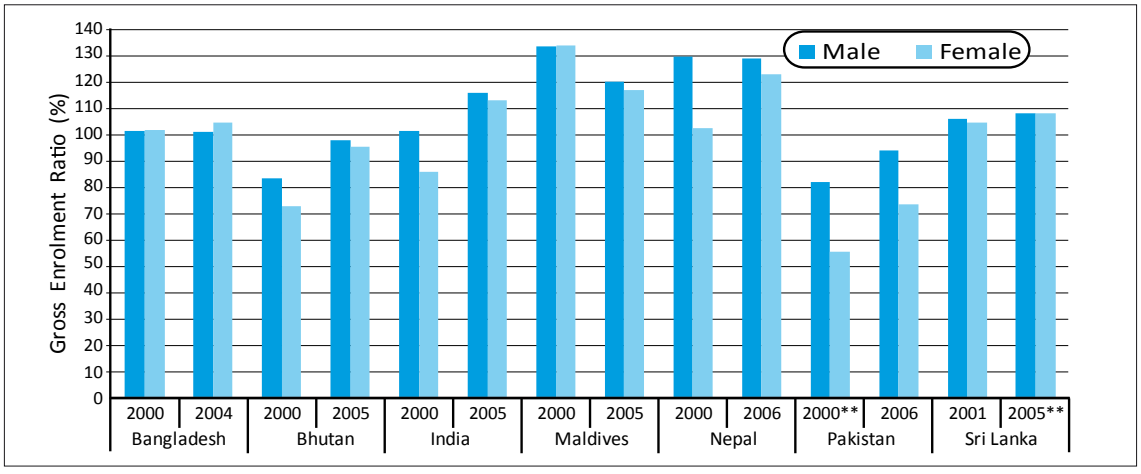
Figure 9: Gross Intake Ratio in Primary Education, by Sex, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate.

From Figures 10 and 11 it can be seen that boys' GER and NER in primary education are still higher than those of girls in four out of the seven countries of the region. In Bangladesh, the Maldives and Sri Lanka the GERs and NERs for girls are equal to or higher than those of boys. In three of the other four countries, the gap has narrowed considerably.

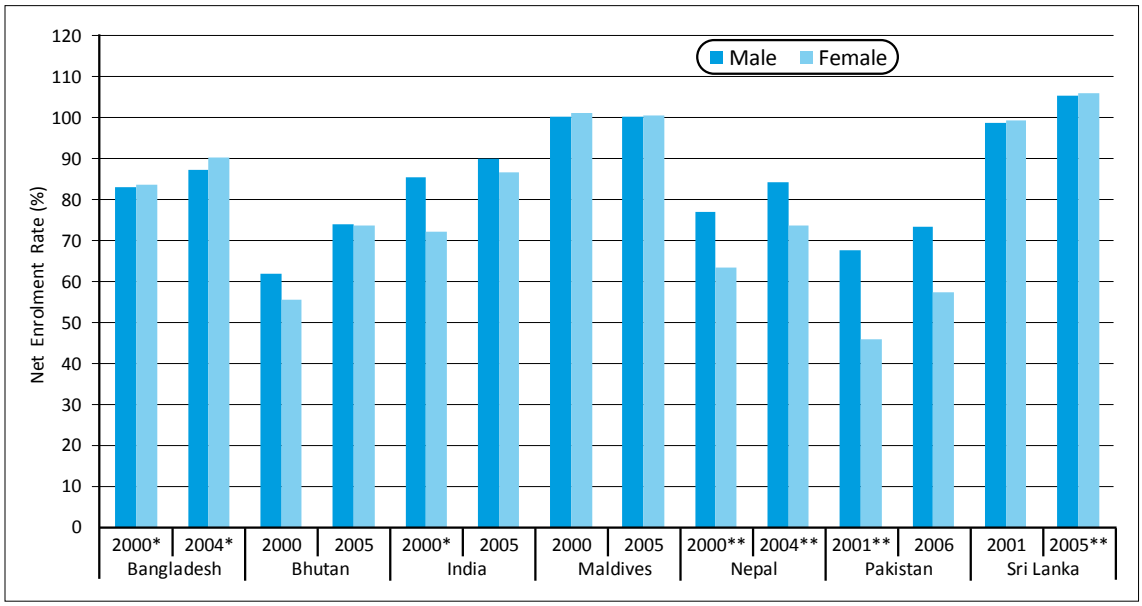
Figure 10: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, by Sex, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate.

In Bhutan, the primary education NER for girls in 2005 was almost equal to that of boys compared to a difference of 6.2 percentage points in 2000, but there is still a gap of 2.8 points in the GERs between the sexes. In India, the NER for girls increased by 14.5 points from 2000 to 2006 compared to an increase of only 5 points for the boys NER during the same period. This reduced the difference in NERs for girls and boys to only 3.3 points compared to 13.1 points five years before. In Nepal, from 2000 to 2004 there was an increase of 7.2 points in the NER for boys and of 10.4 points for girls, reducing the difference somewhat from 13.7 points to 10.5 points. In Pakistan, UIS data show that from 2001 to 2006 the NER for boys increased 5.7 points while the NER for girls increased by 11.3 points, but the difference in the NERs of girls and boys in 2006 remained at the regional high of 16.2 points.

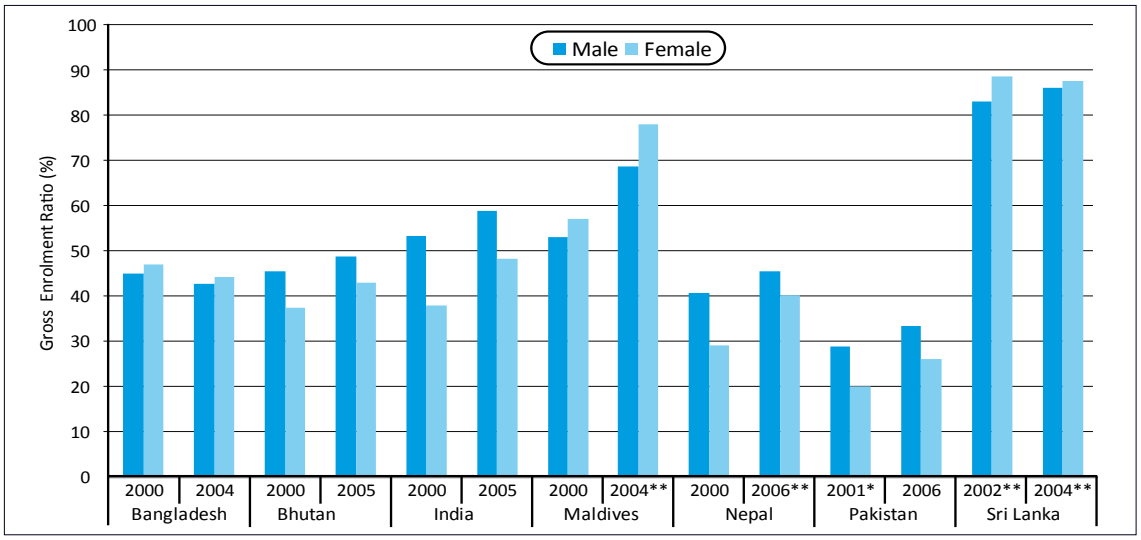
Figure 11: Net Enrolment Rate in Primary Education, by Sex, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate.

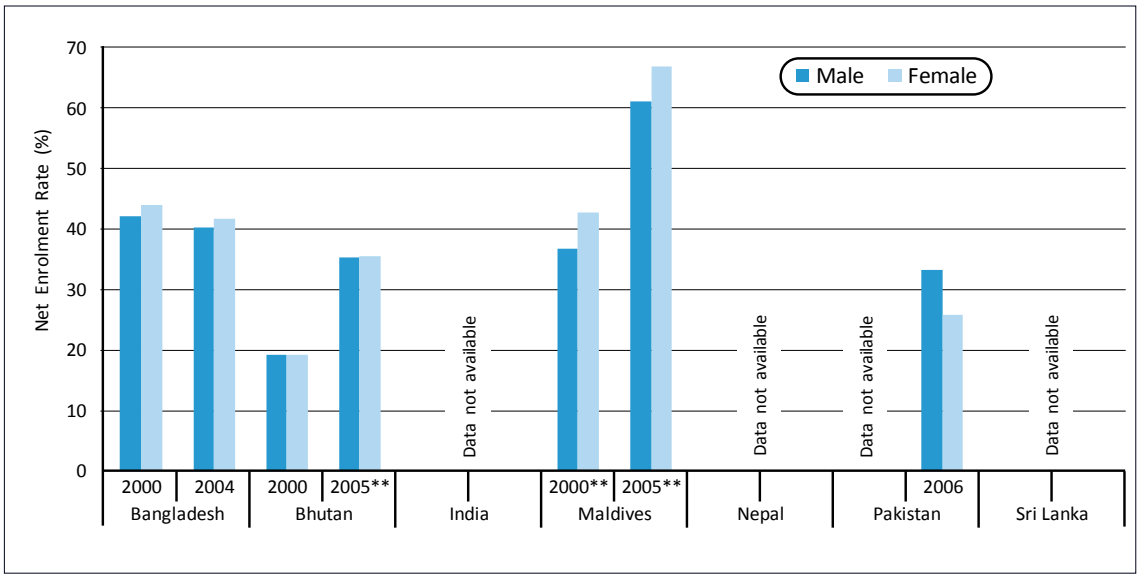
As can be seen from Figures 12 and 13, girls' enrolment in secondary education exceeds that of boys in Bangladesh, the Maldives and Sri Lanka (no data is available for NER). In Bhutan, the GER is lower for girls than boys, but the NER is equal. However, in India, Nepal and Pakistan, the available data show major disparities persist in favour of boys. For both girls and boys, less than half the cohort is enrolled at the secondary level except in Sri Lanka and the Maldives. In Nepal and Pakistan, the enrolment of girls at the secondary level is particularly low at below 40% GER. In Pakistan, only a quarter of girls of secondary school-age were enrolled in 2006 compared to a third of boys.

Figure 12: Gross Enrolment Ratio in Secondary Education, by Sex, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source : UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate. Data for Sri Lanka are provisional as of 4 June 2008.

Figure 13: Net Enrolment Rate in Secondary Education, by Sex, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. Data for Sri Lanka are provisional as of 4 June 2008.

Although remarkable progress has been made in increasing the number of girls in school, it must be remembered that gender parity is only one aspect of gender equality in education. Qualitative as well as quantitative measures are needed to assess how countries are progressing in relation to overall gender equality in education. It is clear that other social disparities tend to exacerbate the disadvantage that girls are facing in general, with the effect that for most disadvantaged groups, girls are most likely to be excluded or given an education of poor quality.

In general, there is insufficient collection and analysis of data on sub-groups of the population based on ethnicity, language, socio-economic status or other categories. But most country reports note that the available information suggests wide disparities exist when the population is divided by the categories. The groups which are most disadvantaged in terms of socio-economic factors are also the ones with the lowest rates for most indicators.

Some of the countries are beginning to collect and analyze data based on factors that might affect children's access to quality education. For instance, Nepal has listed seven categories of children who have been identified as deprived of educational opportunity, i.e. girls, children in remote rural areas, dalits, disadvantaged ethnic groups, children of IDPs, children with disabilities and the extremely poor. It has been found that dalits and other disadvantaged groups have lower participation rates in all levels of schooling. Children in two or more of these seven categories are not likely to attend school or, if they do, it is very unlikely that they will complete the cycle. India has also noted the relatively lower participation rates of children from scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and has highlighted that there has not been a significant change in their share in enrolment during the past five years, although the increased participation of girls from these groups was noted.

Several countries noted that children with disabilities have in the past been excluded from school, but most countries are now making efforts to include them in educational activities. In India, about 1.62 million children with disabilities have been enrolled in elementary classes across the country. Even with the special efforts, however, children with disabilities make up only 1% of the primary enrolment. For most of the countries, if data is available at all, it indicates that the percentage of children with disabilities enrolled in school is considerably lower than the percentage of children with disabilities which would normally be expected in the population.

9.3.2 Progress in Improving Quality of Goal Two

Following the rapid expansion of primary education in South Asia in the 1980s and 1990s, it was recognized that in most cases, the quality of education did not keep pace with the increase in enrolments. For this reason, most countries are now putting emphasis on quality improvement as well as on increasing equitable access. This will be discussed in more detail in the chapter on EFA Goal Six, which focuses on the quality of education.

There are several indicators that point to the need to improve the quality of education. Excessive repetition of grades and low completion rates characterize several of the countries' systems. For instance, in Bangladesh the number of years input per graduate of the five-year primary education cycle is 8.2 years (7.9 for girls and 8.6 for boys). In countries in which there are measures of achievement, the results have been disappointing, indicating poor learning outcomes and the system's failure to prepare children for education at higher levels or for employment and life in general.

In general, countries are strategizing to improve the infrastructure of the school system as well as the quality of the teaching-learning process. There is a renewed emphasis on lowering pupil-teacher ratio and in ensuring that teachers are appropriately trained and have opportunities for continued professional development and support. In some cases, child-friendly, gender-sensitive, rights-based schools are being promoted in order to create the supportive environment needed to maximize learning. Children are encouraged to become active learners and to develop analytical skills in addition to mastering content and basic skills.

9.3.3 Cross-Cutting Issues in Addressing the "Unreached" and "Underserved"

It is recognized in most countries that multi-pronged strategies are required to effectively reach those not yet enrolled and those who have not been retained by the education system. Various incentive schemes are being used to attract and retain children from the poorest and most vulnerable families, as well as from disadvantaged communities. Such schemes are being operated in most countries in the region.

Ensuring access to children in remote areas has been a major effort in a number of countries, particularly the mountainous countries of Nepal and Bhutan, and the island nations of Sri Lanka and the Maldives. In Sri Lanka, small rural schools have been established all over the island giving

access to basic education to a substantial portion of the population. There have also been efforts to improve schools and education in the conflict areas. In the Maldives, special attention is being given to ensuring access and enhancing transition to the higher secondary level. This is particularly difficult on islands that are sparsely populated. The provision of residential schooling facilities is being considered as a possible solution. In Bhutan, boarding schools have been established to provide educational opportunities to isolated and nomadic communities, but it is planned that extensive dependence on boarding, which is expensive and difficult to manage, will be reduced by establishing additional smaller schools in remote areas. In Pakistan, detailed school mapping is to be undertaken to identify unreached localities, and mosque schools will be opened in smaller settlements.

In addition to making every effort to include all children in the formal school system, it is recognized by most countries that, as a transitional measure, alternative arrangements need to be made available for children who cannot or will not enrol in formal schools and for those who have dropped out of the system and returning to school is not a viable option. There are special projects undertaken by NGOs and by governments to provide alternative schooling for working children, for children in urban slums where formal schools are not available and for children who have never enrolled or dropped out of the formal system.

9.3.4 Best Practices and Promising Approaches for Achieving Goal Two

Comprehensive programmes have replaced projects in four of the countries of the region. Through coordinated planning exercises, the programmes in India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Sri Lanka have the potential to cover all the educational needs of a country. For maximum effectiveness, flexibility and dynamic strategies are crucial, which form the cornerstone for changes to make systems more responsive and efficient to meet the needs of all children.

In India, the SSA, the Government's education flagship programme, is being implemented by the Government in partnership with state governments with a long-term perspective on cost-sharing and a district-level decentralized management framework involving local bodies. It is envisaged that the campaign will achieve four goals, namely providing access to all children in the 6-14 year age group through formal primary schools or through other equivalent alternative delivery means, completion of five years of primary education by all children, completion of eight years of elementary education by all children and provision of elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010. The programme provides opportunities for NGOs and the private sector to contribute towards the achievement of the goals. The programme leads towards a community-owned initiative for universalizing elementary education. Efforts under the SSA are to be underscored by effective decentralization, sustainable financing, cost effective strategies for universalization, an interesting curriculum, community-owned planning and implementation, and a focus on girls, marginalized caste groups and ethnic minorities.

9.4 Remaining Challenges and Issues in the South Asia Sub-Region

Reaching the goal of universal primary education is the area in which all countries of South Asia have put in their most efforts and where they have concentrated their funding. The efforts are showing some promising results, but a number of challenges are evident which must be addressed if universal primary education is to be achieved.

Despite efforts to enrol all children, in most countries (except Sri Lanka and the Maldives) there are still children who have never been enrolled in school. They are usually from the poorest families, often socially as well as economically deprived. They may live in remote locations or in the very poor areas of the mega-cities where basic services have not kept up with the rapidly increasing populations. Often they are from ethnic, linguistic and/or social minority groups. All countries have been effective in getting the majority of children in school, and many studies suggest that

parents of even very poor and disadvantaged families are eager for their children to attend school. However, there remain groups of children who are not accessing education. General motivation campaigns will not be sufficient to enrol them in school. To enrol and retain the children who are currently unreached and unserved, well targeted interventions must be implemented which effectively address barriers both within and outside the school.

In order to achieve universal primary education, children must be enrolled in school and retained for the full primary cycle. This is an area in which most countries are having more difficulties. As will be seen in the chapter on EFA Goal Six which discusses the quality of education, survival rates remain low in many of the countries of the region. While there are factors outside school which affect retention, in general it is the poor quality of education which seems to be the primary reason for high drop-out rates in South Asia. Retaining children for the full primary cycle continues to be a major challenge in most of the countries of the region. Effectively addressing this issue is imperative if countries are to fulfil EFA targets and the MDG of universal completion of primary education.

While tremendous progress has been made at the primary level, in general secondary education has not kept pace. It is obvious that most children are not making the transition from primary to secondary schooling. Except for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, less than half the secondary age cohort are enrolled in secondary schools, and for several of the countries it is considerably lower than half.

The percentage of girls enrolled is particularly low. Bhutan and the Maldives have implemented a number of strategies to increase secondary school enrolments, and these have proven effective. However, in Nepal, India and Pakistan the secondary education enrolments are increasing very slowly. If the full benefits of education are to be available for girls and boys in South Asia, there must be a renewed commitment to address this challenge and to implement strategies to increase participation at the secondary level.

While notable progress has been made in nearly all countries of South Asia, achieving gender parity in basic education continues to be a challenge for four of the countries. Bangladesh, the Maldives and Sri Lanka achieved the EFA goal for gender parity for most indicators related to primary and secondary education by 2000 and the favourable situation for girls has been maintained in these countries. There have been significant gains in narrowing the gender gap in India, Nepal and Bhutan, but continued, concerted and targeted efforts will be required to finally close the gap in these countries in as short a time as possible, bearing in mind that the EFA goal and the MDG for gender parity in primary and secondary enrolments by 2005 has already been missed by four of the seven countries in South Asia. In Pakistan, progress in this area has been insufficient. A major drive is needed to narrow and eventually close the gender gap. In all countries, challenges remain to achieve full gender equality within the education systems and in the greater society.

For all countries except Sri Lanka and the Maldives, universal primary education can only be achieved by 2015 if efforts are greatly intensified. Both India and Bangladesh are nearing 90% NERs, while Pakistan, Nepal and Bhutan are lagging behind. In these three countries one-quarter to one-fifth of the children are still out of school. Intensified efforts must include targeted approaches to bring the remaining unreached and unserved children into the education system. Then they must be retained, and this is where each of the countries must exert their most intensive efforts. The goal of 100% enrolment implies 100% retention, and this is specifically stated in the EFA goal and MDG of universal primary completion. This can only be achieved if the quality of education is significantly improved. To achieve the goal of universal primary education, the education systems of Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal and Pakistan must become fully inclusive and the efficiency of the systems must be significantly improved.

10. Goal Three: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning

Goal Three: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

Dakar Framework for Action Expanded Commentary on Life Skills and Lifelong Learning

All young people and adults must be given the opportunity to gain the knowledge and develop the values, attitudes and skills that will enable them to develop their capacities to work, to participate fully in their society, to take control of their own lives and to continue learning. No country can be expected to develop into a modern and open economy without a certain proportion of its workforce having completed secondary education. In most countries, this requires an expansion of the secondary system.

Young people, especially adolescent girls, face risks and threats that limit learning opportunities and challenge education systems. These include exploitative labour, the lack of employment, conflict and violence, drug abuse, school-age pregnancy and HIV/AIDS. Youth-friendly programmes must be made available to provide the information, skills, counselling services needed to protect them from these risks.

All young people should be given the opportunity for ongoing education. For those who drop out of school or complete school without acquiring the literacy, numeracy and life skills they need, there must be a range of options available for continuing their learning. Such opportunities should be both meaningful and relevant to their environment and needs, help them become active agents in shaping their future and develop useful work-related skills.

10.1 Background and Development of Life Skills and Lifelong Learning in South Asia

10.1.1 Definition of Goal Three

How Goal Three is defined and understood in South Asia varies greatly. In India, the goal is presented as the education of adolescents and young people. While other countries have maintained the title as life skills and lifelong learning, for most of the countries the emphasis is on adolescents and the youth. In Bhutan, the aim is to continuously improve the quality and relevance of education to ensure holistic development, while in Nepal the emphasis is on skills-based training and on learning of life skills. The Maldives defines the goal as ensuring that young people's learning needs are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

Bangladesh has adopted a comprehensive and detailed definition. Life skills and lifelong learning are defined as the development of individual capacities to cope with one's needs at social, mental, physical levels and to achieve established and recognized rights. It also encompasses the enhancement of individual negotiation capacity through training, in problem-solving and in developing expertise and capabilities to tackle various circumstances and handle core responsibilities.

In Sri Lanka, the goal of life skills and lifelong learning envisages the development of three skills sets, namely basic skills such as literacy and numeracy which enable a person to acquire the skill

of learning to learn, psycho-social skills that help to develop one's personality to successfully face problems and challenges confronted in day-to-day living, and practical and technical skills which equip a person to earn a living. In Pakistan, three types of skills have also been identified, which are the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, psycho-social skills and practical or functional skills.

10.1.2 National Policies and Legislation for Provision and Coordination of Goal Three

None of the countries reported having a comprehensive policy for this goal. For instance, it was noted that in India there are a number of policies that have a bearing on the education of adolescents, but none of them refer to holistic development or to the provision of education. Other countries in South Asia are in a similar situation. Most of the countries have adopted some strategies and are implementing important programmes but this is generally in a policy vacuum.

10.1.3 Strategies and Programmes for Disadvantaged Children

None of the countries reported having specific quantifiable targets for this goal. In most of the countries, there are a number of strategies and programmes, most of them of a limited scale, which are addressing various aspects of the learning needs of adolescents and youth. Some of the programmes target adolescents still in school particularly in the area of life skills education and technical skills training, while most countries also have projects for youth who have never enrolled or dropped out of school.

In most of the countries, there is the intention to introduce life skills into the formal curriculum, usually at secondary level, as well as in the curriculum of NFE programmes. Several country MDA reports mentioned the prevention of HIV/AIDS as a specific area to be addressed through life skills education. Most of the countries also reported on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) programmes. Along with generic life skills, there is also an emphasis on adolescents and young people learning specific skills which will help them to earn a living and to progress economically.

There is also a great variety in providers, as the area is not confined to the MOE in any country. There is extensive involvement of NGOs as well as CBOs. In both Bangladesh and India, at least 17 different ministries and national bodies are sponsoring initiatives that fall within this goal.[40]

10.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

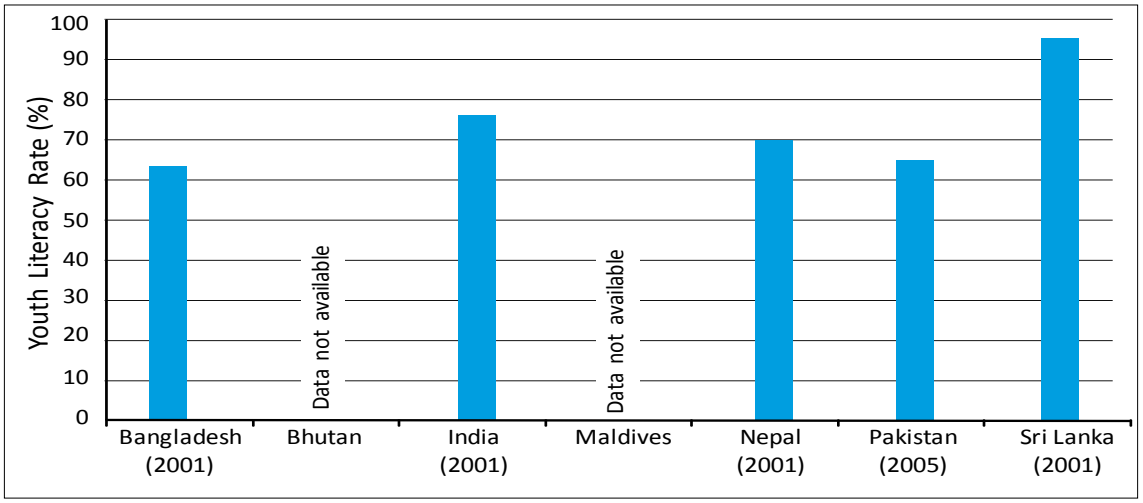
10.2.1 Progress of Countries in the Sub-Region

NFE and skills training for the youth are extremely diverse throughout South Asia and differ widely in objectives, target groups, content, pedagogy, scale and type of providers.[41] This is an area in which it is difficult to assess progress mainly because of the variety of programmes and activities. Most of the intended participants are not in formal institutions and in most of the countries there are no standardized mechanisms for collecting and reporting data to a central body.

As illustrated in Figure 14, while neither comparative nor recent data are available on the youth literacy rate for most of the countries, the indications are that it has continued to improve across South Asia. This is largely the result of more children enrolling in and completing primary education. Due to the very limited scale of programmes targeting the youth who had not become literate in school, it is unlikely that such programmes have made a noticeable impact on youth literacy rates.

40 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 Regional Overview: South and West Asia.*
41 *Ibid.*

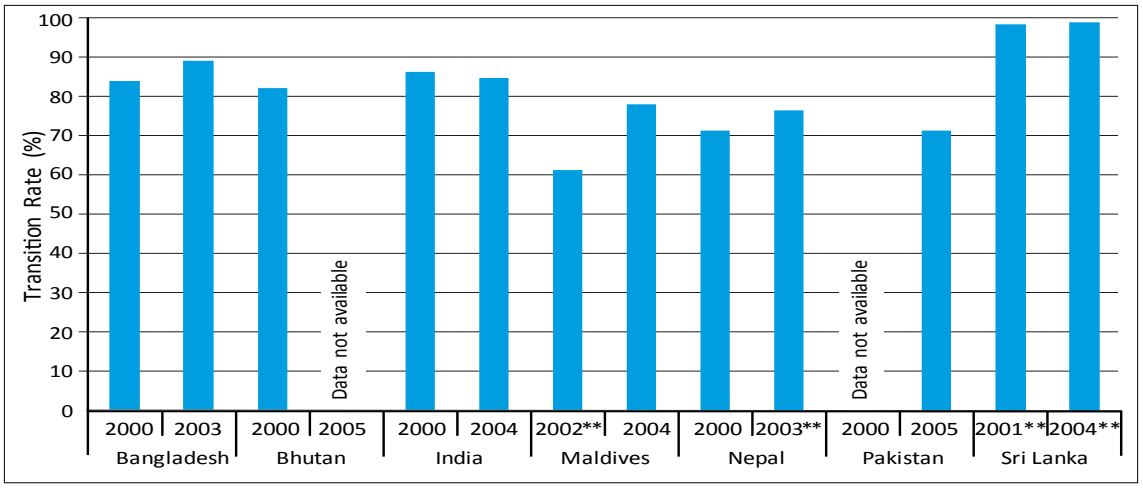
Figure 14: Youth Literacy Rate, After 2000, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: All data are national estimates. Data are for the most recent year available.

Most countries support the policy of keeping adolescents in school through the secondary cycle. However, as was noted under EFA Goal 2, the majority of children of the secondary age group are not in secondary education. Except for Sri Lanka and the Maldives, all the countries have secondary net enrolments considerably below 50%. The transition rates from primary to secondary, shown in Figure 15, are encouraging in this context. All the countries except Pakistan have recorded transition rates from primary to secondary of above 75%, and Sri Lanka has maintained a rate of almost 100%. However, when the low GERs are considered as well, it is obvious that large numbers are dropping out before completing their secondary studies. In many countries in the region, students are transitioning from primary to secondary, but they are not transitioning from lower secondary to upper secondary.

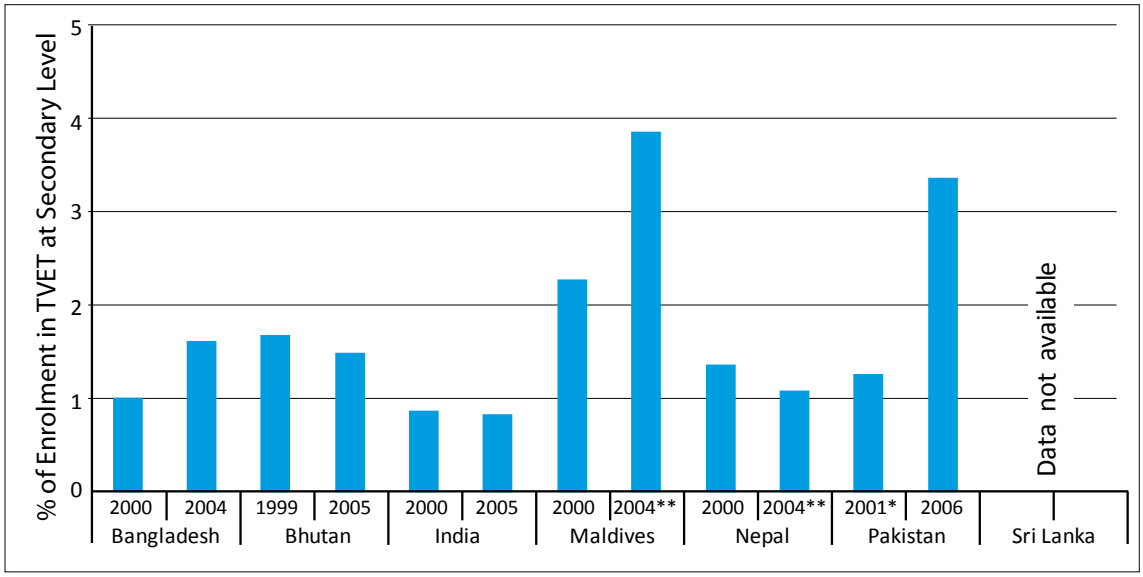
Figure 15: Transition Rate from Primary to Secondary, 2000-2005, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. . Data for Sri Lanka (2004) is provisional as of 4 June 2008.

One of the core EFA MDA indicators is the percentage of students at the secondary level who are enrolled in some type of TVET programme. Most of the countries have TVET alternatives at the secondary level, but as can be seen from Figure 16, the percentage enrolled in these programmes is extremely low. All the countries recorded rates of less than 4%.

Figure 16: Percentage of Enrolment in TVET at Secondary Level, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate.

Several of the countries reported on the number of students enrolled in TVET programmes. In Bangladesh, there are approximately 2,728 TVET institutions in operation with a total enrolment of 241,336. Of this number, 80% were enrolled in private institutions. In Nepal, there are 15 public technical schools, two vocational training centres for community development and one training institute for technical instruction. There are also over 160 private technical institutes. The total enrolment in all the institutes is about 12,000. In Bhutan, there are seven vocational workshops in boarding schools, five vocational training institutes and two handicraft training institutes with an enrolment of about 1,166 students. In Pakistan, the number of students enrolled in TVET institutions increased from 75,000 to 163,000 in four years, but it remained a tiny fraction of the total secondary enrolment and was less than 1% of the age group.

In Sri Lanka, it is recognized that a good general education includes an orientation to the world of work which fits the outputs from the school system to the work opportunities that are available. Practical and technical skills are compulsory subjects from Grade 6 to 9. The post-secondary courses of the TVET system encompass various forms and levels of training, which generally start after completion of the senior secondary level of schooling (Grade 11, age 16 years) and go up to the diploma level.

Another of the core EFA MDA indicators for this goal is the extent to which countries have designated curriculum time in education systems to develop children's and young people's knowledge, skills and attitudes for health. All the countries reported on efforts to include some form of life skills or related topics in the formal school curriculum. However, in most of the countries, initiatives seem to be in relatively early stages and in many cases, the extent to which life skills are given importance in the national curriculum of the countries is not clear.

In Nepal, the school curriculum has recently been revised to incorporate life skills and is currently being piloted in 50 schools in 10 districts. Knowledge, skills and attitude related competencies have been integrated into the primary school level curricula of health education. Grade-wise curricular objectives were revised to include knowledge, skills and attitude level objectives.

The contents related to life skills are incorporated throughout the curriculum providing scope for topics such as personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, nutrition, diseases, first aid and health services.

In Bhutan, the curriculum and textbooks for most subjects have values education embedded in them, but for this to be translated into reality a curriculum framework and teacher guide would need to be developed. A comprehensive school health programme is being implemented through a collaborative effort of the Ministries of Education and Health. In Bangladesh, some efforts have been made to include life skills in both non-formal and formal secondary curricula. In the Maldives, life skills have been introduced in secondary schools and for young people in different sectors, but in formal education most sessions are held outside school hours. The Maldives also has an integrated adolescent sexual and reproductive health and life skills project, which aims to empower young people to make informed decisions. In Pakistan, health and life skills lessons are included in the curriculum from Grades 1 to 10.

Sri Lanka probably has the most fully developed life skills curriculum for formal education in South Asia. The subject of life competencies was introduced in 1999 into the junior secondary curriculum under the education reforms programme. The emphasis was on developing skills and attitudes relating to life situations in children by engaging them in especially designed participatory activities rather than by teaching them in the traditional manner. In 2004, the MOE integrated life competencies with civics education. The ongoing curriculum revision is giving more attention to improving life competencies education. Life skills have been integrated into the health and physical education curriculum, and initiatives are being taken to integrate psycho-social competencies into Grade 3 and 4 of the primary school curriculum. However, even in Sri Lanka, according to the country report, insufficient progress is being made towards the goal of life skills and lifelong learning. It was reported that poor understanding of the subject matter and misinterpretation between technical skills, psycho-social skills and basic educational competencies are the main weaknesses in the system. The time allocated for the subject is not adequate, and most teachers are still using traditional lecture methods in teaching.

Closely aligned with the teaching of life skills is a focus on the use of education for the prevention of HIV/AIDS. Most of the countries reported that efforts are being made to include HIV/AIDS prevention teaching through either formal or non-formal means, but for the most part initiatives are very limited in both scale and scope. Several countries also reported on surveys or studies which have been carried out on the extent of young people's knowledge of issues related to HIV/AIDS.

In Bangladesh, according to a baseline HIV/AIDS survey among youths undertaken in 2005, 85% of females and 93% of males were aware of HIV/AIDS with awareness being higher among urban youth. Knowledge of ways to prevent HIV/AIDS was 22% for females and 23% for males among those with secondary or higher education.

In Nepal, according to a recent report, 58% of the population aged 10 years and older has heard about HIV/AIDS. About 65% of males reported having heard of HIV/AIDS compared to 51% of females. The percent of the people who have heard of HIV/AIDS was higher in urban (83%) compared to rural (53%) areas.

In Sri Lanka, HIV/AIDS prevention education was initiated in the education system in 1994, but the knowledge of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) is poor, as demonstrated by recent studies which found that only 57% of adolescents were aware of the existence of STDs in general, although the knowledge of transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS was relatively better compared to knowledge of other STDs. The knowledge of HIV/AIDS was marginally higher among out-of-school adolescents compared to those in schools.

10.3 Variations within Countries

As with other goals, there are wide variations of coverage across provinces and districts within the countries. As this is a particularly poorly documented area, the information on differences within countries is also very limited. But given the nature of the coverage, which is a mix of many different

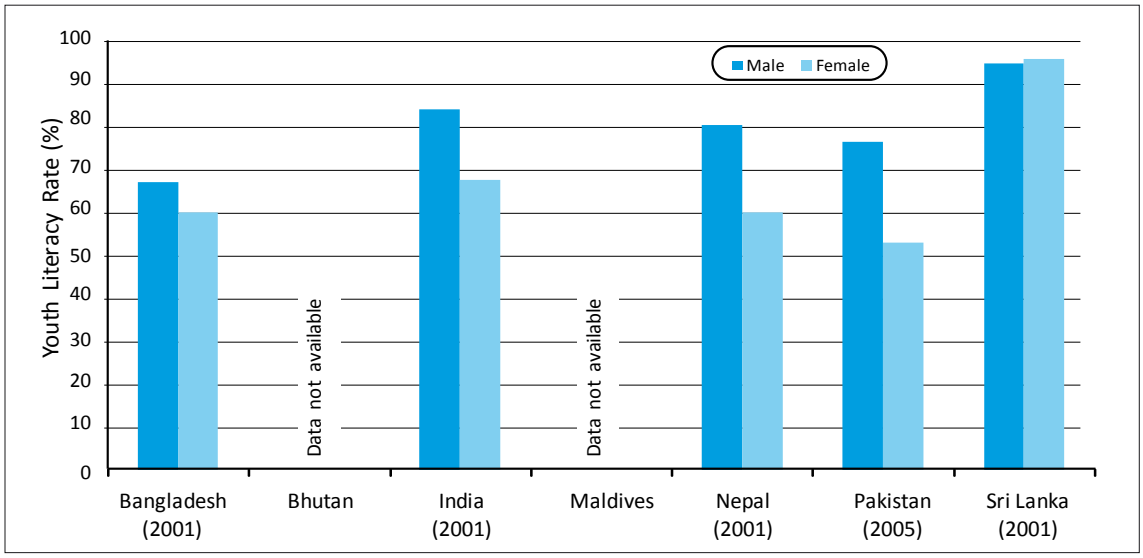
providers, it is inevitable that some areas of a country would benefit more than others. The type of variations can be illustrated by the youth literacy rates for different areas reported by Pakistan, where the gap between the province with the highest youth literacy rate and the province with the lowest rate was 23 percentage points.

10.4 Analysis of Disparities in Achieving Life Skills and Lifelong Learning

10.4.1 Progress in Achieving Gender and Social Equality in Goal Three

As is illustrated in Figure 17, in all the countries for which the data is available, except Sri Lanka, the female youth literacy rate is lower than that of males. Even in Bangladesh, a country which has had gender parity in enrolments in primary education for a number of years, the female youth literacy rate is 7 percentage points lower than the rate for males. The difference between male and female rates is even greater in other countries, 16 points in India, 21 points in Nepal and 24 points in Pakistan. In Pakistan, where youth literacy rates for provinces and administrative areas have also been reported, there are even more stark differences in some areas of the country. The female rates in every province were lower than the lowest provincial rate for males. By sex, the highest rate was 77% for males in Punjab and the lowest was 26% for females in Balochistan.

Figure 17: Youth Literacy Rate, by Sex, After 2000, Sub-Region

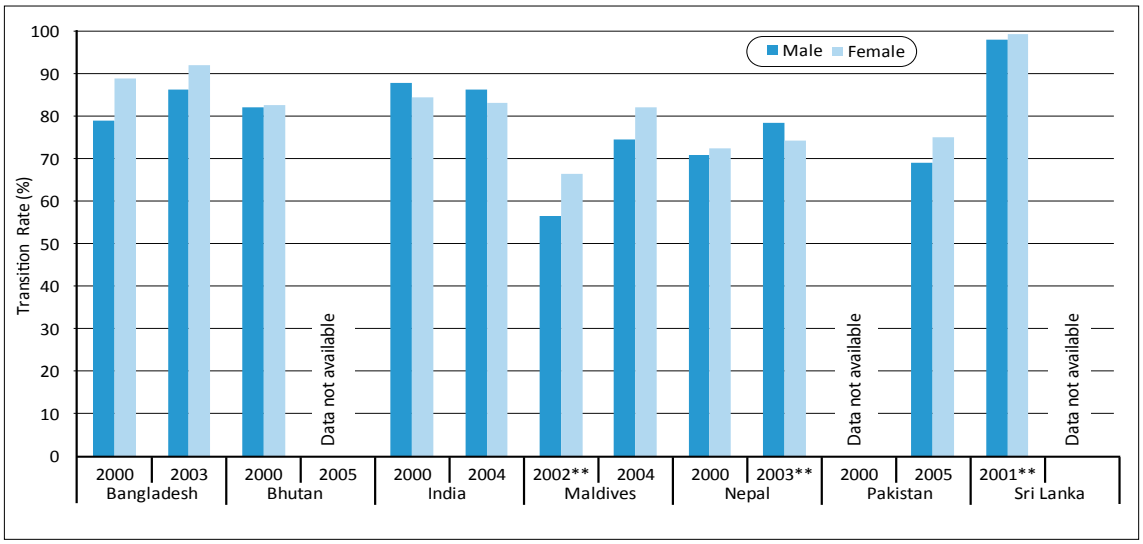


Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: All data are national estimates. Data for the most recent year available.

Mostly, the gap has narrowed in transition rates from primary to secondary for males and females, as shown in Figure 18. According to the latest data, more girls proceed to secondary education than boys in Bangladesh, the Maldives and Sri Lanka. The rate was approximately the same for both sexes in Bhutan in 2000. In India and Nepal the rates for boys slightly exceed those for girls. This is clearly an area in which progress is being made. However, from an examination of the data on GERs and NERs in secondary education reported under EFA Goal Two, it seems that girls are not being retained in secondary school after enrolment. The overall secondary enrolment rates mask disparities between the two levels of secondary education. Generally participation is much higher in lower secondary than in upper secondary. The gaps between the two levels are above 30 percentage points in Bangladesh, Nepal and the Maldives.[42]

42 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 Regional Overview: South and West Asia.*

Figure 18: Transition Rate from Primary to Secondary, by Sex, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate.

Most of the countries did not report on participation rates in the various activities under this goal in terms of geography, ethnicity, language, disability, socio-economic status or other factors which might affect access to provision. It seems that there is little targeting in the areas of TVET and life skills through formal education. However, NFE programmes are generally for disadvantaged groups.

10.4.2 Progress in Improving Quality for Goal Three

In most of the life skills and lifelong learning programmes, quality and relevance are major concerns. Because of the diverse nature of activities, there is little in the way of standardization or quality control by the respective governments. There are a number of areas where improvements are necessary in order to ensure quality provision in life skills teaching and in TVET and NFE initiatives. Efforts need to be taken to improve the quality of teaching, of the curriculum and of textbooks and other learning materials. All programmes must be relevant to the learners, teaching skills that they can apply in their own lives - an area where improvement is needed.

10.4.3 Cross-Cutting Issues in Addressing the "Unreached" and "Underserved"

The TVET sector in most countries, while much too small to meet the technical needs of the countries, also does not seem to be reaching the disadvantaged groups. In some countries there are new initiatives under the general term "livelihoods training" which are designed and implemented specifically for adolescents and youth from disadvantaged and vulnerable groups. Such programmes are generally aligned with market needs so that the training leads to employment. Most of the programmes are being implemented on a small scale, but this is an area that merits further attention by governments as well as other providers.

Box 12: Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children

Working Children in Bangladesh

According to the ILO's Child Labour Survey of 2004, an estimated 7.9 million children aged 5-17 are working in Bangladesh. Most of them are employed in the informal sector. Around 1.5 million children are working in urban areas. In Bangladesh, 47 sectors have been identified as hazardous work. Children are involved in a wide variety of work, many with little or no pay, and some work under highly hazardous conditions. A large proportion of girls' work, particularly domestic work, is unrecorded in Bangladesh, and most of the informal sector operates outside any regulatory framework.

Addressing the Needs of Working Children

From 1997 to 2004, the Government of Bangladesh with the assistance of UNICEF, Sida and DFID, undertook the Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Children (BEHTRUC) Project, which provided two years NFE to over 300,000 children in six divisional cities. Based on the lessons learned from the BEHTRUC Project First Phase, the Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children (BEHTRUWC) Project Second Phase was designed and is being managed by the BNFE under the MOPME with technical support by UNICEF. The learning centres are operated by 20 NGOs which were selected based on their past experience and competency. Sida, CIDA and UNICEF are the main donors of the project.

The project's aim is to provide 200,000 urban working children aged 10 to 14 (60% girls) with appropriate life skills based education. About 20,000 of the adolescents will also receive livelihood skills training to expand their employment horizons.

Since August 2006, a total of 82,750 learners have been enrolled in 3,310 learning centres in six divisional cities. Around 3,000 more learning centres will be opened during April to July 2008. This will bring the total coverage in 2008 to about 167,500 learners in around 6,646 centres operated through the partnership between BNFE and the 20 implementing NGOs.

Life Skills Based Education

One of the lessons learned from the first phase is the importance of developing strong literacy and numeracy skills as well as life skills to ensure that the learning is practical, useful and sustainable in the learners' lives. In order to provide a solid foundation, the basic education course was revised and lengthened. The course has been made more child-friendly and is activity-based with clearly defined learning competencies and a strong life skills component.

The course is for 40 months divided into five learning cycles. Each cycle runs for eight months and roughly corresponds to one academic year. Bangla, maths and life skills are introduced in the first learning cycle. English starts from the second learning cycle. Social studies is integrated into the life skills component. Livelihood related topics are included in the life skills component from the fourth learning cycle.

Core life skills are introduced and then practiced throughout the basic education course to equip the adolescents to apply the skills to simple everyday situations and to a number of issues.

The issues which are discussed are closely related and have immediate relevance to the learners' lives. Topics covered include early marriage, domestic violence and abuse, conflict resolution, puberty, drugs and relationships. The core skills covered in the course are:

- self-awareness
- empathy
- independent thinking
- creative thinking
- decision-making
- problem-solving
- communication
- interpersonal skills
- coping with emotions
- coping with stress

Livelihood Skills Training

One of the key findings from the first phase project was that working children want to increase their technical skills to access better employment opportunities and ultimately more options in life. Based on this, a provision for livelihood skills education has been kept in the second phase of the BEHTRUWC Project for urban working children. Under the livelihood skills component, provisions have been kept to provide two types of livelihood skills (technical and non-technical) training to the urban working children. Technical skills will include vocational skills training, apprenticeships, job placements, and opportunities for self employment. Non-technical skills will consist of job counselling, curriculum vitae writing, communication skills, job searching, entrepreneurial skills, marketing skills, business skills and other relevant skills.

The design of the technical livelihood skills education component will be based on the needs and capability of the learners as well as on labour market demands and opportunities for wage-employment or self-employment. Technical livelihood skills education will be provided directly by the project to 5,000 children of 13+ years who successfully complete the third cycle of the basic education course. The learners will also continue the last two learning cycles of the basic education course simultaneously. Another 15,000 children of 13+ years age will also be provided with livelihood skills training through linkages with the existing skills training activities of other organizations/service providers/NGOs.

From the fourth learning cycle, the contents of the non-technical skills training will be incorporated into the curriculum of the basic education course and accordingly teachers will be trained to impart these skills to the learners of the project. All the learners will be introduced to the non-technical livelihood skills as part of the basic education course.

Source: UNICEF Bangladesh, *Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Working Children*, April 2008.

10.4.4 Best Practices and Promising Approaches for Achieving Goal Three

A number of countries have been working to find ways to extend opportunities for education to young people through programmes which would ensure equivalency to the respective formal systems within countries. Some of the best examples of these approaches are through distance education modes and through the setting up of community education programmes.

In India, the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) provides opportunities for continuing education to interested learners through its 2,945 accredited academic and vocational institutions across the country. Initiated as a project in 1979, open schooling is now recognized as an independent system of education in India. The NIOS, with approximately 1.4 million learners on roll, is the largest open schooling organization in the world. Courses of study include an open basic education programme for children (up to 14 years), adolescents and adults at levels that are equivalent to Classes 3, 5 and 8 of the formal school system, a secondary education course, a senior secondary education course, vocational education courses and life enrichment programmes. The Bangladesh Open University, amongst its many courses, also has a programme which leads to obtaining the SSC.

In the Maldives, the aim of the Centre for Community Education (CCE) is to establish community education in each island using informal education strategies to provide educational opportunities for children who do not have the chance to study in the formal education system, school drop-outs and youth and adults in general. The current focus is vocational education and continuing education opportunities for young adults. In Bhutan, young people are able to advance their academic qualifications through the Continuing Education Programme, which was recently established. This is a joint partnership with the Government and private schools. While the evaluation is done by the Government's examination board, the space and teachers are provided by private schools.

10.5 Remaining Challenges and Issues in the South Asia Sub-Region

Across South Asia there are many challenges which make it difficult to achieve this goal. The first and most obvious is the lack of quantifiable targets. This makes it impossible to accurately gauge the extent to which countries are progressing towards the goal. Also, the EFA MDA indicators are varied, covering a number of inter-related but also quite distinct areas. Since the targets are not set, it is impossible to assess the prospects of achieving the goal. However, it is worthwhile to note some of the challenges and to ascertain what needs to be done to produce a favourable environment for adolescents and youth, both those in school and outside, to access education which will be relevant to their lives and give them skills that will help them to advance both socially and economically.

Perhaps the greatest challenge is the sheer numbers. As has already been noted, most adolescents and youth are not in formal schools. Yet they need to be given educational opportunities, particularly to gain life skills, which will help them to advance personally and socially, and livelihood skills, which will help them to progress economically. In addition to implementing programmes suitable for the general population, there is the need to develop life skills education programmes to meet the learning needs of children and adolescents from ethnic and linguistic minorities, from disadvantaged groups, and of those with disabilities.

For all the various types of education programmes under this goal, there is the need for effective coordination. This is not for the purpose of control but rather to help ensure that all adolescents and youth have equal opportunities to be involved. It should help reduce unnecessary duplication and promote the sharing of ideas and replication of appropriate models. To provide the bedrock for this type of coordination, information systems need to be improved so that data on the respective programmes can be collected, analyzed and used appropriately for better coordination and management.

11. Goal Four: Literacy and Continuing Education

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

Dakar Framework for Action Expanded Commentary on Adult Literacy and Continuing Education

All adults have a right to basic education, beginning with literacy, which allows them to engage actively in, and to transform, the world in which they live. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009, there are still some 776 million people globally who cannot read or write; two-thirds are women. The fragile levels of literacy acquired by many new literates compound the problem. Yet the education of adults remains isolated, often at the periphery of national education systems and budgets.

Adult and continuing education must be greatly expanded and diversified, and integrated into the mainstream of national education and poverty reduction strategies. The vital role literacy plays in lifelong learning, sustainable livelihoods, good health, active citizenship and the improved quality of life for individuals, communities and societies must be more widely recognized. Literacy and continuing education are essential for women's empowerment and gender equality. Closer linkages among formal, non-formal and informal approaches to learning must be fostered to respond to the diverse needs and circumstances of adults.

Sufficient resources, well-targeted literacy programmes, better trained teachers and the innovative use of technologies are essential in promoting these activities. The scaling up of practical, participatory learning methodologies developed by NGOs, which link literacy with empowerment and local development, is especially important. The success of adult education efforts in the next decade will be essentially demonstrated by substantial reduction in disparities between male/female and urban/rural literacy rates.

11.1 Background and Development of Literacy and Continuing Education in South Asia

11.1.1 Definition of Goal Four

Definitions of adult literacy vary across South Asia both in terms of age, and of type and level of skills. Within countries there are often widely varying definitions used by different departments, agencies and organizations. Usually, the census definition is used for official adult literacy rates, while more comprehensive definitions may be used for planning purposes and for assessing levels of functional literacy. For example, the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS) considers a person literate if he or she can read and write a letter in any language. However, according to the Government's NFE Policy Framework, literacy is the ability to read, understand, interpret, communicate and compute in verbal and written forms in varying contexts, and it involves a continuum of learning that enables individuals to develop their potentials and knowledge-base, and to participate fully in community affairs and wider social and developmental contexts.

The age group may also form part of the definition. In India, a person aged 7 years and above who can read and write with understanding in any language is considered literate. In Pakistan, the definition is the same except that the specified age is 10 years and above.

The language of literacy is an issue in some countries. While Bangladesh, Pakistan and India simply specify that literacy can be in any language, other countries qualify this. In Sri Lanka, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write in one's first language. Literacy in the Maldives is defined in terms of the national language Dhivelhi and the Thaana script. In Bhutan, a literate person is defined as someone who can independently read and write for communication and solve new problems using literacy skills, but the Bhutan EFA NPA goals specify literacy in the national language Dzongkha for those aged 15 and above. In Nepal, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write daily life related short and simple sentences written in his or her mother tongue or national language and also the ability to do simple calculations. Nepal seems to be the only country in South Asia which includes numeracy in the official definition. Bangladesh includes numeracy in the broader framework definition but not in the criteria used for the census.

11.1.2 National Policies and Legislation for Provision and Coordination of Goal Four

There is a constitutional mandate for the promotion of literacy in some but not all of the countries of South Asia. The constitution of Sri Lanka has among its goals "the complete eradication of illiteracy and assurance to all persons of the right to universal and equal access to education at all levels." The Bangladesh constitution recognizes literacy as a fundamental right of all citizens and enjoins on the state to take measures to remove illiteracy speedily. The Government approved a national NFE policy framework in 2006 which provides the overarching principles for conducting NFE programmes including adult literacy initiatives and continuing education activities. The age group may also form part of the definition. In India, a person aged 7 years and above who can read and write with understanding in any language is considered literate. In Pakistan, the definition is the same except that the specified age is 10 years and above.

In India, the eradication of illiteracy has been one of the major national priorities since independence. The National Policy on Education 1986 and its Programme of Action (POA), which was also revised in 1992, accorded qualified priority for literacy. The national policy urged that "the whole nation must pledge itself to eradication of illiteracy, particularly in the 15-35 age group."

In Pakistan, a Literacy Ordinance was approved by Parliament in 1987 which included provisions for making literacy a prerequisite for participation in economic and social activities. However, a date for enforcement of the act has not yet been set. The current education policy (1998-2010) envisages democratization of education through the expansion of elementary education including formal and non-formal methods and expanded programmes of adult education, literacy and functional literacy programmes.

Pakistan has set the ambitious goal of increasing the literacy rate for the 10+ age group from 43% to 86% by 2015. According to Nepal's NPA, interventions will be undertaken to raise the adult literacy rate from 48% in 2001 to 75% by the year 2015 and 95% for the 15-24 age group and 90% for the 6+ age group. Bhutan's national literacy goals are to eradicate illiteracy by 2015 and to make the adult population aged 15 years and over functionally literate and numerate in the national language. Since the Maldives already had near universal literacy in 1990, it has concentrated efforts on the promotion of literacy in English in order to strengthen communication with the rest of the world.

11.1.3 Strategies and Programmes for Disadvantaged Groups

In general, adult literacy efforts have been erratic and short lived. A number of countries have taken up initiatives at different times since Jomtien, but most of these have been poorly funded and have not been sustained over time. In many of the countries, the main implementers of literacy programmes have been NGOs and CBOs with governments taking an occasional rather than a long-term interest.

India is the one country in the region which has had a comprehensive policy and a sustained approach, and the initiative was started even before Jomtien. The National Literacy Mission (NLM) was set up in India in 1988 to impart functional literacy to 80 million adult illiterates by 1995, which was subsequently revised to cover 100 million. After trying out different models, the NLM adopted a modified mass campaign approach known as the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) as the dominant strategy for adult literacy.

Most of the other countries in South Asia have included plans to expand adult literacy and continuing education programmes in their NPAs. Acknowledging that literacy is not simply a skill to be learned in isolation, broad strategies integrating literacy with other skills and activities are advocated. In a number of countries, the strategy is to forge partnerships with NGOs and other departments and agencies already active in the field. In Nepal, according to the NPA, a number of activities are to be undertaken, including the implementation of adult literacy programmes in an integrated manner and in coordination with other development programmes with the involvement of local bodies, governmental organizations and NGOs.

In Bangladesh, the NPA seeks to provide opportunities and facilities to meet the learning, life and livelihood skills needs of adolescents, young adults, adults and neoliterate adults to survive and thrive in a competitive world. The plan aims to contextualize EFA and MDG targets under the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) in a harmonized approach with realistic targets and shared responsibilities. The BNFE has the responsibility to establish appropriate standards and to promote NGO/CBO capacities to achieve quality in programme formulation, implementation and monitoring. NGOs and CBOs are to play the primary role in implementing programmes based on a public-private partnership approach for planning, implementation and monitoring of activities.

BNFE is to ensure effective coordination of activities within the government (relevant ministries) and between government and other partners. Appropriate linkages with other relevant programmes (skills training, micro-finance, employment generation) and organizations are to be established to assist NFE participants to put their new-found learning, job skills and knowledge to work towards poverty reduction and income generation. There are to be separate initiatives targeted at selected age specific groups. The groups are the post-primary age group (ages 11-14); out-of-school adolescents and youth (ages 12-19); young adults (ages 15-24) targeting 50% of the illiterate group; and adults (ages 25-45) targeting 25% of the illiterate group. Post-literacy and continuing education initiatives are also part of the plan.

In Bangladesh and Pakistan, the Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) has been launched in collaboration with UNESCO. In Pakistan, a number of other adult literacy projects are being implemented by the Government and by NGOs. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, a national curriculum for literacy has been developed and launched. The curriculum covers the areas of basic literacy, functional literacy and income-generating skills.

In Sri Lanka, a draft action plan has been developed for the period from 2007- 2010. It has identified four objectives related to literacy, namely the development of basic literacy among youth and adults from 91% to 100% by 2010, functional literacy among youth and adults, life/practical skills, and both practical and technical skills required to succeed in life through the school system.

The focus during the Ninth FYP in Bhutan is to expand the NFE programme using the existing teachers and space in primary schools, to recruit promising Class XII graduates to teach in the NFE centres and to foster greater collaboration with other ministries to support post-literacy programmes. The aim is to increase the number of participants in the NFE programme from 1,000 to 4,800 every year.

Box 13: Literacy Through Non-Formal Education in Bhutan

The National Women's Association of Bhutan and the Department of Education initiated the Non-Formal Education Programme with the establishment of six pilot centres in 1992, serving approximately 300 women learners. The objective was to empower illiterate youths and adults who had either dropped out of, or never attended formal schools, and to help improve their quality of life by providing relevant life skills through literacy. The NFE programme was then subsequently expanded in the Eighth FYP as a means of remedying low adult literacy levels. In a little over a decade, the programme has grown exponentially, due to both increasing popular demand for NFE and the high policy priority that adult literacy has received. The programme has now expanded from basic literacy classes to include both post-literacy and self-learning courses.

NFE classes are usually held in the evenings. Within the core curriculum, participants are taught topics covering health and nutrition, hygiene, birth control, the importance of education, and other important health and social themes, with a practical view to directly improve the conditions of their everyday lives. IT resources for NFE students are soon to be introduced in several centres. This is expected to facilitate learning and add another dimension to adult education.

The NFE programme has made a significant impact on the rural population, particularly on women. Some have become members of the National Assembly. Their contribution towards the creation of social capital has been substantial, and they have become agents of change, discussing development issues and the needs of their village communities in relevant meetings. As representatives of their communities, they are regarded as role models. As such, they have motivated many other women to become literate.

The programme has been highly regarded by local communities and its benefits widely acclaimed by the participants themselves. In the words of Karma, an NFE learner in Monggar:

"I did not know anything before. Now I can read and write. I am not confused while travelling, [I] can read vehicle numbers and signboards, do some basic calculations, and am independent. We are thankful to our teacher and to the Royal Government for this chance."

Source: Bhutan EFA MDA Country Report, 2008.

11.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

11.2.1 Progress of Countries in the Sub-Region

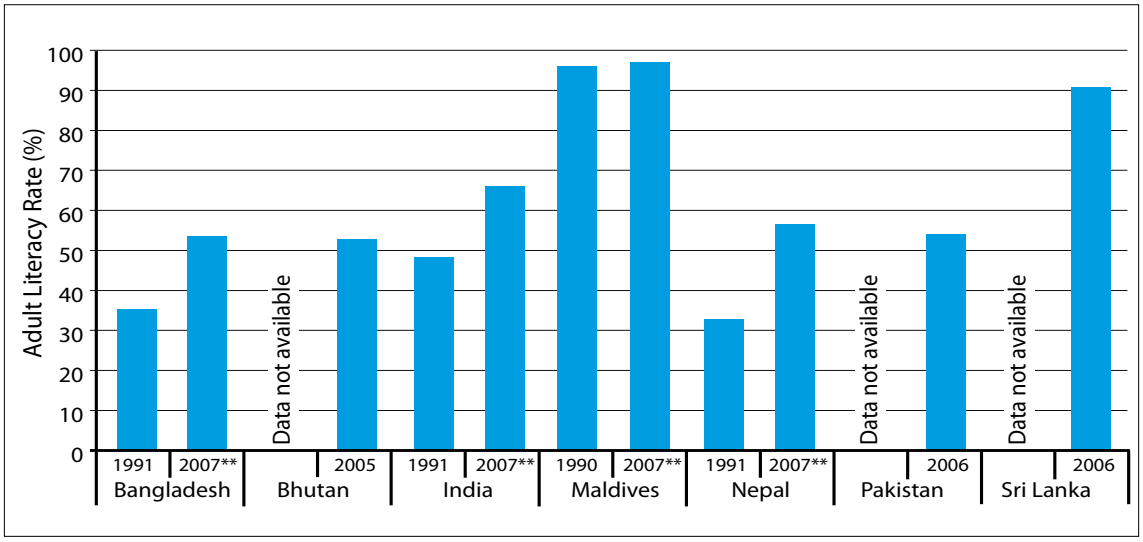
According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, South and West Asia was home to half of the world's 774 million illiterate adults during the period 1995-2004. Although literacy rates rose by 25% to an average of 60% literacy rate for the sub-region from 48% in the previous period (1985-1994), the number of adults lacking basic literacy skills had declined only slightly by 1.6% to 387.8 million. The increase in the literacy rate was higher than any other area in the world, but at 60%, the adult literacy rate for South and West Asia remains well below the average of 77% for all developing countries.[43]

The countries in South Asia with data for the 1990s as well as for the first decade of this century recorded substantial improvements in adult literacy rates, as can be seen in Figure 19. Bangladesh

43 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008.*

improved its adult literacy rate by 18.2 percentage points to 53.5% in 2007 based on UIS estimation. India saw its literacy rate improve to 66% in 2007, according to the UIS estimation, from 48.2% in 1991.

Figure 19: Adult Literacy Rate, Before 1995 and After 2000, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre, accessed August 2009
Note: "**" indicates UIS estimation. Data are for the most recent year available.

Other countries in the region have also made progress in literacy or have maintained high literacy levels. UIS estimates show that the Maldives maintained its almost universal literacy status of 97% in 2007. Sri Lanka's adult literacy rate also stood at 90.8% in 2006. According to the UIS, Nepal saw an increase in its adult literacy rate by 23.5 percentage points to 56.5% between 1991 and 2007. According to a population and household census undertaken in Bhutan in 2005, the adult literacy rate for the 15+ age group increased to 53%. According to the Pakistan EFA MDA Report the adult literacy rate had increased by 9 points in four years. Data from UIS show Pakistan's adult literacy rate at 54.2% in 2006.

Although progress has been made, adult literacy rates for all the countries except Sri Lanka and the Maldives remain at comparatively low levels. Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal have rates of less than 60%. India's literacy rate was at 66% in 2007 according to UIS estimation. Given the huge populations of some of these countries, this represents a substantial percentage of the world's illiterate population. India alone accounted for nearly 35% of the world's adult illiterates in 1995-2004.[44]

As was noted under EFA Goal 3, indications are that the youth literacy rate continued to improve across South Asia during the past decade. Generally, youth literacy rates are substantially higher than adult literacy rates, and this can be seen as a positive factor for improved adult literacy rates in the future.

11.2.2 Variations within Countries

There are wide variations in literacy rates within countries, particularly in the countries with literacy rates below 65%. India has noted that although the gap between the educationally advanced and disadvantaged states has been narrowing over the years, inter-state and intra-state disparities still continue. Bangladesh recorded variations in literacy rates of the six divisions within the country, and Nepal noted disparities across regions. In Pakistan, the difference in the province with the

44 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 Regional Overview: South and West Asia.*

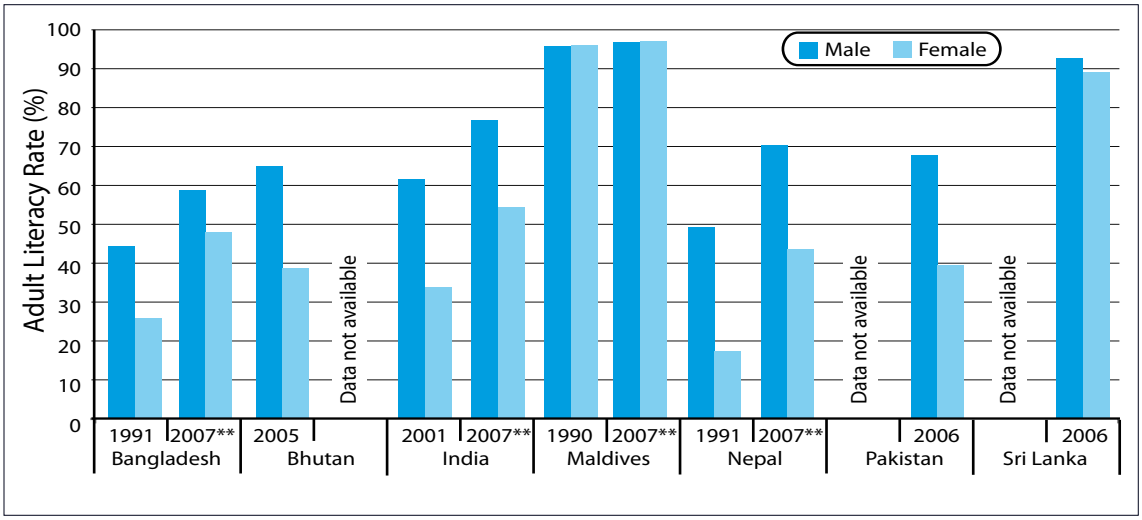
highest literacy rate and the province with the lowest rate was 17 points. Most countries noted considerably higher rates for urban areas than for the rural population.

11.3 Analysis of Disparities in Goal Four

11.3.1 Progress in Achieving Gender and Social Equality in Goal Four

As can be seen from Figure 20, except for the Maldives, the literacy rates for females are substantially lower than the rates for males. Although for the countries for which data is available the gap is narrowing, the disparity by gender remains extremely high.

Figure 20: Adult Literacy Rate, by Sex, Before 1995 and After 2000, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre, accessed August 2009.
Note: "**" indicates UIS estimation. Data are for the most recent year available.

Based on adult literacy rates for the 1999-2004 period, the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 identified South and West Asia as the region with the strongest gender disparities. Striking gender disparities prevailed in India, Nepal and Pakistan, where literacy rates for females were less than two-thirds of those for males. Besides gender, poverty and place of residence also influence literacy rates. Generally illiteracy rates are highest in the countries with the greatest poverty. The link between poverty and illiteracy is also observed at household level with the literacy rates of the poorest households substantially lower than those of the wealthiest.[45]

When literacy rates are compared using both the factors of gender and geographical location, the differences within countries are even more striking. For instance, in India the literacy rate for urban males was 30 points higher than the rate for rural females. In Pakistan, for which a national male literacy rate of 68.7% was recorded, some districts had female literacy rates lower than 10%.

The literacy rates of a number of social and cultural sub-groups have been noted as considerably lower than the national rates. In India, a number of low literacy districts have been identified. The literacy rate among tribal groups is the lowest compared to all other sub-groups of the population. The literacy rates for Muslims is lower than the national average in almost all the big states where there is a large Muslim population, and female literacy rates among Muslims are lower than the female literacy rates of all other religious communities in 21 states and union territories. Disability has also been recognized as a factor aligned with low literacy rates in India.

45 UNESCO, EFA *Global Monitoring Report 2008 Regional Overview: South and West Asia.*

Nepal has noted wide discrepancies in literacy rates among different caste and ethnic groups. The lowest literacy rates are found among the dalits living in the plains. Available statistics indicate that the literacy rate of economically and socially privileged groups ranges from 60% to 94% whereas literacy rates of some of the most disadvantaged castes and ethnic groups are as low as 3.7%. There are also disparities among development regions and ecological zones. Literacy rates are lowest in the mountainous region.

The countries of South Asia have made some gains in reducing the gap in male and female literacy rates, but much remains to be done. Although some countries have noted some improvements in the rates of various sub-groups of the population, overall the gap between advantaged and disadvantaged groups remains unacceptably high. More progress in this area is needed.

11.3.2 Progress in Improving Quality for Goal Four

Most of the adult literacy and continuing education programmes in the region are fairly small scale, and there is a diverse range of activities. While some programmes are intensively monitored, overall, the assessment of literacy initiatives has been very weak. For this reason it is difficult to evaluate the quality of most programmes. Unlike in primary education where quality has become a major concern, in adult literacy there has not been a strong emphasis on quality improvement. However, there are some promising initiatives. Pakistan has noted that for the first time a national curriculum has been developed for adult literacy. This can be used to set standards for diverse programmes. In Bangladesh, the NFE policy framework provides the opportunity for the Government to play a role in setting standards and monitoring quality while encouraging NGOs and other agencies and departments to take the lead in implementing literacy and continuing education programmes.

Improving the quality of primary education is also very relevant to increasing overall literacy rates. Formal schooling is a driving force for literacy expansion, provided that children complete school and receive an education of good quality. Completion rates are low in a number of the South Asian countries, and studies have indicated that, even among those who complete primary education, large numbers possess weak literacy and numeracy skills.[46] Such poor results of formal schooling along with limited opportunities to use literacy skills could result in large numbers of adults who have attended primary school, but who are not functionally literate.

11.3.3 Cross-Cutting Issues in Addressing the "Unreached" and "Underserved"

Most of the countries reported the targeting of specific disadvantaged groups. Nearly all the countries reported a focus on adult literacy programmes for women. In Pakistan, more than 80% of literacy centres are for women. In India, the Tenth FYP recognized that without giving a specific thrust to improve female literacy rates, particularly in states with very low rates and large disparities between male and female rates, it would be impossible to eliminate the gender disparity. A number of innovative programmes have been undertaken to provide literacy for women in disadvantaged areas.

Nepal reported that although efforts are being made, accessibility of the most disadvantaged groups to literacy programmes under the Government and NGO's sponsorship has been inadequate. Available resources are not sufficient for the monumental task. Bhutan also noted the need for increased resources to reach all adults who have not had an opportunity to become literate.

According to Bangladesh's NPA, special efforts are to be made to extend the coverage of literacy and NFE programmes to educationally, socially and economically disadvantaged groups who missed schooling or dropped out of school. Specifically, the clientele groups to be covered by literacy and NFE programmes include primary school drop-outs, never-enrolled adolescents and young adults, illiterate adults, children living in remote locations, people with physical disabilities, ethnic minorities and populations suffering social exclusion.

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46 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2007.*

11.3.4 Best Practices and Promising Approaches for Achieving Goal Four

LIFE was launched in October 2005 by the UNESCO Director-General during the 33rd General Conference of UNESCO.[47] It is a collaborative framework for action, in which national governments, NGOs, civil society, the private sector, UN agencies and bilateral and multilateral agencies work together to combat illiteracy and empower disadvantaged groups, especially rural women and girls. It is being implemented in three phases from 2006 to 2015. In Asia, Bangladesh and Pakistan were selected to participate in the first round of LIFE, beginning in 2006. Five more Asian countries will join as LIFE Round 2 countries in 2008: Afghanistan, China, India, Indonesia, and Papua New Guinea. Round 3 begins in 2010, with Iran and Nepal joining. Each LIFE country receives US$1 million in funding toward literacy initiatives.

In both Bangladesh and Pakistan, the LIFE initiative has worked to increase systematization of literacy programmes and coordination among actors. LIFE has assisted in developing standardized curricula where programmes were previously ad hoc. Moreover, LIFE has facilitated knowledge-sharing and cooperation among Asian countries, with countries such as Thailand, Viet Nam, and Indonesia that have more developed literacy programmes and experience with Community Learning Centres (CLCs) sharing knowledge with LIFE countries that are just beginning to implement this model.

LIFE, with the support of UNESCO, has built on such experience to increase systematization. The CLC workshop in Pakistan in February 2008, for example, worked to establish national guidelines for CLCs (which were previously run by NGOs in an ad hoc fashion). An important success for the LIFE initiative in Pakistan has been to significantly increase coordination among the central government, provincial governments and NGOs.

Bangladesh's experience of LIFE differs from Pakistan's as a result of the strong and long-standing NGO presence in Bangladesh. LIFE funds in Bangladesh have helped support capacity-development, as NGOs now use their expertise to help train the Government in NFE at both central and provincial levels. Acknowledging that NGOs have greater capacity for delivery, the Bangladesh Government now encourages NGOs to become involved in NFE and literacy training.

11.4 Remaining Challenges and Issues in the South Asia Sub-Region

Without giving attention to youth and adult literacy, the EFA goals cannot be achieved. A diverse range of literacy and continuing education programmes is required. There is also the need to give strong attention to establishing and maintaining a literate environment, particularly the availability and use of written materials and information and communications technology. All these encourage literacy acquisition, a reading culture, improved literacy retention and access to information.[48]

Literacy efforts in South Asia have traditionally been implemented by NGOs rather than by governments. This has led to a great diversity of programmes and often to strong integration with other development activities. While NGOs, CBOs and various government departments should continue to play a major role in literacy, there is the need for coordination and leadership by the governments in the region if EFA targets are to be met. Governments should take the lead in setting high quality standards, in setting-up effective data collection and analysis systems and in general coordination of activities.

Across all the countries of South Asia there are sub-groups of the population which have particularly low literacy rates. These groups should be identified with special programmes tailor-made to fit their needs. In many cases this will involve fighting discrimination and promoting the rights of minorities and socially excluded groups.

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47 Information for this section was taken from *UNLD Mid-Decade Progress Report on Literacy in Asia, 2008.*
48 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008.*

Adult literacy is the area in which gender disparities remain the highest for all the indicators in South Asia. While countries have recognized the gender factor and are making efforts to address the issue, concerted and sustained efforts will be required to remove the gender gap.

Expanded and improved primary education systems have been the greatest contributor to increased literacy rates in the countries of South Asia. However, reliance on formal education systems alone will take several decades to produce a literate South Asia. Governments must pursue a two-pronged strategy of support for effective primary education systems and for relevant adult literacy and continuing education programmes for those who have missed the opportunity for formal schooling.

The prospects for achieving the EFA goal for adult literacy for most of the countries in the region are not strong. Unless governments throughout South Asia show a renewed commitment to adult literacy and allocate resources accordingly, this will be a goal which will remain unfulfilled.

12. Goal Five: Gender Parity and Equality in Education

Goal Five: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girl's full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

Dakar Framework for Action Expanded Commentary on Gender Equality in Education

Gender-based discrimination remains one of the most intractable constraints to realizing the right to education. Without overcoming this obstacle, EFA cannot be achieved. Girls are a majority among out-of-school children and youth, although in an increasing number of countries, boys are at a disadvantage. Even though the education of girls and women has a powerful trans-generational effect and is a key determinant of social development and women's empowerment, limited progress has been made in increasing girls' participation in basic education.

International agreement has already been reached to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005. This requires that gender issues be mainstreamed throughout the education system, supported by adequate resources and strong political commitment. Merely ensuring access to education for girls is not enough. Unsafe school environments and biases in teacher behaviour and training, teaching and learning processes, and curricula and textbooks often lead to lower completion and achievement rates for girls. By creating safe and gender sensitive learning environments, it should be possible to remove a major hurdle to girls' participation in education. Increasing levels of women's literacy is another crucial factor in promoting girls' education. Comprehensive efforts therefore need to be made at all levels and in all areas to eliminate gender discrimination and to promote mutual respect between girls and boys, women and men. To make this possible, change in attitudes, values and behaviour are required.

12.1 Background and Development of Gender Parity and Equality in Education in South Asia

12.1.1 Definition of Goal Five

None of the countries specifically defined gender parity or gender equality. However, gender parity generally refers to being quantitatively equal, i.e. to the number of girls being equal to the number of boys for any given indicator. The gender parity index (GPI) is used to measure gender parity. The GPI is the ratio of the female to male indicator value. A GPI value between 0.97 to 1.03 indicates parity between the sexes, whereas a GPI below 0.97 indicates a disparity in favour of boys while a GPI above 1.03 indicates a bias in favour of girls. However, gender equality should not be equated with mere gender parity. Gender equality is a much broader goal which focuses on genuine equality between the sexes in all spheres of education and life. Usually, qualitative methods are needed to assess the extent to which countries are moving towards gender equality.

12.1.2 National Policies and Legislation for Provision and Coordination of Goal Five

All the countries of South Asia have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). This is the basic document that expresses the commitment of countries to work in all areas to enhance the rights of girls and women and to progressively move to a society in which there is full equality of the sexes in every aspect of life. The role of education is considered paramount in the fulfilment of the aims of CEDAW.

Most of the countries in the region have enacted national policies to promote equality in education. Sri Lanka has a long tradition of promoting the rights of girls and women. The 1978 Constitution not only guarantees equal rights without discrimination on the basis of sex but also provides for policies of affirmative action to remove sex discrimination. In India as well, long before international commitment to girls' education was expressed as a follow-up of the EFA goals, the policy environment had recognized the necessity of educating girls if universal elementary education were to be achieved. This was evident from the pro-girls/women constitutional stance that empowered the state to make special provisions for women and children notwithstanding the fundamental obligation of non-discrimination on the basis of sex. This provision has enabled the state to draw up special policies and programmes to benefit girls and women to overcome their disadvantages and to address gender disparities. The National Policy on Education 1986 put special emphasis on the removal of disparities and the equalization of opportunities.

In Pakistan, the Women Protection Bill 2006 is considered an important step for the empowerment of women and girls. Pakistan's Perspective Plan 2001-11 envisages raising female literacy from 29% to 69% by the end of the plan. Emphasis is on the economic, social and political empowerment of women.

In Bangladesh, the Constitution (1972) guarantees equal opportunities for all women and men in the country. In the NPA, gender is identified as a cross-cutting theme with targets implicit within each of the other five goals. In Nepal, the EFA plans for each goal were devised separately with little linkage with the overarching goals of equity and quality. However, equitable quality education is a key principle and a major policy focus of the Government's sector programme (EFA 2004-09).

In the Maldives, successive development plans have reaffirmed gender mainstreaming as a priority and have incorporated gender as a cross-cutting issue. Starting from the Sixth NDP, a separate section on gender as a cross-cutting policy issue has been incorporated. The National Policy on Gender came into effect in 2006. The Seventh NDP for 2006-10 has incorporated all aspects of the policy including targets to eliminate gender disparity in tertiary education and to increase female participation in the labour force from 52% to 60%.

Box 14: Education Policy for the Advancement of Girls and Women

India's National Policy on Education (1986) articulated the intent to "lay special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far." The policy was a turning point in Indian education as it brought the issue of women's equality to centre stage in all discourses on education and development.

"Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well conceived edge in favour of women. . . This will be an act of faith and social engineering. . . The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services, setting time targets and effective monitoring. . . "

Source: India EFA MDA Report, 2008.

12.1.3 Strategies and Programmes for Disadvantaged Children

In order to mainstream equity and inclusion concepts in Nepal's education sector programme (EFA 2004-09), several strategies and activities have been devised and are being implemented. Strategies have been undertaken to achieve equity in access through school construction and rehabilitation, alternative-flexible schools, free school education, free textbooks, school feeding, and scholarships. Strategies undertaken to achieve equity in quality include curriculum improvement, teacher training, professional support, improvement of the school environment and reforms in school examinations. Measures to increase the number of female teachers are strategic from both access and quality perspectives. Increasing institutional capacity and enhancing school autonomy are also the major strategies which may have a direct bearing on equity in education.

In India, the national commitment to girls' education gained momentum through several initiatives in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first generation basic education programmes all emphasized the focus on girls' education. This intent was taken to scale through the District Primary Education Programme (DPEP) which made the female literacy rate a selection criterion for project districts and set goals of reducing gender disparities in enrolment, retention and learning. Continuing in the same vein, the SSA, India's current education sector programme, reiterates the need to focus on girls' education to equalize educational opportunities and eliminate gender disparities.

In Bangladesh, a number of pro-girl policies and strategies have been adopted to enhance the enrolment and participation of girls in the system. In primary education, 60% of new teacher recruits is reserved for women candidates. There have been massive social mobilization campaigns to motivate parents to send their daughters, as well as their sons, to school. Separate toilets for girls are being constructed in primary schools. Under the primary education development programme, PEDP II, a gender action plan has been adopted to address issues of not only quantitative parity but also equity in all areas of school life.

In Pakistan, emphasis is placed on female secondary school education. Scholarships and subsidies for girls' education are provided to low-income households to encourage continuation of education beyond the primary level, with particular emphasis on provision for girls residing in geographic regions with high poverty concentration. Scholarships are given to girls to enhance their professional educational qualifications to become teachers. The content of education is being made more relevant to the practical needs of rural girls through the inclusion of subjects such as agriculture, health and hygiene in the curriculum. The portrayal of women in various

developmental contexts is being introduced to minimize stereotypes in textbooks. The revamping of science education is a major initiative targeting rural areas and encouraging female students to follow the science stream with the aid of scholarships.

In Bhutan, the national goal is to increase the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary and tertiary education and bring a special thrust on enhancing female literacy and opportunities for life skills, vocational education and employment for women, especially young women. A key strategy is to increase the enrolment of females in higher secondary and tertiary education through easier access to schools and better hostel facilities and to expand NFE and skills training in rural areas.

In Sri Lanka, it is recognized that free primary, secondary and tertiary education since 1945 has been a major factor that has contributed to the achievement of gender parity in access to education at all levels. Sri Lanka will continue to implement these positive strategies. The Maldives has followed similar positive policies and strategies resulting in high participation rates of girls as well as boys.

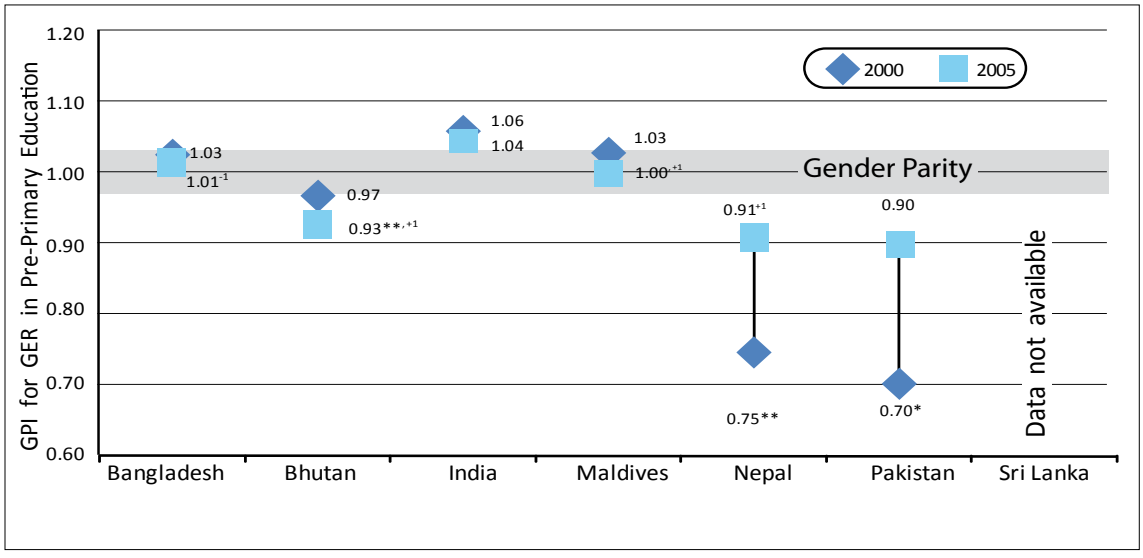
12.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

12.2.1 Progress of Countries in the Sub-Region

Although there is still a long way to go towards achieving gender equality, or even gender parity in most countries, South Asia has made significant progress in reducing gender disparities in education. All countries in the region showed increased GPIs for every indicator for which data is available. Having started the decade with some of the lowest GPIs in the world, the region has moved towards gender parity in a number of areas.

As can be seen in Figure 21, Bangladesh and the Maldives have achieved gender parity in pre-primary education with a GPI of 1.01 and 1.00, respectively. The gender gap has been reduced remarkably in Nepal and Pakistan, the only two countries in South Asia which had low GPIs at the beginning of the decade. The lowest GPI in the region for this indicator is 0.90 for Pakistan, followed by Nepal with 0.91.

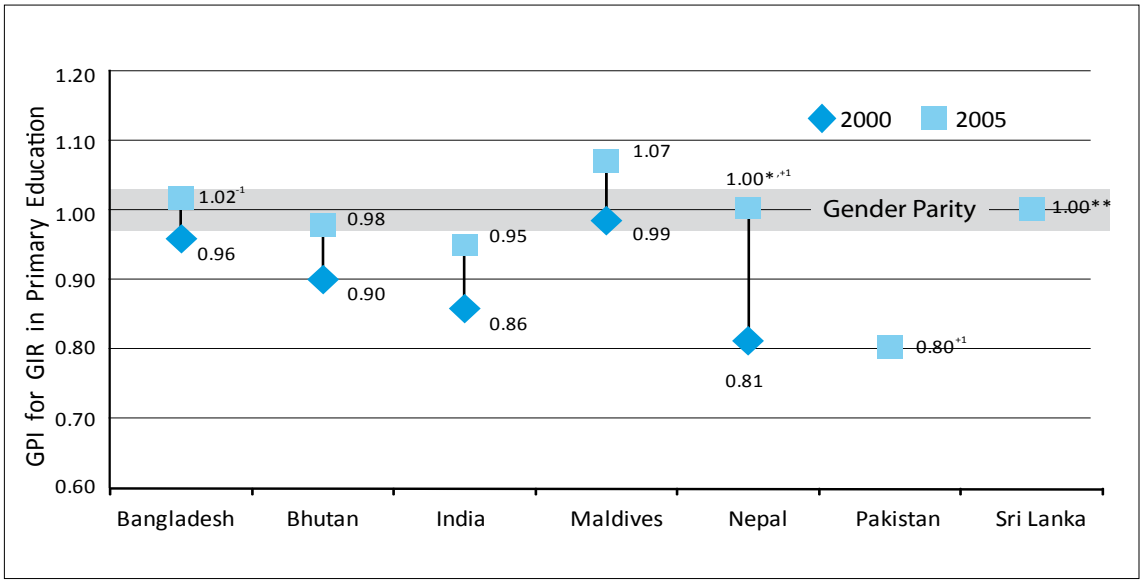
Figure 21: GPI for GER in Pre-Primary Education, 2000 and 2005, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimates. "+n" indicates data refer to n years after the reference year. "-n" indicates data refer to n years before the reference year.

Gender disparities in primary education stem first and foremost from disparities in enrolment in the first grade. As illustrated in Figure 22, all the countries in the region for which data is available showed healthy increases in the GPIs for this indicator. Moreover, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Sri Lanka have achieved gender parity in primary education with GPIs within the range of 0.97 and 1.03. Pakistan is lagging behind the most with a GPI of 0.80, indicating a bias against girls. However, a bias against boys is also showing in the Maldives where the GPI for GIR is at 1.07.

Figure 22: GPI for GIR in Primary Education, 2000 and 2005, Sub-Region

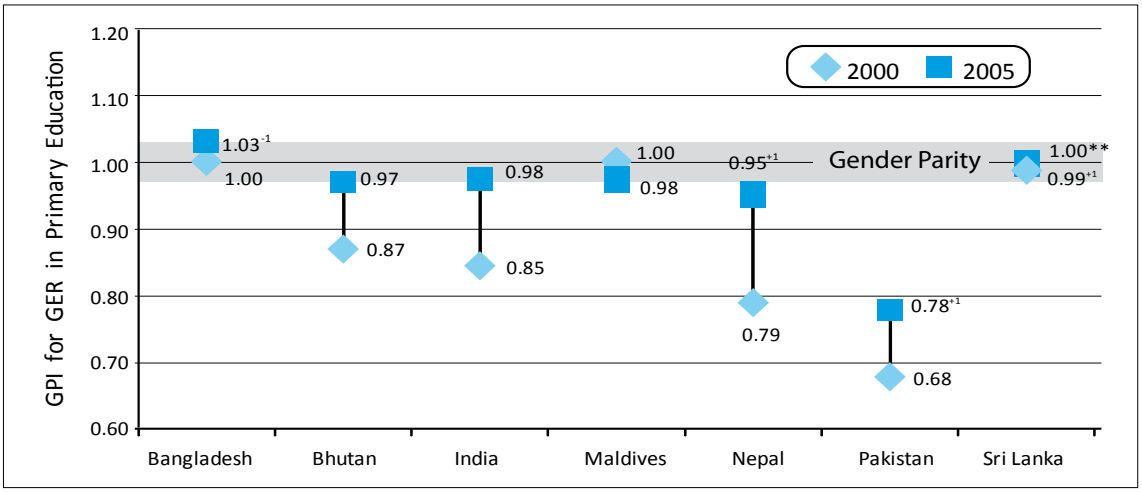


Source : UNESCO Institute for Statistics Database Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimates. "+n" indicates data refer to n years after the reference year. "-n" indicates data refer to n years before the reference year.

South and West Asia was the region that made the greatest progress towards gender parity in primary education GERs between 1999 and 2005, having started the period in the worst situation of any region.[49] The post-Dakar trend was even steeper than that registered between 1991 and 1999. As shown in Figure 23, all countries in South Asia, except Nepal and Pakistan, have achieved gender parity in GER in primary education, with Bhutan and India posting significant gains of 0.10 and 0.13 respectively, from 2000 to achieve gender parity in 2005. Nepal also recorded an improvement in the GPI of 0.16. Although Pakistan's GPI increased by 0.10 to 0.78 in 2005, it is still the lowest in the region indicating much more needs to be done to bring more girls to primary school.

48 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 Regional Overview: South and West Asia.*

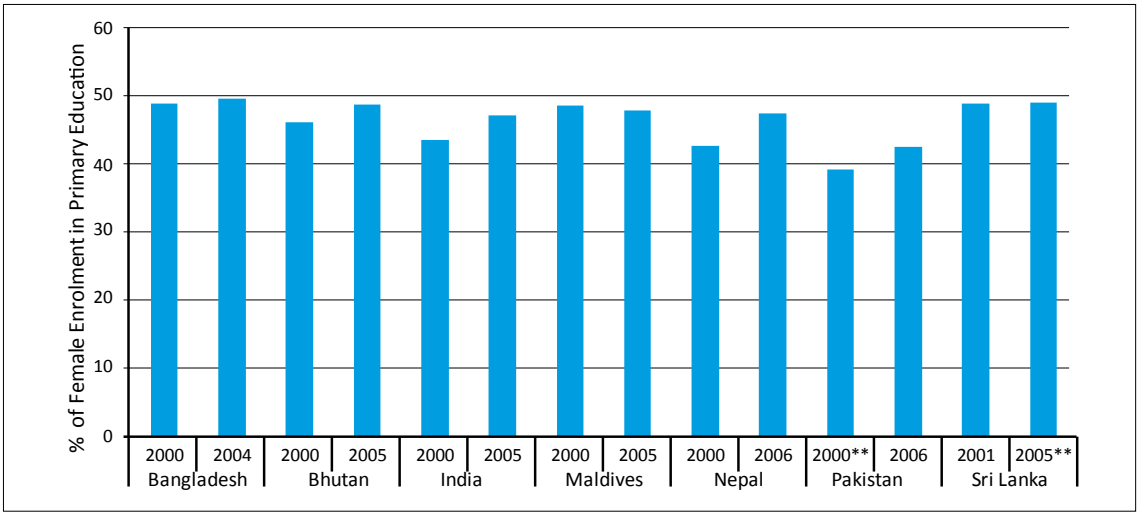
Figure 23: GPI for GER in Primary Education, 2000 and 2005, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "+n" indicates data refer to n years after the reference year. "-n" indicates data refer to n years before the reference year.

As can be seen in Figure 24, the percentage of female enrolment in primary education increased in the countries in the region, except for the Maldives. Although none of the countries had 50% or more enrolment of females, this can be somewhat misleading. In most of the countries of Asia, the male population for this age group is higher than the female population. For this reason, even in countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka which have achieved gender parity in enrolments, the actual number of girls enrolled is less than the number of boys. As was noted in the chapter on EFA Goal 2, the GERs for girls in both of these countries are higher than the GERs for boys.

Figure 24: Percentage of Female Enrolment in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



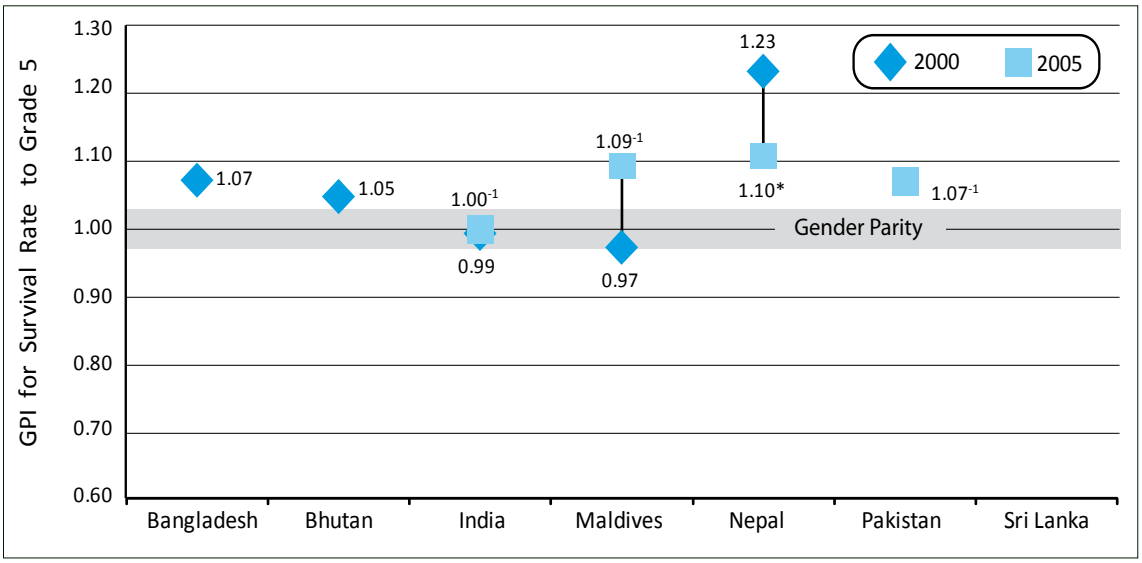
Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate.

Once girls have access to school, they often do better than boys. In all the countries in South Asia with data on repetition, girls repeated less than boys.[50] Although data for 2000 is not available for most of the countries, as can be seen in Figure 25, in 2005 all South Asian countries for which data

50 *Ibid.*

was available had GPIs above 1.0 for survival rate to Grade 5 in primary education, except for India. In every case, girls were more likely than boys to reach Grade 5 of primary education. While it is noteworthy that girls are doing better than boys when given the opportunity, effective gender policies should also address the issue of the under-achievement of boys. The causes may include the poor quality and the limited relevance of education as perceived by adolescent males.

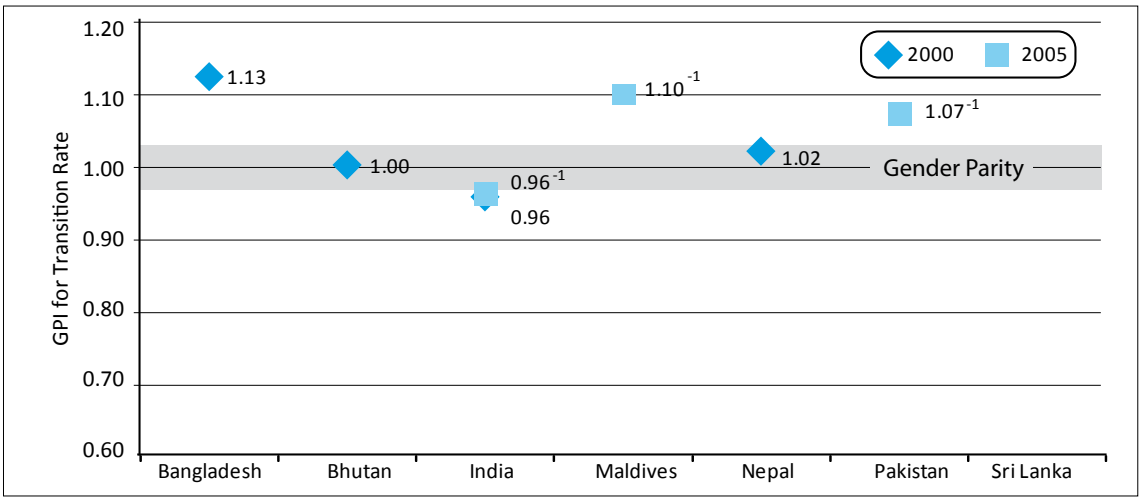
Figure 25: GPI for Survival Rate to Grade 5 in Primary Education, 2000 and 2005, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "*" indicates national estimates. "-n" indicates data refer to n years before the reference year.

Girls were more likely to transition to lower secondary education from primary than boys in Bangladesh, the Maldives and Pakistan, as illustrated in Figure 26. Only Bhutan and Nepal showed gender parity in the transition rates in 2000.

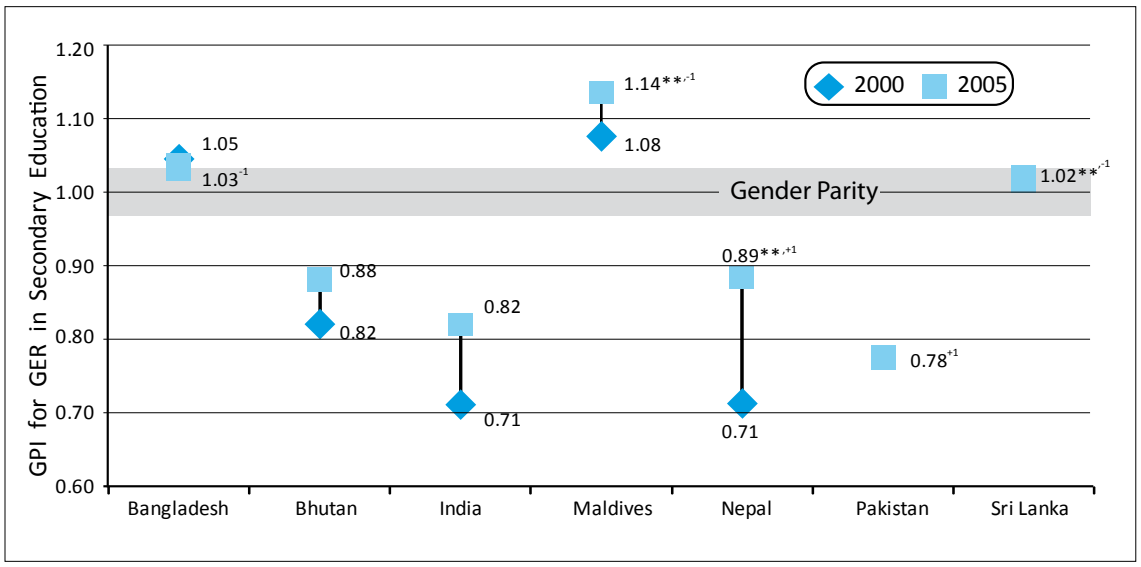
Figure 26: GPI for Transition Rate from Primary to Lower Secondary Education, 2000 and 2005, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Note: "-n" indicates data refer to n years before the reference year.

Unfortunately, once in secondary education there are many barriers that prevent a significant number of girls from continuing. As can be seen in Figure 27, the GPIs for GER in secondary education are considerably lower than the GPIs for transitioning to secondary school. Only Bangladesh and Sri Lanka achieved gender parity with GPIs of 1.03 and 1.02, respectively. Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are the only South Asian countries that achieved the EFA goal and MDG of gender parity in both primary and secondary enrolments in 2005. The Maldives is expected to achieve gender parity in both levels in 2015. However, the Maldives' GPI of 1.14 is also worrying from the standpoint of boys' participation in secondary education. In this case, more needs to be done to equalize enrolments in favour of boys.

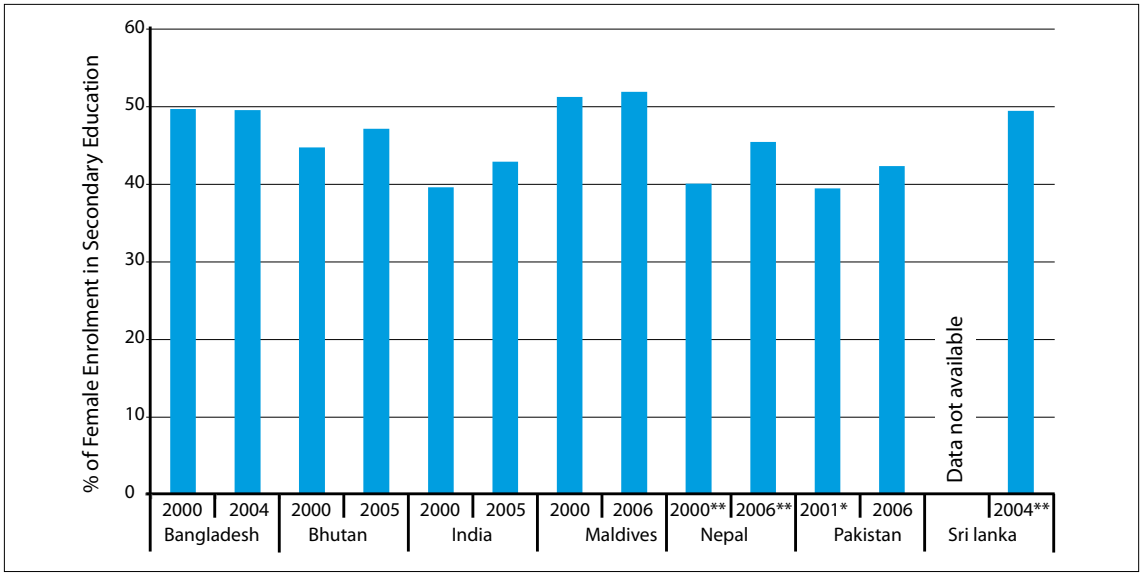
Figure 27: GPI for GER in Secondary Education, 2000 and 2005, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "+n" indicates data refer to n years after the reference year. "-n" indicates data refer to n years before the reference year.

As can be seen in Figure 28, there has been an increase in the percentage of girls' enrolment in secondary education in most countries in South Asia. However the increases have not been as significant as in primary education. Considerably less than half the students in secondary schools are female in Pakistan, India, Nepal and Bhutan.

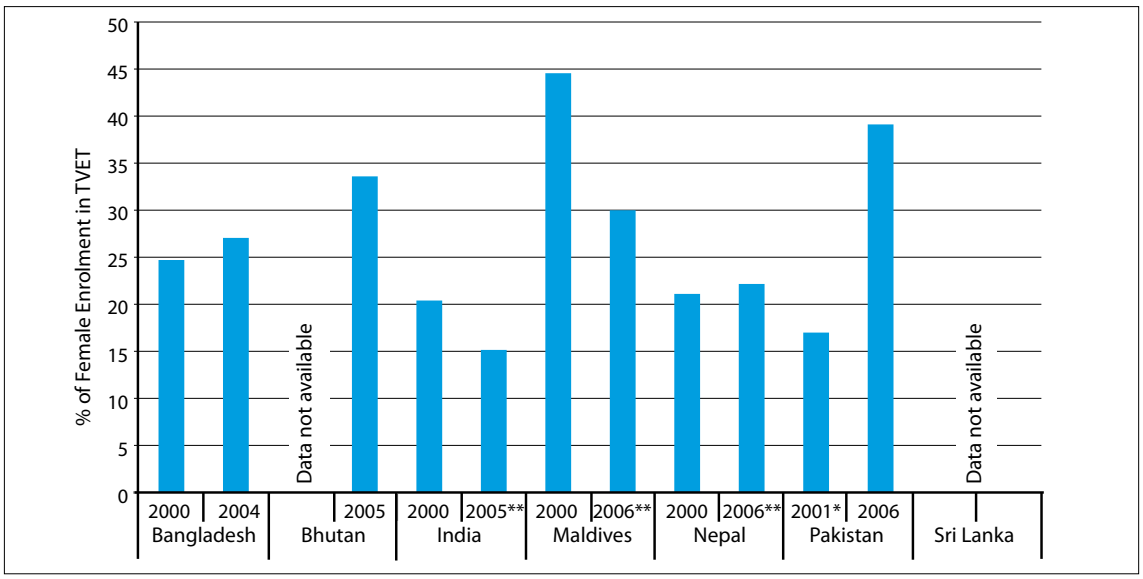
Figure 28: Percentage of Female Enrolment in Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate. Data for Sri Lanka is provisional as of 4 June 2008.

The participation of female students in TVET is low in all countries in the region, as shown in Figure 29. In 2005-06, only two counties in South Asia had more than 30% enrolment of females in TVET programmes. In India and the Maldives, the percentage of female students in TVET appears to have declined, while in Pakistan it increased dramatically to almost 40%.

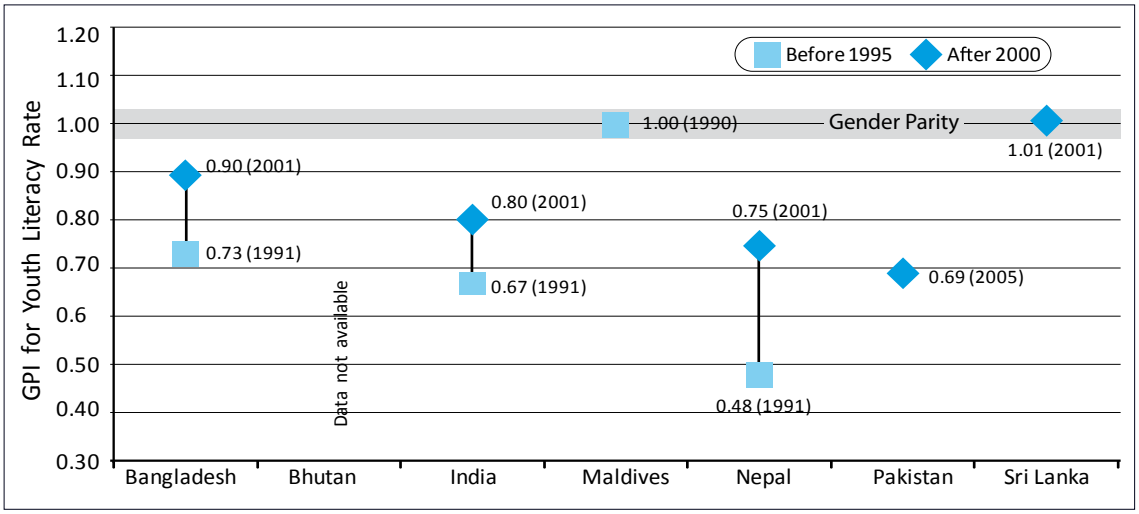
Figure 29: Percentage of Female Enrolment in TVET, 2000 to Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "** " indicates UIS estimate. "* " indicates national estimate.

As shown in Figure 30, the GPIs for the youth literacy rate have increased in all three countries for which there is comparative data. However, only Sri Lanka and the Maldives have achieved gender parity for youth literacy. Significant progress has also been achieved in Nepal, Bangladesh and India to improve female youth literacy rates compared to that of males.

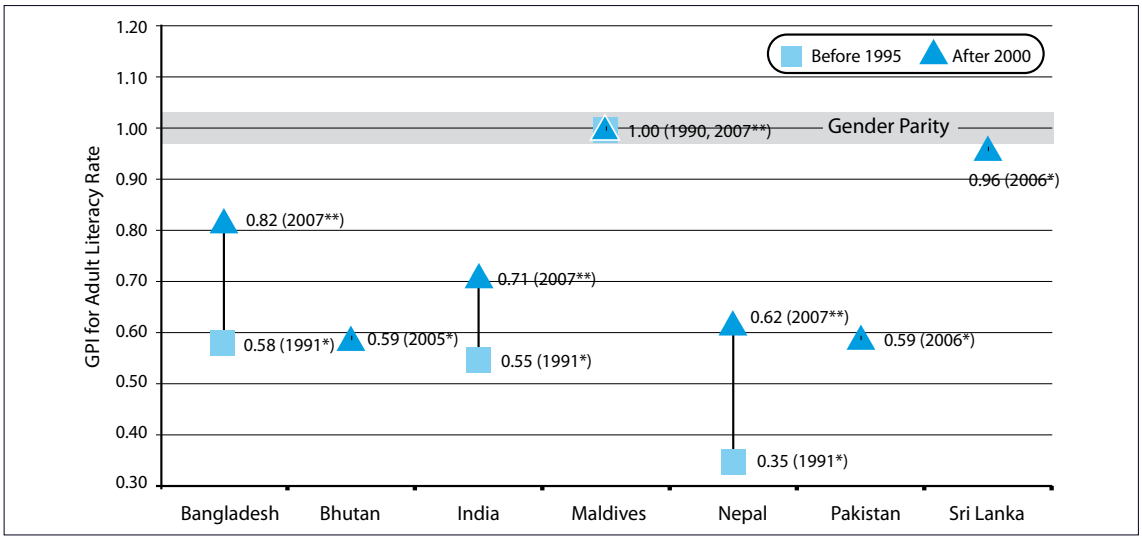
Figure 30: GPI for Youth Literacy Rate, Before 1995 and After 2000, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate. Data are from the most recent year available.

The GPIs for adult literacy are considerably lower than for youth literacy, as can be seen in Figure 31. Only the Maldives has achieved gender parity in adult literacy, while Sri Lanka is very close. In Nepal, the GPI increased by 0.27, but this brought it up to only 0.62. With 0.71 and 0.59 for India and Pakistan, respectively, it is clear that major efforts are needed to raise the literacy levels of women and girls.

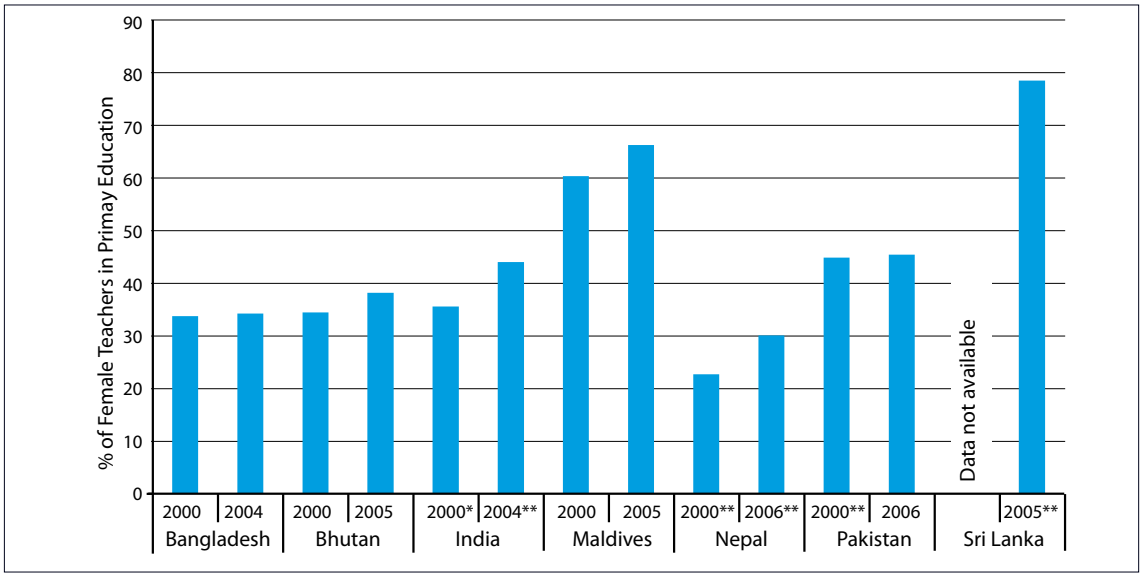
Figure 31: GPI for Adult Literacy Rate, Before 1995 and After 2000, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate. Data are for the most recent year available.

The presence of female teachers can help ensure girls' active participation in education. Ideally, the percentage of women teachers should be at least half of the total number of teachers. As illustrated in Figure 32, while the percentage of female teachers is increasing in every country in South Asia, female teachers make up less than half of the teaching force in most of the countries. In the Maldives and Sri Lanka, however, female teachers dominate the teaching force.

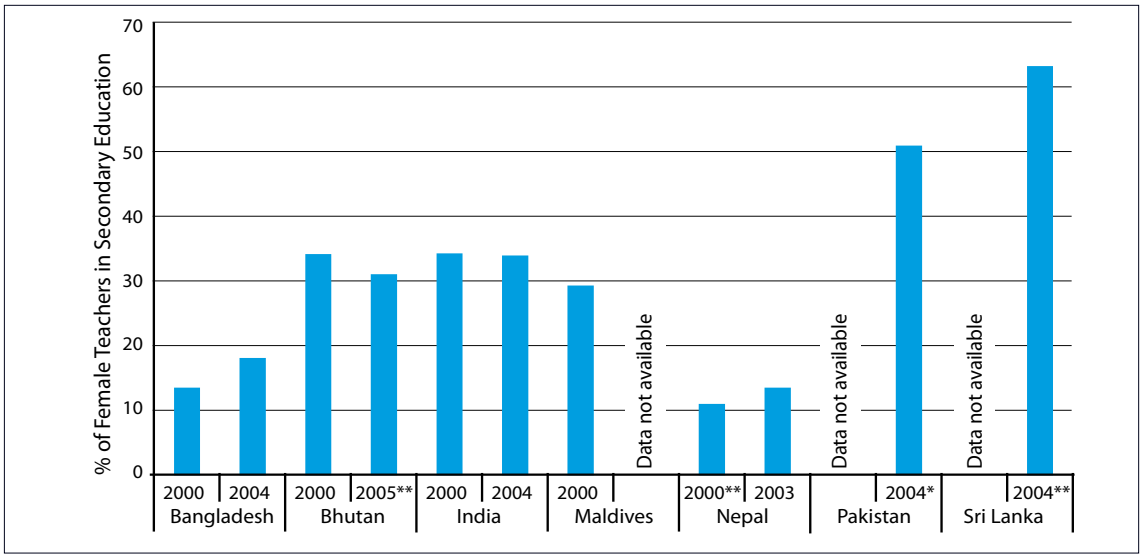
Figure 32: Percentage of Female Teachers in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate.

As can be seen in Figure 33, the percentage of female teachers in secondary education is even lower than in primary. Only in Sri Lanka and Pakistan do female teachers make up more than half the teaching force at the secondary level. In Nepal and Bangladesh, the proportion of female secondary teachers is less than 20%.

Figure 33: Percentage of Female Teachers in Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate. Data for Sri Lanka is provisional as of 4 June 2008.

In addition to the quantitative indicators, for the wider goals of gender equality it is important to assess other qualitative aspects of education as well with a gender lens. In South Asia, textbooks, curricula and teacher attitudes continue to reinforce stereotypes on gender roles in society. For

instance, however measured, in lines of text, proportions of named characters, mentions in titles or citations in indexes, girls and women are underrepresented in textbooks and curricula.[51]

12.2.2 Variations within Countries

As with the other indicators, gender disparities within countries are often as great within a country as across the countries of the region. Urban-rural differences are present in most of the countries, generally with higher GPIs in urban than rural areas. There are regional differences in GPIs as well as significant differences in sub-groups of the population.

12.3 Analysis of Disparities in Achieving Gender Parity and Equality in Education

Gender is often a contributing factor to disparities that exist based on other types of disadvantage. For instance, a poor, ethnic minority girl in a rural area is much less likely to have access to quality education than a middle-class urban girl of the same age. At the same time, she is less likely than a boy from the same sub-group as herself to have access to quality education. Gender in this case is an additional factor which compounds the other factors of disadvantage. The countries across South Asia generally exhibit gender discrimination as well as disparities based on social, cultural, religious and/or economic factors.

In India, the GER of both scheduled caste girls and their scheduled tribe counterparts crossed the 100% mark in 2004-05, signifying a high level of participation. However, the girls' ratios were very low at the upper primary stage. The drop-out rate of both scheduled caste and scheduled tribe girls showed a declining trend at the primary stage. At the upper primary level it was still disturbingly high. Gender disparity still persists and a relatively high proportion of girls do not complete the eight-year cycle, reflecting the weakness of the system to retain them. A number of national and state level initiatives targeting girls and women have been the hallmark of educational interventions for improving the educational status of girls and women. The programmes are important, particularly for the poorest and the most vulnerable girls and women in the country.

In Bangladesh, the biggest gender gap is in adult literacy rates. This is a reflection of the limited access to education of girls in past generations. The higher GPI in youth literacy, although not yet indicating full parity, is an indication that the gap in adult literacy rates will gradually lessen. However, in addition to the natural increase in the number of adult literate women as a result of the school system, targeted initiatives are needed to address the needs of illiterate women to fulfil their right to education. The low GPIs for higher secondary education and the low proportion of girls enrolled in TVET are also major causes of concern. An analysis of the SSC examination, the terminal exam at the end of Grade 10 in Bangladesh, reveals that despite continuing in school until Grade 10, considerably fewer girls than boys sit and pass the SSC exam. As a result, they do not make the transition to higher secondary or to tertiary education. This greatly limits their future employment opportunities and disadvantages them in a number of ways both socially and economically.

While large gender differentials are not immediately apparent in Bhutan, gender disparities are clearly evident in participation in higher secondary, university and vocational education. The proportion of female teachers is also low in higher levels of education and in TVET. The decline in girls' participation as they go up the educational ladder may be indicative of cultural and social constraints that inhibit full participation of girls and women. While gender discrimination is not easily detectable in Bhutan, deepseated social barriers to women's mobility and participation in the public domain need to be analyzed to inform the development of appropriate strategies.

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51 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 Regional Overview: South and West Asia.*

Despite the positive status of gender parity in the Maldives, there are indications that work is still needed to attain full gender equality in education. While the GPI for higher secondary NER is 1.16, the GPI for GER is 0.93, indicating that for overall numbers, girls are under-represented at the higher secondary level. It is also reported that the number of girls going abroad for tertiary education is lower than the number of boys. Cultural expectations regarding young women living away from home impact upon the numbers of female students studying abroad and hence female attainment of tertiary qualifications. From 2001 to 2005, for those studying abroad, only 39% of undergraduate scholarships, 38% of post-graduate scholarships and 22% of doctorate scholarships went to girls.

In Nepal, marked progress has been made in moving towards achievement of gender parity in primary education enrolments. However, there is still a significant imbalance in some districts and among some marginalized groups. There remains a huge gender gap throughout the country in all literacy statistics, especially in disadvantaged districts and among marginalized groups. Capacity development activities to mainstream gender and other forms of social equity are needed to address issues of social inequality and gender imbalance. Furthermore, to address issues of gender and social exclusion in education from a holistic perspective, inter-institutional arrangements and interministerial collaboration are required.

Women and girls in Pakistan face many problems related to poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, discrimination and exclusion from decision-making processes. It is recognized that without developing gender-friendly environments and resolving these issues, women in Pakistan cannot become fully productive members of society. To realize women's potential in society, initiatives are being taken to reduce gender disparities in all walks of life. Education is seen as a major vehicle for eliminating gender inequalities within society, but addressing inequalities within the education system itself is also a tremendous challenge. Although in general there has been more progress in rural areas than urban areas during the last four years, the GPIs for most indicators are still higher for urban than rural areas. There are significant regional differences with some of the areas of the country having very low GPIs for most indicators. These are areas where even more concerted efforts must be made to achieve gender parity and eventually equality. There has not been an analysis of gender disparities in sub-groups of the population based on language, ethnicity and/or socioeconomic status, but it is likely that the gender gap is greatest amongst the most disadvantaged groups in society.

In Sri Lanka, the adult literacy rate of women in all districts is lower than the men's rate, although the disparities are relatively low. This is an area that needs concentrated action in order to identify women not accessing education and to provide them with opportunities to become literate. It is encouraging that in the case of youth literacy, the female literacy rates match or exceed the men's rates.

12.4 Remaining Challenges and Issues in the South Asia Sub-Region

Throughout South Asia, gender-based discrimination continues to be perpetuated both within society and in educational systems. Social restrictions on girls' and women's mobility, early marriage, patriarchy and the dowry system all contribute to low participation of women and girls in education. Consequently, self-perceived roles combined with social norms and economic structures reduce girls' chances of being schooled. For girls and women from socially and economically disadvantaged groups, the situation is exacerbated by exclusion and poverty.

Most countries have made significant progress in terms of collecting and analyzing data disaggregated according to sex. For all the indicators, information has been available for both males and females. However, work still needs to be done to produce data on all the indicators disaggregated by other factors such as location of residence, religion, ethnicity, language and socio-economic status.

The main focus of the data is on quantitative measures of progress towards gender parity. There are many other issues related to gender equality which also need to be addressed if education is to fulfil its role of bringing about a more equal society. Besides the quantitative indicators related to gender parity, emphasis must be given to the achievement of gender equality in the education system and in society as a whole. This is a much bigger challenge as gender stereotypes and perceptions are abundant.

Given the patriarchal nature of most of the societies in South Asia, remarkable progress has been made towards gender equality. However, there is still a long way to go, and there is no room for complacency. Policy makers and practitioners must work together to continue to break down prejudices and to fight discrimination. Only in this way can true gender equality be achieved for this and the coming generations.

13. Goal Six: Quality of Education

Goal Six: Improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Dakar Framework for Action Expanded Commentary on Quality of Education

Quality is at the heart of education, and what takes place in classrooms and other learning environments is fundamentally important to the future well-being of children, young people and adults. A quality education is one that satisfies basic learning needs, and enriches the lives of learners and their overall experience of living.

Evidence over the past decade has shown that efforts to expand enrolment must be accompanied by attempts to enhance educational quality if children are to be attracted to school, stay there and achieve meaningful learning outcomes. Scarce resources have frequently been used for expanding systems with insufficient attention given to quality improvement in areas such as teacher training and materials development. Recent assessments of learning achievement in some countries have shown that a sizeable percentage of children are acquiring only a fraction of the knowledge and skills they are expected to master. What students are meant to learn has often not been clearly defined, well-taught or accurately assessed.

Governments and all other EFA partners must work together to ensure basic education of quality for all, regardless of gender, wealth, location, language or ethnic origin. Successful education programmes require: (1) healthy, well-nourished and motivated students; (2) well-trained teachers and active learning techniques; (3) adequate facilities and learning materials; (4) a relevant curriculum that can be taught and learned in a local language and builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners; (5) an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe; (6) a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values; (7) participatory governance and management; and (8) respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures.

13.1 Background and Development of Quality of Education in South Asia

13.1.1 Definition of Goal Six

All the countries identified quality as a high priority cross-cutting issue. Most of the countries did not give specific definitions, but what is meant by quality in each country can be inferred to some degree by the statement of the goals and/or by aspects of the strategies adopted. The exception is Sri Lanka which has given a comprehensive definition of quality as the acquisition of information with the promotion of personality attributes such as critical thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, team work, responsibility and human values that are essential to ensure effective performance in the work place as well as a multifaceted quality life.

Bangladesh has stated the goal as improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. The Maldives has defined the goal as ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender, ability and location, have access to good quality basic education. Bhutan has identified the goals related to quality as a reduction in the annual drop-out rate at the primary level from 10% to 5%, a reduction in the repetition rate from 21% to 10%, the universalization of coverage of the new curriculum and new activity-based teaching methods and the full adaptation of the secondary school curricula to the Bhutanese context.

India has identified basic norms – physical, human and academic – which act as guiding principles. Alongside the provision of improved facilities, attention is focused on the learning levels of children who attend school. In Pakistan, the goal is to improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. Quality improvement and school effectiveness have been identified as the key elements of the NPA. In Nepal's NPA, the indicators of quality primary education have been broadly categorized as enhanced efficiency in the management of education, an improved primary curriculum and assessment system, improved physical facilities and learning environments, and increased education expenditure.

13.1.2 National Policies and Legislation for Provision and Coordination of Goal Six

Ensuring quality education is a cornerstone for the fulfilment of the CRC. Children will have their rights to education fulfilled through education systems that not only ensure their enrolment but also their active participation and effective learning.

In Sri Lanka, the changes introduced as part of the General Education Reforms in 1997 had as their main purpose to improve the quality and relevance of education. The vision of the Education Sector Reforms in Pakistan is to provide quality education enabling all citizens to reach their maximum potential, to produce responsible enlightened citizens and to integrate Pakistan into the global framework of human centred economic development.

In India, a number of policy and programme initiatives have been taken up with a focus on quality improvement in school education. A new National Curriculum Framework (2005) has been developed that exposes teachers to important issues such as the aims of education, how children construct knowledge, how children's learning can be best facilitated through suitable activities and the role of teachers in school and society. In Bangladesh, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has established a competency-based primary education curriculum with 50 terminal competencies. In Nepal, a national curriculum framework has been developed and approved, and the curriculum was revised in 2004.

In Nepal, a major new policy direction is the promotion of teaching in the mother tongue of children and adults. This is recognized as one of the most important aspects of providing quality education for all children. The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007) makes specific provision for imparting primary education through mother tongue, and ensuring quality education for

indigenous children and linguistic minorities has been included as a seventh goal in Nepal's NPA for EFA. The government's Tenth FYP, which is the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper for Nepal, identifies human development and social inclusion as the main pillars of the poverty reduction strategy. For education, the two major aims for the five-year period are improving access to and quality of primary education and providing education in the mother tongues of the various communities through primary level.

Box 15: Nepal's Goal Seven - Ensuring Quality Education for Indigenous Children and Linguistics

Nepal is a multilingual, multicultural and multiethnic country where most of the 102 castes and indigenous groups speak more than 92 languages as their mother tongues. According to the School Level Educational Statistics of Nepal (2005), of 4,502,697 students at primary level 1,602,047 (35%) are from indigenous groups. In addition, it has been found that most of the school drop-outs belong to the non-Nepali speaking communities. A large number of children from vulnerable groups have no access to school and are debarred from the right to receive basic education.

It has been widely accepted that all children have the right to receive basic and primary education through their mother tongue. If primary education is provided through mother tongue, children's learning will be enhanced. Children can engage in learning activities more actively because they can easily understand what is being taught. Education in mother tongue can also help to attract out-of-school children from indigenous and minority language groups to join school as they will feel more comfortable with the use of their mother tongue in the school.

Taking cognizance of this situation, the Government of Nepal has envisaged a policy to introduce mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the primary level of education. The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2007), which ensures equal status to all mother tongues spoken in Nepal including Nepali, makes a provision of imparting primary education through mother tongue.

To achieve the goal, strategies which are being implemented include:

- use of mother tongue as a subject of study and the medium of instruction;
- bilingual education;
- teacher recruitment, training and deployment; and
- special programmes for endangered languages and cultures.

Source: Nepal EFA MDA Report, 2008.

13.1.3 Strategies and Programmes for Disadvantaged Children

All the countries have developed strategies and interventions to address the issue of quality. The education sector programmes, which are being implemented in India, Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, have a major focus on quality improvement, particularly in terms of learner achievement.

In Bangladesh, under PEDP II, Primary School Quality Level Standards (PSQLS) are being established to ensure that every child has access to the minimum inputs necessary for an acceptable quality of primary education. The programme also has the aim to reduce the number of double-shift schools through ambitious building and teacher recruitment initiatives. It is anticipated that this will result in substantially increased teacher-student contact hours and thereby improve the quality of learning in primary schools.

Quality improvement is the main thrust of India's SSA. To improve the quality of education the Government is pursuing a five-fold strategy which consists of improving the provision of infrastructure and human resources; improving the provision of better curriculum and teaching learning materials; improving the quality of the teaching-learning process; giving attention to teacher capability building; and increasing the focus on specification and measurement of learner achievement levels.

Nepal's EFA Core Document (2004-09) has set principles and strategies to improve the quality of education. These include raising the competence and qualifications of teachers, improving the learning environment in classrooms, enhancing the quality of curricula and textbooks and ensuring their timely distribution, developing school-based autonomous supervision and monitoring and ensuring decentralized management of schools.

In Pakistan, the main quality interventions which have been identified to achieve EFA are reforms in curricula (focusing on basic learning needs of children, adolescents, youth and adults), textbook development, teachers' training and a literacy curriculum. The quality improvement plans are intended to ensure the development of a more relevant learner-centred curriculum, which is supported by and linked with the development of higher quality textbooks, teacher training processes and assessment methods.

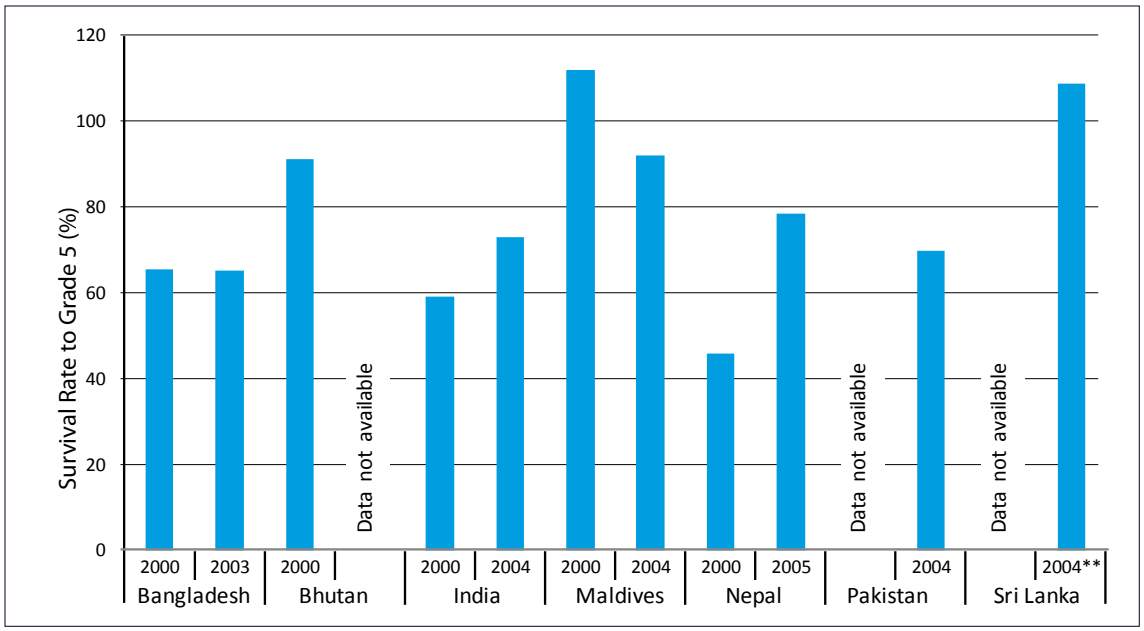
In Bhutan, a number of strategies have been adopted to improve the quality of education. As a follow-up to Dakar, the Maldives prepared a detailed plan of action that spelt out the priority areas that need to be addressed if the goal of ensuring quality basic education is to be realized. For each of the priority areas, strategies have been developed and are being implemented.

13.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

13.2.1 Progress of Countries in the Sub-Region

As can be seen from Figure 34, the survival rate of children to Grade 5 is low for all countries in South Asia except for the Maldives and Sri Lanka, indicating problems in retaining children in school. The data available shows that while there have been improvements in the survival rates since 2000 in some of the countries, Nepal has shown a dramatic increase. In Bangladesh, for example, around 35% of children who start primary education do not reach Grade 5. The survival rate is one of the most important indicators of quality. Often high drop-out rates are associated with poor teaching and poor learning in the classrooms. If parents find that their children are not achieving at least the basic competencies, they are much less likely to continue sending them to school.

Figure 34: Survival Rate to Grade 5, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. Data for Sri Lanka provisional as of 4 June 2008.

Aligned with low survival rates are high repetition rates. Many children spend several extra years completing their primary schooling, while others drop out due to discouragement of having to repeat the same grade and not being able to progress through the primary cycle. The combined effect of low survival rates and high repetition rates is very inefficient systems and a waste of public resources.

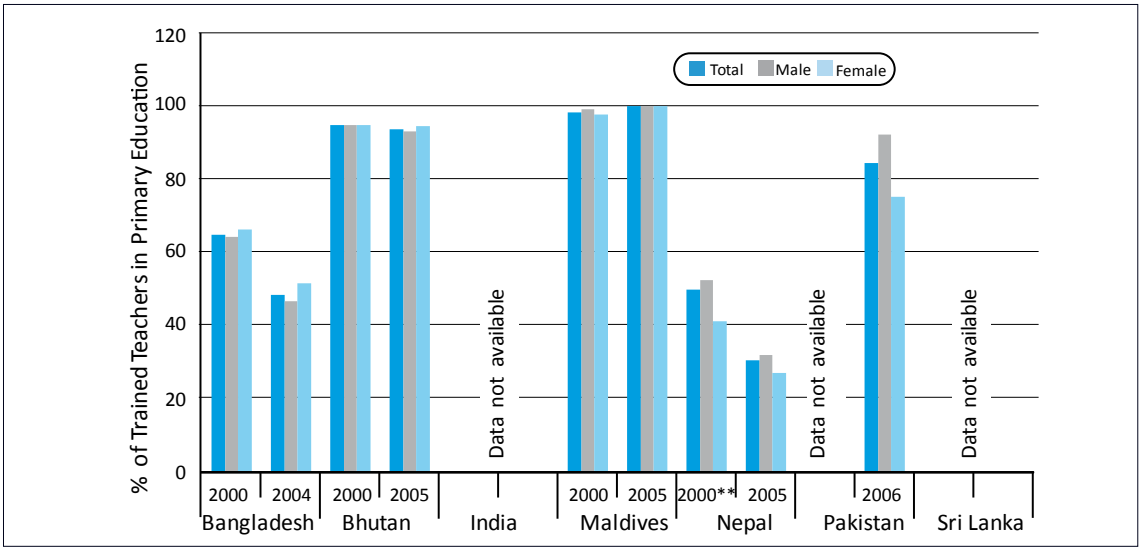
Learning achievement is the best indicator of the quality of education systems. Unfortunately, most of the countries do not regularly monitor learning achievement, and realistic standards for measuring acceptable levels of learning have not been set. Since 2000, four of the seven countries in South Asia have conducted at least one national learning assessment to monitor education quality. Results from national and international learning assessments indicated poor learning outcomes for the region.[52]

Other than the survival rate of children to Grade 5, the measures used to assess quality are proxy indicators. They assess some of the inputs which are recognized globally as important for the delivery of quality education. While the indicators do not describe the outcomes of the system, they are important for assessing the extent to which education systems are providing the necessary inputs for quality to be achieved.

Of the proxy indicators, one of the most important is the percentage of trained teachers in primary education. The goal for most countries is the deployment of trained teachers only. As is shown in Figure 35, this is an input which is far from satisfactory, particularly in at least Nepal and Bangladesh.[53] Although nationwide data is not available for Sri Lanka, it is recognized that most teachers in the country are trained. In India, the percentage of trained teachers varies by state.

52 UNESCO, *EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008 Regional Overview: South and West Asia.*
53 Some of the countries have programmes for pre-service and in-service training which do not lead to certification or accreditation but do contribute to equipping teachers with useful skills.

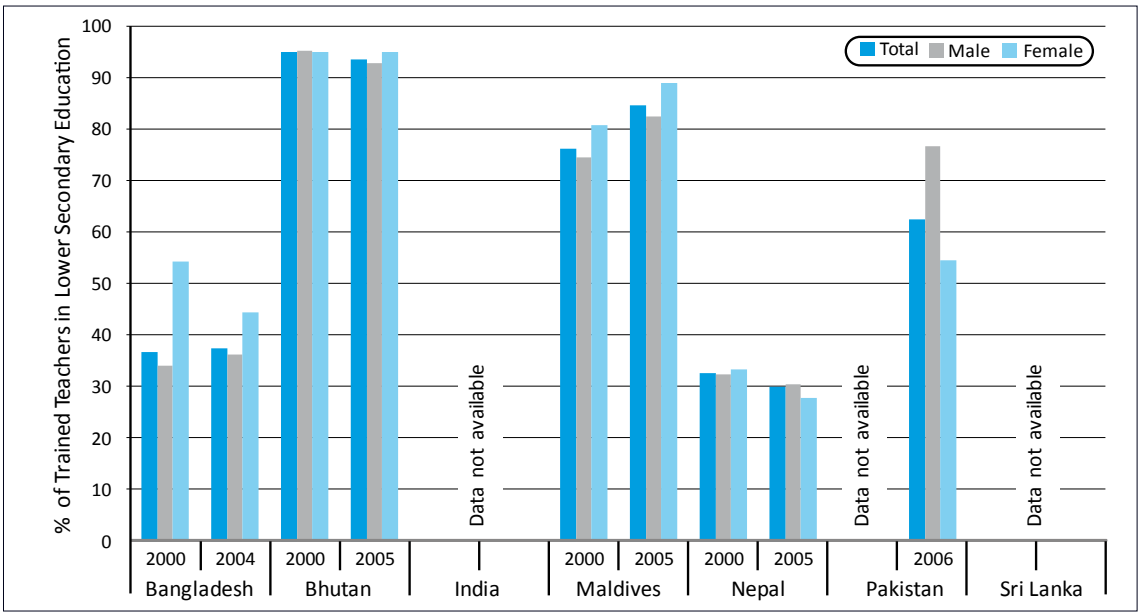
Figure 35: Percentage of Trained Teachers in Primary Education, by Sex, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Note: "**" indicates UIS estimate.

The same countries have a low percentage of trained teachers in lower secondary education, as illustrated in Figure 36. The only country that recorded a slight increase in the percentage of trained teachers from 2000 to 2005 was the Maldives. However, the small decrease in the number of trained teachers in Nepal at this level can be attributed to a change in definition. The duration of training required before being considered a trained teacher was extended from 2.5 months in 2000, to 10 months in 2005.

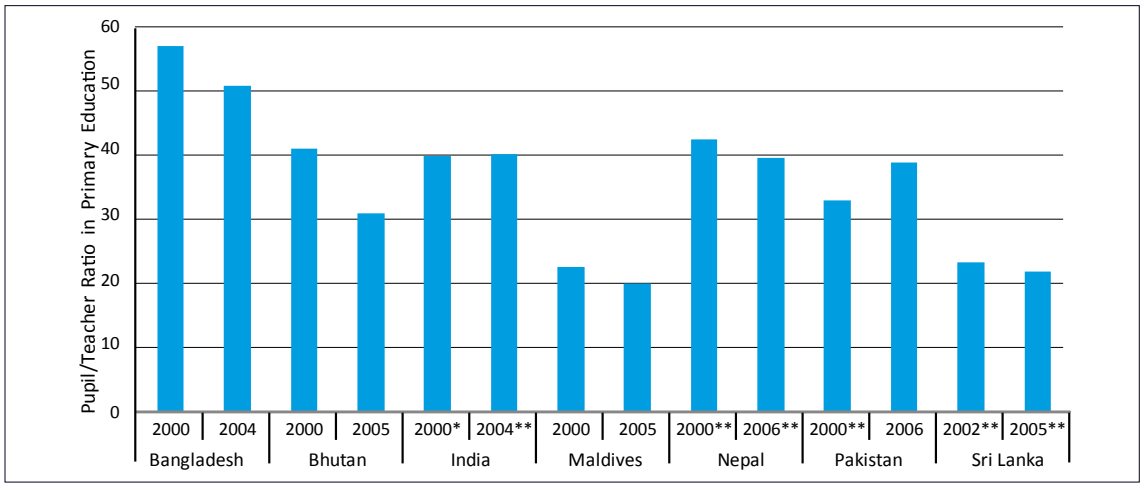
Figure 36: Percentage of Trained Teachers in Lower Secondary Education, by Sex, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.

Most of the countries are aiming to reduce the Pupil/Teacher Ratio (PTR) in order to ensure more time and attention is given to each child in primary school. This improvement, combined with the number of contact hours, to a large degree determines the amount of time spent on tasks by pupils during each day. As illustrated in Figure 37, all the countries except India and Pakistan recorded a decrease in the PTR in primary education from 2000 to around 2005. According to the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2009, there is a broad consensus that a 40:1 PTR is an approximate ceiling for a primary school learning environment of good quality. Most countries in South Asia, except for Bangladesh, have PTRs of under 40:1. However, the ratios mask huge differences in the country as it might be higher or lower when looking at various administrative geographical breakdowns within the country. Very low PTRs may also indicate inefficient distribution of teachers in the country.

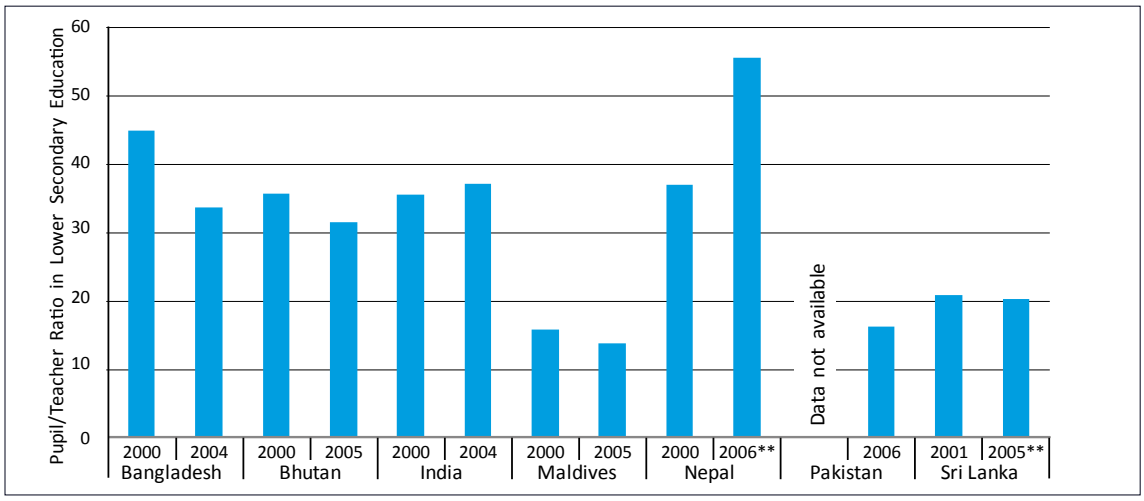
Figure 37: Pupil/Teacher Ratio in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. "*" indicates national estimate. Data for Sri Lanka provisional as of 4 June 2008.

As can be seen in Figure 38, the PTRs were lower in lower secondary than in primary in five of the seven countries. In Bhutan, the PTR for lower secondary and primary were about the same, while in Nepal the PTR in lower secondary schools was substantially higher than in primary schools.

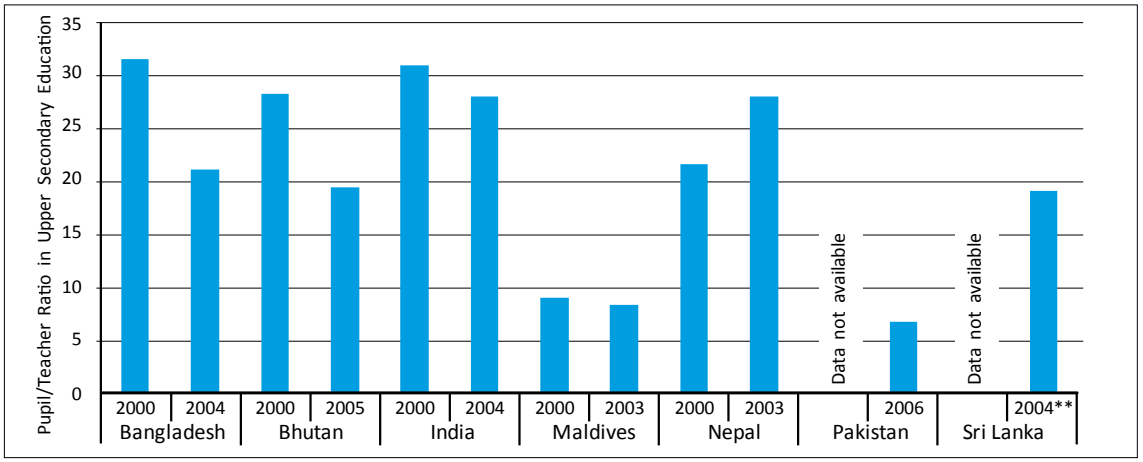
Figure 38: Pupil/Teacher Ratio in Lower Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Note: "**" indicates UIS estimate.

Of all the levels, the PTRs were lowest in upper secondary education in all the countries. As illustrated in Figure 39, all countries in South Asia for which data is available have PTRs in upper secondary of less than 30:1. In some countries they are remarkably low. While this may create favourable learning environments, such low ratios raise questions about the efficiency of the systems. A positive point is that all the countries of the region should be able to substantially increase their enrolments in upper secondary education without causing unacceptably high PTRs. There is still room for growth in terms of student numbers.

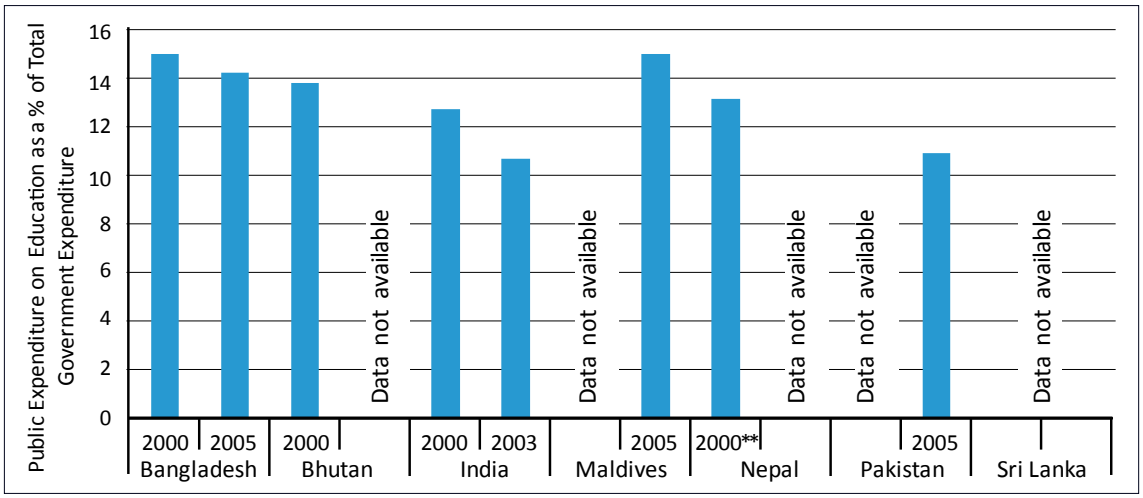
Figure 39: Pupil/Teacher Ratio in Upper Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Notes: "**" indicates UIS estimate. Data for Sri Lanka provisional as of 4 June 2008.

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of a government's total expenditure is one of the most effective ways to measure a country's actual commitment to EFA. Following the renewed commitments at Dakar, it was expected that expenditure on education would increase in order to fulfil the goals. However, in South Asia that does not seem to have been the case. While time comparative data are only shown for Bangladesh and India in Figure 40, the picture is not encouraging. Both countries recorded moderate decreases in the percentage of government's total expenditure on education. All six countries for which data are available recorded percentages of considerably less than 20%.

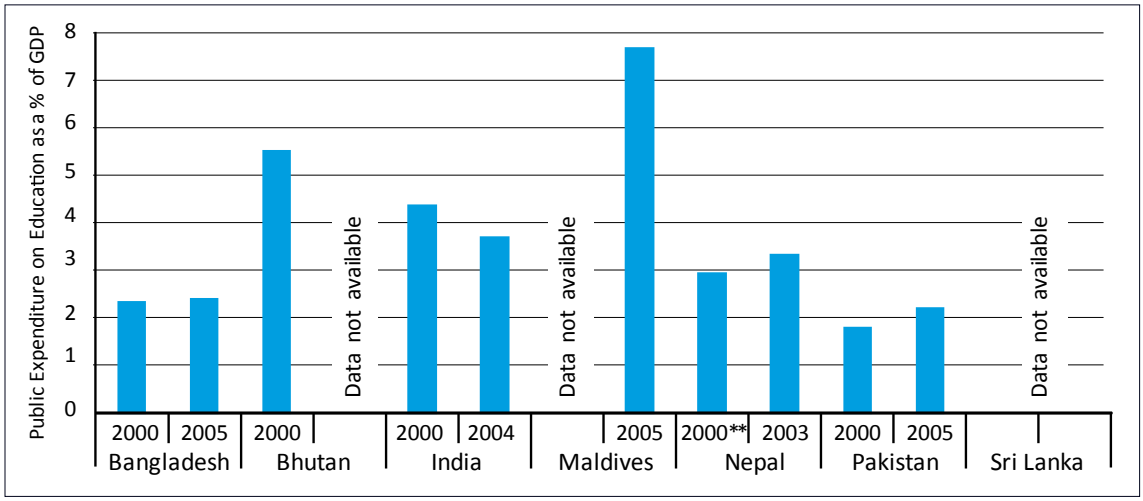
Figure 40: Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of Total Government Expenditure, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Note: "**" indicates UIS estimate.

Of the four countries for which comparative data is available on public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP, Figure 41 shows that Nepal and Pakistan recorded moderate increases, Bangladesh showed a very slight increase and India recorded a decrease, from 2000. Except for the Maldives and Bhutan, the other four countries in South Asia which reported on this indicator recorded percentages of less than 5%.

Figure 41: Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of GDP, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Note: "**" indicates UIS estimate.

13.2.2 Variations within Countries

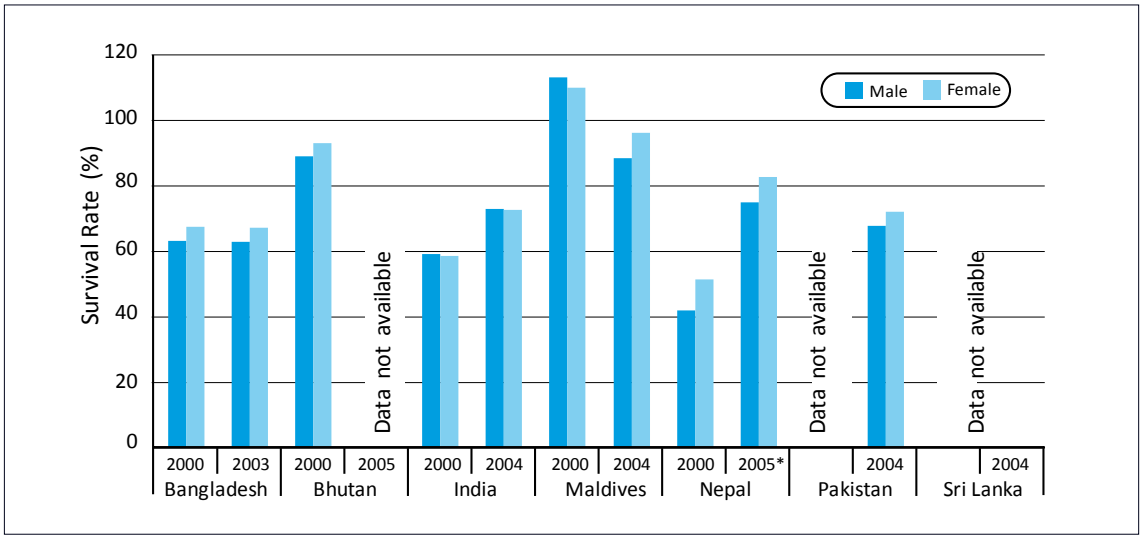
The most significant variations within countries which were reported in the individual country EFA MDA reports were in the area of PTRs. A number of the country reports noted that the average PTRs for a country mask huge differences within the country. Nepal noted that there are big differences in PTRs in different regions. Both India and Pakistan noted variations in different areas of the countries. In the Maldives, the gap between the capital Malé and the rest of the country is substantial. In Bhutan, PTRs are particularly high in community and primary schools in urban and very remote areas.

13.3 Analysis of Disparities in Achieving Quality of Education

13.3.1 Progress in Achieving Gender and Social Equality in Goal Six

As can be seen in Figure 42, in five of the six countries for which statistics are available, the survival rate of girls in primary education exceeds that of boys. The exception is India, which recorded equal rates for both sexes. This is the one area which in nearly all the countries of the region, girls are in a more favourable position than boys.

Figure 42: Survival Rate to Grade 5, by Sex, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre.
Note: "*" indicates national estimate.

A number of disparities with regard to different sub-groups of the population were reported by countries. India noted that achievement surveys reveal wide variations across and within states. Bhutan noted disparities in the distribution of teachers. Sri Lanka reported that there are still serious disparities in the provision of resources to schools, including the placement of teachers.

Nepal's EFA MDA report included a detailed analysis of sub-groups of the population who are missing out on quality education. They are the ones least likely to enrol and, if they do enrol, the most likely to drop out. Most of those who drop out belong to the lowest economic quintile, mainly the disadvantaged ethnic minorities and the dalits. It is clear that the ones who suffer most from the poor quality of education are the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Girls from these groups are the most adversely affected.

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13.3.2 Best Practices and Promising Approaches for Achieving Goal Six

Quality improvement has been identified as the top priority for all four of the sector or sub-sector programmes which are being implemented in India, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Sector-wide approaches provide the opportunity to make genuine sectoral reforms and systemic changes and to plan and implement them in a comprehensive and systematic way. However, at this point it is not clear that SWAPs in the region are being utilized in the most effective way to bring about quality improvement. The commitment of each of the respective governments is needed in order to radically change the way systems work in order to make schools more effective, efficient and accountable to the communities they serve.

Within the programmes, the professional development of teachers has been identified as one of the major areas to address with effective interventions. In India, under the SSA, provision has been made for 20 days of annual training for each teacher. Institutional arrangements have been made at the district and sub-district levels for the in-service education of primary school teachers. The emphasis is on decentralizing the training arrangements and providing guidance and support to teachers on a continuous basis. In the Maldives, considerable resources have also been allotted for the training of teachers.

In order to assess the extent to which interventions are effective in improving the quality of education, robust monitoring and evaluation systems are necessary. In many countries of the region, such systems are weak or not functioning. In Pakistan, an overriding issue in the education sector was the unavailability of high quality, reliable and standardized data. Through a National Education Census vast quantities of information are now available covering all categories of educational institutions. The availability of educational data from the census and from the National Education Management Information System was extremely valuable for the preparation of Pakistan's EFA MDA report.

Although teaching in mother tongue and bilingual education programmes are found in a number of countries, Nepal is the only one in which serious efforts are currently being made to promote the use of mother tongue as a national policy as part of the national plan to improve the quality of education. In Nepal, a number of studies on bilingual education and mother tongue interventions at primary level have been completed. Mother tongue and bilingual schools have been identified in 25 districts. Textbooks to use for subject teaching have been developed in 14 languages with scripts. The feasibility of transitional bilingual education programmes is being studied. A total of 30 textbooks for Grade 1 have been translated into various languages and nine supplementary readers in mother tongue have been developed and distributed. A template has been developed which includes guidelines for preparing mother tongue textbooks. Adult literacy courses have also been developed in a number of languages, and there are pilot projects for both adults and children in which mother tongue is being used as the medium of instruction combined with bridging materials to ensure the acquisition of Nepali literacy as well.

13.4 Remaining Challenges and Issues in the South Asia Sub-Region

Most of the countries of South Asia face the same major challenge. They are plagued by inefficient and ineffective systems with excessive wastage characterized by high repetition rates, low completion rates and poor achievement levels. Each country has to face this challenge and implement major changes in order to bring the quality of education to a level which will enable the country to fulfil the EFA goals. Without improved quality and efficiency, there will never be universal enrolment and completion, and certainly universal literacy will remain an elusive dream.

The recruitment, professional development and retention of a cadre of capable teachers are major challenges for most of the countries in the region. Many of the countries have recognized that poor teachers adversely affect the quality of learning, and they are applying corrective measures, but much more needs to be done as quickly as possible. Effective pre-service and in-service training needs to be a part of the overall professional development of teachers.

Teachers should be accountable to the communities they serve, and at the same time they should be enabled to perform well through decentralized and supportive supervisory systems. Supervisory visits should be seen as part of teachers' professional development. Adequate remuneration, effective professional development and career advancement opportunities are also important.

While many countries in South Asia are still struggling to collect and analyze the quantitative data necessary to monitor progress towards the EFA goals, in the area of quality the situation is even more dismal. A major challenge is to come up with qualitative indicators which can be used not only to monitor progress in the area of quality but also to promote and encourage the use of techniques and methods which will produce high quality teaching-learning in the classroom.

14. Summary of Challenges and Prospects for Achieving the EFA Goals in South Asia by 2015

While progress has been made by the countries of South Asia, most of the goals will not be met unless efforts are accelerated and intensified. While there has been an increase in the number of children participating in ECCE activities and enrolled in pre-schools, in many countries it is the poor and disadvantaged who are being left out. Primary school enrolments have greatly increased in every country, but as long as the high drop-out rates and low survival rates persist, there is little likelihood of achieving the EFA goal and MDG of universal completion of the primary education cycle. Youth and adult literacy rates are increasing, but this has been primarily due to the number of children and adolescents who are becoming literate in formal schools. While enrolling and retaining children in school must be given the highest priority as the most effective way to build literate nations, this alone is not sufficient to reach the EFA goals of adult literacy, continuing education and lifelong learning. Without concentrated efforts to provide opportunities for adults as well as children to become literate and numerate and to maintain the skills through meaningful activities, there is no hope that the countries will reach the EFA targets for adult literacy.

In the area of gender parity, notable progress has been made. In most of the countries, the GPIs for pre-primary education and for intakes into primary schools are nearing or have reached parity. In primary enrolments, gender parity has been achieved in three of the countries and others have made remarkable progress. However, as students progress to higher levels, the number and percentage of girls tend to decrease. The highest disparities, which exist for nearly every country in the region, are in the adult literacy rates. There is still a long way to go to achieve gender parity throughout the education systems and in the wider society. Even more must be done to achieve meaningful gender equality.

While countries have made progress generally the efforts to ensure the participation of the poor, disadvantaged and marginalized have been insufficient. As a result, there are still pockets of children outside the system, and in some of the countries they represent sizeable numbers. Recognizing the right of every child to education, countries must find innovative ways to enrol and retain the children who are most difficult to reach. Only in this way can universal basic education be achieved.

There is still a gigantic task ahead for most countries of South Asia to achieve the EFA goals by 2015. Improving quality is crucial for the fulfilment of each and every goal. In order to take the momentum forward, governments must show their commitment by increased resource allocations. By making the necessary resources available and by forming partnerships and alliances with other stakeholders at every level of the process, governments could still fulfil the goals and targets which have been set. However, time is short. No country currently is on track to fulfil all the goals, but that could change dramatically through a renewed commitment to the EFA cause.

PART III:
PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING THE EFA GOALS IN THE SOUTH ASIA SUB-REGION

Data used in Part III are from the national EFA MDA reports of the countries as provided by the respective MOEs, unless otherwise indicated.

Part III consists of a summary of the national EFA MDA reports submitted by each of the seven countries in South Asia. For each country, a short introduction to the country is followed by a discussion of each of the six EFA goals. The presentation of each goal includes a brief background on issues relevant to the goal within the country, an overview of the progress made by the country towards achieving the goal, an analysis of disparities and a discussion of remaining challenges.

15. Bangladesh

Bangladesh is a small country in the northeastern part of South Asia. Although the area of the country is only 147,570 square kilometres it is home to a huge population of 138.6 million. The population density at 939 per square kilometre is the highest in the world. Although Bangladesh is a relatively new nation, Bengalis are an ancient people, and can trace their history back to 1600 BC. Historically, the land was ruled at times by dynasties from northern South Asia and at times by independent rulers. It was part of British India for over 200 years and, following Partition in 1947, part of Pakistan, until gaining its independence in 1971. The country is divided into six administrative divisions made up of 64 districts.

Bangladesh is a fairly homogeneous society. Over 98% of the people are Bangalees and speak Bangla as their mother tongue, but amongst the linguistic minorities there are about 47 different language groups. Nearly 90% of the people are Muslim. Hindus make up about 9% of the population, with the remaining 1% are mainly Buddhist and Christian.

Three of the world's major rivers and 230 tributaries flow through Bangladesh to the Bay of Bengal, creating a very fertile delta capable of supporting the large population. Agriculture has been traditionally the main livelihood of the people. Rice is the most abundant crop and the staple food. In recent years there has been increasing urbanization such that 34% of the population now live in urban areas compared to 66% in rural areas.

With an annual GDP growth rate of 6.5%, Bangladesh is making progress economically. The per capita GDP in Bangladesh is US$456. It ranked 140th on the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2005. Poverty is widespread but decreasing with a decline in the proportion of the population living below the lower poverty line from 33.7% in 2000 to 25.5% in 2005.

Bangladesh formulated an overarching national development strategy in 2005 called Unlocking the Potential. Popularly referred to as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP), it weaves together various sectoral strategies into a coordinated whole so as to maximize overall social gains including accelerated poverty reduction and achievement of the MDGs. Commensurate with the Dakar Framework for Action, the PRSP has sought to contextualize EFA goals for Bangladesh in the coming decade. It is clear that access to education has been the main pre-occupation of the past decade and a half, and this has borne fruit as exemplified by enrolment and gender parity statistics as well as the entry of Bangladesh into UNDP's medium human development league of countries. Increasingly, however, research on outcome indicators is driving home the point that access achievements are not necessarily translating into commensurate quality achievements. A paradigm shift towards quality while retaining a focus on equity has thus become the basis of planning.

Recognizing the strategic challenges for the meaningful realization of the EFA goals, the Government of Bangladesh has adopted a programme approach for the development of pre-primary and primary education and initiated the Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-II) for 2003-2009 as a successor to the projects under PEDP-I (1998-2003). The Government has also developed, through a participatory process, an NFE Policy Framework. Bangladesh has one of the largest NGO networks in the world. National and international NGOs are active in providing education for children, adolescents and adults.

The Government carried out an extensive participatory and professional process to review the achievements of the first National Plan of Action (NPA-I) (1992-2000), which was developed and implemented following the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990. Bangladesh reviewed the achievements of the NPA-I with regard to the EFA goals and formulated the current NPA-II (2001-2015). The EFA goals in the NPA include the final targets for 2015 as well as intermediate targets for 2005 and 2010.

15.1 Goal One: Early Childhood Care and Education in Bangladesh

15.1.1 Background and Development of ECCE in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has as its goal the expansion and improvement of comprehensive ECCE, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. A major objective of the NPA-II is to institute a well-organized and coordinated programme of ECCE for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, using both formal and non-formal channels, with emphasis on family and community-based programmes. The NPA-II promotes an integrated approach to ECCE combining all aspects of child care and development including health, nutrition and sanitation as well as pre-primary education. It is recognized that a number of government ministries and departments must be involved, particularly those responsible for education, social welfare, women and children's affairs, health, nutrition, water and sanitation.

The Government has adopted a partnership approach in the area of ECCE. In addition to pre-primary classes already in operation in formal schools, NGOs, CBOs and other groups and individuals are encouraged to establish and operate pre-school classes in schools as well as ECCE centres through community-based programmes. The NPA-II envisages three types of ECCE programmes, namely school-based pre-primary education classes, community-based ECCE centres located within primary school catchment areas and home-based ECCE programmes.

MOPME has approved an Operational Policy Framework for Pre-Primary Education. The framework was developed with the assistance of organizations working in the field of ECCE and through a participatory process. Under the framework, national standards are being set for monitoring developmental readiness in early childhood and learning programmes with age-based criteria.

15.1.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bangladesh

Under the NPA-II, children of the age group 3–5 years are covered under the ECCE plans. The population of this age group was estimated as 10.38 million in 2001 and is expected to increase to 11.68 million by 2015. The targets set in the NPA are to enrol one million children in pre-primary classes in formal schools and 1.04 million in NFE by 2005, one million in formal and 1.87 million in NFE by 2010 and 1.3 million in formal and 1.2 million in NFE by 2015. Based on the population projections, this represents an enrolment target of only 22% of the age-group.

MOPME has authorized two NGOs, the Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), a large national NGO, and Save the Children USA, to organize pre-primary classes in government and government-registered primary schools. By the end of 2006, BRAC had organized 20,000 pre-primary classes covering over 600,000 children in the premises or vicinity of government schools, while Save the Children had organized about 2,000 classes, including home and community-based centres in school catchment areas covering about 60,000 children. The pre-primary centres have strong links with the primary schools with the aim of all the children being admitted to Grade 1 of the formal schools upon completion of their ECCE classes. A number of other NGOs also run pre-primary classes, although not on as large a scale or with the formal endorsement of the Ministry.

In 2005, an enrolment of 1.1 million in ECCE programmes was reported for the formal sector with a slightly higher enrolment for girls than boys. This equals a GER of 11.4% and means that the target for the formal system was met. The GPI was 1.03. The total enrolment number in the non-formal system was not reported separately for the 3-5 age-group, but if this enrolment were added to the total, the GER would increase considerably. It was reported that the total coverage of children aged 0-5 under ECCE initiatives of NGOs was approximately 1.5 million. It is estimated that the enrolment in private centres as a proportion of total enrolment is 18%. In 2005, the percentage of new entrants to primary Grade 1 who had attended some form of organized ECCE programme was 37.6% overall, 38.8% for girls and 36.3% for boys. This is an indication that actual enrolment in ECCE is higher than the reported statistics. The GPI for this indicator was 1.07.

15.1.3 Analysis of Disparities in ECCE in Bangladesh and Remaining Challenges

While universal coverage is not planned for ECCE, Bangladesh has recognized the need to target activities to reach the poorest and most vulnerable. Most of the NGO interventions are designed to reach children from families who are disadvantaged and marginalized. The Ministry of Chittagong CHT is implementing a project under which pre-school classes are run in "para" (neighbourhood) centres. Most of the children are from linguistic minorities and do not speak Bangla prior to going to school. In the centres, both Bangla and mother tongue are used in teaching. A number of NGOs have similar programmes in the CHT and northern parts of Bangladesh to help children from linguistic minority groups to transit into primary schools. For nearly all the available information, the GPI of ECCE programmes exceeds 1.0. This indicates that girls are given a high priority.

15.2 Goal Two: Universal Primary/Basic Education in Bangladesh

15.2.1 Background and Expansion of Universal Basic Education in Bangladesh

The Government of Bangladesh is giving the highest priority to the goal of ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to a complete free and compulsory education of good quality. The Bangladesh Constitution (1972) recognizes the fundamental right of education and requires the state "to adopt effective measures for... establishing a universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children." The Primary Education (Compulsory) Act (1990) made primary education compulsory. It was piloted in 68 sub-districts in 1992 and extended to the whole country from 1993.

The basic goal of the NPA-II (2001-2015) is to establish a knowledge-based and technologically-oriented competent society, ensuring that every school-age child has access to primary level institutions that provide all necessary facilities and that each child continues in school and receives quality education. The Government has committed itself to take the appropriate measures and make the necessary investments for the purpose of enhancing learning and gaining appropriate employable and life skills through formal, non-formal and informal education mechanisms; providing education to all primary school-age children, boys and girls, including ethnic minorities, disadvantaged and children with disabilities; ensuring that all primary level institutions, formal and non-formal, offer standardized and quality basic education; ensuring gender equality in basic and primary education; and reducing poverty substantially in line with the PRSP and MDG targets through and as a result of quality basic education and selective skills development training.

15.2.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bangladesh

By the end of the 1990s, Bangladesh already had some of the highest primary enrolment rates in South Asia. Particularly remarkable was the achievement of gender parity for a number of indicators. The challenge this decade is to further increase enrolments and retention, particularly amongst the most disadvantaged communities, to improve the quality of education and to move forward from numerically-based gender parity to full gender equality in all levels and types of schools.

The DPE undertook a comprehensive baseline survey for the sub-sectoral programme PEDP-II in 2005 which provides sex-disaggregated national data with breakdowns for each of the 64 districts. This data when compared to the information given in the EFA 2000 Assessment Report provides a picture of the progress made for a number of the key indicators of primary education during the first five years of the current decade.

The GIR in Grade 1 in 2005 was 111% for girls and 105.9% for boys with a GPI of 1.05. The NIR reflects a more accurate measurement of access and school entrance at the appropriate age. In 2000, the national NIR in Grade 1 was reported to be 64.6% with a GPI of 0.90. By 2005, the NIR had increased to 96.1% for girls and 93.3% for boys with a GPI of 1.03. This represents a significant increase in the number of girls and boys entering primary school at the appropriate age, and full gender parity has been achieved.

While the GER in primary education was 97.2% in 2001, it came down to 93.7% in 2005 (girls 96.2% and boys 91.2%) with a GPI of 1.05, as illustrated in Table 5. The proportion of girls enrolled was 50%. The reduction of GER from the earlier rates could mean that more children are enrolling at the appropriate age so that there are fewer over-age children enrolling. The NER more accurately shows the proportion of children of the appropriate age in primary school. The NER increased from 85.1% in 2002 to 87.2% (girls 90.1% and boys 84.6%) in 2005. The GPI was 1.06. Table 5 also shows the disparity in the NER, GER and GPIs within Bangladesh, showing a huge gap between the highest and lowest rates by district.

Table 5: NER and GER for Primary Education, 2005, by Sex, Bangladesh

Location Level	Net Enrolment Rate (%)			Gross Enrolment Rate (%)		
	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female	GPI
National	84.6	90.1	1.06	91.2	96.2	1.05
Highest district	99.98	99.9	1.00	115.1	113.7	0.98
Lowest district	65.4	70.2	1.07	70.8	74.8	1.05

Source: DPE, 2007.

Secondary education is divided into three phases. Grades 6-8 are classed as junior secondary, Grades 9-10 form secondary proper and Grades 11-12 (age 16-17 years) make higher secondary, which is the beginning part of college education that leads to tertiary education. The GER for junior secondary (Grades 6-8) in 2005 was 59% (66% for girls and 54% for boys) with a GPI of 1.08, while the NER was 54% (60% for girls and 49% for boys) with a GPI of 1.07. This compares favourably with 2001 enrolments in junior secondary (GER 57% and NER 50%). In 2005, the GER for secondary (Grades 9-10) was 42% (46% for girls and 39% for boys) with a GPI of 1.03, while the NER was 38% (42% for girls and 35% for boys) with a GPI of 1.03. The proportion of girls enrolled was 51%. Comparing the 2005 data with enrolments in secondary education in 2001 (GER 44% and NER 32%), it appears that more students of the appropriate age group are now being enrolled.

The GER for higher secondary (Grades 11-12) in 2005 was 15% (10% for girls and 18% for boys) with a GPI of 0.56, while the NER was 12% (10% for girls and 14% for boys) with a GPI of 0.71. When compared with 2001 enrolments in higher secondary (GER 7% and NER 4%), a significant increase of students at this level can be noted. However, it is a matter of major concern that the number of students, particularly girls, decreases drastically following the first public examination (i.e. the Secondary School Certificate at the end of Grade 10).

The data indicates that a considerable number of children repeat grades. The percentage of children repeating each grade is 12.3% for Grade 1, 11% for Grade 2, 13.7% for Grade 3, 11.4% in Grade 4 and 5.7% in Grade 5. This represents very high wastage in terms of time for both teachers and students as well as in financial terms. It is likely that the high repetition rates contribute to the low retention rates in primary education. In every grade, the percentage of boy repeaters is slightly higher than the percentage of girls repeating the grade. On average, the number of years input per graduate of the five-year primary cycle is 8.2 years (7.9 years for girls and 8.6 years for boys). The additional three years of input needed to produce a graduate is a result of the high repetition rates and the low survival rates.

The PEDP II 2005 survey found that overall survival rate was 53.9% (girls 56.1% and boys 51.7%). This is a lower survival rate than was reported in previous years. The decrease probably represents an improvement in the data collection system rather than an actual decline in the percentage of children completing Grade 5. The collection of more reliable data is to be commended and should lead to more effective monitoring of this and other indicators in the future. The GPI at 1.08 remained positive in favour of girls.

The available data indicates that the transition rate from primary to secondary had increased from 88.4% in 2002 to 92.4% in 2003 and then declined to 83.3% in 2004. This apparent decline may also be due to more accurate data collection. The reported transition rate of girls was higher each year than that of boys. In 2004, it was 86.6% for girls and 80% for boys with a GPI of 1.08.

Following the World Conference on EFA in Jomtien in 1990, Bangladesh decided to increase the number of teachers in primary schools as part of the drive to increase enrolment. One part of this strategy was to increase the number of female teachers to 60%. To attract more women, their qualification was relaxed to SSC or high school graduation at the end of Grade 10. For male teachers, the qualification remained unchanged at HSC. As the classrooms had to be provided with teachers quickly because of rapidly increasing enrolment, teacher training was changed from one-year pre-service to ten-month in-service training. Primary teachers start classroom teaching immediately upon recruitment. Usually they receive the Certificate-in-Education training within the first few years of their teaching career. The proportion of Certificate-in-Education trained teachers in government and government-registered primary schools is 71.9% (67.2% of women and 74.8% of men teachers).

In 2005, the average PTR was 54:1 with a PTR of 58:1 in government primary schools and 46:1 in government-registered and community schools. The national PTR average was 61:1 in 2002, indicating a reduction in the PTR in just three years. However, the national rate masks even higher ratios in some schools. According to the reports by district, the highest PTR was 85:1 with a PTR of 87:1 in Government schools. According to plans under PEDP II, the national PTR should be reduced to 46:1 by 2009.

In 2005-06, the proportion spent on primary education from the revenue budget was 34% and the proportion spent on secondary education was 23%. The proportion spent from the development budget was 61.5% for primary education and 27.1% for secondary education.

15.2.3 Analysis of Disparities in Universal Basic Education in Bangladesh and Remaining Challenges

One of the great achievements of the primary and secondary education systems in Bangladesh is the attainment of gender parity in enrolments for primary and secondary levels (excluding higher secondary). All the pupil-related indicators for both primary and secondary based on the latest data show GPIs exceeding 1.00 in favour of girls. This is the case not only at the national level but generally true across the districts. However, the comparatively low GPI (0.56) for GER in higher secondary indicates that there are still constraints within the system that may inhibit girls from progressing to higher levels of education.

There are significant differences by district for some of the indicators. For instance, compared to the national NER of 87.2%, in Gazipur the NER is only 65.4% for boys and 71.6% for girls. The national survival rate is low at 53.9%, but in Sherpur it is even lower at only 27.1% (27.8% for girls and 27.1% for boys). Data is not available on sub-groups of the population by ethnicity or socio-economic status.

As an incentive for the enrolment and participation of children from poor families, the Food for Education programme was started in 1993 and covered up to 40% of all school children. It was replaced with cash stipends in 2001. Rural girls in secondary schools have been receiving cash assistance in the form of stipends since 1993. The girls' secondary education stipends projects are credited with being one of the major contributing factors for achieving gender parity in primary and secondary enrolments.

15.3 Goal Three: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning in Bangladesh

15.3.1 Background and Development of Life Skills and Non-Formal Education in Bangladesh

The NPA-II includes the goal of ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. In Bangladesh, life skills and lifelong learning is defined as the development of individual capacities to cope with one's needs at social, mental and physical levels and to achieve established and recognized rights. It also encompasses the enhancement of an individual's negotiation capacity through training in problem-solving and in development of expertise and capabilities to tackle various circumstances and handle core responsibilities. Learners may be adults or out-of-school youth. What characterizes the structured learning activities involved is a large diversity of provision and providers, including the public, private and civil society sectors as sole providers or in partnership.

The NPA-II has not set any targets in quantitative or in qualitative terms for the goal. In the National Education Policy, the target population for admission in life skills and lifelong learning programmes is 8+ years for NGOs and 12-13 years for government organizations. According to the PRSP, one of the challenges for Bangladesh is to increase the proportion of TVET participation from 3% to 20% of enrolled secondary students by 2020.

15.3.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bangladesh

Among the youth (15-24 years) in Bangladesh, the literacy rate is reported to be 72.7%, 75.03% for males and 70.36% for females, with a GPI of 0.94. Comparing adult literacy rates to the youth literacy rate, it is clear that the proportion of literate young people is higher than for the older age groups. Also, although there is still a gender gap, it is considerably less than for the general adult literacy rate.

In 2005, approximately 2,728 TVET institutions were in operation in Bangladesh with a total enrolment of 241,336. Of this number, 48,267 students were enrolled in 180 public institutions and 193,069 students were enrolled in 2,548 private institutions. The proportion enrolled in private institutions was 80%. Only 26% of the students were female and the GPI was 0.35. The majority of TVET institutions suffer from poorly equipped workshops and laboratories, lack of teaching and training materials, inadequate classrooms and libraries and a lack of qualified teachers. The absence of linkages between training institutes and employers is a major impediment. With such a small enrolment, the GER for TVET is negligible. Currently, vocational training in Bangladesh does not meet the skills needed in the labour market both in terms of quantity and quality.

A Baseline HIV/AIDS Survey among youths was undertaken in Bangladesh in 2005. It was found that 85% of females and 93% of males were aware of HIV/AIDS, with awareness being higher among urban youth. Knowledge of ways to prevent HIV/AIDS was 22% for females and 23% for males among those with secondary or higher education.

15.3.3 Analysis of Disparities in Life Skills and Non-Formal Education in Bangladesh and Remaining Challenges

This is an area that faces many challenges and has not yet been given a high priority in EFA implementation. Although there have been some efforts to incorporate life skills into the formal and non-formal curriculum in Bangladesh, they are in an early stage of development and have not been reported in the EFA MDA analysis. The enrolment in formal TVET programmes is very low, and it is one of the few spheres of EFA in which there are still significant gender gaps. There are other initiatives operating in the country under the general label of livelihoods training. While the number is small, such interventions are more likely to reach the most vulnerable groups than the formal TVET institutions.

15.4 Goal Four: Literacy in Bangladesh

15.4.1 Background and Development of Literacy Acquisition in Bangladesh

The Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (Article 17) recognizes literacy as a fundamental right of all citizens and enjoins on the state to take measures to remove illiteracy speedily. The Government approved a national Non-Formal Education Policy Framework in 2006 which provides the overarching principles for conducting NFE programmes including adult literacy initiatives. Also established was the BNFE, which is the Government agency for the overall coordination of literacy and NFE activities in Bangladesh.

According to the NFE Policy Framework, "Literacy is the ability to read, understand, interpret, communicate and compute in verbal and written forms in varying contexts. It involves a continuum of learning that enables individuals to develop their potentials and knowledge-base and to participate fully in community affairs and wider social and developmental contexts."

The NPA-II seeks to provide opportunities and facilities to meet the learning, life and livelihood skills needs of adolescents, young adults, adults and neo-literate adults to survive and thrive in a competitive world. The plan aims to contextualize EFA and MDG targets under the PRSP in a harmonized approach with realistic targets and shared responsibilities. The BNFE has the responsibility to establish appropriate standards and to promote NGO/CBO capacities to achieve quality in programme formulation, implementation and monitoring. NGOs and CBOs are to play the primary role in implementing programmes based on a public-private partnership approach for planning, implementation and monitoring of activities. BNFE is to ensure effective coordination of activities within the Government (relevant ministries) and between Government and other partners. Appropriate linkages with other relevant programmes (skills training, microfinance, employment generation) and organizations are to be established to assist NFE participants to put their new-found learning, job skills and knowledge to work towards poverty reduction and income generation. The BNFE will develop and maintain a regularly updated database and GIS mapping on the participant population, needs, location of services, agencies and linkages with marketing and input providing facilities.

Under the NPA-II there are to be separate initiatives targeted at selected age specific groups. The groups are the post-primary age group (ages 11-14); out-of-school adolescent and youth (ages 12-19); young adults (ages 15-24) targeting 50% of the illiterate group; and adults (ages 25-45) targeting 25% of the illiterate group. Post literacy and continuing education initiatives are also part of the plan.

15.4.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bangladesh

The BBS considers a person literate if he or she can "read and write a letter in any language." On the basis of this criterion, the adult literacy rate in Bangladesh according to the 2001 Census was 47.5% and the current adult literacy rate is estimated to be 54.8% with a female literacy rate of 48.9%, a

male rate of 60.3% and a GPI of 0.81. The adult literacy rate in urban areas is 82.2% with rates of 77.4% for females and 86.3% for males. The corresponding rates in rural areas are 52.4% overall, 46.5% for females and 57.9% for males. Of the administrative divisions, Barisal has the highest adult literacy rate of 71.3% and Rajshahi has the lowest rate with 49.4%. For urban areas, the Dhaka division has the highest adult literacy rate (84.8%) while the Sylhet division has the lowest (71.5%). For rural areas, Chittagong and Sylhet divisions have the lowest rates (30.5%). At 72.7%, the youth literacy is 17.9 percentage points higher than the adult literacy rate. More progress towards gender parity has also been achieved with the youth literacy rate with GPI at 0.94 compared to 0.81 for the adult literacy rate.

According to the available information, there are 1,048 NGOs with NFE programmes in the country. A recent study found that NGOs run 6,574 centres, attended by 145,470 learners with females making up 82% of the learners. NGOs are also the implementers of a number of government-sponsored initiatives. This includes BNFE's Post Literacy and Continuing Education project which covers a large number of learners in rural areas. There are 20 NGO implementing partners of BNFE's project for working children which is targeting 200,000 working children aged 10-14 in the six divisional headquarter cities.

There is only a small amount from the revenue budget allocated for literacy and NFE, mainly for BNFE staffing. MOPME's expenditure on literacy and NFE in 2005-06 was calculated as 3.53% of the overall development budget. A number of other ministries, including the Ministries of Education, Religious Affairs and Social Welfare implement projects related to NFE and literacy.

15.4.3 Analysis of Disparities in Literacy in Bangladesh and Remaining Challenges

Due to long-term discrimination against girls and women in past decades, the GPI for adult literacy shows a bias against women while enrolment in primary and secondary schools show more girls are now enrolled than boys. However, there are indications that progress is being made in addressing gender disparities in adult literacy. A high proportion of literacy and non-formal education programmes are targeting women. Also, the number of literate girls joining the adult population each year is increasing. These are promising signs for the future, but attaining gender parity in adult literacy is a long-term goal that will require sustained efforts at all levels for many years. Achieving gender equality is an even greater challenge.

Bangladesh is committed to extending the coverage of literacy and NFE programmes to educationally, socially and economically disadvantaged groups who missed schooling or dropped out of school. Specifically, the clientele groups to be covered by literacy and NFE programmes include primary school drop-outs, never enrolled adolescents and young adults, children living in remote locations, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities and populations suffering social exclusion as well as all illiterate adults.

15.5 Goal Five: Gender Parity and Equality in Education in Bangladesh

15.5.1 Background and Development of Gender Parity and Equality in Bangladesh

As part of the NPA-II, the Government of Bangladesh has adopted the goal of 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 is a cross-cutting theme in the NPA-II with targets implicit within each of the other five goals. There are gender parity index targets for most indicators. Monitoring of progress makes full use of sex disaggregated data.

The Constitution of Bangladesh (1972) guarantees equal opportunities for all women and men in the country, and a number of policies have been adopted to facilitate the realization of this

guarantee. In the context of the CEDAW, the Government has put into place mechanisms to promote the participation of women and girls in society.

In the education sector, a number of pro-girl policies and strategies have been adopted to enhance the enrolment and participation of females in the system. In primary education, 60% of new teacher recruitments is reserved for women candidates. There have been massive social mobilization campaigns to motivate parents to send their daughters as well as their sons to school. Separate toilets for girls are being constructed in primary schools. Under PEDP-II, a gender action plan has been adopted to address issues of not only quantitative parity but also equity in all areas of school life.

In secondary education, the most notable intervention has been the various secondary school stipend projects for girls which have been in operation since the early 1990s covering most girls in rural secondary schools. There have been initiatives specifically to promote women teachers in secondary schools, and in 1999 a 30% quota was introduced for women teachers in secondary schools, madrasahs and colleges.

15.5.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bangladesh

This is an area in which Bangladesh has made the most notable progress in all of South Asia. It is truly a matter of pride for the nation that Bangladesh is one of the few countries in South Asia which has been on target of achieving gender parity in enrolments in both primary and secondary education in 2005. Bangladesh has achieved gender parity for the majority of the EFA indicators for which the GPI is monitored. The following are the indicators for which gender parity has been achieved: GER in ECCE (1.03), NIR in Grade 1 (1.03), GER in secondary education (1.03) and NER in secondary education (1.03). The proportion of girls' enrolment in primary (50%) and secondary levels (51%) is also positive. These are all remarkable achievements.

There are a few indicators for which gender parity has not yet been reached. Some indicators have exceeded the higher end of the 0.97 to 1.03 gender parity range, indicating a bias against boys such as the GPIs for: GIR in Grade 1 (1.05), GER in primary education (1.05), NER in primary education (1.06), Survival Rate to Grade 5 (1.08), and Transition Rate from Primary to Secondary Education (1.08). Only two of the reported EFA indicators have GPIs of less than 1.0, namely adult literacy (0.81) and youth literacy (0.94). Also, the GPI for higher secondary education GER (Grades 11-12) at 0.56 is considerably lower than that of secondary education (Grades 9-10) at 1.03. The proportion of female enrolment (26%) in TVET was also very low. The proportion of female teachers was low for each of the teacher-related indicators at 36% in primary, 10% in secondary and 18% in TVET in 2005.

15.5.3. Analysis of Gender Disparities in Bangladesh and Remaining Challenges

The biggest gender gap is in adult literacy rates. This is a reflection of the limited access to education of girls in past generations. The higher GPI in youth literacy, although not yet indicating full parity, is an indication that the gap in adult literacy rates will gradually lessen. However, in addition to the natural increase in the number of literate adult females as a result of the school system, targeted initiatives are also required to address the needs of existing illiterate women to fulfil their right to education. Efforts for universal education and the promotion of adult literacy, particularly for women, should be seen as complementary.

The low GPIs for higher secondary education and the low proportion of girls enrolled in TVET are major causes of concern. An analysis of the SSC examination, the terminal exam at the end of Grade 10, reveals that despite continuing in school until Grade 10, considerably fewer girls than boys sit and pass the SSC exam. As a result, girls do not make the transition to higher secondary or to tertiary education. This greatly limits their future employment opportunities and disadvantages them in a number of ways both socially and economically.

Besides the quantitative indicators related to gender parity, emphasis must be given to the achievement of gender equality in the education system and in society as a whole. This is a much bigger challenge as gender stereotypes and perceptions are abundant. For instance, a recent review of the curriculum and textbooks of both primary and secondary education showed a general gender imbalance in favour of males and revealed a number of gender stereotypes. Having achieved gender parity for most indicators, the education system in Bangladesh must with equal commitment promote full gender equality.

15.6 Goal Six: Quality of Education in Bangladesh

15.6.1 Developments in the Provisions of Quality Education in Bangladesh

Along with gender, the major cross-cutting goal is improving all aspects of the quality of education and ensuring excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. The NPA-II envisages all primary level institutions, formal and non-formal, offering standardized and quality basic education, thus providing a strong foundation that prepares children to face challenges in higher education and broader life with confidence and success. It also promotes equivalence between formal and non-formal basic education and between different streams within each, at all levels.

The NCTB has established a competency-based primary education curriculum with 50 terminal competencies. There is no national examination at the end of the primary cycle, but a national assessment was piloted in 2006, and PEDP-II includes an assessment component in which there will be periodic assessments of the system based on selective sample testing of students.

A major focus of PEDP-II is quality improvement. Under the programme, PSQLS are being established to ensure that every child has access to the minimum inputs necessary for an acceptable quality of primary education. The programme also aims to reduce the number of double-shift schools through ambitious building and teacher recruitment initiatives. The plan is to increase the proportion of government primary schools running on a single shift from 12% to 31% by 2009. It is anticipated that this will result in substantially increased teacher-student contact hours and thereby improve the quality of learning in primary schools.

15.6.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bangladesh

Although a number of initiatives are being undertaken through PEDP-II to improve the quality of education, there has not been sufficient time to see the outcomes. Some of the monitoring mechanisms have been refined with better school-level information being collected and analyzed. The Survival Rate to Grade 5 reported for 2005 of 53.9% (56.1% for girls and 51.7% for boys) is expected to increase as the quality improvement initiatives are implemented across the country.

To attract more women primary teachers after committing to the EFA initiative in 1990, the Government relaxed the entry qualification for female candidates from HSC to SSC. Nearly all teachers in government schools have at least this level of education. The majority of primary teachers have at least HSC and a number have Bachelors and/or Masters degrees as well.

Overall, according to a DPE report in 2007, 71.9% of primary teachers (67.2% of females and 74.8% of males) in government and government-registered schools have completed the ten-month Certificate-in-Education course. In government and government supported secondary schools, 53.5% (57.4% of females and 52.6% of males) have completed the Bachelor of Education according to a BANBEIS report in 2006. For ECCE and non-formal education programmes, which are for the most part run by NGOs, the qualifications for teachers vary but generally they do not exceed the SSC level. Formal training in education is not required, but usually in-service training is included as part of the conditions of service.

The PTR in government primary schools was 58:1 in 2005 compared to 46:1 in government-registered and community schools. Most of the schools are running on a double-shift, so the actual number of students in a class at a given time is less than these averages. But the intention is to reduce the number of double-shift schools in a bid to increase teacher-student contact hours. As this happens, it becomes even more important to decrease the PTR. The PTRs vary across the districts with one district (Rangamati) having an average of only 33:1 while another (Noakhali) an average of 75:1, reflecting the huge variation within the country. The ratio also varies for individual schools and grades. It is not uncommon to find classes with up to 100 Grade 1 students with only one teacher. This obviously has huge implications for the quality of education, and the Government is seeking to address the situation through PEDP-II initiatives. In secondary schools, the national average of the PTR was 31:1 in 2005, although this again masks the disparities within the country.

Public expenditure on education as a percentage of the total government expenditure was 14% from 2005-06. It is 15% of the revenue budget and 13% of the development budget. The public expenditure on education as a percentage of the GNP is 2.3%, compared to the UNESCO recommended 6% of GNP. Public expenditure on education in primary schools is Taka 1,783 (approximately US$27) per student.

The PEDP-II 2005 baseline survey found that 90% of schools had a portable water supply mostly from tube wells. However, about 44% of the tube wells were not working at the time of the survey. Arsenic contamination presents a difficulty for some of the schools. With regards to sanitation it was found that about 9% of all government and government-registered primary schools had no toilets and 20% had only one toilet in the school for all children and teachers. Separate toilets for girls were available in 37% of the government schools and 35% of the government-registered schools.

15.6.3 Analysis of Disparities in Quality in Bangladesh and Remaining Challenges

Two of the areas that require addressing most urgently are the low teacher-student contact hours and the high PTRs. While PEDP-II has initiated the construction of new classrooms and the recruitment of new teachers to address both of these issues, it will take some time for the effects of these measures to be seen. Also, under the current projections, two-thirds of students will still be attending double-shift schools even at the end of PEDP-II in 2009 and the average PTR will be 46:1,which is an improvement over the current situation but far from ideal. These are matters which the Government is considering with the intention to further reduce the number of double-shift schools and the PTR, as well as to increase the number of teacher-student contact hours.

From the high repetition and low completion rates of primary schooling, it can be deducted that the quality of primary schooling is not satisfactory. When sufficient learning is not taking place in the classroom, there is a tendency for parents who can afford it to rely on private tuition to assist their children to learn the necessary content and skills to progress through the system. This automatically disadvantages children from poor and vulnerable groups whose families cannot afford private tuition.

The Government has recognized quality improvement as the most important and urgent need in primary education and in other types and levels of education. For this reason, it has been given high priority in the NPA-II. It is imperative that the interventions for quality improvement reach all the schools and children in Bangladesh. In addition to initiatives to improve quality in general, targeted interventions will also be needed to reach the most vulnerable to ensure that they remain in school and achieve the basic competencies required to progress to the next level of the system and for application in their lives.

15.7 Overall Conclusions and Policy Recommendations in Bangladesh

Bangladesh has made considerable progress toward achieving some of the EFA goals. The achievement of gender parity in enrolment in both primary and secondary is particularly noteworthy. However, there is no room for complacency. In order to achieve the goals as set out in the NPA II, concerted action is needed in every area.

In ECCE, there has been considerable work done by NGOs in cooperation with the Government. Various Ministries have also been involved in ECCE activities. However, overall coverage is still limited. By building on the partnership model and effective initiatives which have already been implemented on a small scale, there is scope to increase activities for near universal coverage in the next few years. For this to happen, policy decisions will be required in order to set a national framework and standards, and ensure increased funding and stronger coordination.

Bangladesh is approaching the achievement of universal primary education enrolment at entry for both girls and boys. However, due to high drop-out rates, universal completion is still an elusive goal. In order to achieve universal completion by 2015, drastic measures and renewed efforts will be required. Besides reaching and retaining the groups which are the most difficult to enrol, the quality of the system must be remarkably improved in order to retain students and to ensure their achievement of basic education competencies.

Life skills, lifelong learning, and youth and adult literacy have not been given high priority during the first decade of this century. Funding by the Government has been minimal, and most of the work has been carried out by NGOs. In the NPA II, as well as in the recently approved NFE policy framework, there is a commitment to extend the coverage of literacy and NFE programmes, particularly to the poor and vulnerable and to girls and women. These are areas that will require significant increases in funding and stronger coordination of activities in order to create a national impact.

Bangladesh has made notable progress in the area of gender equality. The achievement of gender parity in enrolment in both primary and secondary education has been remarkable. Greater emphasis is now required on the achievement of full gender equality within the education system and in society as a whole.

Despite its considerable achievements in the areas of enrolment and gender parity, Bangladesh is still lagging behind in the area of quality. Poor quality results in wastage throughout the system. This has been identified by the Government as a major challenge, and there is a strong commitment to promote, through policies and practice, improvement in the quality of all educational interventions.

16. Bhutan

The tiny Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan is situated between the two giant nations of China and India. Most of the country is mountainous and the land elevation ranges from 160 metres above sea level in the south to more than 7,550 metres in the north. The population of the country was 634,982 in 2005 according to the first nationwide population and housing census. The population can generally be divided into two major ethnic groups, the Drukps and the Lhotsamps. Smaller ethnic groups with distinctive languages also live in remote pockets of Bhutan. Buddhism and Hinduism are the two major religions.

Bhutan has been an independent nation throughout its history. A great religious teacher from Tibet, Shabdrung Ngawang Namgyal unified the country and established a theocracy in 1652, which continued until 1907 when Sir Ugyen Wangchuck was elected by popular consensus as the first king of Bhutan. Since the monarchy was established, the country has been ruled by four successive hereditary kings with the fifth successor enthroned in late 2008.

Bhutan's development policy is uniquely guided by the Gross National Happiness (GNH) concept, which espouses that human beings have spiritual and emotional needs which are as important as material ones, but which have been largely overlooked by the traditional development approach. The concept of GNH now formally constitutes the key objective of national development and serves as the foundation for Bhutan's normative approach.

Ranked 135th on the Human Development Index (HDI) in 2006, Bhutan has moved from the category of 'low' to 'medium' human development. The proportion of people living in poverty in Bhutan has been reduced to 31.7% of the population according to the Bhutan Human National Development Report 2005. There is a varied economy with substantial contributions to the GDP from mining, manufacturing and electricity along with the traditional sectors of agriculture, livestock and forestry.

Education is viewed as the basis for all development and as such has always been given a very high priority in planning. Around 13% of the Royal Government of Bhutan's resources are allocated annually for education. The MOE publishes the "Education and Policy Guidelines and Instructions" annually, which outlines the priorities of the education sector and informs of any policy changes. The Education Sector Strategy is closely aligned to the Ninth FYP, which is the overall guide for all development activities in the country. EFA goals and targets are included as part of the overall planning process of the Government and are reflected in the FYPs.

16.1 Goal One: Early Childhood Care and Education in Bhutan

16.1.1 Background and Development of ECCE in Bhutan

Under the broader rubric of early childhood care and development (ECCD), the national definition of ECCE programmes covers nurseries and day-care centres. These should help optimize the growth and development of children aged 3–5 years through informal and formal settings, and equip children with skills important for adjusting to their immediate environment. As ECCD is a relatively new concept in Bhutan, an awareness campaign programme on child care will be further strengthened by targeting families using different media. The subject of ECCD is to be developed and included in the NFE programme for dissemination throughout the country. Private individuals and entrepreneurs will be encouraged to set up child care centres and nurseries in areas where a demand for such programmes exists.

While ECCD is a fairly new concept, the first year of primary schooling in Bhutan is called the pre-primary section. Hence, children going to school start their formal education in the pre-primary class at the age of 6. It is recognized that what needs to be developed further is the broader concept of ECCE that addresses the health needs of children under 3 years old and the cognitive and nutritional requirements of the 3-5 year olds.

16.1.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bhutan

An ECCD section has been established under the Department of School Education. A draft ECCD policy and guidelines were formulated in 2003 and have been incorporated into the Guidelines for Establishment of Private Schools in Bhutan. Nine licenses have been issued to establish private day-care centres since 2005 and six are currently functioning. The combined enrolment is 211 (107 girls and 104 boys). There are 18 teachers, all female.

16.1.3 Analysis of Disparities in ECCE in Bhutan and Remaining Challenges

Reaching the poorest and most deprived children is the major challenge for the ECCD programme. ECCD currently is a small, urban initiative and a focused strategy has yet to be developed to reach the neediest and the poorest. Initiatives need to be developed to extend ECCD activities to rural areas and to the poorest and most disadvantaged. ECCD needs to be part of a holistic and integrated approach to reaching groups marginalized as a result of geographical location and socio-economic factors. At the same time, there is a need to review the curriculum to assess its effectiveness in generating community demand for ECCD.

16.2 Goal Two: Universal Primary/Basic Education in Bhutan

16.2.1 Background and Expansion of Universal Basic Education in Bhutan

Bhutan's goal is for the NER for primary education to reach 100% by 2015. Ensuring access has received top priority, with the goal to ensure each child has access to a primary school within one hour's walking distance from his or her home. This is to be made possible through expanding the existing community primary schools and establishing new primary schools where necessary. The concept will be further strengthened by developing some primary schools as resource centres, which may incorporate a computer centre, literacy centre, community library and a place for other community functions. While schools will be built and maintained with the help of communities using locally available materials, construction materials not available locally will be provided. Boarding will continue as a strategy to extend educational opportunities to isolated and nomadic communities. Extensive dependence on boarding, which is expensive and difficult to manage, will be reduced by establishing additional smaller schools in remote communities.[54] Education at the basic level (11 years of schooling, pre-primary to Grade 10) will continue to be free.

16.2.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bhutan

There has been a steady expansion of community schools. The number of community primary schools increased by 62% from 151 in 2000 to 245 in 2006. The number of students enrolled in community schools has increased from 17,335 in 2000 to 29,132 in 2006. This represents about 28% of the primary student body and about 20% of the student population up to higher secondary level.

Hostels and the provision of food have been introduced to serve as a pull factor to bring children into the school system. Due to the mountainous terrain and the dispersed settlements, providing a school within three kilometres' radius is not always possible. Therefore, the provision of hostel facilities and food has been instrumental in increasing student enrolment and retention in remote areas. The food has been beneficial, particularly for children from poor families. In 2006, there were 40 lower secondary, 18 middle secondary and 16 higher secondary schools with boarding facilities receiving some food support under the World Food Programme (WFP). A total of 41,438 students (23,578 boarders and 17,860 day students) were receiving food assistance in 2006. The proportion

54 Currently the government is considering a shift from this policy. Instead of continuing to construct community primary schools in the remote areas, a consolidation policy is being considered. Since the new policies are still being discussed, this report reflects the 2006 policies.

of girls receiving food assistance increased from 41% of the total in 2000 to 45% in 2006 (43.2% of the boarders and 48.2% of day students).

In Bhutan, the primary education cycle covers seven years of schooling from pre-primary to Grade 6. The total primary school enrolment in 2006 was 102,225 students, which is about 20% more than in 2000. Between 2000 and 2006, the enrolment increased an average of about 3.3% annually. The girls' annual growth was 4.1% compared to the boys' increase of 2.4%. This has helped to reduce the gender gap.

The GIR in primary school increased from 105% (104% for girls and 105% for boys) in 2004 to 112% (111% for girls and 114% for boys) in 2006. In 2006 the GPI was 0.97.

The GER for primary education, including the private schools, increased from 72% in 2000 to 102.1% in 2006 (100% for girls and 104% for boys) with a GPI of 0.97. The NER for primary education in 2006 was 79.4% (79% for girls and 80% for boys) with a GPI of 0.99. The NER is not available for earlier years. Available data for 2007 indicates that around 16.3% of primary school-age children are out of the formal school system. This indicates that the NER has further increased. Children enrolled in monastic education and those studying outside the country are not included in the official data. For basic education (pre-primary through to Grade 10), the GER is 84.8% and the NER is 75% in 2006. Data for other EFA indicators have not been reported.

16.2.3 Analysis of Disparities in Universal Basic Education in Bhutan and Remaining Challenges

Looking at the sub-national breakdown, gaps remain in terms of gross and net enrolment in primary education with the primary NER ranging from a high of 94% (Bumthang) to a low of 65% (Samtse). The table below shows the primary NER and GER and the GPIs for the 20 Dzongkhags in Bhutan.

Table 6: Primary Education NER and GER (%) and GPI, by Dzongkhag, 2006, Bhutan

Dzongkhag	NER				GER			
	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI
Bumthang	94	93	95	1.02	113	111	115	1.04
Chukha	71	71	70	0.99	93	95	90	0.95
Dagana	75	76	74	0.97	104	106	101	0.95
Gasa	68	69	66	0.96	87	93	82	0.88
Haa	84	80	88	1.10	107	101	113	1.12
Lhuentse	81	83	79	0.95	103	106	100	0.94
Mongar	78	78	77	0.99	100	102	98	0.96
Paro	86	85	88	1.03	106	105	107	1.02
Pemagatshel	89	89	89	1.00	113	117	110	0.94
Punakha	88	83	94	1.13	108	100	116	1.16
Samdrupjongkhar	78	81	76	0.94	107	111	104	0.94
Samtse	65	67	63	0.94	87	92	83	0.90
Sarpang	72	72	71	0.98	94	97	91	0.94
Thimphu	87	86	88	1.02	104	104	104	1.00
Trashigang	82	87	78	0.90	105	112	99	0.88
Trashiyangtse	87	89	84	0.94	112	116	108	0.93
Trongsa	92	90	94	1.04	117	115	120	1.04
Tsirang	68	70	67	0.96	99	103	96	0.93
Wangdue	83	81	85	1.05	104	103	106	1.03
Zhemgang	89	88	90	1.02	119	118	120	1.02
NATIONAL	79	80	79	0.99	102	104	100	0.96

Source: Bhutan Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment Report (2000-2006), page 40.
Note: GPI has been recalculated.

Based on indicators for which data are available, Bhutan has achieved gender parity for primary GIR (0.97) and primary NER (0.99), and is approaching parity for primary GER (0.96). Enrolments in primary schools have increased for both girls and boys, but there has been a faster growth for girls (4.1% annually for girls compared to 2.4% for boys). These are all positive signs and are to be commended. However, it is not possible from the data presented to assess whether or not it is applicable for qualitative measures such as repetition and retention. Also, the growth in girls' enrolments must be sustained into secondary schooling and higher levels. Verifiable progress in these areas is very important for achieving gender parity and for moving beyond mere numbers to gender equality in all aspects of schooling and society.

GERs, NERs and GPIs show regional variations in access for girls and boys across the country. The Government is aware of the geographical differences and is making particular efforts to extend education to the most disadvantaged areas.

A major challenge for Bhutan is to collect and analyze data for all the key indicators. The availability of data to show trends over time is particularly important. The disaggregation of data by location, ethnicity, and sex is also essential, particularly for informing strategies and initiatives to reach out to out-of-school children.

16.3 Goal Three: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning in Bhutan

16.3.1 Background and Development of Life Skills and Non-Formal Education in Bhutan

Related to this goal, Bhutan is aiming to continuously improve the quality and relevance of education to ensure the holistic development of each child, encompassing innate abilities, moral and social values, social cohesion and the world of work, including agriculture and other vocations. It is envisaged that technical, vocational and academic education and training will develop into a multifaceted system of opportunities. Programmes are to range from job-oriented short training courses and apprenticeship training programmes to specialized training at degree and postgraduate levels. The system is to be highly flexible and designed to respond to evolving public and private sector demands. Sufficient flexibility must also be provided within the system for students to move between academic and vocational studies easily. Pursuing a vocation should not preclude a person from pursuing further academic studies.

The NFE programme which promotes literacy and numeracy skills development, particularly for rural women and girls, has included some skills development information in reading materials for both the basic literacy and post-literacy courses. However, while touching on some vocational objectives, these do not include practical components. It is expected that in coming years, increasing numbers of graduates from the NFE programme will pursue further training in lower level vocational skills.

The curriculum and the textbooks of most subjects have value education embedded in them, but for that to be translated into reality a curriculum framework and teacher guide need to be developed. The Comprehensive School Health Programme is a collaborative partnership programme between the Ministries of Education and Health. In addition to providing health services to schools, it provides health education in schools, promotes self-esteem and respect among students and staff, and works in partnership with homes and wider communities. It also offers counselling services on careers, life skills, first aid, HIV/AIDS, reproductive health, substance abuse and other youth issues.

16.3.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bhutan

There are seven vocational workshops in boarding schools, five vocational training institutes spread across the country and two handicraft training institutes. Apart from students in the degree and diploma colleges, there are now 1,166 students enrolled in different vocational and traditional craft training centres, which has more than doubled from 529 students in 2000. Of these students, 418 (36%) are female and 748 (64%) are male. The GPI is 0.56.

Another avenue for advancing one's academic qualifications is through the Continuing Education Programme established two years ago. The number of students doubled in the second year. Faced with the shortage of space in government schools, this is a joint partnership between the Government and private schools. While the evaluation is undertaken by the Government's examination board, the space and teachers are provided by the private schools. In 2007, there were 361 students of whom 187 (51%) were female and 176 (49%) were male, giving a GPI of 1. 06.

16.3.3 Analysis of Disparities in Life Skills and Non-Formal Education in Bhutan and Remaining Challenges

At only 36%, the proportion of female students in TVET indicates that more initiatives need to be taken to involve girls and women in this type of education. The higher percentage of females (51%) in the continuing education programme is an encouraging development. Further analysis is needed to assess whether the most disadvantaged students are accessing TVET and other programmes of this nature.

A continuous review of labour market requirements and mid- and long-term economic development projections are crucial in order to design and plan appropriate vocational education training. Ensuring systematic improvement of the standards and quality of training is another critical dimension. It is recognized that the quality of training can be improved mainly by involving all stakeholders, especially the private sector, in the identification, design and delivery of training. A national qualification framework needs to be developed that defines the different levels of education and defines different learning routes between school, vocational and tertiary education.

16.4 Goal Four: Adult Literacy and Continuing Education in Bhutan

16.4.1 Background and Development of Literacy Acquisition in Bhutan

The national goal is to eradicate illiteracy by the year 2015 and to make all the adult population above 15 years of age functionally literate and numerate in the national language Dzongkha. A literate person is defined as one who can independently read and write for communication and solve new problems using literacy skills. The vision for Bhutan is to create a system of learning opportunities for all people at every stage of life. Opportunities are to be available for those outside the formal system of education to learn new skills and knowledge through a system of continuous education. Learning opportunities are to be community-based and are to improve people's lives to the greatest extent possible. In light of the important development outcomes and effects on the overall well being of the family, particular emphasis is placed on the learning needs of women.

The focus during the Ninth FYP is to expand the NFE programme using the existing teachers and space in primary schools, to recruit promising Class XII (Grade 12) graduates[55] to teach in the NFE centres and to foster greater collaboration with other ministries to support post-literacy programmes. The aim is to increase the number of participants in the NFE programme from 1,000 to 4,800 every year. Learning opportunities are to be community-based and are to improve

55 Minimum qualification for all new NFE Instructors was raised to Class XII from Class X in June 2007.

people's lives to the greatest extent possible. In light of the important development outcomes and effects on the overall well-being of the family, particular emphasis is placed on the learning needs of women.

16.4.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bhutan

Bhutan's literacy information was updated in 2005 when a comprehensive population and household census was taken. According to the Census, the adult literacy rate (15 years and above) was 53% (39% for females and 65% for males) with a GPI of 0.60. The urban adult literacy rate was 72% compared to 44% in the rural areas.

The Census showed a youth literacy rate (ages 15-24) of 74.4% (68% for females and 84% for males) with a GPI of 0.85. In urban areas the youth literacy rate was 84% compared to 68% in rural areas. For both adult literacy and youth literacy there were considerable differences across the country with the remote areas having the lowest rates. A gender gap also exists with male literacy rates for both youth and adults higher than female rates.

Table 7: Literacy Rates (%), by Sex and Urban-Rural, 2005, Bhutan

Age Group %	Literacy Rate				
	Total	Male	Female	Urban	Rural
15-24 years	74.4	84	68	84	68
15 years and above	53	65	39	72	44

Source: Bhutan Population and Household Census, 2005.

While formal education has made significant inroads in the younger generation and helped increase the literacy level, for those who dropped out of school and for others who had no opportunity to attend school, NFE is considered the only hope for acquiring basic literacy skills. The target people are mainly in the 15-40 age bracket. Although the NFE centres are also located in the urban areas, those in the rural areas have been the main beneficiaries of this programme.

In 2000, there were 146 NFE centres with 5,372 learners. By 2007, the number of centres had grown to 777 and the number of learners had nearly tripled to 14,694. The majority of learners were females (10,002) while there were only 4,692 males. A total of 11,178 learners were enrolled in the basic literacy course while the remaining 3,516 were enrolled in the post-literacy course.

It is reported that the NFE programme has made a significant impact on the rural population, particularly on women. Some learners have become parliamentarians in the National Assembly and, in addition to playing the role of change agents, their contribution towards the creation of social capital has been substantial. They are known to be able to discuss development issues and the needs of their villages.

The adult literacy programme requires substantial dedicated resources. Given that the current total expenditure on adult literacy is less than 0.5% of the total expenditure of the education sector, resource mobilization is crucial for achieving the EFA goal.

16.4.3 Analysis of Disparities in Literacy in Bhutan and Remaining Challenges

Marked differences in adult and youth literacy rates exist across gender, districts, and rural-urban areas. Although female literacy rates have improved, at 39% the female adult literacy rate is much lower than the 65% rate of their male counterparts. The GPI of 0.60 is extremely low. The low level of female literacy assumes particular importance since it is widely regarded in Bhutan as perhaps the most significant factor in development. With adult literacy levels at only 44% in rural areas compared to 72% in urban areas, the rural-urban differences are also striking.

Despite the higher male literacy rates, an area of concern for the NFE programmes is the low participation of men, who accounted for only 29% of the learners in 2006. Migration and frequent travel for work are perhaps the major reasons for low male participation. This, however, is a problem that requires deeper analysis at the community level if appropriate strategies are to be developed to effectively involve men in NFE programmes. However, the programmes seem to be an effective mode to reach to the large number of women who constitute the largest portion of the illiterate population in the country.

16.5 Goal Five: Gender Parity and Equality in Education in Bhutan

16.5.1 Background and Development of Gender Parity and Equality in Bhutan

The national goal is to increase the ratio of girls to boys in primary, secondary, and tertiary education and to bring a special thrust on enhancing female literacy and opportunities for life skills, vocational education and employment for women, especially young women. The strategy is to increase the enrolment of females in higher secondary and tertiary education through easier access to schools and better hostel facilities, and to expand NFE and skills training in rural areas.

While it is considered that there is no overt discrimination against women in Bhutanese society, if the statistics on women's participation in economic and political life are examined, it would appear that there is a gender gap, if not an explicit bias. Gender has been mainstreamed as a cross-cutting issue in Bhutan's development plans.

16.5.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bhutan

In 2000, girls constituted 46.1% of primary enrolment. By 2006 this had increased to 48.9%. In absolute numbers, there was an increase from 39,251 to 50,017 girls during this period. This steady increase in the enrolment of girls at the primary level is also reflected at the secondary level. With a GPI of 0.98, gender parity is considered achieved at the primary level. With girls making up 50% of the enrolment in Classes VII and VIII, it appears that gender parity has been achieved for this level, while for Classes IX and X girls make up 48.4% of the enrolment. Although there has been a moderate increase of girls over the years in Classes XI and XII, they accounted for only 35.6% of the students in government schools in 2006. Interestingly, girls' enrolment in private schools at the same level was at par with the boys (50%).

Girls' enrolment decreases at the tertiary level. In 2005, only 35% of the enrolment in the Royal University of Bhutan was female, and of those studying on government scholarships outside the country, females accounted for only 25%. In 2006, of the total number of students enrolled in six institutes offering vocational education, only 33% were women.

The proportion of women teachers in the overall staffing of educational institutions varies greatly according to school type and level. Data from the national EFA MDA report show that as of 2006, 46% of teachers in government primary schools were women, 68% in private primary schools, and only 22% in community primary schools. Most community schools are located in remote areas, sometimes involving up to two days of walking and therefore teachers, women in particular, are reluctant to take up such postings.

However, the percentage is an improvement from 2000, when females accounted for only 12% of the teachers in community schools. In general, the proportion of women teachers decreases as the levels of education increase. The proportion is 48% in lower secondary, 41% in middle secondary, 30% in higher secondary, 20% in private higher secondary, and 17% in the Royal University of Bhutan. In TVET, the proportion of female teachers is only 12% and in NFE it is 48%.

16.5.3 Analysis of Gender Disparities in Bhutan and Remaining Challenges

While large gender differentials are not immediately apparent in Bhutan, some gender disparities are clearly evident in participation in higher secondary, university and vocational education. The proportion of female teachers is also low in higher levels of education and in TVET. The decline in girls' participation as they go up the educational ladder may be indicative of cultural and social constraints that inhibit full participation of girls and women. While gender discrimination is not easily detectable in Bhutan, deep seated social barriers to women's mobility and participation in the public domain need to be analyzed to inform the development of appropriate strategies.

16.6 Goal Six: Quality of Education in Bhutan

16.6.1 Developments in the Provision of Quality Education in Bhutan

Bhutan's goals related to quality education are to reduce the annual dropout rate at the primary level from 10% to 5%, to reduce the repetition rate from 21% to 10%, to universalize coverage of the new curriculum and new activity-based teaching methods, and the full adaptation of the secondary school curricula to the Bhutanese context by 2007. Strategies that have been adopted include: ensuring that adequate facilities are available to schools; continuing to provide textbooks, stationery and hostel facilities for needy students; expanding boarding facilities and creating new hostels; encouraging private schools with secondment of teachers from government schools; developing a quality curriculum which is relevant and in accordance with the needs of the country; encouraging wholesome education and the development of productive citizens; enhancing the quality of teachers through pre-service and in-service training and upgrading of qualifications; introducing incentives to attract teachers to remote areas; and strengthening administrative support through improved monitoring and networking among educators.

16.6.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Bhutan

One of the key elements for ensuring quality education is the availability of qualified and trained teachers. In 2000, there were 3,045 teachers, including those in private schools and government institutes. This number doubled to 6,094 in 2006. Comparing the data of 2000 and 2006, there is a significant difference in the number and qualifications of teachers. There was a phenomenal increase in the number of teachers holding Bachelors degrees, from 452 in 2000 to 1,789 in 2006. The current high percentage of trained teachers (92%) is remarkable considering the overall increase in the number of teachers.

Non-national teachers have played a critical role in supplementing the teacher shortage in the country. In 2000, there were 576 non-national teachers constituting 19% of the total teaching force of 3,026. In 2006, there were 614 non-national teachers but the percentage had come down to 12% of the total of 4,975 teachers. Despite the increase in student enrolment, the increase in number of trained Bhutanese teachers has led to the overall reduction in the percentage of non-national teachers. The number of national teachers rose by 78% from 2,450 in 2000 to 4,361 in 2006. Most of the non-national teachers are teaching in middle and higher secondary schools.

To enhance the skills and competency of teachers, the Government provides in-service training programmes for teachers. Overall, 94% of all teachers have received in-service training. Efforts have been successful to ensure trained teachers are teaching in all locations, especially in difficult geographical areas. In addition, from 2002 to 2006, a total of 404 teachers were sent outside Bhutan on short courses and long-term fellowships. Teachers are also given the opportunity to upgrade their qualifications to higher secondary and degree level. The upgrading started in 1998 with 31 candidates and by 2007 about 1,167 teachers had enhanced their qualifications to Class X or Class XII level. For the degree level, a distance Bachelors in Education and a distance Masters in Education are offered. These are very popular since current civil service rules require a degree for career advancement.

The ideal standard for PTR has been set by the Government as 32:1. While the national average of 30:1 for all types of schools appears to be within the permissible limit, there are some disparities in the distribution of teachers. It is generally the lower level schools, such as the community and primary schools that have a high PTR, both in urban and very remote areas. In 2006, the national average for primary schools was 33:1. During the 2000-2006 period, there were significant improvements in the PTRs with decreases from 47:1 in 2000 to 28:1 in 2006 in community schools and from 44:1 to 33:1 in primary schools in the same period, in general.

For pupil-class ratios in urban areas, community and primary schools have the highest number of students in a section, with an average of 46 and 40 students, respectively. The lower secondary classes are also crowded in the urban areas, with an average of 41 students in a section. At the other end of the scale, the community schools in remote and difficult to reach areas have a very small number of students, ranging between 20 and 12, and it is in these situations where multi-grade teachers have been posted.

The Government has always made an effort to ensure that the curriculum is relevant to work and in line with the national needs and aspirations of the people. Revisions pertaining to three subjects – Dzongkha, English and Mathematics – have been initiated. A curriculum framework for English, from Pre-Primary (PP) to Class XII, has been developed. The curriculum guide for teachers and textbooks for Classes V to XII have also been completed. The new curriculum for Classes V-XII is being implemented, and the text books and curriculum guides for teachers of classes PP to IV are being revised.

The student enrolment for PP to Class X between 2000 and 2006 increased by 28%, whilst the repetition rate halved from 12.7% to 6.3%. In 2005, the drop-out rate for PP was nil and the year-wise primary level drop-out rate did not exceeded 4.5%, thus achieving the national goal of a reduction in the drop-out rate to 5%. The highest concentration of dropouts was in Classes X (7.4%) and VII (7.3%). The goal of reducing the repetition rate from 21% to 10% has been achieved with the highest rate recorded of 9.1% for Class IV in 2005.

16.6.3 Analysis of Disparities in Quality in Bhutan and Remaining Challenges

Bhutan has made remarkable efforts to improve the quality of education across the range of levels and schools, and it has been successful in bringing about many changes in the way schools function. It is recognized that sustaining the gains made and reducing drop-outs, especially among girls, will required strategies that go beyond teacher training and improved curriculum. Sustained community-level advocacy will be required to ensure that girls' education becomes a community norm and that all girls get the opportunities of benefiting from the national commitment of ensuring that every Bhutanese child successfully completes 11 years of basic schooling. Since some assessment responsibilities, especially at the primary and upper primary levels, have been delegated to the schools themselves, some benchmark indicators as well as the possibility of periodic assessment through an external mechanism may be considered. Maintaining quality standards in remotely located schools is of particular importance, as the poor and marginalized are in most cases studying in these schools. Sustaining quality in these schools will ensure that the equity and quality goals of EFA are met.

16.7 Overall Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Overall, Bhutan has documented substantial progress in all the EFA goals. The national MDA report made recommendations for the successful implementation of each of the six goals. Only the concluding observations are included in this section.

Bhutan is currently spending 7% of its GDP on education. With further expansion in the Tenth Plan (2008-2013), substantial resources will be required to improve the current infrastructure and construct new school buildings.

Bhutan has a highly subsidized system of education with tuition fees, textbooks, and in some places meals, given free. However, at the same time there are costs for parents that have been increasing and have prevented poorer families from sending their children to school. This is clearly reflected in the enrolment figures, which show 78% enrolment from the families in the top 20% of the income bracket but only 59% from those in the bottom 20% of the income bracket. The provision of incentives such as free stationery and board to rural students may need to be complemented with a scholarship scheme which may serve as an additional pull factor.

17. India

India is a vast country with a population of more than one billion, extending over an area of more than three million square kilometres. It is multilingual, multi-ethnic and multi-religious. India is home to 16% of the world's population, and over 400 languages are spoken, of which 22 are recognized as constitutional languages. India has followers of all the major religions of the world. Hinduism is followed by more than 80% of the population. Around 13% of the population are Muslim, making it the country with the second largest Muslim community in the world. Christians, Buddhists, Jains, Sikhs and others make up the remainder of the population.

India is divided into 35 states and Union Territories (UTs). It has a federal form of government with responsibilities divided between the central government and the states. Education is the responsibility of both.

At the time of Independence in 1947, India was an economically impoverished country. Over the decades, the predominantly agricultural economy expanded and there is now a thriving mixed economy. While the majority of people still live in rural areas, there are massive cities supporting very large populations. For the last decade the economy has been growing steadily at a rate of about 8% to 9% per year. The country ranked 128th on the HDI in 2005.

The commitment to Education for All is a goal enshrined in the Indian Constitution which has been pursued through successive education policies and development plans at national and state levels. The Government of India is implementing a number of programmes for universalizing elementary education, achieving total literacy and providing quality education for all. As envisaged in the National Policy on Education 1986, the programmes are being implemented through 'meaningful partnership between the centre and the states'. The National Development Council, with representation of Chief Ministers of all states, imparts a national character to the entire process of planning and programme formulation. The Union Government bears the responsibility for maintaining the national integrative character of education and improving quality and standards. This is being sought through the flagship programme SSA, a nationwide programme of universal elementary education implemented in a mission mode, along with programmes under the ICDS and the activities of the NLM.

17.1 Goal One: Early Childhood Care and Education in India

17.1.1 Background and Development of ECCE in India

There are several provisions in the Constitution of India, either as a fundamental right or as a directive principle of state policy, that have been used to promote ECCE services in the country. Initially, the Indian Constitution committed to the provision of 'free and compulsory education for children up to fourteen years of age'. In the absence of a lower age limit, early childhood education services were considered as part of the constitutional commitment. However, the subsequent 86th Amendment to the Constitution in 2001 divided the span of 0-14 years into two clear categories to cover their needs under separate articles in the Constitution. Article 21A has been introduced which makes elementary education for 6-14 year old children a fundamental right. ECCE has been included as a constitutional provision but not as a legal right of every child in Article 45 which reads: "The State shall endeavour to provide ECCE for all children until they complete the age of six years."

Child development and education are considered concurrent subjects, which imply a shared federal and state responsibility for ECCE service delivery. The provision of ECCE services is governed by a plethora of policies and related action plans beginning with the National Policy on Education 1986 which viewed ECCE as "an integral input in the human resource strategy, a feeder and support programme for primary education and a support service for working women."

17.1.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in India

ECCE provision in India is available through three distinct channels: public, private and non-governmental. Government-sponsored programmes are largely directed towards the disadvantaged communities, particularly those residing in rural areas. There are over 130 programmes under the auspices of various departments and ministries which target the development of children aged 0-6 years.

As a sequel to the adoption of the National Policy for Children, the Government initiated the ICDS which has emerged as a major national strategy for promoting holistic early childhood development in the country. The basic premise of the programme, which is a centrally sponsored and state administered nationwide initiative, is that early childhood education and care are inseparable issues and must be considered as one. The programme has been designed in an integrated way, adopting a holistic approach through one community-based service provider for all children from pre-natal to 6 years and pregnant and nursing mothers.

In view of the need for an effective and expanded scheme for childcare facilities, the Rajiv Gandhi National Crèche Scheme has been launched for the children of working mothers. Crèches are allocated to the States/UTs on the basis of the proportion of child population. Uncovered districts and tribal areas are given the highest priority to ensure a balanced regional coverage. The services include both the care aspect and pre-school education.

Under the SSA, provision has been made not only for greater convergence of pre-school education initiatives, especially of ICDS, with that of primary schooling but also for the setting up of pre-school centres in uncovered areas. As a result of actualizing these provisions many States/UTs have not only come up with the pre-primary centres (either separately or as a wing attached with the primary schools) but also have designed various state specific interventions to fit their local situation.

The ECCE services being provided by voluntary organizations and NGOs play a vital role in providing education for all ages in socially and economically deprived areas. These organizations primarily work with communities in difficult circumstances such as tribal people, migrant labourers and rural children in specific contexts. They run crèches and ECCE centres by mobilizing local resources. Some NGOs also run mobile crèches, which move along with the construction labour from one site to another. Although the effectiveness of these programmes has not been systematically evaluated, children who attend them are more likely to move on to primary schools and parents have generally reported positive outcomes.

Throughout India there are fee charging/profit-making initiatives in ECCE. While the public sponsored ICDS and NGO programmes cater to children from disadvantaged communities, private initiatives are targeted towards children of socioeconomically better-off families. These impart pre-school education through nurseries, kindergartens and pre-primary classes in private schools. Though exact figures are not available, it is estimated that about 10 million children receive ECCE from privately owned programmes. In the absence of a regulatory system or even registration at the ECCE stage, the education offered by these programmes is of variable quality.

Under public initiatives, the enrolment, which was 15% of the 3-6 year old children in 1989-90, stood at about 21% in the first half of the 2000-2010 decade (Lok Sabha, Starred Questions, 2004). According to the 2001 Census, the country has approximately 60 million children in the 3-6 years age-group. It is estimated that about 34 million children are covered by pre-school initiatives under ICDS and private initiatives. This leaves about 26 million 3-6 year old children not enrolled in pre-school activities. The gap between the number of pre-school children and available pre-school services seems to be very large.

17.1.3 Analysis of Disparities in ECCE in India and Remaining Challenges

The children not covered and unreached by ECCE programmes are found in both rural and urban areas. In rural areas, many of them are located in isolated and remote hamlets, dalit and fishing hamlets, and in temporary settlements of seasonal migrant workers. In urban areas, many of the children live on pavements and in unauthorized settlements and slums. Children living in difficult circumstances, such as children of long-term patients, children with special needs, children of sex workers and women prisoners, riot and disaster-affected children, and refugees and displaced children may also be identified as children not covered and unreached by ECCE programmes.

In order to extend the benefits of ECCE to reach the large number of children presently not covered, the sub-group report on ECCE for the 11th Five-Year Plan (FYP) has recommended to identify and implement contextually suited, locally relevant innovative strategies and approaches. The sub-group also recommended increasing resources to fill this huge gap.

There are around 106 million women in the work force, of which 40%-45% are in the reproductive age group. Day care support services are an essential requirement for the children of working women. The sub-group on ECCE for the 11th FYP recommended that the existing crèche facilities need to be expanded exponentially with shared responsibility by the Government and the employers.

17.2 Goal Two: Universal Basic Education in India

17.2.1 Background and Expansion of Universal Basic Education in India

While the universalization of elementary education has been a national goal since 1950, the 86th Constitutional Amendment Act 2002 made education a fundamental right for children in the age group of 6-14 years by providing that "the State shall provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of six to fourteen years in such manner as the State may, by law, determine." The overall goal is to provide free and compulsory education of satisfactory quality to all children. It is significant to note that the National Policy on Education defines universal elementary education in a broad framework changing the emphasis from enrolment to participation, retention and achievement.

Although considerable progress has been made towards achieving the target of EFA, it is recognized that more rigorous and sustained efforts are required to universalize elementary education. A major bottleneck has been the persistence of regional and sectional disparities. The policy goal therefore is to intensify efforts to reach primary education to the deprived sections of the population. The goals of EFA with respect to universal access are twofold: the universal enrolment of all children including girls, disabled children and children belonging to scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in primary classes and the provision of upper primary education for them; and the provision of NFE or alternative education for school dropouts, working children and girls who cannot attend formal schools.

The last decade has witnessed a number of new initiatives to improve access to and participation of children in elementary education as well as for improving the quality of education in primary schools. SSA, the Government's primary education flagship programme, is being implemented by the Government in partnership with the state governments with a long-term perspective on cost sharing and a district level decentralized management framework involving local bodies. It is envisaged that the abhiyan (campaign) will achieve four goals, namely: providing access to all children in the age group 6-14 years through formal primary schools or through other equivalent alternative delivery means; completion of five years of primary education by all children; completion of eight years of elementary education by all children; and provision of elementary education of satisfactory quality for all by 2010.

The programme provides opportunities for NGOs and the private sector to contribute towards the achievement of the goals. The programme aims to lead towards a community-owned initiative for universalizing elementary education. Efforts under the SSA are to be underscored by effective decentralization, sustainable financing, cost effective strategies for universalization, an interesting curriculum, community-owned planning and implementation and a focus on girls, marginalized caste groups and ethnic minorities.

17.2.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in India

The total number of schools at the primary level increased from 641,695 to 710,471 from 1999-2000 to 2003-04. Similarly, for upper primary, the number increased from 198,004 to 262,649 during the same period. The average annual rate of growth since 1997-98 was 2.7% at primary and 6.9% at upper primary level. The faster growth of upper primary schools is due to increased completion rates at lower primary as well as the conscious policy of the Government to achieve the target of one upper primary school/section for every two primary schools, as envisaged in the Programme of Action (1992).

Government and local bodies put together continued to own more than 90% of primary schools. The contribution of private agencies has been small though increasing over the years and was highest in the school year 2004-05 (9.79%). The percentage of primary aided schools has been slowly decreasing over the years while the percentage of unaided schools has been increasing. In 2004-05 at upper primary level, government schools accounted for 33.1% of all schools, while local body schools accounted for 7.9%, private aided schools, 29.4%, and private unaided schools 29.6%.

From 1999-2000 to 2004-05, enrolment in elementary education increased substantially, especially in the upper primary stage. Whereas the annual increase in enrolment in primary was 3.2%, for upper primary it was 3.9%. Both in primary as well as upper primary, proportionately the increase in girls' enrolment was higher than that of boys. In primary classes, whereas the annual growth rate for boys was 1.7%, for girls it was 5.2%. Similarly for upper primary, the increase in boys' enrolment was at the rate of 2.2% per year while for girls it was 6.5%. At primary level, GER improved from 95.7% in 2000-01 to 98.2% in 2003-04. For upper primary, during the same period, GER increased from 58.6% to 62.4%.

The drop-out rate decreased from 40.7% in 2000-01 to 29.00% in 2004-05 in primary classes. During the same period, the drop-out rate decreased from 53.7% to 50.8% in upper primary, and 68.6% to 61.9% in secondary. The decrease in drop-out rates at all levels implies an improvement in retention rates.

17.2.3 Analysis of Disparities in Universal Basic Education in India and Remaining Challenges

The GPI and the percentage of girls' enrolment in primary and upper primary, computed for the period 2000-01 to 2003-04, reveal that there was consistent improvement in the average for both indicators. The GPI increased from 0.80 in 2000-01 to 0.93 in 2003-04.

There was no significant change in the share of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes' enrolment in the total enrolment at elementary level from 2000-01 to 2003-04. However, the participation of girls increased in both the social groups and the drop-out rate decreased during the period for both scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. The scheduled caste drop-out rate at primary level decreased from 45.2% to 34.2% while for scheduled tribes the decline was from 52.3% to 42.3%. However, the drop-out rate for both groups remained significantly higher than the national average.

About 1.62 million children with disabilities were enrolled in elementary classes across the country in 2005-06, of which 1.24 million were in primary and 380,000 in upper primary classes. Children with disabilities made up 0.99% of the primary enrolment and 0.87% of the total enrolment in upper primary. The GPI for children with disabilities was as low as 0.71 in primary and 0.67 in upper primary.

It was reported that the number of out-of-school children came down dramatically to 9.5 million by November 2005 from 24.9 million in March 2003. There are two specific schemes, the EGS and AIE, which support diversified strategies for out-of-school children.

Under the EGS, educational facilities are set up in habitations that do not have a primary school within a distance of one kilometre. Any habitation having 25 out-of-school children in the 6-14 age group (15 in the case of hilly or desert areas and tribal hamlets) is eligible to have an EGS centre. The EGS is a temporary facility until a primary school replaces it within two years. The formal curriculum is taught in EGS centres and all enrolled children are provided free textbooks and a mid-day meal.

Under the AIE, flexible strategies are being implemented for the education of children who cannot be directly enrolled in a school or EGS centre. The strategies include residential and non-residential bridge courses, back to school camps, seasonal hostels, drop-in centres and other alternative schools. AIE has been effective in providing education to the older age group (11-14 years), never enrolled or drop-out children, children who migrate seasonally with their families, street children and other deprived urban children, working children and other vulnerable children in difficult circumstances. In 2005-06, over three million children benefited from the AIE facilities of SSA. For 2006-07, the total number of children targeted for coverage under AIE reached 5.6 million.

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme was originally launched as a centrally sponsored programme in 1995 to support the universalization of primary education and to improve the nutritional status of children at the primary stage. In light of directives of the Supreme Court and policy pronouncements contained in the National Common Minimum Programme of the Government, the programme was revised in 2004 to ensure provision of a cooked mid-day meal for children studying at primary level in government, local body and government-aided schools as well as for children studying in EGS and AIE centres. To achieve this, an important component of assistance to states towards cooking costs was introduced. The scheme reached out to 120 million children enrolled in nearly a million schools/EGS centres. Evaluation studies conducted by independent agencies in 2005 reported that the programme is functioning and has helped in the daily attendance and enrolment of children, particularly girls. Improvement in retention, learning ability and achievement were also reported.

17.3 Goal Three: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning in India

17.3.1 Background and Development of Life Skills and Non-Formal Education in India

According to the National Census conducted in 2001, there were 225 million adolescents, comprising nearly one-fifth (22%) of the total population of India. Of the total adolescent population, almost 47% are female and 53% are male. Nearly one out of three adolescents aged 15-19 years is working, 21% as main workers and 12% as marginal workers. Economic compulsion forces the youth to participate in the work force resulting in high drop-out rates from education. Early marriage is common. The mean age at marriage for males is 22.6 years but for females it is only 18 years. Female mortality rates are higher compared to males of the 15-24 years age group. The pervasiveness of discrimination, lower nutritional status, early marriage and complications during pregnancy and childbirth among adolescents contribute to female mortality.

There are a number of policies formulated by the central government which have a bearing on adolescents' education. However, none of the policies refer to holistic development of adolescents and the role of education in this context. In the National Policy on Education (1986/92), the statements on upper primary and secondary education have obvious reference to adolescents. More specific reference is made in the context of NFE, population education and education for women's equality. The National Youth Policy (2001) recommends the introduction of sports and physical education as compulsory subjects in the school curriculum. The National Sports Policy (2003) covers the age range of 13-35. It refers to gender, justice and the empowerment of youth (including adolescents) through education. It also focuses on education's role in the prevention of HIV/AIDS. The National Charter for Children (2003) calls for the provision of education and skills for children and adolescents with special attention to the education of girls to improve their health and nutrition status. The National Population Policy (2000) refers to the special learning needs of adolescents and to population education.

17.3.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in India

The literacy levels of youth are fairly high especially in urban areas. About 90% of the 15-19 age group in urban areas are literate. In rural areas, the literacy rate of this group is 75%. Overall, adolescents from rural areas and girls are disadvantaged in education. The male-female differences increase with each level of education.

The Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan (NYKS) is an autonomous organization under the Department of Youth Affairs and Sports. It is the largest grassroots level organization in the Asia-Pacific region, catering to the development needs of more than 8 million non-student rural youth in the age group of 15-35 years, enrolled through about 253,000 village-based youth clubs across 500 districts of the country.The fields in which NYKS carries out its operations for the development of rural youth mainly relate to education, training, employment promotion, income generation, self-employment, enterprise creation and financial assistance. NYKS also undertakes various awareness programmes for the overall development of the rural community.

A number of activities were undertaken in 2006-07. A total of 3,060 skill upgradation programmes were organized with the participation of 79,922 youth (19,951 male; 59,971 female), 182 trainings in self-employment projects were organized involving 5,893 youth (3,469 male; 2,424 female) and 208 self-help groups development training programmes were organized with the participation of 10,275 youth (4,576 male; 5,699 female).

The NIOS provides opportunities for continuing education to interested learners through its 2,200 accredited academic and vocational institutions across the country. Initiated as a project in 1979 by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), open schooling has now taken shape as an independent system of education in India. The NIOS, with approximately 1.4 million learners on roll, has emerged as the largest open schooling organization in the world. The NIOS offers courses of studies through an open and distance learning mode. Courses of study include: an open basic education programme for children (up to 14 years), adolescents and adults at levels that are equivalent to Classes 3, 5 and 8 of the formal school system; a secondary education course; a senior secondary education course; vocational educational courses; and life enrichment programmes.

A section of adolescents and youth have become involved in drugs and alcohol. It is reported that 24% of the drug users are in the age group of 12-18 years. Incidences of alcoholism, drug addiction and crime amongst adolescents have seen a sharp rise in the last few years. Of those involved, boys outnumber girls and most of them are illiterate or have studied up to primary stage (41% primary, 20% illiterate), and a large number are school drop-outs. According to the National Aids Control Organization (NACO), 31.8% of AIDS cases in India between 1986 to 2006 were found to be in the 15-29 age group.

A number of projects focusing on HIV/AIDS and drug prevention are being undertaken. NACO has a number of nationwide targets, including: to achieve an awareness level of not less than 90% among youth; to train at least 600 NGOs in the country on conducting target intervention programmes among high risk groups; and to cover all the country targeting students in Class 9 and Classes 11 through school education programmes.

17.3.3 Analysis of Disparities in Life Skills in India and Remaining Challenges

Two organizations, NYKS and NIOS, with country-wide networks, have been primarily catering to the educational needs of adolescents and youth, particularly those outside the formal system of education. While NYKS has its focus on occupational skill development as part of rural development, NIOS is offering both general and vocational courses to the target group mainly in urban and semi-urban centres.

At this point, it is not known what proportion of the youth who have benefited from these and other programmes. This is an area that requires both assessment of efforts to date and the formulation of comprehensive strategies to meet the needs of adolescents and youth.

17.4 Goal Four: Literacy in India

17.4.1 Background and Development of Literacy Acquisition in India

The goal of the NLM is to attain full literacy (that is, a sustainable threshold level of 80% by 2012). NLM envisages that a focus on imparting of functional literacy to nonliterates in the age group 15-35 would help achieve this goal. NLM seeks to bring nonliterates to a level of self-reliance in the three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic. It also provides for skills development to improve their economic status and well-being. It promotes values of national integration, conservation of the environment, women's equality and observance of small family norms. And finally, it facilitates their participation in the development process. Functional literacy, encompassing all of the above, is the overall goal of NLM. A special programme has been launched targeting districts with low female literacy rates. It is also proposed to provide access to life skills programmes for neo-literates.

Eradication of illiteracy has been one of the major national concerns since Independence. The beginning of India's widely acknowledged literacy movement, which encompassed adult literacy and continuing education in the 1990s can be traced to the National Policy on Education adopted

in 1986 and its Programme of Action (POA) revised in 1992, which accorded qualified priority for literacy. The NPE urged that "the whole nation must pledge itself to eradication of illiteracy, particularly in the 15-35 age group." The POA proposed for the eradication of illiteracy to be treated with a sense of urgency and made a "mission". The NLM was set up in 1988 to impart functional literacy to 80 million adult illiterates by 1995, which was subsequently revised to cover 100 million. After trying out different models, the NLM adopted a modified mass campaign approach known as the TLC as the dominant strategy for adult literacy.

The 2001 Census revealed that there were 304 million illiterates in the country, of which 44 million were in the 7-14 age group and the remaining in the 15+ age group. The target for literacy has been re-set to 85% under the 11th FYP. This would require a 15 percentage point increase, which, if achieved, would represent the highest increase in any decade. To achieve this target, focused attention will be given to the target age group of 15-35. The target for the basic literacy programme for the 15-35 age group is 50 million. Besides basic literacy, 120 million neo-literates are targeted for participation in LEAP. The overall target population for adult education in the Eleventh FYP is 170 million.

17.4.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in India

The efforts made by the TLC and post-literacy programmes to eradicate illiteracy yielded commendable results, as reflected in the 2001 Census, with an increase in literacy by 12.6 percentage points from 52.2% in 1991 to 64.8% in 2001, with male literacy at 75.3% and female literacy at 53.7% in 2001. The increase in the literacy rate was the highest for any decade. The urban-rural literacy differential, while remaining significant, decreased during the period. All states registered an increase in literacy rates and male literacy rates are above 60% in all States and UTs except Bihar (59.7%). The literacy rates for women rose at a much higher rate than male literacy rates. The increase in literacy rates for the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes was even greater. The social impact of literacy efforts translated into better health awareness, greater empowerment and greater participation in panchayat elections.

The Tenth FYP recognized that without giving a specific thrust to improve female literacy rates, particularly in States with very low rates in general and large disparities between male and female rates, it would be impossible to bring about a dramatic improvement in the female literacy rate in the country and eliminate the gender disparity. For this reason, a number of innovative programmes were undertaken to provide literacy for women in disadvantaged areas.

A special project was launched to raise the female literacy rate of eight districts of Uttar Pradesh by covering 2.5 million illiterate women in the 15-35 age group. A female literacy programme in Bihar was implemented in 13 districts with low female literacy rates to cover 2.4 million women learners in the 15-35 age group. Nine districts in Orissa were covered under the Special Project for Accelerated Female Literacy which targeted 1.04 million non-literate women in the 15-35 age group. A special female literacy programme was implemented in five districts with low female literacy rates of Jharkhand. Around 500,000 women illiterates in the 15-35 age group were covered under the programme.

17.4.3 Analysis of Disparities in Literacy in India and Remaining Challenges

The national literacy rate for males in 2001 was more than 20 percentage points higher than the female rate. Urban rates for both male and female are considerably higher than national female literacy rates. Less than half of rural females are literate. The extent of the disparities can be illustrated by comparing the urban male rate of 79.9% with the rural female rate of 46.1%, a difference of 33.8 percentage points. A comparison of the female literacy rates of some of the most deprived areas with the urban male rates would reveal an even more stark disparity. Although the gap between the educationally advanced and disadvantaged states has been narrowing over the years, inter-

state and intra-state disparities still continue. Gender and geographical disparities in literacy persist and bridging these disparities is envisaged to be the prime focus of NLM in the Eleventh FYP. In addition to focusing on female literacy, the NLM will also concentrate on a number of special focus areas and groups.

The literacy map of the country shows a wide variation. The west coast, southern peninsula and north-eastern states like Mizoram are areas of high literacy. The main problem of illiteracy is in low literacy districts of the northern belt of the country, especially in the states of Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh which have almost 50% of India's non-literates. Various approaches have to be adopted depending on the socio-economic context. Literacy programmes have to be integrated with other development programmes being implemented in that area. In the case of migrant communities, a separate strategy of keeping the volunteer with the community may be adopted.

The literacy rate among tribal groups is 47.1%, which is the lowest compared to any other section of the population. During the implementation of the TLCs in some of the districts, concerted efforts were made to improve literacy among tribals. Around 13% of learners in TLCs have been from scheduled tribe communities.

India's Muslim population is the second largest in the world, next only to Indonesia. The literacy rate for Muslims is lower than the national average in almost all big states where the Muslim population is large, including Bihar (42%), Jammu and Kashmir (47.3%), Uttar Pradesh (47.8%), Assam (48.4%), Haryana (40%), Uttaranchal (51.1%), Jharkhand (55.6%), Rajasthan (56.6%) and West Bengal (57.5%).

Female literacy rates among Muslims are lower than the female literacy rates of all other religious communities in 21 States/UTs of India. Female literacy rates of Muslims are particularly low in the states of Haryana (21.5%), Bihar (31.5%), Nagaland (33.3%), Jammu and Kashmir (34.9%), Meghalaya (35.2%), Assam (40.2%), Uttaranchal (40.3%), Manipur (41.6%), Jharkhand (42.7%) and Punjab (43.4%). It was proposed to give these states special focus in the Eleventh FYP.

Although the TLCs took the form of a mass movement and were extended throughout the country, in many cases, the campaigns languished due to a number of reasons including natural calamities, lack of political will and frequent transfers of the District Collectors. Despite the completion of the campaign, large numbers of illiterates remained unreached. The Projects for Residual Illiteracy (PRIs) was launched in these areas after the conclusion of TLCs to cover the remaining illiterates. PRIs have so far been taken up in 29 districts of Rajasthan, eight districts of Andhra Pradesh, four districts of Bihar, three districts of Jharkhand, nine districts of Madhya Pradesh, 14 districts of Karnataka, 13 districts of Uttar Pradesh and four districts of West Bengal.

17.5 Goal Five: Gender Equality in Education in India

17.5.1 Background and Development of Gender Parity and Equality in India

The persistent low educational participation of girls had, until recently, adversely impacted on women's empowerment in India. Such educational disadvantage of a defined segment of population has not only denied them individual growth and development, it has slowed down the pace of national development and resulted in skewed attainment of development indicators.

This is despite early recognition of the value and need for female education. In fact, much before international commitment to girls' education was expressed as a follow-up of the EFA goals, the policy environment in India had recognized the necessity of educating girls if universal elementary education were to be achieved. This was evident from the pro-girls/women constitutional stance that empowered the State to make special provisions for women and children notwithstanding the fundamental obligation of non-discrimination on the basis of sex. This provision has enabled

the State to draw up special policies and programmes to benefit girls and women to overcome their backwardness and address gender differences.

The National Policy on Education 1986 articulated the intent to "lay special emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunity by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far." It was a turning point in Indian education as it brought the issue of women's equality to centre stage in all discourses on education and development. The policy asserted: "Education will be used as an agent of basic change in the status of women. In order to neutralize the accumulated distortions of the past, there will be a well-conceived edge in favour of women... This will be an act of faith and social engineering... The removal of women's illiteracy and obstacles inhibiting their access to, and retention in elementary education will receive overriding priority, through provision of special support services setting time targets and effective monitoring..." It was acknowledged that achieving universal elementary education would be impossible without concerted efforts to reach the girl child. Since the mid-1980s, all basic education programmes have been designed to incorporate these policy perspectives and recommendations.

The national commitment to girls' education gained momentum through several initiatives in the late 1980s and early 1990s. The first generation basic education programmes all emphasized the focus on girls' education. This intent was taken to scale through the DPEP which made the female literacy rate a selection criterion for project districts and set goals of reducing gender disparities in enrolment, retention and learning. The clearly stated emphasis on girls' education has drawn the attention of planners, implementers and programme managers alike. Continuing in the same vein, the SSA reiterates the need to focus on girls' education to equalize educational opportunities and eliminate gender disparities.

17.5.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in India

The share of girls in total enrolment at the primary level increased from 49.8 million (43.7%) in 2000-01 to 59.9 million (46.7%) in 2003-04. In 2000-01, 17.5 million girls (comprising 40.9%) were enrolled at the upper primary level. This number rose to 21.5 million (representing 44% of the total enrolment) in 2003-04. In absolute terms, there was an increase of 10.1 million girls at the primary stage while at the upper primary level, the increase was relatively modest. The GPI for most indicators for the elementary stage showed a steady improvement. From 0.80 in 2000-01, the GPI for primary enrolment rose to 0.93 in 2003-04, indicating a progressive reduction in gender disparity.

Although gender parity for gross or net enrolments at the primary level has not been achieved, the GPIs for primary education showed improvements in all areas. However, for other indicators, such as adult literacy and youth literacy, the GPIs showed improvement but remain significantly below the target range of 0.97 to 1.03.

17.5.3 Analysis of Gender Disparities and Remaining Challenges

The primary GER of both scheduled caste girls and their scheduled tribe counterparts crossed the 100% mark in 2004-05, signifying a high level of participation. However, the girls' ratios were very low at the upper primary stage. The drop-out rate of both scheduled caste and scheduled tribe girls showed a declining trend at the primary stage, but the rate remained disturbingly high at the upper primary level. Among girls at the primary stage in general, the drop-out rate declined steadily from 41.9% in 2000-01 to 21.54% in 2005-06. The analysis makes it clear that gender disparity still persists and a relatively high proportion of girls do not complete the eight-year cycle, reflecting the weakness of the system to retain them.

A number of national and state-level initiatives targeting girls and women have been the hallmark of educational interventions for improving the educational status of girls and women. The

programmes are important particularly the poorest and the most vulnerable girls and women in the country.

Under a centrally sponsored scheme, a programme of NFE was operated from 1979-80 to 2001 for out-of-school children in the 6-14 years age group. Recognizing that large numbers of girls and working children had been left out of the ambit of education, the NFE scheme provided the flexibility, relevance of curriculum and diversity of learning activities to reach them through a decentralized management system. The scheme was implemented in 25 States/UTs in educationally disadvantaged states as well as in states with urban slums, hilly areas, deserts and/or tribal areas, with a particular emphasis on working children. Of the 241,000 NFE centres, there were 118,000 NFE centres exclusively for girls.

Based on suggestions made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee, the Planning Commission and others, the NFE scheme was revised and renamed the "Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education" programme. The scheme provides for extending access to small and un-served habitations, flexible strategies for out-of-school children, bridge courses, back-to-school camps and residential camps for out-of-school girls. A new feature is making community management of centres mandatory.

The National Programme for Education of Girls for Elementary Level (NPEGEL), launched in September 2003, is an integral but distinct component of the SSA. It provides additional provisions for enhancing the education of underprivileged and disadvantaged girls at the elementary level through community mobilization, the development of model schools in clusters, gender sensitization of teachers, the development of gender sensitive learning materials, early child care and education facilities and the provision of need-based incentives.

The KGBV, launched in July 2004, is designed to encourage greater participation of girls in education at the upper primary level. The scheme has sanctioned 2,180 residential upper primary level schools for girls belonging predominantly to scheduled castes, scheduled tribes, other disadvantaged castes and minority communities with high gender gaps and low female literacy. Three-quarters of the seats are reserved for girls from marginalized or minority communities and the remaining are available to girls below the poverty line. A total of 270 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) have been set up in blocks with a predominantly Muslim population and 583 in scheduled tribes' blocks. Up to December 2006, approximately 63,921 girls had been enrolled in 1,039 KGBV schools, of which 27.3% are from scheduled castes and 30.8% are from scheduled tribes. The scheme is part of the SSA with effect from 1 April 2007.

17.6 Goal Six: Quality of Education in India

17.6.1 Background and Development in the Provision of Quality Education in India

Several policy and programme initiatives have been taken up in recent years with a focus on the issue of quality improvement in school education. Apart from substantially enhancing allocations for the physical and academic infrastructure necessary for effective schooling, a systematic exercise has been carried out to determine basic norms for provision of physical, human and academic facilities in each school. These norms act as the guiding principles for creating additional schooling facilities for primary education.

Alongside the provision of improved facilities, policy makers have also focused their attention on the learning levels attained by children who attend schools. A national committee of experts set up by the Government in the early 1990s evolved a framework of "Minimum Levels of Learning" to be attained by every student in primary education.

The critical role of teachers in ensuring quality education has also come into sharper focus. The massive expansion of the system has influenced the quality of teachers and the support system available for guiding them in their work. One of the major policy interventions in the last decade

was to make institutional arrangements at district and sub-district levels for the in-service education of primary teachers. The emphasis is on decentralizing the training arrangements and providing guidance and support to teachers on a continuous basis.

The elementary school system in India has grown in size to an enrolment of around 200 million. The sheer magnitude poses a major challenge not only for efficient management but also for mobilizing resources needed to maintain even a reasonable level of quality. Persisting with efforts to move ahead on all fronts is seen as the most important factor. Keeping this in view, a number of programmes and schemes have been initiated by the central as well as state governments. The quality improvement component has been given high priority in all the EFA projects and is the main thrust of the SSA.

To improve the quality of education, the Government has pursued a five-fold strategy consisting of: improving the provision of infrastructure and human resources; providing improved curriculum and teaching learning materials; improving the quality of the teaching-learning process; giving attention to teacher capability building; and increasing the focus on specification and measurement of learner achievement levels.

17.6.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in India

From the 1999-00 to 2005-06 period, the number of primary schools increased from 641,695 to 772,568 and upper primary schools increased from 198,004 to 288,493. The number of teachers also increased. The Government policy is to provide at least two teachers for every primary school initially and ultimately to provide one teacher for every class or sector in primary schools. In upper primary schools, the teachers are provided on the basis of subject teaching and teaching workload. A substantial increase in the number of teachers has been registered since 1999-2000. At the primary stage, there were 1.92 million teachers in 1999-00, which increased to 2.18 million in 2005-06. At the upper primary level, the number increased from 1.3 million to 1.67 million over the same period.

Despite the increase in the number of teachers, the PTR at the primary level increased from 43:1 in 1999-00 to 46:1 in 2005-06. At the upper primary level, there was a slight decrease during the same period from 38:1 to 35:1. The average pupil-class ratio at the primary level improved from 48 per class in 2002-03 to 41 per class in 2005-06, and at the upper primary level it decreased during the same period from 36 to 33 per class.

Almost all the teachers at the upper primary stage have the required qualification. At the primary level, 4% of male teachers and 4.75% of female teachers lack the minimum qualification (secondary passed). A sizeable proportion of primary school teachers in Mizoram, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Assam and Tripura are not academically qualified. The proportion of teachers having pre-service training increased from 66% in 2003-04 to 73% in 2005-06 at primary level. The proportion of trained upper primary teachers during the same period increased from 69% to 76%.

A new National Curriculum Framework (2005) has been developed through an extensive consultation process. The new framework exposes teachers to important issues such as the aims of education, how children construct knowledge, how children's learning can be best facilitated through suitable activities and the role of teachers in school and society. Subject-specific learning improvement programmes based on innovative pedagogical practices, many under the leadership of teachers, are in place across the country. For their part, schools are becoming more child-friendly and teachers are increasingly aware of the efficacy of child-centred, activity-based pedagogy.

The SSA has made a provision for 20 days of annual training for each teacher and all states have utilized this provision. Overall, across the states 2,347,017 teachers out of a total of 3,053,285 (77%) have received training. This large coverage is certainly an achievement. The training modules are in all cases developed at the state level. The training content reflects a wide range but is largely

focused on subject-specific training and pedagogical aspects. A few innovative themes include life skills development, road safety and reading promotion activities.

17.6.3 Analysis of Disparities in Quality in India and Remaining Challenges

Despite all the efforts, there are still inter-state and intra-state disparities in terms of quality inputs and outputs across the system. Compared to the national average of 40:1, in India 9 out of 35 States and UTs have PTRs above 40:1 in primary schools. The highest PTRs in primary schools are observed in Bihar (62:1), Uttar Pradesh (60:1), Jharkhand (48:1) and West Bengal (48:1). The high PTRs are also indirectly reflected when the pupil-class ratio is analyzed. Compared to the national average of 41, the primary pupil-class ratio is extremely high in Bihar (91) and Jharkhand (69).

As a part of the design of the SSA, achievement surveys are conducted for Classes 3, 5 and 7/8 at three yearly intervals to yield the baseline, mid-term and terminal profiles. To date, the final results of the Class 5 baseline survey (of 2002) and the provisional findings for Class 3 and Class 7/8 from surveys of 2004 are available. The sample survey on learning achievement at the end of Class 5 reveals that the mean achievement of students in language, mathematics and environmental studies (EVS) at the national level is 58.6%, 46.5% and 50.3%, respectively. The Class 3 survey has found the mean learning achievement in mathematics and language to be 58.3% and 63.1%, respectively. Mean achievement levels for Class 7 in mathematics, language, science and social science are 30%, 53%, 36% and 33%, respectively. Class 8 students have scored on average 38% in mathematics, 52% in language, 41% in science, and 45% in social science.

The surveys reveal wide variations across and within states in terms of achievement. For Class 5, which marks the end of the primary cycle, of the 30 participating States and UTs, the mean achievement averages were below the national average in 17 States in mathematics, in 15 States in language and in 17 States in environmental science. For Class 8, which marks the end of the elementary cycle, of the 17 participating States, achievement averages were below the national average in 10 States in mathematics, in 11 States in language, in 10 States in science and in 11 States in social science.

In 2005, a set of 14 monitoring formats and three analytical sheets were finalized for use nationally. Teams were trained in the field of monitoring quality dimensions, issues in quality and the kind of information to be collected and the analysis required. Follow-up workshops at state and district level were also organized.

A total of 18 states have sent the information on the state level formats for 2006 for one quarter each. Implementation of this monitoring exercise has helped the states to identify the issues which they need to focus on in order to improve quality in elementary education. A number of states could relate poor learner achievement in select subjects with problems in classroom transactions. This is helping the states to plan in a focused manner and to improve their training programmes. This exercise has empowered the states to focus on quality dimensions as per their specific needs and requirements.

17.7 Overall Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Raising public expenditure on education to a level of 6% of GDP has been a national commitment of India for nearly 40 years. At present, public spending on education is about 3.7% of GDP. The resource generating capacity of the Government has received a boost as a result of high growth rates in the Tenth FYP, and the resulting exuberance should offer the right opportunity to meet this long pending commitment of increasing expenditure on education.

The objectives of the National Education Policy have been addressed during the 10th FYP mainly through the SSA, the Mid-Day Meal Scheme, teacher education schemes, and programmes under the NLM. As a result, most of the indicators have shown a positive trend. There has been a reduction

in the number of out-of-school children, a decrease in gender and social disparities and a decline in drop-out rates. The number of teachers and the number of schools have increased substantially.

The urgent challenges are bringing the 6%-7% children of the 'hard-to-reach' category into the fold of education, addressing issues pertaining to improving quality, bridging social gaps and reducing inter-state, inter-district and inter-block disparities. To make the goal of universalization of elementary education meaningful, inclusive education, which is suitable for all children, including those with special needs, is a significant component under SSA. These are the challenges which need to be addressed in the Eleventh FYP. Special emphasis needs to be put towards the education of girls to achieve gender parity and equality, with a focus on inclusion and quality.

18. Maldives

The Republic of Maldives is a small island nation. Of its 1,190 islands, 196 islands are populated, 88 are resort islands and 34 have been developed as industrial islands. The sea forms over 99% of the Maldives and only 0.33% is land. The islands of the Maldives are small, and can be traversed by foot in 10 minutes. Currently, 72 islands hold a population of less than 500, 39% of the islands have a population of 500 to 1,000 and only 2% have a population over 5,000. The highly scattered nature of the population poses many challenges for the provision of basic services with a particular impact on the quality of education provision.

According to the March 2006 Census, the population of the Maldives is about 300,000. Nearly one third of the population live in the capital Malé. Currently, just over one third of the population is of school age. By 2015, it is projected that this will go down to a quarter. The Maldives has been an independent state for most of its history. The Portuguese occupied the Maldives for 15 years in the sixteenth century. The Maldives became a British protectorate in 1887 and remained so until independence on 26 July 1965. The Maldives was converted to Islam in 1153 A.D. Dhivehi, the language of the Maldives, is of Indic origin, and the people are of different ethnicities. The script for Dhivehi is known as Thaana, which is written from right to left like the Arabic letters. English is treated as a second language and as the medium of instruction in the schools.

During the past two decades, development of the tourism and fisheries sectors, favourable external conditions, large inflows of external aid, and generally prudent economic management contributed to a steady rise in GDP of 7% per annum. Two decades of strong growth has led to some of the best economic, social and health indicators in South Asia. The average per capita income is $2,600.

Ranked 100th on the HDI in 2005, the Maldives will graduate from the LDC status to the middle-income group in 2008. The Maldives has the second highest rank (behind Sri Lanka) in South Asia on the Gender-related Development Index (GDI).

18.1 Goal One: Early Childhood Care and Education in the Maldives

18.1.1 Background and Development of ECCE in the Maldives

Pre-primary education is an integral part of the Government's overall education policy and strategy. The EFA goal of expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and development (ECCD) was included in the Fifth and Sixth National Development Plans, the Education Sector Master Plan (1995 – 2005), and has a clear focus in the Seventh National Development Plan which includes a specific goal to maintain the net enrolment in ECCD at over 85%.

Maldivians attach great importance to starting the education of their children at an early age. Even prior to the introduction of modern pre-schools, the traditional edhuruge (a home-based education system provided by respected community members) discharged the function of developing basic

literacy, numeracy, religious knowledge and awareness in children. Today, modern pre-schools co-exist with the edhuruge in most island communities, and together they provide the first organized learning opportunities for over 89% of pre-school aged children.

The ECCD Programme began as a UNICEF-funded project in 1989 at the Non-Formal Education Centre (NFEC). At its conception, the main focus was to train atoll-based ECCE teachers and produce appropriate materials. It is now under the Early Childhood Care and Development Unit (ECDU). The responsibilities of the ECDU are to strengthen pre-school education in the Maldives, to advocate and promote ECCD best practices and key messages, to develop appropriate learning materials, to build the capacity of pre-school teachers and managers and to promote community based ECCD activities.

The overall strategy is to strengthen and expand ECCD, enhance enrolment and encourage and sustain community initiatives and participation. The MOE provides assistance for community initiatives and also promotes alternative non-formal ECCD programmes. Raising public awareness of how to nurture and care for the physical, developmental and learning needs of infants and toddlers is integral to the efforts to expand ECCD programmes. In 2001-03, a national campaign on ECCD was launched to raise parental awareness and understanding of ECCD needs and ways of stimulating the healthy development of infants and toddlers. Seed funding for community organizations and private parties to initiate ECCD programmes is part of the plan to identify and target assistance to communities that are least served by ECCD programmes. Curricular guidelines and resources have been developed and provided free to pre-schools and childcare centres.

18.1.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in the Maldives

There has been a steady increase in enrolment in pre-primary education. In 1997, only 45% of the atoll population had access to a nursery school, but by 2005 the proportion had increased to 79%. In 2006, there were 176 pre-schools. Special emphasis has been given to start pre-schools on islands where there are none. Through community initiatives nine pre-schools were established in 2005-06. The EFA goal of expansion of ECCD has been almost fully realized as all but 12 of the inhabited islands have a modern pre-school.

Community and privately run pre-schools cater to the majority of children enrolled at the pre-primary level. In 2005, there were 13,505 children (6,611 girls and 6,894 boys) enrolled at the pre-primary level. Of these, 23% of the pre-schoolers were enrolled in Malé. The role of the community and the private sector is critical in ensuring provision of quality ECCD. The PTR was a healthy 26:1.

As of March 2006, only 282 of the 614 pre-primary school teachers (46%) were trained. Of the 332 untrained teachers, 249 (75%) were located in the atolls and 83 in Malé. Media for and about children under 5 is a major focus in the Maldives. Materials have been developed exclusively for advocacy and awareness raising. Materials include books, leaflets and posters for children and caregivers.

18.1.3 Analysis of Disparities in ECCE in the Maldives and Remaining Challenges

Taking the learning and experience from model-ECCD centres to scale is a major challenge in terms of the physical and human resources required. Many of the pre-schools on the islands run by communities do not have the required facilities and trained staff to cater to the needs of pre-school aged children. Teacher training will have to be a priority area if the quality issues in ECCD are to be addressed, especially on the isolated atolls. Some basic protocols for running a pre-primary centre, whether it be the traditional edhuruges run by the local communities or privately managed schools, need to be developed to ensure some degree of uniform quality across the board. This would be one way of ensuring that disadvantaged children also get the benefit of quality pre-primary education.

The strategic focus on strengthening pre-primary education needs to be matched with assessing the impact of the intensive advocacy done at the community level on community attitudes and practice. It is recognized that pre-primary education is but one part of wider ECCD programmes and that there is still the need for change at the parental, family and community levels. Such assessments are necessary to inform future community level work.

18.2 Goal Two: Universal Primary/Basic Education in the Maldives

18.2.1 Background and Expansion of Universal Basic Education in the Maldives

With the goal of ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender, ability and location, have access to basic education, the Maldives by 1998, had already achieved universal primary enrolment. The Maldives has moved ahead of other countries in the region by extending the concept of basic education beyond the elementary level to 10 years of schooling, thereby making a national commitment to ensuring that every child would have this opportunity. This has created challenges of teacher availability and competence, of provision of quality education and above all of learning achievements, all of which are the key challenges being addressed in the Maldives currently.

18.2.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in the Maldives

In the past two decades, there has been considerable progress in creating access to educational opportunities at all levels. Since 2000, all children in the Maldives have had access to the first seven years of formal schooling, a major achievement for a country whose students are scattered over 196 inhabited islands. By 2004, there were 225 schools with primary classes, 117 schools with lower secondary classes, and 15 schools with higher secondary classes. As part of strengthening and improving educational quality, 135 community schools were converted into government schools in 2005. By 2007, secondary schools were available in atoll capitals and on the islands with larger populations. Only 29 islands do not have access to secondary schooling.

As illustrated in Table 8, the primary GER rose from 116.2% in 2000 to 123% in 2005. In 2005, the GER was 119.8% for girls and 126% for boys with a GPI of 0.95. Table 9 shows that primary NER increased from 98% in 2000 to 100% in 2005, and the GPI increased from 0.98 to 1.0.

Table 8: Gross Enrolment Ratio, by Level (%), 1997-2005, Maldives

Level	1997			2000			2005		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Primary	127.5	125.5	129.6	116.2	112.9	119.5	123.0	119.8	126.0
Lower Secondary	46.2	47.3	45.0	79.4	84.0	74.9	118.0	126.1	110.4
Higher Secondary	3.3	na	na	4.5	na	na	11.5	11.1	11.9

Source: Republic of Maldives, School Statistics, 2005, Ministry of Education.

Table 9: Net Enrolment Rate by Level (%), 1997-2005, Maldives

Level	1997			2000			2005		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
Primary	99.5	99.5	99.5	98.0	97.1	98.8	100.0	100.0	100.0
Lower Secondary	18.9	21.0	16.8	36.6	39.7	33.7	64.6	70.7	58.8
Higher Secondary	1.1	…	…	1.3	…	…	7.2	7.8	6.7

Source: Republic of Maldives, School Statistics, 2005, Ministry of Education.
Note: "…" indicates no data available.

The GER for lower secondary increased from 79.4% in 2000 to 118% in 2005, and the NER increased from 36.6% to 64.6% during the same period. In 2005, the GPI was 1.14 for GER and 1.20 for NER. However, despite increases at the lower secondary level in the last five years, the GER and NER are drastically lower for higher secondary. The GER for higher secondary increased from 4.5% in 2000 to 11.5% in 2005, and during the same period the NER rose from only 1.3% to 7.2%. In 2005, the GPI in higher secondary for GER was 0.93 and 1.16 for NER.

There was an overall improvement of 27 percentage points in the transition rates from primary to secondary between 1999-2000 and 2004-05 with a 31-point improvement in girls' transition rates compared to a 23-point increase for boys. The transition rate for girls in 2005 was 86% compared to 80% for boys with a GPI of 1.08. The lower transition rates for boys is part of a general trend of boys dropping out in search of livelihoods at a much earlier age or as a result of apathy stemming from poor performance as well as an uncertainty as to the relevance of formal education. This is a trend that needs to be further analyzed and the root causes addressed.

18.2.3 Analysis of Disparities in Universal Basic Education in the Maldives and Remaining Challenges

The Maldives is committed to inclusive education to encompass all children, and as part of this commitment the inclusion of children with special needs has been brought to the fore through the formulation of a national policy on disability, currently at draft stage. A road map has been formulated to achieve the national policy to increase and expand opportunities for special education. There is a system established to coordinate among the authorities to monitor the implementation of activities outlined in the road map for children with disabilities. At each step of implementation, the quality of service is to be measured through feedback from those involved and adjustments made accordingly. From 2001 to 2005, of the 310 children with disabilities who were enrolled for special classes, only six children were enrolled in the atolls. Quite clearly, children in the atolls have almost no access to any kind of special classes and this is an area that needs attention in the future.

Overall, the major challenge in the Maldives' basic education sector is ensuring access and enhancing transition to the higher secondary level. The concern is how to create such access on islands that are sparsely populated making the establishment of higher secondary schools unfeasible. Several alternatives are under consideration such as the provision of residential schooling facilities in the atoll capitals and the provision of incentives to encourage parents to send their children to such residential facilities. This is a slow process as parents and communities have to be convinced that indeed this is a viable and desirable alternative.

18.3 Goal Three: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning in the Maldives

18.3.1 Background and Development of Life Skills and Non-Formal Education in the Maldives

There is a strong commitment to the goal of ensuring that young people's learning needs are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. Increasing access to 10 years of formal schooling is seen as a strategic step in meeting the learning needs of young people. It is recognized that 10 years of schooling is necessary to develop the technological literacy and know-how and personal attributes to thrive in an age of knowledge and technology.

A major goal is to provide the necessary infrastructure to raise the NER in secondary schooling (Grades 8-10) from 36% to 80% by 2010. A critical strategy to achieve the goal is to provide a 'diversified' secondary curriculum that is student-centred, culturally relevant and that provides diverse learning opportunities. Such a curriculum should include vocational and technical training and employment-based training. An integral and important element is providing meaningful life skills education. There is also a plan to encourage the private sector to offer college level (diploma and certificate level) training programmes to meet the learning needs of young people.

18.3.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in the Maldives

There is a strong possibility that the Maldives will meet its target of 80% NER in secondary education by 2010 as enrolment in lower secondary has been steadily rising from about one-third of the age group in 2000 to nearly two-thirds in 2005 (64.6%). There has also been a significant improvement in NERs for girls. Compared to the NER in lower secondary of 70.7% for girls in 2005, the NER for boys at 58.8% is considerably lower. The proposed enriching of the curriculum through vocational skills may help to increase NERs in general and for boys in particular. While at the higher secondary level, NERs are significantly lower, it is recognized that better NERs and completion rates at the lower secondary level should have a positive impact on higher secondary level participation and completion rates.

Life skills have been introduced in schools and for young people working in different sectors. The Integrated Adolescent Sexual and Reproductive Health and Life Skills Project, which has been implemented in the Maldives for the past three years, targets adolescents in Malé and some other areas. The life skills programme aims to empower young people to make informed and healthy decisions, in the face of often confusing and conflicting information and lifestyles, and to encourage the development of the necessary skills and attitudes to cope with various aspects of one's life in the family, the school and the community in general.

Workshops for training peer educators have been held to motivate young people to undertake educational activities with their peers. Since 2003, orientation sessions were held for 566 teachers, 150 school heads and 80 senior officials of the MOE, and life skills training was imparted to 1,270 primary students, 624 secondary students, and 656 students from atoll schools. A total of 120 programmes with 15-minute segments on life skills have been telecast by Television Maldives.

The CCE offers courses including an advanced certificate in ECCD, foundation and certificate courses in the English language, distance education in the English language, certificate courses in secretarial and textbook production skills, and condensed technical and vocational courses in electrical wiring, computer hardware and dressmaking and design. Starting in 2000, the CCE started an initiative called Second Chance with the objective to conduct and coordinate classes in Malé and in the atolls, to provide counselling for students, to develop teaching-learning materials and to provide career development opportunities for students. Around 1,500 students have benefited from the various courses offered.

18.3.3 Analysis of Disparities in Life Skills in the Maldives and Remaining Challenges

With the school timetable already overloaded with academic subjects and two external examinations, the commitment to life skills education is still quite minimal at the school managerial level as well as at the policy level. As life skills sessions are held outside the normal timetable hours of the students, the facilitators find it difficult to complete the intended number of hours of life skills education. Incorporating life skills as an integral part of teacher training (both pre-service and in-service training) remains a challenge. This is a critical element as the teacher plays a key role in not only being an academic but also a social mentor for students.

18.4 Goal Four: Literacy in the Maldives

18.4.1 Background and Development of Literacy Acquisition in the Maldives

In 1990, the Maldives already had an adult literacy rate of 96% and a youth (age 15-24) literacy rate of 98.2% with GPIs of 1.0 for both. These favourable rates were maintained in 2000, with adult and youth literacy rates of 96.3% and 98.2%, respectively. The overall literacy rate (2006) for the country is 93.8%. Accordingly, the Maldives does not have a specific target for adult literacy but rather has adopted the goal of ensuring equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.

Literacy in the Maldives is defined in terms of the national language Dhivehi using the Thaana script. Considering the small size of the population and the fact that scarcely anyone outside the Maldives speaks Dhivehi, it is remarkable that the language has flourished. The uniqueness of the national language means that Maldivians also need to learn foreign languages in order to communicate with the outside world, to obtain higher education and to support the tourism industry. Generally the most useful language is English.

Progress in English language knowledge, especially among young adults, has moved at a rapid pace. In 1997, English was spoken only by around half of the young adults of the islands' population (outside Malé), but by 2004, it was spoken by more than three-quarters of them. The increase has been slower among older people, with rates going up from 10% to 20%. Progress has also been made in Malé. In 1997, almost all young adults spoke English but only 55% of older adults did, but by 2004 the proportion had risen to around 70% of the older adults.

18.4.2 Analysis of Disparities in Literacy in the Maldives and Remaining Challenges

Even though high literacy rates for both men and women have been achieved, the country faces the problem of a possible relapse of neo-literates into illiteracy. Currently there are no mechanisms in place to assess the status of literacy skills or information and knowledge levels. This would need to be done to inform any post-literacy and continuing education programmes. A tracking and database system needs to be developed to monitor out-of-school youth, the status of neo-literates' skills and the extent to which vocational skills have been useful in ensuring livelihood.

18.5 Goal Five: Gender Equality in Education in the Maldives

18.5.1 Background and Development of Gender Parity and Equality in the Maldives

In the Maldives, gender disparities are not as evident as in most other parts of South Asia. Existing laws and policies do not discriminate against women in the areas of access to health services, education and employment, but socio-cultural factors do restrict girls' and women's enjoyment of these rights. While there is no doubt that gross gender disparities are not characteristic of the Maldives, issues of women's empowerment and the qualitative realization of gender equality remain as much a concern for the Maldives as for other countries in the region.

Successive development plans have reaffirmed gender mainstreaming as a priority and have incorporated gender as a cross-cutting issue. Since the Sixth National Development Plan, a separate section on gender as a cross-cutting policy issue has been incorporated. The National Policy on Gender came into effect in April 2006. The Seventh National Development Plan 2006-2010 has incorporated all aspects of the policy including targets to eliminate gender disparity in tertiary education and to increase female participation in the labour force from 52% to 60%.

18.5.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in the Maldives

The Maldives has already achieved gender parity for most indicators for which information is available, although the GPI values are showing a trend of possible growing disadvantage against boys. GPIs of 1.0 or above were recorded for NERs of primary, lower secondary and higher secondary education, for adult and youth literacy rates and for transition rates from primary to secondary. An enabling environment is in place through the national commitment to gender equality and mainstreaming supported by strong policy commitments and institutional mechanisms to achieve the national goals.

In 2005, the proportion of female teachers at the pre-primary level was 95%, while at the primary level it was 66%. However, the proportion of female teachers at the lower secondary level was only 36% and at higher secondary it was 27%. This is indicative of the smaller number of women gaining the qualifications required to join the teaching profession at the higher levels.

18.5.3 Analysis of Gender Disparities in the Maldives and Remaining Challenges

Despite the great progress made in terms of gender parity, there are indications that work is still needed to attain full gender equality. While the GPI for higher secondary NER is 1.16, the GPI for the GER is 0.93, indicating that in terms of overall numbers, girls are under-represented at the higher secondary level but more higher secondary-school aged girls than boys are enrolled at the higher secondary level. It is also reported that the number of girls going abroad for tertiary education is lower than the number of boys. Cultural expectations regarding young women living away from home impact upon the numbers of female students studying abroad and hence female attainment of tertiary qualifications. From 2001 to 2005, 39% of undergraduate scholarships abroad, 38% of post-graduate scholarships and 22% of doctorate scholarships went to girls.

18.6 Goal Six: Quality of Education in the Maldives

18.6.1 Developments in the Provision of Quality Education in the Maldives

A major cross-cutting goal is ensuring that all children, irrespective of sex, ability and location, have access to good quality basic education. As a follow-up to the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000), the Maldives prepared a detailed plan of action that detailed the priority areas that need to be addressed if the goal of ensuring quality basic education is to be realized. Key strategies include: developing an effective mechanism to monitor student achievement across the country; conducting a five-year national programme to train teachers; developing a decentralized school supervision mechanism; strengthening in-house supervision of schools; increasing the production of relevant curriculum materials; providing adequate educational facilities in each school; completing a needs assessment of special needs students and providing in-service training for teachers to mainstream the students where possible; giving greater emphasis to schools in the least served areas of the country to ensure that students in all locations are served equally; developing a national educational management information system; and conducting a national campaign to raise awareness of student's nutritional needs, particularly on the importance of providing a good breakfast for children.

18.6.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in the Maldives

An issue of particular relevance to the Maldives is the dependence on expatriate teachers. The World Bank Third Education and Training Project, which ended in 2007, focussed on training local teachers and improving teacher competencies. There was a 6% increase in the number of national teachers from 3,326 in 1999 to 3,538 in 2005. However, the proportion of national teachers in Malé remained about the same during the project period (58%). The actual number of national secondary school teachers increased significantly from 200 local teachers in 1998 to 607 teachers in 2005, but so did the number of expatriate teachers, which increased from 500 in 1998 to 1,611 in 2005. Hence, the proportion of national teachers dropped from 69% in 1999 to 63% in 2005.

Considerable resources have been applied to the training of teachers. A total of 2,063 national teachers (1,462 females, 601 males) were trained under the project, which included obtaining a teacher qualification rather than just graduating in a subject area. In addition, about 1,335 primary and 1,885 secondary teachers were provided with in-service training. The number of untrained teachers is still high at 1,475 (967 female, 508 male).

By 2005, the proportion of teachers trained at each level of the system was 41% of pre-primary, 64% of primary, 85% of lower secondary and 88% of higher secondary teachers. It is interesting to note that the likelihood of having a trained teacher increases as students progress to higher levels in the system. Compared to 12% of higher secondary teachers, over one-third of primary teachers are untrained.

At the primary level, based on results from the national assessment of 2003, learning achievement levels are mixed. In mathematics, for Grades 4 and 7, results were acceptable, but the results were lower than expected in English. This was the first assessment using competencies, and teachers and students alike were still adjusting to this new policy. No comparable information from an earlier date is available to analyze trends.

Much progress has been made to increase the number of secondary school students taking and passing the national certificate examinations at Grades 10 and 12. The total number of students passing the O-level (Grade 10) and A-level (Grade 12) examinations substantially increased from 1999 to 2005.

To improve the quality of education, 20 Teacher Resource Centres (TRCs) have been established in 20 atolls. The objective is to decentralize professional development, materials production and curriculum development through empowerment, ownership and participation by all. As the TRCs will be locally staffed and will provide necessary in-service training and additional contents upgrading for locally recruited teachers within the atolls, the establishment of child friendly learning environments in island schools should be both feasible and sustainable. It is envisaged that community participation in establishing both the TRCs and child friendly learning environments will ensure a degree of ownership and thus support sustainability.

18.6.3 Analysis of Disparities in Quality in the Maldives and Remaining Challenges

The gap in the quality of education between the capital Malé and the rest of the country is considerable, and inter- and intra-atoll quality gaps have also emerged. Major efforts have been put towards increasing educational opportunities outside Malé at all levels, particularly for secondary students. As a result of facilities expansion in the atolls, more opportunities have become available to sit the O-level and A-level examinations in locations other than Malé. In 1999, O-level examinations were available in Malé (1,197 students) and across 17 atolls (821 students), and A-level examinations were only available in Malé (198 students). By 2005, O-level examinations were available in Malé (2,715 students) and across 21 atolls (4,951 students), and A-level examinations were available in Malé (709) as well as three of the atolls (122 students). While all these gains are impressive, the percentage of students passing the O-level examinations dropped from 25% in 1999 to 20.8% in

2005, while the A-level results dropped from 44.4% to 39.4% over the same period. The exception was the A-level results of girls, which showed an increase of 23 percentage points over the period from 1999 to 2005.

With the low O-level and A-level pass rates, most students are left without a relevant preparatory educational qualification under the current system. This creates a particular disadvantage for poorer students. To rectify this situation, the Maldives is considering offering a national certification examination for those students who do not qualify in the Cambridge O-level and A-level exams.

It is encouraging to see that there is a commitment to improving quality in education. Even with the increase in the student population, the standards have not dropped but rather are improving. The number of top achievers is on the rise. The picture is promising and with the dedication and hard work of all concerned, the quality of Maldivian education should improve considerably in the next five years.

18.7 Overall Conclusions and Policy Recommendations in the Maldives

It is recognized that a major challenge is ensuring teacher competency and building capacity in a sustained manner. Planning and universal training coverage of teachers at all levels will be key to ensuring quality education. Supervision and monitoring have been identified as another dimension for ensuring quality. The setting up of the Educational Supervision and Quality Improvement (ESQI) Section as a separate unit is a positive development for strengthening school supervision and learning assessment processes. Coordination between the ESQI section and EDC will need to be strengthened to ensure that the feedback from supervision and assessment feed into teacher training and capacity building.

Given the automatic promotion system, ensuring and assessing learning achievement is a challenge. The O-level and A-level exam results indicate that performance and achievement levels are less than satisfactory. Having a strong continuous assessment system in place is imperative. This implies that teacher competencies in the area of continuous assessment should receive top priority.

Scaling up quality interventions for ECCD will require a systematic training programme that should include developing an understanding and perspective on ECCD coupled with pedagogic inputs for pre-primary education. This should be a priority area as there are a large number of untrained ECCD teachers. ECCD interventions in the atolls need to be strengthened if the larger goals of equity and reaching disadvantaged children are to be fully realized.

Special education practices and strategies for inclusion are in an infancy stage. There is a need to set up a framework to monitor special education initiatives both in Malé as well as in the atolls. A resource support mechanism is necessary to sustain and nurture this initiative in order for it to be embedded within the education system.

Given the demographic profile of the Maldives, the strengthening of life skills initiatives, especially for young adults, needs to be given top priority. An effective life skills programme is needed as the curriculum does not currently include these skills and the teaching methods do not promote their acquisition. Life skills packages should be adjusted for the island environment. More teachers should be trained in life skills to facilitate a positive environment for the students and to produce a positive impact.

With the expansion of the secondary school sector, there is an urgent need to revisit the secondary school curriculum as well as teacher training in order to meet the changing requirements of the Maldives and to include a strong and viable vocational education component for children who may not pursue higher education. Similarly, training of secondary school teachers needs to be recast taking into account the poor performance of students at O-level and A-level exams.

Since the Maldives is working to achieve self-sufficiency in the availability of local teachers, it may be necessary to revisit and recast the pre-service teacher training curriculum to focus specifically on quality issues such as continuous assessment. National supervision and assessment mechanisms, processes and systems also need to be strengthened. The use of new technologies such as ICT needs to be explored in order to meet the needs of dispersed schools, students and teachers.

19. Nepal

Nepal is a mosaic of geographical and social diversity. Geographically it consists of three layers, the mountains, the hills and the terai (plains). The population according to the 2001 Census was about 23 million, with a projection of about 27 million for 2007. Nepal is inhabited by people of diverse social, cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The 2001 Census identified 101 social groups and recorded 92 languages. The castes and ethnic groups whose mother tongue is different from the national language constitute about 51% of the population.

Around 80% of the people in Nepal are engaged in subsistence agriculture. The per capita income is about $370, and 31% of the people live below the poverty line. Nepal was ranked 142nd on the HDI in 2005. The percentage of spending on education as a percentage of GDP is 3.4%.

Following the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000), a National Plan of Action (NPA) for EFA was prepared in 2001 and endorsed by the Government of Nepal in 2002. The NPA covers the whole EFA period (2001-15) and is based on Government policies as well as the prevailing situation and needs in Nepal. The EFA Core Document (2004-09) is the basis of the Government's sector wide programme in education, which is implemented by the Government with its own funds as well as funding from a number of donors.

19.1 Goal One: Early Childhood Care and Education in Nepal

19.1.1 Background and Development of ECCE in Nepal

The EFA goal for Early Childhood Development (ECD) is based on the Dakar Framework for Action. The EFA NPA and the EFA Core Document 2004-2009 programmes in Nepal have made commitments to expand and improve ECD provision throughout the country. Various forms of early care and education programmes that include school-based, community-based and privately run pre-primary and kindergarten schools have been brought under the one title of ECD. The country has set a target to provide ECD services to 80% of children aged 3–5 by 2015. Similarly, it has targeted to have 80% of new entrants to Grade 1 to have had attended some form of organized ECD programme by 2015.

Based on the ECD Strategic Plan (2004), an Early Childhood Development Programme Implementation Guideline was prepared by the Department of Education, MOES in 2005. The Tenth FYP (2002–2007) highlighted ECD as the main initiative to prepare children for enrolment in primary schools and for their holistic development. Expansion of community-based ECD and orientation of primary school teachers, head teachers and parents are the main objectives for ECD.

Two different modalities of support have been adopted for urban and rural areas: a demand driven approach with partial government support for urban and accessible areas, and special support for the establishment and operation of ECD centres in areas of deprived and disadvantaged communities. Approximately 25% of ECD centres will be established in disadvantaged and high poverty pockets of the country and the Government provides the major portion of the cost for these centres. Special attention is to be given to children from high risk groups such as street children, orphans, children with disabilities, child labourers and children from dalit, disadvantaged and Kamaiya families.

19.1.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Nepal

The enrolment of children in ECD/Pre-Primary Centres (PPCs) has increased rapidly over the years. GER increased from 11.7% in 2000 to 41.4% in 2006 (40.9% for girls and 41.9% for boys). The percentage of new entrants to Grade 1 who had attended some form of organized ECD programme increased from 9.6% in 2002 to 18.3% in 2006. Gender parity in GER has been attained (GPI 0.98), and there is no marked difference in terms of overall enrolment of dalit and janajati and other castes.

There are nine districts where the percentage of children in Grade 1 with ECD/PPC experience is more than 35.5%, whereas there are 44 districts, mostly mountain, hill and some terai districts, where less than 16% of the children in Grade 1 have ECD/PPC experience. Moreover, there are 48 districts where the percentage of children with ECD/PPC experience is below the national average (18.3%). Of these, 12 districts have less than 5% of children in Grade 1 with ECD/PPC experience.

19.1.3 Analysis of Disparities in ECCE in Nepal and Remaining Challenges

Despite the growth of ECD/PPCs in recent years, many challenges remain before the target of 51% enrolment can be achieved by 2009. There are regional differences in the growth of GER. The hill, mountain and terai zones have achieved GERs of 38.1%, 36.8% and 36.3%, respectively. The highest GER is in the Kathmandu Valley with 128%. Being economically and socially advantaged, the Kathmandu Valley has the highest concentration of pre-primary education providers in the country. The overwhelming majority of institutional schools with pre-primary classes are concentrated in the urban areas.

The quality of ECD provision, which is generally poor in most of the school-based and community-based centres, is a concern. The issues and challenges of ECD mainly relate to parental awareness and involvement, qualifications and training of ECD facilitators and capacity of the system. There is still a need for the development of norms and standards regarding qualifications of ECD facilitators and for the development of criteria for implementing ECD programmes at the district level.

19.2 Goal Two: Universal Primary/Basic Education in Nepal

19.2.1 Background and Development of Universal Basic Education in Nepal

The goal for UBE is to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minority groups, have access to a complete free and compulsory education of good quality. The term 'all children', currently signifies children within 5 to 9 years of age living in the country, irrespective of their sex, caste, ethnicity or any other circumstance (children within 5-13 years from 2009). The NPA 2001-2015 targets achieving NERs of 88%, 90%, 95% and 100% by the end of 2005, 2007, 2012 and finally 2015, respectively. The Tenth National Development Plan (2002-2007) adopted the target of securing 90% NER at primary level by mid 2007.

The Education Act (2001) provides for all children to have free access to quality basic education and acknowledges the national obligation to fulfil this goal. Following the restoration of popular democracy in 2006, Nepal promulgated a new Interim Constitution in the same year. The Interim Constitution has enshrined the right of people to basic and primary education. It also states that school education up to secondary level will be free. It envisages primary education in mother tongue for different linguistic groups. It highlights the importance of access to education for females, orphans, children with disabilities, ethnic or religious minorities and other disadvantaged groups. The system and procedures for the implementation of the constitutional decrees as well as the legal provision and actual programme for compulsory education still need to be developed.

Nepal employs a number of strategies for enduring universal basic and primary education. The first important strategy is to bring schools closer to the habitat – ensuring that a school is within easy walking distance for a child, not more than 30 minutes. The second strategy is to remove economic barriers – schools are made free of fees. No regular fees are to be charged for registration, tuition or school operation, and textbooks are provided free of cost. The third strategy is to provide incentives to needy students, in the form of school uniforms and scholarships. The fourth strategy is to ensure that basic needs are met in the schools, that is drinking water, toilets, safe environments and, in some disadvantaged places, mid-day meals. The fifth strategy is to ensure an inclusive environment, socially, culturally, linguistically, and physically.

To make primary education free and compulsory, the Government has taken a phased approach. The first phase is for expanding access and providing free schooling. The second phase is for making education rights-based, and the third phase is for developing systems and mechanisms to ensure appropriate support for the disadvantaged sections of the population, gradually making education compulsory. Complete free basic and primary education is expected to be achieved by 2015.

For the past several decades, there has been a significant expansion in the numbers of schools, teachers and students. However, there are still a large number of school age children who have not been able to attend school. Children who belong to disadvantaged and deprived communities, girls and special needs children, constitute the major proportion of the excluded population.

The Government has taken a number of important measures to expand access to basic education. The interventions include special consideration for girls and children of disadvantaged communities and ethnic minorities to complete the primary school cycle; scholarship programmes for dalit children and for girls; school improvement and expansion programmes in areas of low enrolment, high repetition and high drop-out rates; programmes to improve existing school physical facilities; and school feeding programmes in areas where the nutritional status of children is low. Alternative schooling initiatives for children in difficult circumstances include school outreach programmes for children in remote and difficult areas, flexible schooling for working and disadvantaged children, and out-of-school programmes for un-enrolled children and school dropouts.

19.2.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Nepal

Table 10: Gross and Net Primary Enrolment Ratio (%), by Sex, 2001-2006, Nepal

Year	GER			NER		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
2001	124.7	114.7	134.1	81.1	75.1	86.9
2002	118.4	109.4	127.1	82.3	76.8	88.7
2003	126.7	117.1	136.0	83.5	77.5	89.4
2004	130.7	124.2	137.0	84.2	78.0	90.1
2005	145.4	141.8	148.8	86.8	83.4	90.1
2006	138.8	138.4	139.2	87.4	85.5	89.3

Source: Ministry of Education and Sports, Government of Nepal, Education for All Mid-Decade Assessment National Report 2007, p49.

In 2006, the NER for the primary level was 87.4% and GER was138.8%, as illustrated in Table 10. The increase in NER has been gradual, about 1 percentage point per year. The NERs for girls and boys are 85.5% and 89.3%, respectively. The high GER shows that there are many over-age and under-age children in primary schools. Regional variations in primary school enrolments exist, with 21 districts with GERs less than the national average of 138.8% and with 13 districts, mainly

in the western mountains and central terai, with GERs of less than 100%. Although the NER and GER for dalit and janajati are not available, studies show that their enrolment levels are less than the national average, with dropout and repetition rates higher compared to other groups. The completion rates for dalits and janajatis are also low. Disparities in gender, caste, and ethnicity increase with increased levels of education and poverty.

Between 1995-96 and 2003-04, access improved almost universally across all types of education facilities. During this period, the proportion of households having access to primary schools within a 30-minute walking distance from home increased from 88.4% to 91.4%. In urban areas, almost all households (98.8%) are within easy reach of primary schooling facilities whereas among rural areas this is the case for only 89.9% of households. Terai households in rural areas have somewhat better access compared to their hill and mountain counterparts. Access to lower secondary and secondary education also increased as indicated by improved transition rates of primary to lower secondary and lower secondary to secondary schools.

In general, school statistics show that retention of children until the last grade of each level of schooling is a major challenge. Measurement in terms of promotion, repetition, dropout, survival, completion and transition rates to upper grades and levels indicate slow progress in improving internal efficiency. Overall, the internal efficiency of the education system is very poor. Factors contributing to this include low literacy levels of parents in rural areas, low levels of government investment in pre-primary and ECD programmes, lack of focus on in-service teacher training, lack of teaching materials for teachers to help poor performing students and lack of programmes to raise awareness among School Management Committees (SMC), Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) members and parents about appropriate interventions.

19.2.3 Analysis of Disparities in Universal Basic Education in Nepal and Remaining Challenges

There are nine categories of children in Nepal who have been identified as deprived of educational opportunity – girls, children in remote rural areas, dalits, disadvantaged ethnic groups, children of IDPs, children with disabilities, working children, street children and the extremely poor. At all levels of schooling, the number and percentage of boys is higher than girls. Participation rates for both boys and girls in urban areas are higher than for rural areas, as is the case for the richer quintiles compared to poorer quintiles. Dalits and disadvantaged groups have lower participation rates in all levels of schooling. Children in two or more of these nine categories are not likely to attend school or, if they do, it is very unlikely that they will complete the cycle.

The NER trend in primary education from 2001 to 2006 indicates that the specific age-group population in school has been increasing continuously. In 2001, 81.1% of the total primary age group was enrolled in schools across the country and by 2006 this had increased to 87.4%. Girls' primary NER increased more rapidly from 75.1% to 85.5%, compared to the boys' NER which increased from 86.9% to 89.3%, in the same period. Comparing the NER for boys and girls, there is still gender disparity. However, the NER for girls shows an upward trend. The annual average increase from 2001 to 2006 was 2.2 percentage points for girls, 0.5 points for boys and 1.3 points for both sexes.

The Nepal Living Standards Survey (NLSS II, 2003-04) found that the children most deprived of education are from families within the poorest quintile (45% against the richest 5%) and children living in rural areas (24% against 8% in urban areas). Children in the terai (26%) and mountain (23%) zones are the most disadvantaged. At all levels of schooling, participation rates for boys are higher than those of girls.

The survival rate of children has been used as a proxy indicator of quality. From 2000 to 2005, the overall Survival Rate to Grade 5 increased from 66% to 78%. For girls, the increase was from 68% to 75%. The survival rate of boys during this period increased more and overtook the survival rate of

girls with an increase from 65% in 2000 to 79% in 2005. Despite these gains in improving survival rates, there is still much to do to improve the quality of education.

Despite the magnitude of the current EFA efforts, the trend analysis shows that achieving 100% NER by 2015 will not be possible without more concerted effort. The Government recognizes that special efforts are therefore needed. Rights-based education is one such step which has been taken seriously by the Government. However, there is still the need to develop systems and mechanisms to ensure this policy is implemented. Ensuring fully operational and effective schools in all regions, districts and settlements is still a challenging task. Many schools do not have an adequate number of teachers with the appropriate level of training, many schools lack classrooms and ensuring basic facilities is still a challenge. Effective implementation of policy provisions, such as primary education in mother tongue, is still far from being realized. Similarly, education for children with disabilities is still not available for the majority of such children. Norms and standards for minimum quality of primary schools are yet to be developed.

19.3 Goal Three: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning in Nepal

19.3.1 Background and Development of Life Skills and Non-Formal Education in Nepal

In response to EFA Goal 3 to "ensure that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes," Nepal's NPA includes the development of life skills education in a broader context. National development plans (that is, the Eighth, Ninth, and Tenth Plans) have put emphasis on skills-based training and learning of life skills. There are however no specific quantifiable targets for life skills and lifelong learning. The main policies related to life skills education are the provisions to make education more relevant to life. Building on the EFA objectives, the Tenth Plan provides for the expansion of literacy programmes to improve the livelihoods of deprived groups, especially girls, dalits and disadvantaged children. The Tenth Plan's objectives also include the development and expansion of secondary education, production of a mid-level technical workforce through the expansion of vocational and technical education and the production of a high-level skilled workforce through the development of higher education.

The policy framework for life skills education is to develop learning environments sensitive to the needs of girls, disadvantaged and displaced children. The policy focus is on developing necessary skills to earn a livelihood and to help reduce poverty, to develop skills for safe health, sanitation and prevention of health hazards including HIV/AIDS and epidemics, to develop personal skills for better interaction with the environment, to use different means of communication for information and expanding opportunities including learning opportunities, to promote local entrepreneurship, especially through the promotion of indigenous skills and knowledge, and to promote democratic ways and values, team work, conflict resolution, harmony, and partnerships.

The strategies of the Government for the provision of appropriate learning and life skills education include: curricular reform to incorporate important aspects of life skills such as health, sanitation, general knowledge, communication, and skills at primary and secondary levels; mobilizing and enhancing technical education and vocational training for youths; general training and orientation for youths and adults on contextual issues and topics such as HIV/AIDS, micro-credit and savings, health issues and family planning; and making adult literacy programmes functional and relevant in the context of life skills. There are a number of programmes targeting the achievement of this goal.

19.3.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Nepal

The Council for Technical Education and Vocational Training (CTEVT) is responsible for managing 15 public technical schools, two Vocational Training Centres for Community Development and one

Training Institute for Technical Instruction. There are also over 160 private technical institutions, which operate in affiliation with the CTEVT. The total enrolment capacity of these institutions is about 12,000. Since it is often difficult for poor and disadvantaged sections of the population to meet the costs of the programmes run by private technical training institutes, CTEVT recognizes the urgent need to develop cost-effective skills development schemes for the wider population. To achieve this objective, CTEVT has begun developing a programme attached to general secondary schools. Using the existing physical and human resources, the programme is managed and operated by the SMCs of the schools and offers mainly technical education programmes, including civil engineering, electrical engineering, mechanical engineering and agriculture. As suggested in the Tenth Plan, CTEVT aims to develop one programme in each of the 75 districts. It has so far established 15 and is planning to develop 15 per annum between 2007 and 2011.

The trade school concept is an initiative of the Government and the Nepalese Chamber of Commerce and Industries (FNCCI). Under this scheme, trade schools are supported by both the business community and the Government. Five trade schools have been established as part of a five-year pilot project for unemployed youth, employees who are working in business and industries, and rural and disadvantaged groups.

In response to the commitment of the MOES to incorporate life skills, the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) has recently revised the school curriculum. Knowledge, skills and attitude-related competencies were integrated into the primary school level curricula for health education. Grade-wise curricular objectives were revised to include knowledge, skills, and attitude level objectives. The contents related to life skills are incorporated throughout the curriculum providing scope for topics such as personal hygiene, environmental sanitation, nutrition, diseases, first aid and health services. The revised curriculum and textbooks are being piloted in 50 schools of 10 districts.

According to NLSS II 2003-04, 58% of the population aged 10 years and above have heard about HIV/AIDS. About 65% of males reported having heard of HIV/AIDS, compared to 51% of females. The percent of the people who have heard of HIV/AIDS is higher in urban (83%) compared to rural (53%) areas. While TV, radio, newspapers and pamphlets are the main sources of knowledge of HIV/AIDS in urban areas, radio, friends, relatives, and TV are the main sources in rural areas.

19.3.3 Analysis of Disparities in Life Skills in Nepal and Remaining Challenges

The current provision for life skills education is very small compared to the needs. Studies show that a large proportion of youths and adults (about 80%) are not covered by any institutional provision. There is an emerging trend of private sector involvement in the provision of skills development, particularly in profitable areas such as health, education, computers and small trades. However a systematic approach based on data and strategic information is still lacking.

It is difficult to estimate the progress towards the EFA goal of life skills education. The challenges include developing an information system that tracks needs as well as provision and trends, and also developing specific programmes to address policy focuses and strategies. Particularly, there is a need to develop life skills education programmes to meet the learning needs of children from ethnic minorities and disadvantaged groups, children with disabilities, as well as children and youth affected by conflict situations. There is still a need to develop a consensus on the scope and coverage of life skills education and their prioritization. There should be coordination among the various stakeholders involved in the development and provision of life skills education. There is also scope for developing and adopting a national framework for life skills education.

19.4 Goal Four: Literacy in Nepal

19.4.1 Background and Development of Literacy Acquisition in Nepal

In Nepal, literacy is defined as the ability to read and write daily life-related short and simple sentences written in the person's mother tongue or national language, as well as 'numeracy' or the ability to do simple arithmetic calculations. Literacy is seen as a key determinant for long-term human development and a significant factor for the social and economic improvement of individuals and a country. Although the word literacy has been officially replaced by "non-formal education," literacy as the skill of reading and writing is still used to denote the literacy rate of the country.

Nepal was one of the signatories of the Jomtien World Declaration on Education for All (March, 1990) which set the target to reduce the adult illiteracy rate to half its 1990 level by the year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on improving female literacy to significantly reduce the disparity between the male and female literacy rate. However, the Jomtien Declaration did not significantly influence Nepal to accelerate progress towards raising the literacy rate in the country within the given timeframe.

A decade later, at the World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, April 2000) the six EFA goals were reaffirmed, including the fourth objective to achieve a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and to ensure equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults. This declaration has positively influenced Nepal to promote literacy and NFE programmes as major vehicles for poverty reduction and social empowerment. Nepal has developed and is implementing a National Plan of Action to raise the adult literacy rate to 75% by the year 2015 (from 48% in 2001), to 95% for the 15-24 age group (from 70%) and to 90% for the age 6+ group (from 54%). To achieve the anticipated outcomes a variety of literacy, post literacy, and income-generating programmes are being designed and implemented.

In order to address the development needs in the field of literacy and NFE, the following pledges have been made in the Tenth Plan: formulating programmes on formal and non-formal technical and vocational education with an emphasis on using technology; implementing programmes on literacy, post literacy, income generation and other NFE programmes to assist particularly disadvantaged communities; making 1,866,000 adults, particularly women, dalits and disadvantaged janajatis (ethnic groups) literate, to achieve the literacy rate targets set in the plan; providing 933,000 new literates with post-literacy education and skills training; providing 200,000 boys and girls of school age with basic primary education and setting up of 205 CLCs to support a continuous learning process; increasing the literacy rate by expanding NFE programmes; implementing effective adult literacy and child education programmes in an integrated manner and in coordination with other development programmes, with the involvement of local bodies and governmental and NGOs; developing the national Non-formal Education Centre (NEC) as an institution for policy making, providing technical services and monitoring and evaluation; and clarifying the role of NGOs and local bodies in the implementation of illiteracy eradication programmes and entrusting them with the responsibility for implementing the programmes.

19.4.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Nepal

From the beginning of the Tenth Plan, NFE has been seen as a main vehicle to reduce poverty and to create social awareness. The Government has commissioned the Non-formal Education Council as well as the NEC to coordinate NFE initiatives and to provide policy direction and programme support. Although still in early stages of development, a number of initiatives have been undertaken in the past few years. From 2000 to 2007, around one million people (nearly 200,000 men and over 800,000 women) have been involved in the national literacy programme. A total of 150 CLCs were established from 2001 to 2006 at the village-level for institutionalized provision of literacy and post-literacy activities. Linkages between formal and NFE are being established. Ways

are being explored to provide open learning for expanding literacy provision as well as for making it applicable to the daily lives of the participants. Awareness programmes for motivating people to eradicate illiteracy have been undertaken. Attempts are being made to forge links with the numerous national and international NGOs with literacy programmes.

Increasing the literacy rate to meet the targets set for 2007, 2012 and 2015 poses a significant challenge for Nepal. It is recognized that the present programmes and strategies may not achieve the goals set in the EFA NPA. At the current pace, it is unlikely that the literacy targets will be met by 2015. More concerted initiatives will be required. There is a growing concern that a comprehensive literacy programme needs to be launched in the country. A perspective plan for NFE/literacy has been prepared with the aim to develop and implement a holistic programme for the advancement of NFE/literacy.

19.4.3 Analysis of Disparities in Literacy and Remaining Challenges

According to the 2001 Census, there is a gender gap of more than 20 percentage points in the overall literacy rate (age 6+), the youth literacy rate (age 15 to 24 years) and the adult literacy rate (age 15 and above). Gender disparity is strikingly apparent in the adult literacy rate where only 35% of females are literate compared to 63% of males (GPI 0.56).

There are also disparities among development regions and ecological zones. Literacy rates are lowest in the mountainous region. The central hills region, which includes the Kathmandu valley, has the highest literacy rates while the mid-western and far-eastern mountains have the lowest rates. In general, the hill areas tend to have literacy rates above the national average (except in the far and mid-west hills), the terai region is generally in the middle, and the mountains are mostly below the national average.

Wide discrepancies in literacy rates are also evident among different caste and ethnic groups. The lowest literacy rates are found among the dalits living in the terai. The big gap in literacy rates among different ethnic groups indicates clearly that the existing programmes have failed to adequately reach the deprived ethnic groups. Accessibility of these groups to literacy programmes either under the Government's or NGOs' sponsorship is inadequate. According to the Nepal National MDA Report, available statistics show that the literacy rate of economically and socially privileged groups ranges from 60% to 88%.

The magnitude of the illiterate population is huge with a total of 7,086,712 (male 2,535,195 and female 4,551,517) illiterates. This size is beyond the capacity of the current programmes to achieve the targets. Increasing public awareness and active participation of stakeholders, including potential participants, are considered crucial for the success of NFE programmes. The role of the media or mass communication is considered important for this. It is important to develop partnerships with the numerous national and international NGOs involved in NFE. The strategy has been to undertake such initiatives at the village level with the preparation of village education plans (VEPs). Recently a 10-year national literacy plan was developed and adopted by the Government. A comprehensive national literacy programme is being planned.

Major challenges remain. Resources from the regular budget as well as additional funds for specific initiatives remain too small compared to the needs. Literacy programmes, materials and content are still driven by providers' perceptions and provision due to a lack of a localized system. The number of CLCs is too limited and their expansion remains a challenge. There is a need to translate the national commitment in terms of policy into concrete actions with adequate budget provision.

19.5 Goal Five: Gender Parity and Equality in Education in Nepal

19.5.1 Background and Development of Gender Parity and Equality in Nepal

In Nepal, the EFA plans for each goal were devised separately with little linkage with the overarching goals of equity and quality. Although equity-related issues are progressively covered in the Government's sector programme (EFA 2004–09), the "mainstreaming" of equity and inclusion concepts is relatively limited. However, equitable quality education for all is a key principle as well as a major policy of the programme. In order to materialize this principle, several strategies and activities have been devised and are being implemented. Strategies have been undertaken to achieve equity in access through school construction and rehabilitation, alternative/flexible schools, free school education, free textbooks, school feeding, and scholarships. Strategies undertaken to achieve equity in quality include curriculum improvement, teacher training, professional support, improvement of the school environment and reforms in school examinations. Measures to increase the number of female teachers are strategic from both access and quality perspectives. Increasing institutional capacity and enhancing school autonomy are also the major strategies which may have a direct bearing on equity in education.

19.5.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Nepal

The enrolment of girls at both the primary and secondary level improved between 2002 and 2006. During this period, female NER increased for primary from 76.8% to 85.5%, for lower secondary from 35.8% to 47.8%, and for secondary from 23.9% to 32.4%. Despite the progress made, disparities in terms of gender, caste and ethnicity persist.

For example, at the district level, most of the districts from the terai, mid-western and far-western regions are still facing problems, such as the low GPI in primary enrolment of 0.74 in 2006 in several districts of the terai region. Children with disabilities also have limited access to education. The GPI at the primary level for disabled children was only 0.82 in 2006.

Overall, the promotion, repetition and dropout trends of primary education have steadily shown improvement. Girls' share of promotion has increased. Repetition and drop-out rates for both boys and girls have decreased in primary level. However, dalit children's chances of survival decrease as the grade level increases. Interestingly, in all the grades, dalit girls are more likely to survive than dalit boys, but in most cases being female is an additional disadvantage in the groups already disadvantaged by other factors.

With an adult literacy rate of only 35% for females compared to 63% for males and a GPI of 0.56, significant gender disparities are a major concern for both overall and disaggregated breakdowns by geographical regions, caste and economic and social groupings. For example, the adult literacy rate of dalits in the country is only 27% with males at 38% against the females at only 16%. Moreover, there is disparity between the literacy rates of hill dalits with 54.9% compared to only 20.2% for the terai dalits in 2006. Wide gender disparities in literacy prevail among both hill and terai dalits, with GPIs of 0.72 and 0.44, respectively, as well as in the far-western and mid-western mountain and hill districts. Considerable gender disparities exist in some terai and hill districts adjoining the eastern and central regions. Western and central districts in general are characterized by a lower gender gap in literacy status.

There are huge gender disparities in the composition of the teaching profession. So-called high caste males dominate the teaching force at all levels. The number of female teachers in public primary schools increased from 23.4% in 2004 to 30.6% in 2006, but women still make up less than one-third of the primary teaching force. The number and percentage of female teachers in the upper grades is even lower.

19.5.3 Analysis of Gender Disparities in Nepal and Remaining Challenges

Gender-based discrimination continues to be perpetuated both within society and in educational systems. Social restrictions on girls' and women's mobility, early marriage, patriarchy and the dowry system all contribute to low participation of women and girls in education. Consequently, self-perceived roles combined with social norms and economic structures reduce girls' chances of being schooled. For dalit girls and women, the situation is exacerbated by untouchability and poverty. Negative teacher attitudes towards girls, including their low expectations of girls, and inappropriate physical and non-physical environments of the schools also discourage girls from attending school.

Marked progress has been made towards achieving gender parity in primary education enrolments. However, there is still a significant imbalance in some districts and among some marginalized groups. There remains a huge gender gap throughout the country in all literacy statistics, especially in disadvantaged districts and among marginalized groups. Capacity development activities to mainstream gender and other forms of social equity are needed to address issues of social inequality and gender imbalance. Furthermore, to address issues of gender and social exclusion in education from a holistic perspective, inter-institutional arrangements and inter-ministerial collaboration are required.

19.6 Goal Six: Quality of Education in Nepal

19.6.1 Developments in the Provision of Quality Education in Nepal

Government policy for improving the quality of education focuses on ensuring gender parity, reaching and bringing disadvantaged children into the mainstream, advocating a rights-based approach to education, increasing public investment in education, updating the curriculum and teacher training, upgrading the physical environment of schools, promoting an inclusive approach in education and decentralizing management of education services. Specific interventions are being undertaken to implement each of these strategies.

The EFA Core Document (2004-09) has set principles and strategies to improve the quality of education. These include raising the competence and qualifications of teachers, improving the learning environment in classrooms, enhancing the quality of curricula and textbooks and ensuring their timely distribution, developing school-based autonomous supervision and monitoring and ensuring decentralized management of schools.

19.6.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Nepal

The EFA NPA has broadly categorized the indicators of quality primary education as enhanced efficiency in the management of education, an improved primary curriculum and assessment system, improved physical facilities and learning environments and increased education expenditure. Initiatives are being implemented to delegate important aspects of school management to local communities. Head-teacher training with certification is in place. Teacher management systems are being improved including the upgrading of teacher qualifications, providing 10 months initial training for teachers and instituting a mandatory teacher licensing system. Strategies are also being implemented to establish requirements for teacher accountability and supervisory services are being brought closer to schools to provide professional support to teachers and to monitor performance based on agreed standards for quality education. This includes the establishment of reporting requirements.

The primary curriculum was revised in 2004, and teachers' guides and teacher support materials based on the national curriculum were developed. A national curriculum framework was developed by the Curriculum Development Centre and approved by the Council. However, shifting from the existing practices of textbook-based assessment to curriculum-based assessment is yet to

take place. Prime concerns have been the construction and rehabilitation of school facilities and ensuring minimum standards for appropriate learning environments. Over 5,000 new classrooms have been constructed and around 1,500 schools rehabilitated. However, visible improvements in the school environment are yet to be realized.

There are standards set by the Government relating to PTRs (40:1 for the mountain; 45:1 for the hills and 50:1 for the valley/terai) and student-space ratio of 0.75 square metre at primary level and one square metre at the secondary level. Similarly, minimum learning achievement measured by student annual examinations is another way to ensure minimum quality. These indicators, however, do not cover the quality aspects comprehensively, and there have been difficulties in maintaining the standards. The issue relates to individual school conditions. For example, in the rural mountain region the PTRs are as low as 7:1 whereas in the terai urban and semi-urban areas the PTRs are as high as 150 students per teacher in some schools.

Survival Rate to Grade 5 has increased remarkably at the primary level from 66% in 2000 to 78% in 2005. However, the cycle completion rate and the straight cohort analysis are available only at the research level and are not included in the regular reporting and analysis.

The available financial data indicate that demand for quality education has not been sufficiently met by a corresponding increase in educational expenditure. A considerable increase in budgetary provision for education is needed to comprehensively address the issue of quality education.

19.6.3 Analysis of Disparities in Quality in Nepal and Remaining Challenges

Since Dakar, there has been an increasing emphasis on improving the quality of education, and a number of strategies are being implemented for this purpose. However, the data collection, monitoring, evaluation and reporting systems are insufficient to adequately identify where problems exist, to monitor progress and to document the effects of initiatives to improve quality across the country and in specific locations. It is clear that the ones who suffer the most from the poor quality of education are the poor, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups. Girls from these groups are the most adversely affected. It is recognized that an even greater priority must be given to quality and that an increased budgetary provision will be necessary. Improved monitoring and reporting systems are needed to identify the extent of the disparities as well as to document the effects of initiatives to improve quality.

It is important to identify and take measures to address the issues related to school drop-outs, who mostly belong to the poorest quintile, mainly the disadvantaged ethnic minorities and the dalits. This is one of the main reasons for very poor participation of the poorest quintile in secondary, higher secondary and tertiary levels of education. According to the NLSS 2003-04 data, the NERs of the poorest quintiles are 51% for primary, 7% for lower secondary, 2% for secondary, 1% for higher secondary and 0% for tertiary.

Obviously, dropping out relates to poor learning achievement and in most of the cases failure in the annual grade promotion examinations. The problem is also related to the lack of sensitivity and capacity of teachers and schools to address the difficult circumstances of the disadvantaged children in terms of language, inclusion and relevance of education.

Other emerging disparities relate to the differences between private and public education. Private schools reportedly have better conditions and basic provisions which help to ensure regular attendance, and are better at maintaining contact between students and teachers. The difference relates to both better management and the mode of parental investment which is direct payment by the parents to the schools. There is also a gap in terms of per child expenditure. Private schools are, however, serving only those who can pay, mostly the children from relatively wealthy families. This has to be seen from the economic perspective of the poor and the non-poor groups. For example, for the poorest quintile, food costs make up 73% of their total expenditure compared to the richest quintile's expenditure of 41% on food. The share spent on education of the poorest is 1.3% compared to 4.8% in the case of the richest quintile (NLSS 2003-04).

It is also noted that data relating to the school environment and basic provisions such as safe drinking water, toilets, playgrounds, libraries and books are collected in the school census, but yet to be included as part of regular monitoring and reporting. Similarly, the information regarding inclusiveness, relevance and child friendliness are yet to be considered. Overall, efforts have been made to improve the quality of education but they have mainly focused on the curriculum framework and policies. Ensuring policy implementation remains a challenge. There is also a need to establish national norms for schools and classrooms with a set of comprehensive standards. Setting national norms and ensuring that schools meet such norms are crucial to ensure basic quality in the rural schools, particularly in the areas where the communities belong to disadvantaged groups.

19.7 Goal Seven: Education of Indigenous People and Linguistic Minorities in Nepal

19.7.1 Background and Development of the Education of Indigenous People and Linguistic Minorities in Nepal

"Ensuring the rights of indigenous people and linguistic minorities to basic and primary education through mother tongue" is the seventh EFA goal which is unique for Nepal. The Government added this goal in light of the country's diverse ethnic and linguistic population and in accordance with the strong political commitment to mother tongue education.

Nepal is a multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic country with 101 social groups speaking more than 92 languages as their mother tongue. In 2005, of the 4.5 million students at primary level, 1.6 million (35.6%) were from indigenous groups. It has also been found that most of the school dropouts belong to the non-Nepali speaking communities. Apart from them, a large number of children from these vulnerable groups have no access to school and are debarred from the right to achieving basic education.

Taking cognizance of this situation, Nepal has taken a policy decision to introduce mother tongue as the medium of instruction at the primary level of education. The Interim Constitution of Nepal (2006), which ensures equal status to all mother tongues spoken in Nepal including Nepali, makes a provision for imparting primary education through mother tongue. The Tenth Plan, which is the PRSP for Nepal, identifies human development and social inclusion as the main pillars of the poverty reduction policy. For education, the two major aims for the five-year period are improving access to and quality of primary education and providing education in the mother tongues of the various communities up to primary level.

To achieve the goal, a number of strategies have been adopted: the use of mother tongue as a subject of study and as the medium of instruction; bilingual education, teacher recruitment, training and deployment; and special programmes for endangered languages and cultures. Activities are being implemented in line with these strategies.

19.7.2 Progress Achieved in Selected Core MDA Indicators

A number of studies on bilingual education and mother tongue interventions at primary level have been completed. Mother tongue and bilingual schools have been identified in 25 districts. Textbooks to use for subject teaching have been developed in 14 languages with scripts. The feasibility of transitional bilingual education programmes is being studied. Thirty textbooks for Grade 1 have been translated into various languages and nine supplementary readers in mother tongue have been developed and distributed. A template has been developed which includes guidelines for preparing mother tongue textbooks. Adult literacy courses have also been developed in a number of languages, and there are pilot projects for both adults and children in which mother tongue is being used as the medium of instruction combined with bridging materials to ensure the acquisition of literacy in Nepali as well.

19.7.3 Analysis of Disparities in the Education of Indigenous People and Linguistic Minorities in Nepal and Remaining Challenges

Despite the political commitment, there is no comprehensive policy guidance to provide primary education to all children through their mother tongue. The policy documents are silent about teacher recruitment and teacher deployment to support primary education through mother tongue. There is no clear procedure for the production and distribution of reading materials for mother tongue education. The criteria to identify mother tongue and bilingual schools and the responsible agencies for implementation are not clear. Also, there is no data keeping system on teachers and students on the basis of their mother tongues, to guide the development of reading materials, teacher deployment and teacher training.

There is also no comprehensive programme for mother tongue education. Most of the activities indicated in the EFA NPA and in "The Bilingual Transitional Education Programme for All Non-Nepali Speaking Children" are yet to be carried out. Except for the 25 selected districts, other districts have yet to identify mother tongue and bilingual schools. The task of teacher training has not yet been initiated for mother tongue education. The translation of textbooks in various languages has been initiated but in many cases the translated textbooks do not reflect the social and cultural needs of the students. The budget allocated for the development of bilingual and mother tongue materials, as well as for other activities of the programme, is grossly inadequate to meet the needs of the country.

In order to fulfil Nepal's very laudable seventh EFA goal, an increased budget, further planning and a strong commitment of communities and the education establishment are required. Full implementation can only be accomplished over time, but the recognition of the right of children to receive education in their mother tongue is a vital first step.

19.8 Overall Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The Nepal National MDA Report identified major issues and proposed recommendations to ensure the fulfilment of each goal. General observations and recommendations were also included in the report and are summarized in this section.

Development of basic and primary education has been a major national endeavour, particularly since 1990. The development activities in the earlier period took place as part of the Basic and Primary Education Project (BPEP). From 1997, it became a core national programme and continued until 2004. These development activities took place with the inspiration and support of the world EFA campaign started in 1990 from Jomtien. One of the strengths of BPEP was that it was a core national reform programme implemented by the Government through the MOES. Many reform activities took place during this period including the creation of the Department of Education to undertake the national programmes. The educational endeavours are supported by donors and development partners with technical assistance and resources.

There has been significant achievement in terms of access to primary education. Government policies, including free primary education, schools in walking distance of home and incentives for children in disadvantaged places and from disadvantaged communities, are important programmes for ensuring better access. Flexible schooling, alternative schooling for children in rural areas and in difficult circumstances and hostels for female students are some of the supplementary measures taken to address needs of children who could not be accommodated by regular formal schooling.

Revision of the national curriculum and preparation of a national framework to ensure flexibility and relevance at the local level, expansion of teacher training, free textbooks at the primary level, classroom construction and piloting of continuous assessment are some of the important interventions undertaken for enhancing the quality of education. Decentralized management of

schools with the voluntary transfer of school management to local communities with resource autonomy has provided an important thrust towards better school management.

Recent policy thrusts are rights-based basic and primary education and upgrading basic education to Grade 8 from the current Grade 5. These are major steps calling for an overall reformulation of education structures and provisions.

There are conceptual commitments and statutory provisions in place for effective implementation of EFA activities. However, there are still many challenges for the operationalization of the provisions and for the effective undertaking of the tasks to achieve the goals. There are crucial policy gaps to fill and mechanisms must be developed to ensure the translation of policies and strategies into actions. Most importantly, the capacity of institutions and people must be developed to operate programmes according to the spirit, principles and concepts behind the policies and strategies.

In line with the aspirations of the people, the interim constitution of Nepal has decreed that basic and primary education will be rights-based and free up to secondary education. In line with the NPA, the Government is undertaking preparatory work to develop a policy and programme for upgrading primary education from Grade 5 to Grade 8. However, the tasks that lie ahead are rather challenging. There will be a need for a thorough assessment of current practices. Crucial for success will be the development of implementation systems and budgeted programmes. Also, there is a need for a national strategy for the eventual implementation of compulsory basic and primary education.

The Government must address the emerging needs and aspirations of the people through increased budgetary allocations. There is a need to increase the budget commitments from the current 3% of GNP to a higher level in line with world trends.

A comprehensive EMIS to support development of practical policies and plans that capture the contextual concerns is another important need. Such an EMIS system should include a database to disaggregate data by ethnicity, language, socio-economic status and other important indicators that have direct implications for the education of the children, particularly those who are disadvantaged.

Improving the quality and relevance of education is important to ensure that parents and children, particularly the disadvantaged, feel that the environment and the activities in schools are friendly and meaningful. Commitment and participation of local stakeholders including the school, community, parents and government personnel are important requirements. The preparation of District Education Plans and Village Education Plans are an important part of this approach. Such activities should be reinvigorated and established as part of the regular programme.

Since the progress towards EFA goals varies significantly by regions, districts, villages, social groups and economic quintiles, there is a need to form forums to take up the issues at the appropriate levels and with the concerned groups to ensure that their needs are addressed. EFA forums should be formed at least at the district and village levels. Such forums should review the EFA status in the district and village and accordingly, identify issues and suggest strategies and policies needed to address the issues. Such forums should also make political bodies aware of the issues and solicit their support to address them. Most importantly, there is a need to form a body at the local level to take the ownership of EFA, and for this, there is an urgent need to activate and reinvigorate the locally elected bodies.

20. Pakistan

Pakistan emerged as an independent state on 14 August 1947. It is a land of diverse cultures and terrain consisting of four provinces, namely Balochistan, North Western Frontier Province (NWFP), Punjab and Sindh, and the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA). Other administrative areas are the Federally Administered Northern Areas (FANA), Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT). Spread across nine major ecological zones, Pakistan has a diverse

array of landscapes. Its territory encompasses portions of the Himalaya, Hindu Kush, and Karakoram mountain ranges and is the home to some of the world's highest mountains. The terrain also includes vast fertile plains as well as deserts.

Pakistan has a population of approximately 159 million with one-third living in urban areas while the majority (63.7%) reside in rural areas, largely dependent on agriculture for their livelihood. Pakistan is an Islamic Republic and an overwhelming majority of the population (96.3%) is Muslim. Approximately 1.6% of the population is Hindu, 1.6% Christian, and 0.3% Bahais, Sikhs, Buddhists and followers of other religions. Pakistan has a multitude of languages which are as diversified as its people. Urdu is the national language and the medium of instruction in 65% of the nation's schools. Urdu and English are official languages of the Government. Pakistan is a land of historically vibrant and dynamic cultures. The magnificent Ghandara and Indus Valley civilizations flourished in what is now Pakistan.

Overall, Pakistan's macro and micro economic indicators have shown positive upward trends in the past few years after a decade of depression during the 1990s. It was ranked 136th on the HDI in 2005. The number of people living below the poverty line has steadily decreased in recent years, standing currently at 17%. The percentage of spending on education as a percentage of GDP is 2.2%. The Medium Term Development Framework (2005-10) has been aligned with the MDGs in keeping with the country's resolve to scale-up efforts to achieve the MDGs by 2015.

In 2004, the Government of Pakistan initiated a comprehensive Education Sector Reforms Programme (2004-07) in line with the National Education Policy 1998 – 2010 and with a particular focus on EFA. Pakistan's EFA NPA is based on the Dakar Framework with the aim of achieving the six international EFA goals. Compulsory and free education is mandated in the Constitution. As a federal system EFA plans are implemented by the provinces, and in accordance with the Local Government Plan 2000, there is further devolution to the district levels. Pakistan is a member of the UNESCO High Level Group on EFA, is one of the E-9 countries and is a potential EFA Fast Track Initiative (FTI) country.

20.1 Goal One: Early Childhood Care and Education in Pakistan

20.1.1 Background and Development of ECCE in Pakistan

Early Childhood Education (ECE) has been set as the third highest priority in the NPA. Both the Government and NGOs are committed to promoting ECE. According to the plan, net participation in ECE activities should reach 50% by 2015. Pre-primary ("katchi") classes were at one time common in formal schools but from the 1980s, the practice was almost discontinued, whereas pre-primary education remained an important part of private education. Recognizing the role and significance of ECE, provision has been made in the National Education Policy (1998-2010) to reintroduce pre-primary officially as a formal class in primary schools, in effect making primary education six years.

20.1.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators in Pakistan

Pakistan has reported remarkable progress in participation in ECE activities. The level of achievement has already far exceeded the targets set for 2015. Compared to a GER in ECE of 36% in 2001-02, by 2005-06 it had reached 91%. During this period, the GER for girls increased from 33% to 85%, while the increase for boys was from 40% to 97%. Considerable increases with resultant higher GERs have been reported for all the provinces. Sindh currently has the lowest GERs with 55% for girls and 62% for boys. The FATA shows the greatest discrepancy between girls and boys with GERs of 78% and 154%, respectively. GER in ECE was slightly higher in rural areas (93%) than in urban areas (88%).

A somewhat less dramatic but significant increase was also reported in the percentage of new entrants in Grade 1 who have attended some form of organized ECE programme, rising from 64% in 2001-02 to 74% in 2005-06. During this period, the increase for girls was from 72% to 78%, while for boys it was from 58% to 72%. With only 28% of new entrants in Grade 1 having ECE experience, Sindh was the province with by far the lowest rates for this indicator. In urban areas, 63% of new entrants have ECE experience compared to 77% in rural areas.

Out of a total enrolment of 7.1 million in 2005-06, 2.7 million (1.2 million girls and 1.5 million boys) were studying in private sector schools. The private sector accounts for about 33% of the education system overall, whereas for ECE, its share is about 39%. The proportion of children enrolled in ECE activities in private schools is remarkably higher in urban areas. In urban areas, private schools account for 73% of the enrolment compared to only 22% in rural areas.

20.1.3 Analysis of Disparities in ECCE in Pakistan and Remaining Challenges

Tremendous growth in ECE activities has been reported. The move towards making it a part of the formal system may have produced this immediate impact. Effective social awareness campaigns are also mentioned. The differences in girls' and boys' participation rates are not great, but it should be noted that there has been a greater increase in boys' participation than girls in the past five years, that in the FATA girls' enrolment is much lower than boys and in the private sector there is a higher participation of boys than girls. There are considerable differences in the participation rates of the different provinces and administrative areas, but no further breakdown is available to identify sub-groups of the population which may not be participating in ECE activities.

Teacher training has been identified as an issue that needs to be addressed. There is no specific training required of teachers in the Government system. Consequently the percentage of teachers with the requisite training was not reported. The percentage of trained teachers in the private sector was reported to be 47% of which 10% were working in urban and 22% in rural areas.

Age-wise data is not available, making it impossible to report on net participation rates. The very high GERs reported (over 100% for some areas) may be related to many of the children being over- or under-age and may not accurately reflect the actual percentage of the population participating in ECE activities.

The extension of ECE activities into all public schools is a major priority. The training of teachers and the provision of adequate classrooms are urgent challenges. The Government will continue to encourage the involvement of the private sector and NGOs to ensure that ECE is available to all children.

20.2 Goal Two: Universal Primary/Basic Education in Pakistan

20.2.1 Background and Expansion of Universal Basic Education in Pakistan

As the highest priority in the NPA, the goal of universal basic education is that by 2015 all children, with special emphasis on girls and children in difficult circumstances, will have access to compulsory primary education of good quality. Starting from a baseline of 66%, the target is 100% NER for boys by 2010 and for girls by 2015. An intermediate target of 79% NER (68% for girls and 90% for boys) was set for 2006.

The NPA includes a number of strategies for the realization of universal primary education. EFA plans have been prepared and launched at national, provincial and district levels, and EFA fora and EFA units established at each level to improve coordination and expedite implementation of the NPA. The Compulsory Primary Education Act has been enacted in three out of four provinces of the country as well as in Islamabad Capital Territory. Although enforcement of the act is still pending, significant efforts are being made to get all children into school. According to the NPA, primary education facilities will be provided to all children in the relevant age group and disparities in

the availability of school facilities for boys and girls in both rural and urban areas will be reduced. Almost 30,000 new primary schools are to be constructed and facilities in 100,000 existing schools are to be upgraded. Detailed school mapping is to be undertaken to identify unreached localities, and mosque schools will be opened in smaller settlements. The terms and conditions for recruitment of females are being relaxed to recruit more women teachers. A motivational campaign is to be launched to convince parents to send their children to schools. Under the Girls Primary Education Project, 1,700 community model schools have been established throughout the country with improved facilities. A number of projects are being implemented to improve both access, particularly for girls, and the quality of education.

20.2.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

The estimated population of the primary education age group (5-9 years) in 2005-06 was 19.3 million, 13% of the total population. Comparing statistics in 2001-02 with the data for 2005-06, Pakistan recorded a gradual improvement in numbers and percentages for nearly all indicators during the four-year period.

As illustrated in Table 11, increasing from 96% to 116%, the GIR for Grade 1 rose 20 percentage points during the four-year period from 2001-02 to 2005-06. There was a significant increase of 30 points in female GIR compared to 11 points for males with the resultant 111% GIR for girls and 121% for boys. The NIR increased by 16 points from 77% to 93%. The increase for girls was 23 points compared to 9 points for boys, but at 88% the NIR for girls was still considerably lower than the 97% for boys. As shown in Table 12, during this four-year period, the primary GER increased by 13 points from 71% to 84%. The increase was 17 points for girls compared to 9 points for boys, resulting in 76% GER for girls and 92% for boys. The NER increased by 9 points from 57% to 66%. Whereas the increase for boys was only 6 points, for girls the increase was 12 points. Yet the NER for boys at 72% is still considerably higher (13 points) higher than the 59% NER for girls. This means that over 40% of Pakistan's primary-aged girls are still out of school. In 2001-02, there was a significant difference in NERs of urban areas (65%) and rural areas (53%). However, in four years, the gap had been closed with an NER of 66% in both rural and urban areas.

Table 11: GIR and NIR in Primary Education (%), 2001-2006, Pakistan

Year	GIR in Primary Education			NIR in Primary Education		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
2001-02	96	81	110	77	65	88
2003-04	103	90	116	83	72	93
2005-06	116	111	121	93	88	97

Source: MOE, Government of Pakistan, Education for All Mid Decade Assessment – Pakistan Country Report 2008, pp. 53-54.

Table 12: GER and NER in Primary Education (%), 2001-2006, Pakistan

Year	GER in Primary Education			NER in Primary Education		
	Total	Female	Male	Total	Female	Male
2001-02	71	59	83	57	47	66
2003-04	78	66	90	63	53	72
2005-06	84	76	92	66	59	72

Source: MOE, Government of Pakistan, Education for All Mid Decade Assessment – Pakistan Country Report 2008, pp. 55-56.

At the secondary level, the GER increased by 6.1 percentage points from 24.5% to 30.6% from 2000-01 to 2005-06. The percentage point increase for girls and boys was the same, leaving the same gap in enrolment with GER for girls at 26.6% compared to 34.4% for boys. The NER increased by only just over 4 points for girls and boys over this four-year period. In 2005-06, the overall NER in secondary education was only 23.9%, with boys at 26.8% and girls at 20.7%. This means that only a fifth of Pakistan's girls of the age group and one fourth of the boys are in secondary school. Although not as great as in primary, a gender gap persists which has not been reduced over the four-year period. In secondary education the urban-rural gap persists and is widening. The NER in urban areas increased 8 points in four years from 30% to 38% while in rural areas the NER improved only 3 points from 14% to 17% during the same period.

The overall average repetition rate of primary school children to Grade 5 declined from 2.7% in 2001-02, to 2.1% in 2005-06. The repetition rate for girls declined from 2.4% to 1.9%. The repetition rate to Grade 5 on average in 2005-06 was recorded as 3% in urban areas compared to 1.9% in rural areas. It was reported that from 2001-02 to 2005-06 the survival rate in the public sector increased by nearly 15 percentage points from 57.3% to 72.1%. The survival rate for girls in 2006 at 72.8% was slightly higher than the 71.6% rate recorded for boys.

The share of public expenditure allocated to primary education was only 23.5% in 2001-02. By 2005-06 this had almost doubled to 43.6%.

20.2.3 Analysis of Disparities in Universal Basic Education in Pakistan and Remaining Challenges

Pakistan has made significant progress in primary education. The number of out-of- school primary aged children was reduced from 8.8 million to 6.8 million in four years. However, the intermediate primary NER targets for 2006 of 79% overall, 68% for girls and 90% for boys were missed by 13 percentage points, 9 points and 18 points, respectively. With NERs of 66% overall, 59% for girls and 72% for boys, the prospects of reaching the target of 100% primary enrolment for boys by 2010 and for girls by 2015 seem very unlikely unless new strategies are employed and progress is greatly accelerated.

The gap between girls and boys for most of the indicators has been reduced from the 2001-02 school year to 2005-06. However, huge gender gaps still exist. In 2006, the GPI was 0.82 for GER as well as for NER for the primary level. The GPI for secondary education was 0.77 for both GER and NER. With a GPI of 1.05, Survival Rate to Grade 5 was the only indicator with a difference in favour of girls. Four-tenths of primary age girls and four-fifths of secondary age girls are out of school. This all indicates that renewed efforts for promoting girls' education at every level must be employed in order to close the gender gap and to ensure primary education for all children by 2015.

While generally the indicators are higher for urban areas than for rural areas, for most indicators the gap has been narrowing. The exception is enrolment in secondary education where the gap is widening with 38% NER in urban areas compared with only 17% in rural areas in 2005-06.

There are tremendous variations across the provinces and administrative areas. For instance, the NER for primary is 66% nationally, 84% in ICT and only 40% in Balochistan (32% for girls). The NER for secondary is 24% nationally, 64% in ICT and only 11% in Balochistan and FATA (8% and 3% for girls, respectively). Compared to the national Survival Rate to Grade 5 of 72%, it is 94% in AJK and 39% in FATA (25.5% for girls). Generally the areas with the lowest indicators also have some of the lowest GPIs in the nation.

There was no reporting of rates for indicators below the level of provincial/administrative areas. From the data, it is not possible to compare different linguistic, ethnic and/or socio-economic groups. In order to identify the children who are out of school and to target efforts to enrol and retain them, further analysis will be needed.

20.3 Goal Three: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning in Pakistan

20.3.1 Background and Development of Life Skills and Non-Formal Education in Pakistan

Included in the NPA is the goal of ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. The main focus of the EFA is to meet the learning needs of children, adolescents and adults. Learning needs have been classified into two categories, namely learning content which covers knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, and learning tools which covers literacy, numeracy, problem solving and oral expression. The skills are to be acquired through four pillars of learning, namely learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together and with others, and learning to be. In an effort to provide great specificity on the skills covered within EFA, three typologies have been identified, namely basic skills (literacy and numeracy), psycho-social skills (reflective, personal and interpersonal skills including problem solving, communication, coordination and team work) and practical/ functional skills (manual skills relating to specific vocations or for a specific behaviour such as health).

20.3.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

The youth population (15-24 year age group) increased 4 million (13%) from 30 million in 2001-02, to 34 million in 2005-06. The urban youth population is 16.85 million and the rural population is 17.2 million (49% and 51% of the total, respectively). The number of literates of this age group increased from 19.15 million to 22.63 million over the same four-year period. The youth literacy rate increased from 62% to 66.6%. The rate for males increased 4 points from 73% to 77% compared to an increase of only 3 points for females from 52% to 55%. Provincial statistics indicate that the highest increase in the youth literacy rate (9 points) was in the NWFP and the lowest increase (3 points) was in Sindh. Overall, the highest youth literacy rate in 2005-06 was in Sindh (71%) and the lowest in Balochistan (48%). The female rates for every province were lower than the lowest provincial rates for males. By sex, the highest rate was 77% for males in Punjab and the lowest was 26% for females in Balochistan.

The enrolment of the secondary level age group (ages 10-16) was 6.39 million in 2001-02, of which only 75,000 (1.2%) were enrolled in TVET institutions. In 2005-06 the enrolment was 7.68 million and enrolment in TVET increased to 238,000 (3.1%). There was an increase in enrolment in TVET of around 163,000 from 2001-02 to 2005-06.

Concepts and content on health education and skills have been included in the curricula from primary (Grade 1) to secondary (Grade 10). Teachers' manuals and materials on HIV/AIDS have been developed to create awareness about HIV/AIDS and other contagious and fatal diseases. Health and physical education are optional subjects at secondary level. Health and sanitation, mother care, child care and awareness about various diseases in terms of symptoms, prevention and treatment are included as core concepts in the curricula of functional literacy and post literacy.

The overall transition rate from primary (Grades 1-5) to lower secondary level (Grades 6-8) was 69.2% in 2001-02 (male 68.6% and female 70.2%). In 2005-06, the overall transition rate increased to 76.6% (male 74.5% and female 79.8%). The 9.6 percentage point increase for females was somewhat higher than the 5.9 points for males. The GPI for transition from primary to lower secondary increased from 1.02 to 1.07 in four years, indicating more women than men transition to lower secondary.

The overall transition rate from lower to upper secondary (Grades 9-10) improved 10 percentage points from 76.9% in 2001-02 to 86.9% in 2005-06. The increase in female transition rate of 16.3 points from 70.2% to 86.5% was considerably higher than the 4.9 percentage point increase in male transition rate from 82.3% to 87.2%. The GPI for transition from lower to upper secondary increased from 0.85 to 0.99 in four years.

20.3.3 Analysis of Disparities in Life Skills in Pakistan and Remaining Challenges

This is not an area of high priority in EFA plans or implementation. Life skills have been introduced into the curriculum in both formal and non-formal education, but there is no documentation of the extent of implementation or of the results.

Although the number of adolescents enrolled in TVET has increased, the percentage enrolled in TVET compared to the population is less than 1%. There was no reporting of TVET enrolment for older age groups. The GPI of enrolment in TVET at the secondary level more than doubled from 0.31 to 0.64, but even so the GPI remains very low, indicating a bias against women. Less than 90,000 girls are enrolled in TVET at the secondary level in all of Pakistan compared to nearly 150,000 boys.

Rates of transition from primary to secondary and from lower to upper secondary are improving, and the rates for girls have increased more than for boys. However, the percentage of the age group in secondary schools is still very low, and this is particularly true of girls.

20.4 Goal Four: Literacy in Pakistan

20.4.1 Background and Development of Literacy Acquisition in Pakistan

The NPA assigns a high priority to the goal of achieving a 50% improvement in levels of adult literacy by 2015, especially for women, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults. The target set in the NPA is 86% literacy for the 10+ age group by 2015. With a baseline of only 43%, this target is very ambitious.

In Pakistan, the adult literacy rate has traditionally been recorded for the 10+ age group based on the population census conducted every 10 years. From census to census, the definition of literacy has changed, making it difficult to compare rates over time. In the 1998 Census, the definition of a literate person was "one who can read a newspaper and write a simple letter in any language". The proposed definition for the 2008 Census was "one who can read and write a paragraph in any language with understanding and can make simple calculations".

A Literacy Ordinance was approved by Parliament in 1987 which included provisions for making literacy a prerequisite for participation in economic and social activities. However, a date for enforcement of the act has not yet been set.

The current Education policy (1998-2010) envisages democratization of education through the expansion of elementary education including formal and non-formal methods and expanded adult education, literacy and functional literacy programmes, as a basic requirement for economic development, for modernization of social structures and for providing equality of opportunity for all citizens. It is recognized that Pakistan's international commitment to double the rate of literacy by the year 2015 cannot be accomplished without achieving universal primary education. This will be achieved by complementing the formal primary school system with a strong non-formal basic education initiative. A massive non-formal basic education programme is included in the plan to provide access economically and expeditiously to all the 5.5 million primary school age children who are at present out of school. Adolescents and youth who have missed primary education are to be given a second chance through a crash condensed course to enable them to complete the primary education cycle within two to three years.

A number of measures are being undertaken by the Government to provide literacy for adults, especially for women. Under the President's Education Sector Reforms Programme an amount of Rupees 100 Million has been allocated annually since 2001-02 for opening adult literacy centres in the provinces. The Literacy Initiative for Empowerment (LIFE) has been launched in collaboration with UNESCO. LIFE activities include training of literacy managers and teachers, curriculum development, development of literacy materials, establishment of CLCs and needs assessment for

literacy for the next 10 years. A number of other adult literacy projects are being implemented by the Government and by NGOs. For the first time in the history of Pakistan, a national curriculum for literacy has been developed and launched. The curriculum covers the areas of basic literacy (three levels), functional literacy and income-generating skills.

20.4.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

In 2001-2002, Pakistan's adult literacy rate was 43% (male 57% and female 29%). The urban literacy rate was 63% compared to 34% for rural areas. By 2005-06, the literacy rate of the 15+ age group had increased to 52%. The male literacy rate increased 8 percentage points from 57% to 65%, and the female literacy rate increased 9 points from 29% to 38%. The increase in the overall rate in four years totalled 9 points, or just over 2 points per annum. As has been noted under Goal Three, there has also been a modest increase in the youth literacy rate.

Amongst the provinces, the highest increase in adult literacy rates were in Punjab (from 44% to 54%) and Sindh (from 45% to 55%), which recorded a 10-point increase overall in four years, followed by the NWFP having a 9-point increase (from 45% to 54%). Balochistan had the lowest increase of only 5 points from 32% to 37% (only 1.25 points increase per year). Balochistan remains the province with the lowest adult literacy rates in Pakistan for both males and females.

The literacy and NFE sector were not given due attention in previous decades, and this is one of the reasons for the low literacy rates. In 2005-06, the total allocation for literacy and NFE was around Rupees 3,000 million out of a total education sector allocation of Rupees 170,708 million. About 2% of the education sector allocation is for literacy and NFE. It has been calculated that the minimum budget requirement for the literacy and NFE sector per year is around Rupees 5,051 million. To meet this gap in the budget, an additional Rupees 2,000 million is required annually.

20.4.3 Analysis of Disparities in Literacy in Pakistan and Remaining Challenges

The major focus of literacy programmes in Pakistan is on the female population. More that 80% of literacy centres are for women. A number of development programmes and projects have been launched since 2000 for the promotion of girls' primary education and female literacy. These programmes and projects are beginning to show positive results. The GPI for the national adult literacy rate has improved 0.07 from 0.51 in 2000-02 to 0.58 in 2005-06. The improvement in GPI was highest in rural areas (0.36 to 0.44) compared to urban, where there was a 0.04 decline, and amongst the provinces in Punjab and Sindh. However, with a GPI of only 0.58 in national adult literacy rates, there is still much to be done. Overall, only 38% of adult females in Pakistan are literate compared to 65% of adult males. In Balochistan, the province with the lowest adult literacy indicators in Pakistan, only 18% of adult females are literate compared to 54% of adult males, and the GPI at 0.33 is alarmingly low. There are also large variations in the literacy rates of the provinces. Within provinces there are also enormous differences in rates of the districts with several districts having female literacy rates as low as 3% to 6%.

Based on the analysis of the situation, it is clear that major initiatives will be needed to meet the EFA goals for adult literacy, particularly for women. Besides general programmes to provide literacy to the adult population, specific efforts must be targeted to meet the needs of women, provinces with low literacy rates and ethnic, linguistic and socio-economic groups with particularly low rates.

20.5 Gender Parity and Equality in Education in Pakistan

20.5.1 Background and Development of Gender Parity and Equality in Pakistan

A major goal of the NPA is to eliminate gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005 and to achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girls' full and

equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality. This is a cross-cutting issue which is integral to all the other goals and targets.

Pakistani women and girls constitute 48% of the population. The Government is committed to reducing and narrowing gender disparities and to empowering women significantly through education. According to Vision 2030, gender equality and gender justice entails equality of opportunity for all citizens, both women and men. Through recent government initiatives, there has been some progress in the empowerment of women through their representation on federal, provincial and local electoral bodies and in other spheres of life. The Women Protection Bill 2006 was an important step in the empowerment process. Pakistan's Perspective Plan 2001-11 envisages raising female literacy from 29% to 69% by the end of the plan. Emphasis is on the economic, social and political empowerment of women. Gender gaps, particularly in social indicators, are to be removed and a better quality of life for women is to be ensured. To stimulate sustainable development, gender equality and women's empowerment are to play a major role in the alleviation of poverty, hunger, and disease.

In the education sector, emphasis is placed on female secondary school education. Scholarships and subsidies for girls' education are provided to low-income households to encourage continuation of education beyond the primary level, and particular emphasis is on the provision for girls residing in geographic regions with high poverty concentrations. Scholarships are given to girls to enhance their professional educational qualifications to become teachers. The content of education is being made more relevant to the practical needs of rural girls through the inclusion of subjects such as agriculture, health and hygiene in the curriculum. The portrayal of women in various developmental contexts is being introduced to minimize stereotypes in textbooks. The revamping of science education is a major initiative targeting rural areas and encouraging female students to follow the science stream with the aid of scholarships.

20.5.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

The GPI has been calculated for each indicator to assess where Pakistan stands in terms of gender parity in quantitative terms. The table below gives the GPI for each indicator in 2001-02 compared to 2005-06, along with a calculation of the gains during the four years.

Table 13: GPIs for Key EFA Indicators, 2001-02 and 2005-06, Pakistan

Indicator	GPI for 2001-02	GPI for 2005-06	Increase in GPI
Adult literacy	0.51	0.58	0.07
Youth literacy	0.72	0.72	0.00
GER in ECE	0.83	0.88	0.05
GIR in primary education	0.74	0.91	0.17
NIR in primary education	0.74	0.91	0.17
GER in primary education	0.72	0.82	0.10
NER in primary education	0.72	0.82	0.10
GER in secondary education	0.73	0.77	0.04
NER in secondary education	0.73	0.77	0.04
Survival Rate to Grade 5	1.21	1.01	-0.20
Transition Rate from primary to lower secondary	1.02	1.07	0.05

Source: Pakistan National EFA Mid-Decade Assessment Report, 2008.

Both the absolute number and the percentage of adult male and female literates aged 15 and above increased during the four-year period from 2001-02 to 2005-06. Although the GPI among adult literates improved, at 0.58 this is the indicator with the lowest GPI, signifying that for every 100 men who are literate there are only 58 literate women. Although there was an increase in the absolute number and percentage of youth male and female literates, there was no improvement in gender parity. While there is more disparity in rural areas compared to urban areas, in rural areas the GPI showed a gradual increase from 0.49 to 0.60. There are significant regional differences. The NWFP and Balochistan are far below the national average with GPIs for youth literacy of only 0.39 and 0.42, respectively.

Starting with a fairly high base, the gender disparity in ECE enrolments narrowed over the four-year period from 2001-02 to 2005-06. There are now 88 girls for every 100 boys in ECE programmes. In urban areas, the GPI is in favour of girls while in rural areas the trend is also encouraging as GPI increased from 0.83 in 2001-02 to 0.88 in 2005-06. Punjab recorded a GPI of 0.98, while the FATA at 0.50 in 2005-06, had the lowest GPI in the country.

A sharp increase was recorded in the GPI for both GIR and NIR in Grade 1 with an increase of 0.17 for both, the highest increase for any indicator. Gender disparity each year has comparatively narrowed more in rural areas than urban areas. It is closer to parity (0.93) in rural areas than in urban (0.88). Although it registered a 0.18 improvement, at 0.51 the FATA is still the area with the lowest GPI.

There was also a notable improvement in gender parity in both GER and NER at the primary level. The GPIs for both has gradually increased from 0.72 to 0.82 with improvements in both urban and rural areas. With a GPI of 0.96 in urban areas, gender parity is nearing achievement, while in rural areas with a GPI of 0.76 there is still a considerable gap. This is also true of some of the regions. Although the GPI for GER in the FATA increased from 0.27 in 2001-02 to 0.41 in 2005-06, there is still less than half the number of girls in school as boys.

The GPIs for both GER and NER at the secondary level only marginally increased by 0.04 from 0.73 in 2001-02 to 0.77 in 2005-06. In urban areas, gender parity has been achieved with the GPI for both secondary GER and NER having increased from 0.91 to 0.97 during the same period. However, in rural areas the GPI increased only 0.01 to 0.58. Across the country, the GPI varied greatly. For secondary NERs, the highest rates were recorded for the FANA (0.90) and Punjab (0.89) in 2005-06, whereas the FATA had an alarmingly low GPI in secondary NER of only 0.16 in the same year.

The two indicators for which the GPI is in favour of girls are the Survival Rate to Grade 5 (1.02) and the transition rate from primary to lower secondary (1.07). This is the case for survival to Grade 5 in both urban and rural areas. The GPI for transition from primary to secondary in urban areas is in favour of girls while in rural areas the GPIs are also encouraging and moving towards parity. The GPIs for both survival and transition are fairly high throughout the country, although there are still some significant gender gaps in some areas. In the FATA, the GPIs were 0.55 for survival and 0.81 for transition in 2005-06. In Balochistan, the GPI for transition was 0.84 in 2005-06.

Enrolments in primary schools have significantly increased. However, the proportion of girls of the total enrolment only marginally increased from 2001-02 to 2005-06 by 3 percentage points to 43%. Over the same period, there was a gradual increase in the proportion of girls' primary enrolment in both urban and rural areas. The proportion increased from 46% to 48% in urban areas while in rural areas it improved from 37% to 41%. Although there had been an increase of about one million girls at secondary level since 2001-02, the proportion of girls' enrolment in secondary increased only slightly by 1 percentage point to 42% during the four-year period. In urban areas, the proportion of girls in 2005-06 was 48% compared to 41% in rural areas. From 2001-02 to 2005-06, the proportion of female enrolment in TVET increased from 23% to 38%. The proportion of girls in TVET was higher in rural areas (43%) than in urban areas (36%). Some of the areas of the country have particularly low proportions of girls enrolled at the various levels of schooling. The lowest proportions of girls

in the country were in the FATA for primary (28%), the FANA for secondary (13%) and the NWFP for TVET (31%).

The number of women teachers in primary education has increased by 8 points since 2001-02. However, their proportion of the teaching force only increased from 44% to 45% from 2001-02 to 2005-06, and there is still a large difference in the proportion in urban (64%) and in rural areas (37%). The number of women teachers in secondary schools increased by 140,000 and their proportion increased from 52% to 58% over the same period. There was a positive trend in the increase of female secondary teachers in both urban and rural areas. The proportion of women teachers in urban secondary schools increased from 65% to 69% while in rural secondary schools it increased from 39% to 46%. The number of women teachers in TVET increased tremendously by 150% and their proportion also increased from 26% in 2001-02 to 32% in 2005-06. The proportion of women teachers in TVET is 32% in urban areas and 33% in rural areas.

20.5.3 Analysis of Gender Disparities in Pakistan and Remaining Challenges

Women and girls in Pakistan face many problems related to poverty, illiteracy, malnutrition, discrimination and exclusion from decision-making processes. It is recognized that without developing gender-friendly environments and resolving these issues, women in Pakistan cannot become fully productive members of the society. To realize women's potential in society, initiatives are being taken to reduce gender disparities in all walks of life.

Education is seen as a major vehicle for eliminating gender inequalities within society, but addressing inequalities within the education system itself is also a tremendous challenge. The extent of the problem can be seen in the low adult literacy rate for women of 38% and a GPI for adult literacy of only 0.58. Parity for this indicator can only be achieved through sustained efforts to involve girls and women in education at all levels over a substantial period of time. However, there are encouraging signs. The GPIs for ECE and for gross and net intakes at Grade 1 of primary are comparatively high. This indicates that entry rates at the lowest levels are moving towards parity.

There have been significant gains towards gender parity in enrolments in both ECE and primary, but there needs to be renewed efforts to greatly increase the enrolment of girls in both primary and secondary. The GPIs that are in favour of girls are survival to Grade 5 and transition to secondary schools. This is an indication that, if girls are given the opportunity, they are as likely as boys, and possibly more likely, to continue their education.

Although in general there has been more progress in rural areas than urban during the last four years, the GPIs for most indicators are still higher for urban areas. There are significant regional differences with some of the areas of the country having very low GPIs for most indicators. These are areas where even more concerted efforts must be made to achieve gender parity and eventually equality. There has not been an analysis of gender disparities in sub-groups of the population based on language, ethnicity and/or socio-economic status, but it is likely that the gender gap is greatest amongst the most disadvantaged groups in society.

The main focus of the data is on quantitative measures of progress towards gender parity. There are many other issues related to gender equality which will also need to be addressed if education is to fulfil its role of bringing about a more equal society.

20.6 Goal Six: Quality of Education in Pakistan

20.6.1 Developments in the Provision of Quality Education in Pakistan

Another cross-cutting goal is to improve all aspects of the quality of education and ensure excellence so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. Quality improvement and school effectiveness are the key elements of the NPA.

The Government intends to ensure quality of education by implementing the Education Sector Reforms. The vision of the Education Sector Reforms is to provide quality education that enables all citizens to reach their maximum potential, to produce responsible enlightened citizens and to integrate Pakistan into the global framework of human-centred economic development. It is recognized that continuous efforts are required to address quality and efficiency of education in order to achieve the targets and objectives of EFA. The main quality interventions include reforms in curricula (focusing on basic learning needs of children, adolescents, youth and adults), textbook development, teachers' training and a literacy curriculum. The quality improvement plans are intended to ensure the development of a more relevant learner-centred curriculum, which is supported by, and linked with, the development of higher quality textbooks, teacher training processes and assessment methods. An overriding issue in the education sector was the unavailability of high quality, reliable and standardized data. Through the National Education Census, vast quantities of information are now available covering all categories of educational institutions.

20.6.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

According to the records, all primary school teachers in Pakistan fulfil the required minimum academic qualifications. A recent initiative is underway to upgrade the required qualifications of primary school teachers to graduate level. A number of teacher training and development projects are being implemented by the Government and NGOs.

The PTR in primary education increased from one teacher to 36 students in 2001- 02 to 40 students per teacher in 2005-06 due to the impact of increased enrolments. The PTR for primary in rural areas increased by five to 39:1 during the same period, while in urban areas it increased only by two to 43:1. An increase in enrolment is a target of EFA, but the increased PTR highlights the need to induct new teachers at primary level.

Although there was an increase in enrolment in secondary education, the PTR remained constant at 15:1. There was a substantial increase in the number of secondary teachers. In 2005-06, the PTR in rural areas (18:1) was considerably higher than in urban areas (13:1), but throughout the country the PTRs for secondary are generally low. Only one area (FANA) at 25:1 has a PTR above 20:1.

The Government increased its expenditure on education from Rupees 78.9 billion in 2001-02 to Rupees 170.7 billion in 2005-06. The percentage of public expenditure on education of the total expenditure increased from 9.55% to 12.18%. However, a financial gap still exists. The public expenditure on education as a percentage of GNP increased from 1.76% to 2.20%. In spite of constraints, it is the intention of the Government to increase it further to 4%. The public expenditure per pupil as a percent of GNP per capita for primary education doubled from 4.04% to 8.77%. The public expenditure as a percent of GNP per capita for secondary education increased from 6.36% to 9.68%. The intended result of these increases is the improvement of the quality of education.

Clean drinking water and adequate sanitation are a priority of the Government. A comprehensive national policy has been formulated to address missing facilities in schools. An integrated policy is being implemented with a focus on having clean drinking water for the entire population and maximization of sanitation coverage. The proportion of schools with drinking water increased from 57% in 2001-02 to 69% in 2005-06. The proportion of schools with adequate sanitation facilities increased from 44% to 63% during the same period. The proportion of urban schools with clean water facilities increased from 73% to 90% while in rural schools the increase was from 55% to 63%. The water and sanitation situation in schools varies across the country. In Balochistan, only 32% of schools have water sources and only 28% have adequate sanitation. The Government has launched a national programme to supply basic water and sanitation facilities to all schools of the country.

20.6.3 Analysis of Disparities in Quality of Education in Pakistan and Remaining Challenges

There has been an improvement in all of the quasi-indicators of quality, as illustrated over the four-year period from 2001-02 to 2005-06. This in itself does not guarantee a higher quality of education, but it is an important start.

The PTR in primary schools is not unduly high. While the national average is 40:1, only three areas have higher PTRs. They are Punjab with 44:1, the NWFP with 42:1 and AJK with 41:1. Further investment and teacher recruitment are needed in these areas to ensure that enrolments can increase without an adverse impact on quality. With a national average of only 15:1, the PTR for secondary is very favourable. The PTRs for secondary schools for all provinces and administrative areas are below 20:1, and in Sindh the PTR is only 11:1. There could be considerable growth in secondary enrolments throughout the country without any area exceeding a PTR of 30:1.

It is recognized that quality improvement will take concerted efforts over a substantial period of time. For this reason, quality improvement has been given a high priority. In addition to general strategies for improving the quality of education intended for the whole country, targeted initiatives will also be required to identify and meet the needs of areas, schools and sub-groups of the population which are not being reached adequately with other quality improvement interventions. There is also a pressing need to introduce a coherent policy on teacher education and development.

20.7 Overall Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

The Pakistan National EFA MDA Report has reviewed and analyzed the progress towards EFA by comparing the baseline 2001-02 data with the most recent available data from 2005-06. There has been considerable progress for a number of indicators. The results of the efforts of Pakistan are encouraging and reflect its commitment to attain the targets of EFA. Pakistan has accelerated efforts to achieve universal primary education, gender goals, youth and adult literacy and quality education. The Government has increased its investment in education at every level. However, many challenges remain and efforts must be intensified if the EFA goals are to be met by 2015. The following major priorities have been identified.

The human factor in educational change needs greater policy attention. Leadership should be promoted in the system through carefully designed incentives. Determining merit through testing should be ensured. Teacher education programmes need to be revisited and a professional development centre should be established in each district. National standards of teacher education and a system to accredit teacher education programmes need to be established.

Sustainable improvement in school effectiveness and the quality of education is only possible when apex institutions with sufficient professionals and capacity provide support through research on educational issues of national, provincial and district significance. This is an area that requires strengthening.

Civil society and community participation are essential to achieve success in EFA. The Government fully recognizes the important role of communities in the promotion of education. It would be useful to review the organizational framework of community participation which needs to be more flexible and less prescriptive in nature.

Universal primary education by 2015 can only be assured by consolidating and accelerating efforts for increasing enrolments, improving NERs and GERs, reaching the unreached and disadvantaged groups, enhancing survival and transition rates and minimising drop-out and repetition rates. Efforts for universal primary education must be intensified.

Literacy and poverty eradication are high priority areas in Pakistan and hence they are an integral part of education policy and plans as well as other national strategies such as the PRSP. An integrated approach has been adopted to address all dimensions of the issues. An effective monitoring system has to be in place to ensure efficiency and achievements.

Although there are multiple challenges, Pakistan has made considerable progress in reducing gender disparities for a number of indicators. However, there is still a need to address gender issues in institutions, enrolments, teacher recruitment, GIRs, GERs, NERs and drop-out rates. A renewed commitment to gender goals is required. The information gathering and analysis system requires further strengthening. The formulation of policies should be informed by reliable data from the field. Spending on education in Pakistan has been substantially increased but it still remains low as a percentage of national income. The Government plans to increase spending on education to 4% of GDP. A recommitment to more spending on education as well as to spending more efficiently need to be assured. Governance needs to be improved at provincial, district and sub-district levels. The capacity of departments of education for planning and management require strengthening.

Pakistan introduced the Education Sector Reforms and is implementing the NPA for EFA. Despite economic and financial constraints, funds have been provided even beyond the allocations. However, more funding is needed from both internal and external sources. Achieving Education for All is a challenging goal for Pakistan. It will require the commitment and active engagement of all stakeholders to make it a reality.

21. Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is an island nation separated from India by a narrow strait. The Bay of Bengal lies to its north and east and the Arabian Sea to its west. The population is around 20 million. About three quarters of the population is rural and 1.7 million people live in the Greater Colombo area. Ethnically, the majority of the population is Singhalese, about one-fifth of the population is Tamil and the remaining population mostly Moors with small numbers of other groups. The majority of the people are Buddhist, but there are also substantial numbers of Hindus, Muslims and Christians. Sri Lanka gained independence after 150 years of British rule in 1948. The powers of government are substantially devolved to the elected Provincial Councils. The country is divided into nine provinces which are subdivided into 24 districts.

Sri Lanka's economy has enjoyed moderate success despite a brutal 25-year civil conflict which has inflicted massive economic and social costs, and the tsunami in 2004 which devastated two thirds of the coastal belt and caused heavy damage to human lives and property. Despite having one of South Asia's highest per capita GDP rates (US$ 856), at least a quarter of the population remains below the poverty line. Open economic policies have transformed the traditional agro-based economy to one dependant on services and manufacturing. In 1963, the agricultural sector contributed 44% to the GDP, but by 2004 it had come down to 18%, while services contributed 56% and the industrial sector 26%. During the last half of the century, GDP growth has been around 5.5% annually. The per capita income has risen from US$150 in 1960 to US$1,355 in 2006. Sri Lanka was ranked 99th in the HDI in 2005 and has graduated from a low income country to a middle income country.

Sri Lanka has had high participation rates in education for over 60 years, and during the past decade there has been a major emphasis on improving the effectiveness of the system. The General Education Reforms in 1997 introduced changes in the curriculum and advocated transformation of teaching-learning techniques in order to improve the quality of education and its relevance to individual and national needs. The EFA NPA has converted policy into action. Elements of the plan are integrated into the plans of the MOE and other agencies. The EFA Unit of the MOE is responsible for policy direction, co-ordination and monitoring of EFA programmes.

21.1 Goal One: Early Childhood Care and Education in Sri Lanka

21.1.1 Background and Development of ECCE in Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka is committed to expanding and improving comprehensive ECCE, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Early childhood is defined in the Sri Lankan context as the period of a child's life from conception to age 5. Sri Lanka has used the term "early childhood care and development" (ECCD) instead of ECCE when designing and planning programmes that support children's development, learning, health, nutrition and other attributes. The terminology used for ECCE programmes varies, but the educational services are similar in early childhood development centres, pre-schools and Montessori schools. Daycare centres and crèches differ from the other institutions in that children are taken care of for longer hours in the absence of their working parents.

Early childhood education is an important part of the General Educational Reforms of 1997. The Reforms detailed the actions to be taken for ECCD and pre-school education. The crucial activities include: strengthening the Children's Secretariat and the Non-Formal Education Branch of the MOE; designing awareness programmes; developing training programmes on early childhood development for mothers and care givers; promoting setting up of more pre-schools to provide facilities for greater participation of children between 0-3 years in education; making legislative provisions for the regulations of pre-schools; designing basic curriculum guidelines for pre-schools; and setting up a Department of Early Childhood Education and a Child Study Centre in one of the universities. Activities have been undertaken in all these areas.

The National Policy on Early Childhood Care and Development (2004) is being introduced in the provinces by the Children's Secretariat, which functions under the Ministry of Child Development and Women's Empowerment (MCDWE). The aims of the national policy are: to assure for every child the best start in life by ensuring access to adequate health and nutrition services along with the opportunities for responsive psychosocial stimulation; to promote the importance of an integrated approach that brings together health, nutrition, psychosocial stimulation, safe water, hygiene and sanitation services; to develop standards and guidelines that regulate the development and implementation of ECCD programmes; to clarify the role and responsibilities of central, divisional and local government authorities in the provision and support of ECCD services; to clarify the relationship between governmental, non-governmental agencies, the private sector, communities and families in the provision of ECCD services; to synchronize and coordinate the services provided by the different stakeholders in ECCD; to mobilize and allocate increasing financial resources for and investment in ECCD programmes; to promote the importance of the roles of parents, caregivers and the community in the development of children; and to enhance the capacity of parents, caregivers and communities to adequately support their children's development.

21.1.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

There are home-based programmes, health programmes, crèches and pre-schools that serve the needs of children in the early childhood stage in Sri Lanka. All these programmes, except pre-schools, serve children from birth to a relatively young age. However, the unavailability of systematically updated comprehensive databases at a national level makes it difficult to provide a valid statistical picture of ECCD programmes, especially regarding 0-3 year old children.

There are 315 divisional secretariats in the nine provinces in Sri Lanka. However, information on enrolment in pre-schools was available for only 185 divisional secretariats. The available data indicates a GER in ECCD programmes of 80% in 2006. The Western Province reported the highest enrolment rate of 94%. The Sabaragamuwa Province reported the lowest at 57%. The significant roles played by the Government and NGOs as well as INGOs have contributed towards increasing the enrolment levels in pre-schools in Sri Lanka. Sex disaggregated information is not reported for the GER, but from the other data, such as new entrants to Grade 1 with ECCE experience, it would appear that the enrolment of girls and boys is approximately the same.

The percentage of new entrants to primary Grade 1 who have attended some form of organized ECCD programmes has increased steadily from 77% in 2000 to 90% in 2005. The percentage of girls rose from 79% to 90% while the percentage of boys grew from 76% to 89%. In 2005, the GPI was 1.01.

Data for 2005 have been disaggregated by sex, ethnicity, medium of instruction and geographical location. The percentage of Tamil children (80%) with ECCD experience at entry in Grade 1 is less than the Muslim children (85%) and both are lower than the majority Sinhala children (93%). Only 56% of boys and 57% of girls on plantations have ECCD experience upon entry to Grade 1. The percentage of girls and boys is approximately the same for all three groups. When considering the medium of instruction, the percentage of children who have ECCD experience in Tamil medium (81%) is considerably lower than that of Sinhala medium (93%).

The majority of ECCD centres in Sri Lanka are operated by the private sector, including NGOs and religious groups. However, due to lack of data, it is not possible to give the exact percentages in terms of the number of centres or the number of children covered.

Training for ECCD in the Sri Lankan context is defined as "what has been obtained other than on the job." Improving and expanding training opportunities for care providers has been spelt out in the National Policy on ECCD. The minimum educational and professional qualifications required for care providers are specified in the "Guidelines for Child Development Centres" produced by the Children's Secretariat in 2006. A number of courses are available for training in ECCE but the duration and quality vary greatly. It is not possible with the available data to give the number of ECCD providers who have had appropriate training. A 2004 survey found that in some provinces it is as high as 79% while in others it is as low as 23%.

21.1.3 Analysis of Disparities in Sri Lanka and Remaining Challenges

The National ECCD Policy (2004) is a timely measure taken by the Government to ensure that Sri Lankan children in early childhood receive the nurture, care and education they need to develop to their full potential. The policy includes a strategy to train all ECCD personnel in identifying children at risk and children with special needs. There are variations in participation rates by region and community. These are areas that need to be studied further in order to enrol all children in quality ECCD programmes.

In Sri Lanka, the majority of children have experienced ECCD prior to admission to primary school although the quality of the programmes have not been evaluated. It is recognized that assessment is needed on how children experience child care including the responsiveness of the caregivers, individualization of care and the use of language in the classroom.

There are differences in participation rates according to ethnic and language groups and in various areas in the country. It was identified by the Children's Secretariat that a number of children do not attend pre-school because there are no centres in their locality. For most of the available data, there is no appreciable difference in rates by sex.

Overall, there are very high participation rates in ECCD programmes in Sri Lanka. For the remaining children to be enrolled, more targeted initiatives may be required. For an improvement and standardization of quality, it is recognized that more training and support is required.

21.2 Goal Two: Universal Primary/Basic Education in Sri Lanka

21.2.1 Background and Expansion of Universal Basic Education in Sri Lanka

The goal of UBE is to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to a complete free and compulsory education of good quality. UBE is defined in Sri Lanka as education in Grades 1–9 for

children aged 6 to 14 years. Education is compulsory for all children of this age group, and inclusive education is the accepted policy.

Education for All has been a goal of Sri Lankan society for well over 60 years. The Education Ordinance No. 31 of 1939 provided for enabling legislation to enforce compulsory attendance of children aged 5-14 years, but the Government did not take the necessary steps to introduce regulations to enforce this policy. The National Education Commission (NEC) was established in 1991 as the policy-making body for education in Sri Lanka. The Report of the National Education Commission (1992) drew attention to the need for legislation on compulsory education. After six decades, regulations to enforce compulsory education for the 5-14 age group were introduced with effect from 1 January 1998. These regulations require parents to ensure admission of their children to school and their continued attendance.

In 1945, the Free Education Act paved the way for children from poor families to gain free access to education. The Constitution of Sri Lanka (1978) provides for "the complete eradication of illiteracy and the assurance to all persons of the right to universal and equal access to education at all levels." According to law, the medium of instruction of students should be their mother tongue, and there is provision for instruction in Sinhala and Tamil.

The main focus of the NPA is to improve the quality of education. The objectives of the NPA which are focused on achieving UBE are the provision of UPE, the improvement of quality, access and equity in secondary education and the development of education in conflict affected areas. A number of programmes have been undertaken to ensure that all children can attend school. The state provides free textbooks to all students from Grade 1 to Grade 11. School uniform materials are provided for all students. Through the Grade 5 scholarship programme, a subsidy for secondary education is given to students of low income families who perform well on the exam. School nutrition programmes are mainly focused on students of Grades 1 and 2 in approximately 8,023 schools in difficult areas. Small rural schools have been established all over the island giving access to basic education to a substantial proportion of the population. There have also been efforts to improve schools and education in the conflict areas.

21.2.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

Although enrolment rates in Sri Lanka have been impressive for many years, the target of total participation in basic education has not yet been achieved, and in the last five years some of the achievements have been eroded. There has also been some difficulty with data collection. Data for seven districts are not available as the population census could not be held due to the conflict situation. Population estimates have been calculated for these districts based on the census data of 1981. Accordingly some of the key indicators have been estimated for the affected areas of the country.

The GIR for Grade 1 of the primary cycle was 102% for both males and females in 2001. By 2004, the national rate had dropped to 90% for girls and 91% for boys. It had increased again somewhat in 2005 with 93% for girls and 95% for boys, with a GPI of 0.97. The variation among districts in 2005 ranged from 81% to 102% for girls, and from 85% to 102% for boys.

The NIR for Grade 1 steadily decreased from 96% in 2001 to 88% in 2004 but picked up slightly to 91% in 2005. The national NIR in 2001 was 96% for girls and 95% for boys. In 2005, the NIR was 90% for girls and 91% for boys with a GPI of 0.99. The district rates ranged from 79% to 100% for girls and from 83% to 99% for boys.

In 2001, the national GERs in primary education was 108% overall, 108% for girls and 109% for boys with a GPI of 0.99. By 2005, the percentages had declined to 97%, 94% and 99%, respectively, with a GPI of 0.94. The district rates vary from 87% to 100% for girls and from 91% to 104% for boys. Although according to the GERs, more girls (106%) than boys (103%) participated in primary

education in the urban sector, the participation of girls (102%) was slightly lower than that of boys (103%) in the rural sector. In the plantation sector, the GER was lower for girls (97%) than for males (106%). Among the ethnic groups, the highest GER was for Muslim boys (109%) and the lowest for Tamil girls (100%).

The national NER in primary education also showed a downward trend from 92% in 2001 to 89% in 2005. In 2001, the NER for girls was 93% while the rate for boys was 91% with a GPI of 1.03. In 2005, the rates had dropped to 90% for boys and 88% for girls. The decline was greater for girls than for boys, and the GPI was reversed to 1.00. Among the districts, the rates in 2005 ranged from 78% to 96% for girls and from 82% to 96% for boys. It has to be noted that an unspecified number of children in the 5-14 age range attend international schools. Enrolment data for these schools are not available, but it is estimated that about 2% of the children in the relevant age range are enrolled in these schools.

Table 14: Primary Education NER, by Sex and GPI, 2001-2005, Sri Lanka

Year	NER			
	Total	Male	Female	GPI
2001	92	91	93	1.03
2002	95	95	95	1.00
2003	92	92	92	1.00
2004	91	92	90	0.99
2005	89	90	88	1.00

Source: Sri Lanka National EFA Mid-Decade Assessment Report, 2008.

In 2001, the GER in secondary education for both girls and boys was 96% with a GPI of 1.0. By 2005, there had been a decline for both sexes to 95% and 92%, respectively, with a GPI of 1.03. Rates for the districts ranged from 87% to 98% for girls and from 86% to 103% for the boys.

There was minimal change in the national average NER in secondary from 89% in 2001 to 90% 2005. Girls' NER remained at 91% and the boys' at 88% with a GPI of 1.04 The lowest rates in the districts were 84% for girls and 82% for boys. In Colombo, the rates were exceptionally high with 96% for girls and 101% for boys. This is the result of students migrating from other districts to enrol in Grade 6 in Colombo schools.

The transition rates from primary to lower secondary were 98% for girls and 96% for boys in 2001. The rates improved to 99% for girls and 98% for boys in 2005 with a GPI of 1.01. An examination of the rates across the different population groups reveals that the transition rate for both male and female children in plantation schools (95% and 96%, respectively) are lower than the rates for students in other schools (97% for boys and 99% for girls). Also, the rates in Tamil and Muslim schools are lower than those in Sinhala schools. The transition rates in 2005 for males and females in urban schools were 108% and 111%, respectively, whereas the transition rates for males and females in rural schools were 95% and 96%, respectively. The transition rates of over 100% in urban schools are due to the migration of students from rural schools to urban schools at Grade 6.

Transition rates from lower secondary to upper secondary are slightly lower than those from primary to lower secondary. However, a slight improvement in the rates can be observed from 2001 to 2005 where the increase was from 95% to 96% for girls and from 92% to 94% for boys.

Primary completion rates were calculated as a percentage of the relevant school-going age population rather than by using a cohort analysis. The completion rates hardly changed from 89% in 2001 to 90% in 2005. The completion rate for girls in 2005 was 91% compared to 88% for boys with a GPI of 1.03.

Repetition rates are relatively low in all the primary grades. In the Sinhala medium schools, the rates for both sexes for every grade are below 1%. In the Tamil medium schools, the repetition rates for girls range from a low of 0.89% for girls and 1.16% for boys in Grade 1 to a high of 2.03% for girls in Grade 4 and 2.57% for boys in Grade 5. Generally, the repetition rates for boys were higher than those of girls.

The overall PTR is around 22:1, which by regional standards is quite low, but this masks high variations among schools and areas. The education system managed by the MOE has a more than adequate stock of teachers. Yet severe teacher shortages exist in some areas, especially in remote rural schools. The shortages are particularly severe in Science, Mathematics and English subjects. At the same time there are large surpluses of teachers in some urban schools. There are excesses and deficits of teachers at the same time in almost all districts. This means that some schools enjoy the benefit of more than their share of teachers at the expense of less fortunate schools.

National expenditure on education declined from 3.5% in the 1990s to about 3% of the national income by 2005. The Government education expenditure in Sri Lanka currently amounts to about US$415 million annually which is about 7%-9% of Government spending. The escalation of defence expenditure in the context of the civil war has contributed to the decline of allocation for education. Defence expenditure in 2005 accounted for over 5% of the GDP. The other reasons for the relatively moderate public education investment include the broad range of public services such as free health care and wide ranging access to poverty alleviation programmes.

21.2.3 Analysis of Disparities in Universal Basic Education in Sri Lanka and Remaining Challenges

The intentions of the Government, which are in line with internationally accepted principles on the rights of the child, are reflected in the national policy and objectives on education. However, it is recognized that weaknesses, shortcomings, gaps and lapses are evident in translating these policies and objectives into actions and strategies. The Government has almost entirely taken over the burden of providing education for children. Free instruction, textbooks, uniforms, mid-day meals and subsidized transport are provided for school-going children. Despite all these steps, Sri Lanka has still not achieved UBE. There are serious disparities in the provision of resources to schools. There is no strict policy or procedure to ensure that every school receives an adequate quota of teachers. The provision of infrastructure facilities and furniture is not equitably executed. These shortcomings have seriously affected the quality of education and achievement levels of students in less fortunate schools. It will be necessary to positively discriminate towards small and deprived schools to bring them up to the national standards until these inequalities are eradicated. Also, the MOE should set up an efficient and practicable monitoring system to constantly monitor the progress of the system so that any shortcomings can be addressed promptly and effectively.

The NEC of Sri Lanka has identified the following as vulnerable groups of children: plantation children; children with disabilities; working children including those in domestic service; children of migrant women workers; street children; orphaned, abandoned and destitute children within and outside children's homes; and children in remand homes, detention centres and certified schools. There are strategies and special programmes for reaching each of these vulnerable groups, but renewed efforts will be necessary if they are to be provided equal access to a quality education which will make a difference in their lives. The Sri Lanka National EFA MDA Report lists a number of recommendations for identifying and better serving children who are not participating in primary education as well as the children who enter but do not receive a good quality education due to social and economic barriers or because of inadequacies in the system.

21.3 Goal Three: Life Skills and Lifelong Learning in Sri Lanka

21.3.1 Background and Development of Life Skills and Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka

The goal of life skills and lifelong learning envisages the development of three skills sets: basic skills such as literacy and numeracy, which enable a person to acquire the skill of learning to learn; psycho-social skills that help to develop one's personality to successfully face problems and challenges confronted in day-to-day living; and practical and technical skills which equip a person to earn a living. The strategies adopted to ensure fulfilment of the goal are: the designing of a curriculum appropriate for imparting basic skills, psycho-social skills and technical and vocational skills in schools; delivery of the curriculum by competent teachers; and ensuring the required inputs in order to maintain the expected standard of quality.

The school curriculum is designed to achieve the national goals identified by the NEC in its 1992 report and subsequently modified by its 2003 report. Acquisition of skills takes place through the total school curricula comprising of academic subjects as well as co-curricular activities. A few subjects have also been introduced into the curriculum, especially to facilitate the teaching of life skills.

21.3 2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

The subject of life competencies was introduced in 1999 into the junior secondary curriculum under the education reforms programme. The emphasis was on developing skills and attitudes relating to life situations in children by engaging them in specially designed participatory activities rather than by teaching them in the traditional manner. In 2004, the MOE integrated life competencies with civics education. The ongoing curriculum revision is giving more attention to improving life competencies education. Life skills have been integrated into the health and physical education curriculum, and initiatives are being taken to integrate psycho-social competencies into Grades 3 and 4 of the primary school curriculum.

A good all-round education is expected from schools. In Sri Lanka, it is recognized that a good general education includes an orientation to the world of work which fits the outputs from the school system to the work opportunities that are available. Practical and technical skills are compulsory subjects from Grades 6 to 9. At the secondary level, science, technology and a practical subject are compulsory for all students in schools. It is expected that students who complete these subjects will have a broad idea of the work opportunities available and the basic skills required to undergo further training in the field of their choice. The Government has recently introduced technology subjects at the senior secondary level as well.

The post-secondary courses of the technical education and vocational training (TEVT) system encompass various forms and levels of training, which generally start after completion of the senior secondary level of schooling (Grade 11, age 16 years) and go up to the diploma level. The first tier of training consists of certificate courses which are designed to produce semi-skilled to crafts-level workers. These courses range in duration from six months to four years. The next tier of courses consists of diploma programmes which vary in duration from three to four years. The objective is to prepare students to become versatile technicians capable of performing a broad spectrum of work between that of an engineer and a skilled worker. About 320 TEVT institutions throughout the country are operated by the major public TEVT providers. A number of ministries are involved in TEVT, either as part of their mandated functions or as part of serving their respective sectors. Other public TEVT providers and operators include 379 statutory bodies, 209 government institutions and 21 special institutions. The Government is seeking to reduce unemployment and respond to the changing labour market by combining short- and medium-term strategies. In the short term, the Government is exploring the possibility of expanding local and foreign skilled and semi-skilled employment, while over the medium term, according high

priority to manufacturing-based growth with increased foreign investment. This strategy requires highly trained labour, including technicians and technologists, who are currently in short supply. The Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission is planning to develop a national TEVT policy framework. By incorporating a policy on quality assurance, it is planning to develop a strong TEVT sector responsive to the requirements of industry, learners and other stakeholders. The National Vocational Qualifications Framework of Sri Lanka (NVQSL) is to be the key element in unifying TEVT. National skills standards are to be prepared in consultation with industry. National quality standards for teaching and assessment using a competency based approach are to be the basis for national certification of learners and workers. The NVQSL is benchmarked with the systems of developed countries.

Sri Lanka is still a low prevalence country for HIV. But the national surveillance statistics shows a slow but progressive increase in reported cases. HIV/AIDS prevention education was initiated in the education system in 1994, but the knowledge of STDs and HIV/AIDS among Sri Lankan adolescents is poor. According to recent studies only 57% of adolescents are aware of the existence of STDs in general. The knowledge of transmission and prevention of HIV/AIDS was relatively better compared to knowledge of other STDs. About 50% to 60% of adolescents demonstrated positive attitudes towards HIV/AIDS patients and attitudes improved with age. The knowledge of HIV/AIDS and symptoms and signs of STDs was marginally higher among out-of-school adolescents compared to those in schools, reflecting a knowledge transfer through community channels. However, overall knowledge could not be considered satisfactory as the overall percentage of those with correct knowledge rarely exceeded 50%.

21.3.3 Analysis of Disparities in Life Skills and Non-Formal Education in Sri Lanka and Remaining Challenges

Although life skills competencies and an introduction to technical and vocational skills have been a part of the curriculum for many years in Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka's National EFA MDA Report did not find the country to be making sufficient progress towards the goal of promoting life skills and lifelong learning. It was found that a poor understanding of the subject matter and misinterpretation between technical skills, psycho-social skills and basic educational competencies are the main weaknesses in the school system. The time allocated for the subject is not adequate, and most teachers are still using traditional lecture methods for teaching purposes.

There is no strong psycho-social competencies development programme for out-of-school youth. The National Youth Services Council and the Plantation Human Development Trust have life skills development programmes, but the coverage is limited. The Sri Lanka Red Cross Society and a few NGOs are conducting life competency development programmes in the conflict affected areas but the coverage is not adequate to reach all affected children and young people.

Post-secondary higher technical education is relatively underdeveloped. Only a limited number of mandated public providers and a few enterprising private technical institutions with foreign affiliations are engaged in higher technical skills development. This is one of the major difficulties in responding to labour market demands.

The Government is the main financier and provider of TVET in Sri Lanka. As the TVET system has expanded, activities are being duplicated and the system is facing operational and financial constraints. These affect the efficiency, relevance, and quality of TVET. There is a growing number of private providers of TVET courses, but these mostly focus on information technology. They award an assortment of certificates and diplomas with no assurance of quality or national recognition. There appears to be tremendous variation in their training quality, from outstanding to very poor. This may compound the unemployment situation and discourage the youth from pursuing TVET programmes.

21.4 Goal Four: Adult Literacy and Continuing Education in Sri Lanka

21.4.1 Background and Development of Literacy Acquisition in Sri Lanka

The Constitution of Sri Lanka has among its goals, "the complete eradication of illiteracy and assurance to all persons of the right to universal and equal access to education at all levels" and "to promote with special care the interests of children and youth so as to ensure their full development, physical, mental, religious, social and to protect them from exploitation and discrimination". Literacy represents the core of the development spelled out in the above two articles. Literacy in Sri Lanka is defined as the ability to read and write in the first language.

In the Three Year Action Plan for Education for All (2002-2004), adult literacy was included in the fourth segment of NFE. Improving adult literacy programmes was one of the specific goals identified. However, a general expectation rather than a specific goal was implied in the plan. The Action Plan for 2004-2008, on the other hand, is more specific and detailed. The objective for the period from 2004-2008 is to ensure that out-of-school youth in the compulsory education age group acquire functional literacy. The objective, however, does not take cognizance of the needs of illiterate adults who are above 18 years. A draft Action Plan has been developed for the period from 2007-2010. It has identified four objectives related to literacy, namely the development of basic literacy among youth and adults from 91% to 100% by 2010, the development of functional literacy among youth and adults, the development of life/practical skills and the development of both the practical and technical skills required to succeed in life through the school system.

21.4.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

The NFE Branch of the MOE operates three types of NFE programmes. In 2005, the enrolment in the three programmes was 17,994 with 11,746 female participants (65%) and 6,248 male participants (35%). The enrolment by type of programme was 4,175 in basic literacy (23%), 3,796 in functional literacy (21%) and 10,023 in CLCs (56%). Geographically, in all three types of activities, the worst-served areas appeared to be the North-Central, North-Western and North-East provinces. This is a cause for concern as the literacy rates for North-Central and North-Western provinces were lower than the national literacy rate.

The non-identification of specific targets or performance indicators to be achieved in relation to literacy at the national level, by region or sex prevents an accurate assessment of progress achieved. In a country where census figures show high literacy rates it is important to differentiate levels of literacy, particularly to identify individuals who may have low and hardly usable levels of literacy. As there has been no attempt to assess literacy using reliable instruments and as there are no statistics on degrees of literacy, it is not possible to ascertain whether or not literacy levels are improving.

The latest available literacy statistics are from the 2001 National Census which did not cover seven districts in the conflict-affected Northern and Eastern provinces. Although at 91%, Sri Lanka has the highest adult literacy rate in the region, there has only been a modest increase since 1981 of 4 percentage points from 87%. The female rate, which increased from 83% to 90%, showed a greater improvement than the male rate, which increased from 91% to 93%. GPI rose from 0.91 to 0.96, but overall it is disappointing progress considering how advanced the country was two and a half decades ago. There is no data to show whether or not there has been any additional progress in the last five years.

Sri Lanka in 2001 had a high rate of literacy (95.6%) among its youth (ages 15- 24), and the female rate (96.0%) for this age group was slightly higher than the male rate (95.1%) with a GPI of 1.01. Among the sectors, the estate sector had the lowest youth literacy rate (85.5%) and the rate for females (84%) was lower than the male rate (87%). Among the provinces, the highest rate of youth literacy as well as of female youth literacy was in the Western province. In six out of the seven

provinces for which data is available, the female rate was higher. The only province in which the female rate was lower is the Central province which has a substantial proportion of its population coming from the estate sector.

21.4.3 Analysis of Disparities in Literacy in Sri Lanka and Remaining Challenges

In all districts, the adult literacy rate was lower for females than for males but the disparity is low. As noted above, the reverse is largely true for youth literacy. The disparities are more pronounced at the district level with the highest percentage of 95.4% being for a district in the Western province while the rates for plantation districts were considerably lower (82.6% to 85.2%).

Comparing statistics on adult literacy rates with poverty levels, while there is no direct correlation between the two variables, it is clear that on the whole, poor districts tend to have lower rates of literacy in relation to the national literacy rate. The available data indicates a clear relationship between poverty and illiteracy with the districts that have high poverty indicators having a literacy rate below 90%.

The report notes that the ultimate goal of improving literacy is not only to ensure that all people become literate but also that they have opportunities to reach higher levels of proficiency to improve the quality of their lives. Thus the objective should be not only to estimate the percentage of population (adults and young adults) who gain literacy but also to classify the levels of literacy that they have mastered. In this way, programmes can be designed and supported to improve levels and uses of literacy.

It is recommended that the following groups are identified as priority target groups for literacy programmes: those who lack literacy in disadvantaged communities such as urban slums, estates, fishing, remote rural and conflict-affected communities; gypsies and prisoners; those who have lapsed into illiteracy as a result of not utilizing literacy and numeracy skills such as early drop-outs and child workers; children with special needs, child workers, children in detention camps and disabled adults who have never received the opportunity of enrolling in school; and children who are in school but whose learning achievement is low. By developing and implementing strategies to meet the educational needs of these groups, combined with the effects of UBE, there should be a steady increase in the youth and adult literacy rates.

21.5 Goal Five: Gender Parity and Equality in Education in Sri Lanka

21.5.1Background and Development of Gender Parity and Equality in Sri Lanka

In Sri Lanka's NPA, gender is considered a cross-cutting issue, an integral part of the first four goals. Sri Lanka has a long tradition of promoting the rights of girls and women. The 1978 Constitution not only guarantees equal rights without discrimination on the basis of sex but also provides for policies of affirmative action to remove gender discrimination. Policies increasing access to education have been universally implemented for over six decades and education has been a major agent in reducing gender and socio-economic disparities within the education system as well as in society at large. Free primary, secondary and tertiary education since 1945 has been a major factor that has contributed to the achievement of gender equality in terms of access to education at all levels.

21.5.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

Sri Lanka already had impressive indicators in terms of the GPI at the beginning of the century, and these have been maintained. With a few exceptions, gender parity has been achieved for many of the core indicators with 2005 GPIs within the 0.97 to 1.03 range.

Although very high for the region, adult literacy rates have only risen moderately from 87% in 1981 to 91% in 2001. Compared to a general increase of only 4 percentage points in 20 years, the female

adult literacy rate improved by 7 points from 83% to 90%, and the GPI improved from 0.91 to 0.96. Gender parity for youth literacy has been achieved with a GPI of 1.01 in 2005.

There is one area of concern with regard to maintaining gender parity. Both the GER and the NER for primary education decreased nationally from 2001 to 2005, as has already been noted. It is important to also note that the decrease was greater for girls than for boys. While the GER for boys during the period declined by 10 points from 109% to 99%, for girls the decrease was 14 points from 108% to 94%. Although not as dramatic, a similar pattern is seen in the NERs. While boys' NER decreased by only 1 point from 91% to 90%, the decline for girls was 5 points from 93% to 88%. During the period, the GPI for GER decreased from 1.01 to 0.95 and for NER the decrease was from 1.02 to 0.98.

Table 15: Primary GER and NER (%), by Sex and GPI, 2001-2005, Sri Lanka

Year	GER				NER			
	Total	Female	Male	GPI	Total	Female	Male	GPI
2001	108	108	109	1.01	92	93	91	1.02
2002	105	104	106	0.98	95	95	95	1.00
2003	100	99	101	0.98	92	92	92	1.00
2004	101	102	107	0.95	91	90	92	0.98
2005	97	94	99	0.95	89	88	90	0.98

Source: Sri Lanka National EFA Mid-Decade Assessment Report, 2008.

21.5.3 Analysis of Gender Disparities in Sri Lanka and Remaining Challenges

For most of the indicators there are no major concerns about gender disparity issues among sub-groups of the population. However, in all districts, the adult literacy rate of women is lower than the men's rate, although the disparities are relatively low. This is an area that needs concentrated action in order to identify women not accessing education and to provide them with opportunities to become literate. In the case of youth literacy, gender parity has been achieved.

21.6 Goal Six: Quality of Education in Sri Lanka

21.6.1 Developments in the Provision of Quality Education in Sri Lanka

As with gender, in Sri Lanka's NPA, quality is considered a cross-cutting issue, an integral part of the first four goals. The main focus of the NPA is to improve the quality of education. This is consistent with educational policy and the thrust of the Government's education initiatives in the last decade. The changes introduced as part of the General Education Reforms in 1997 had as their main purpose to improve the quality and relevance of education.

Quality is defined as the acquisition of information with the promotion of personality attributes such as critical thinking, problem solving, decision-making, team work, responsibility and human values that are essential to ensure effective performance in the work place as well as a multifaceted quality life. This provides the broad framework for initiatives to improve the quality of education at all levels and in all spheres.

21.6.2 Progress Achieved in Selected EFA MDA Core Indicators

An analysis of most of the quality indicators is included in the discussion on EFA Goal 2, universal basic education. For most indicators, Sri Lanka has registered impressive results. Completion rates for primary education are 91% for girls and 88% for boys. Repetition rates in primary education are relatively low. At 22:1 the PTR for primary education is remarkably low. The percentage of primary

teachers having the required academic qualifications increased from 65% in 2000 to 85% in 2005, and 80% of secondary teachers are certified to teach according to national standards.

21.6.3 Analysis of Disparities in Quality of Education in Sri Lanka and Remaining Challenges

Sri Lanka recognizes that despite the overall positive indicators, the quest for quality has not yet been attained. A number of areas have been identified for further work in order to improve the quality of all educational provision and to target areas where quality is particularly problematic. It is recognized that there are still serious disparities in the provision of resources to schools, including the placement of teachers.

In ECCD, the majority of centres are operated by the private sector. This has meant that it has been difficult to maintain standards of quality. It is recognized that more training and support are required for an improvement of quality and in order to bring a degree of standardization to services.

The NEC of Sri Lanka has identified a number of vulnerable groups of children. Some special steps have been taken for these children. It is important that initiatives include not only provision for access to school but equitable access to a high quality education.

21.7 Overall Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

Sri Lanka has a long tradition of educational provision for both girls and boys as a means of national development. As a result, along with the Maldives, the country has achieved the most impressive EFA indicators in the South Asia region. However, the Government has recognized that there is no room for complacency. For each of the goal, areas have been identified for further improvement in order to reach the EFA targets by 2015.

The National ECCD Policy (2004) is being implemented to ensure that Sri Lankan children receive the care and nurture they need to develop to their full potential. The vision, mission, aims, areas of action and objectives have been clearly stated in the policy statement. It has identified the framework and mechanisms to ensure quality assurance in ECCD and stipulates the responsibilities and functions of the Government, the private sector, NGOs and communities. However, it is recognized that the aims of the policy do not adequately reflect the multicultural nature of Sri Lankan society. The development of harmony among various ethnic groups living in Sri Lanka should be a major aim of ECCD. Since pre-schools are important agents in reaching parents, objectives with regard to social cohesion and social integration should be included in the policy. It is recommended that bilingual or multilingual staff who view diversity as an asset should be trained to work with children that attend ECCD centres from different linguistic backgrounds.

The achievement of universal basic education has been given top priority by the Government. The Government is fully funding all aspects of primary education. Funds have been allocated even in the midst of financial constraints. However, despite all the efforts, UBE has not yet been achieved. It is recognized that more intensive and more directly targeted efforts are required. Effective measures are needed to get all out-of-school children into education and to ensure uniformity of quality standards for schools throughout the country. Also, the Ministry needs to set up an efficient monitoring system to constantly assess, review and analyze the progress of the system so that shortcomings can be addressed promptly and effectively.

Sri Lanka has made noteworthy progress in the area of literacy and basic skills due to its social development policies of providing free education to all children. The importance of psycho-social skills however has only recently been recognized. The teaching of life skills has been adopted as a new subject in the curriculum. Aspects of life skills are also included in other subjects such as civics, health and physical education. There is also an emphasis on peace and conflict resolution

implemented through the academic curriculum as well as through co-curricular activities. However, much still needs to be done in this area to ensure the development of life skills in children and adolescents. Technical and vocational programmes also need to be made more practical and aligned with market needs in order to contribute to economic and social growth.

Sri Lanka has one of the highest literacy rates in the region. However, there have only been moderate increases in the last two decades and universal literacy as a goal has been given little emphasis. New measures are needed to finally achieve the objective of universal literacy. The ultimate goal of improving literacy is not only to ensure that all people become literate but also that they have opportunities to reach higher levels of proficiency in literacy to improve the quality of their lives.

A review of the policies, legislation, plans and actions that have targeted the achievement and maintenance of high levels of literacy in Sri Lanka clearly indicate that progress made in literacy and formal education in the space of six decades, especially in relation to the other countries in South Asia, are impressive. However, the EFA agenda is still far from fully achieved. Policymakers as well as practitioners in education should identify universal literacy of both children and adults as a realistic goal on which it is not possible to make any compromises.

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Statistical Tables

Annex 2: Country Profiles

Annex 3: Bibliography/References

Reader's Guide

The following symbols are used in the Statistical Tables and Country Profiles:

…	No data available
*	National estimation
**	UIS estimation
-	Magnitude nil or negligible
.	Not applicable
(p)	Data for the reference year or more recent years are provisional
x	Data refer to years or periods other than those specified in the column heading, differ from the standard definition, or refer to only part of a country
+n	Data refer to the school or financial year (or period) n years or periods after the reference year or period
-n	Data refer to the school or financial year (or period) n years or periods before the reference year or period
#	Data refer to the most recent year available during the period specified in the column heading

Note: All the data used in Annex 1: Statistical Tables came from the UNESCO Institute for Statistics Data Centre, accessed on February 2008.

Annex 1: Statistical Tables

Goal 1: Expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

Gross Enrolment Ratio in Pre-Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	15.7	15.5	15.9	2004	10.3	10.2	10.4
Bhutan	2000	1.2	1.2	1.2	2005	1.6	1.7	1.5
India	2000	23.5	22.9	24.2	2005	38.8	38.0	39.7
Maldives	2000	60.0	59.2	60.9	2006	82.4	82.4	82.3
Nepal	2000	11.8**	13.5**	10.0**	2006	27.1	28.4	25.8
Pakistan	2000	63.3*	74.0*	51.9*	2005	52.5	55.2	49.6
Sri Lanka		…	…	…		…	…	…

Goal 2: Ensuring that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality.

Gross Intake Ratio in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	114.7	117.0	112.3	2004	123.2	122.1	124.3
Bhutan	2000	84.5	88.8	80.1	2005	103.2	104.3	102.0
India	2000	120.1	128.7	110.6	2005	128.6	131.7	125.1
Maldives	2000	100.8	101.4	100.1	2005	101.3	97.9	104.8
Nepal	2000	128.9	141.8	115.3	2006	160.2*	160.0*	160.4*
Pakistan		…	…	…	2006	113.0	124.9	100.4
Sri Lanka	2001	98.7	98.5	99.0	2005	108.7**	108.7**	108.8**

Net Intake Rate in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	73.9**	74.5**	73.3**	2004	85.6	82.9	88.4
Bhutan	1999	20.3**	21.3**	19.3**	2005	32.1	32.3	31.9
India		…	…	…		…	…	…
Maldives	2000	86.0	86.5	85.6	2002	88.4	88.4	88.5
Nepal		…	…	…		…	…	…
Pakistan		…	…	…	2006	88.1	97.4	78.3
Sri Lanka	2001	91.4	91.1	91.7	2004	97.5**	97.6**	97.4**

Gross Enrolment Ratio in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	101.6	101.4	101.7	2005	102.9	101.2 (2004)	104.6 (2004)
Bhutan	2000	78.2	83.6	72.8	2005	96.7	98.1	95.3
India	2000	93.9	101.3	85.8	2005	114.6	115.9	113.2
Maldives	2000	133.7	133.5	134.0	2005	118.7	120.2	117.2
Nepal	2000	116.7	129.8	102.7	2005	126.1	129.0 (2006)	123.0 (2006)
Pakistan	2000	69.2*	81.9*	55.7*	2005	84.1	94.2 (2006)	73.5 (2006)
Sri Lanka	2001	105.4	106.0	104.7	2005	108.3	108.4** (2005)	108.3** (2005)

Net Enrolment Rate in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	83.4*	83.0*	83.9*	2004	88.9*	87.4*	90.5*
Bhutan	2000	58.8	61.9	55.7	2005	73.9	74.0	73.8
India	2000	79.2*	85.4*	72.3*	2005	88.5	90.1	86.8
Maldives	2000	100.9	100.5	101.4	2005	100.5	100.4	100.6
Nepal	2000	70.5**	77.1**	63.4**	2004	79.2**	84.3**	73.8**
Pakistan	2001	57.2**	67.8**	46.0**	2006	65.6	73.5	57.3
Sri Lanka	2001	99.0	98.7	99.3	2005	105.7**	105.5**	106.0**

Gross Enrolment Ratio in Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	46.2	45.2	47.2	2004	43.8	43.0	44.5
Bhutan	2000	41.7	45.8	37.6	2005	46.1	49.0	43.2
India	2000	46.3	53.7	38.2	2005	54.0	59.0	48.6
Maldives	2000	55.3	53.3	57.4	2004	73.4**	68.9**	78.2**
Nepal	2000	35.3	41.0	29.3	2006	43.2**	45.7**	40.5**
Pakistan	2001	24.7*	29.0*	20.1*	2006	30.0	33.7	26.2
Sri Lanka	2002	86.0**	83.4**	88.8**	2004	87.2**	86.4**	88.0**

Net Enrolment Rate in Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	43.1	42.2	44.0	2004	41.0	40.2	41.8
Bhutan	2000	19.2	19.2	19.2	2005	35.5**	35.5**	35.6**
India		…	…	…		…	…	…
Maldives	2000	39.8**	36.9**	42.7**	2005	64.1**	61.2**	67.1**
Nepal		…	…	…		…	…	…
Pakistan		…	…	…	2006	29.7	33.3	25.8
Sri Lanka		…	…	…		…	…	…

Goal 3: Ensuring that the learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes.

Youth Literacy Rate (Age 15-24), After 2000, Sub-Region

Country	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2001	64.0	67.0	60.0
Bhutan		…	…	…
India	2001	76.0	84.0	68.0
Maldives		…	…	…
Nepal	2001	70.0	81.0	60.0
Pakistan	2005	65.0	77.0	53.0
Sri Lanka	2001	96.0	95.0	96.0

Transition Rate from Primary to Secondary, 2000-2005, Sub-Region

Country	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	84.1	79.2	89.1	2003	89.3	86.5	92.1
Bhutan	2000	82.5	82.3	82.6	2005	…	…	…
India	2000	86.6	88.1	84.5	2004	85.1	86.5	83.4
Maldives	2002	61.6**	56.6**	66.6**	2004	78.2	74.6	82.2
Nepal	2000	71.6	70.9	72.6	2003	76.7**	78.7**	74.3**
Pakistan	2000	…	…	…	2005	71.7	69.3	75.2
Sri Lanka	2001	98.8**	98.1**	99.6**	2004	99.3**	…	…

Percentage of Enrolment in TVET at Secondary Level, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000		Latest Year	
	Year	Total	Year	Total
Bangladesh	2000	1.0	2004	1.6
Bhutan	1999	1.7	2005	1.5
India	2000	0.9	2005	0.8
Maldives	2000	2.3	2004	3.9**
Nepal	2000	1.4	2004	1.1**
Pakistan	2001	1.3*	2006	3.4
Sri Lanka		…		…

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

Adult Literacy Rate (Age 15+), 1990/91 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	1990/91				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	1991	35.3	44.3	25.8	2007	53.5**	58.7**	48.0**
Bhutan		…	…	…	2005	52.8	65.0	38.7
India	1991	48.2	61.6	33.7	2007	66.0**	76.9**	54.5**
Maldives	1990	96.0	95.9	96.1	2007	97.0**	97.0**	97.1**
Nepal	1991	33.0	49.2	17.4	2007	56.5**	70.3**	43.6**
Pakistan		…	…	…	2006	54.2	67.7	39.6
Sri Lanka		…	…	…	2006	90.8	92.7	89.1

Goal 5: Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieve gender equality in education by 2015, with a focus on ensuring girl's full and equal access to and achievement in basic education of good quality.

GPI for GER in Pre-Primary Education, 2000 and 2005, Sub-Region

Country	2000	2005
Bangladesh	1.03	1.01[-1]
Bhutan	0.97	0.93**[,+1]
India	1.06	1.04
Maldives	1.03	1.00[+1]
Nepal	0.75**	0.91[+1]
Pakistan	0.70*	0.90
Sri Lanka	…	…

GPI for GIR in Primary Education, 2000 and 2005, Sub-Region

Country	GIR in Primary		GER in Primary		GER in Secondary	
	2000	2005	2000	2005	2000	2005
Bangladesh	0.96	1.02[-1]	1.00	1.03[-1]	1.05	1.03-1
Bhutan	0.90	0.98	0.87	0.97	0.82	0.88
India	0.86	0.95	0.85	0.98	0.71	0.82
Maldives	0.99	1.07	1.00	0.98	1.08	1.14**[,-1]
Nepal	0.81	1.00*[, -1]	0.79	0.95[+1]	0.71	0.89**[,+1]
Pakistan	…	0.80[+1]	0.68	0.78[+1]	…	0.78[+1]
Sri Lanka	…	1.00**	0.99[+1]	1.00**	…	1.02**[,-1]

GPI for Survival and Transition Rate, 2000 and 2005, Sub-Region

Country	Survival Rate to Grade 5		Transition Rate from Primary to Lower Secondary	
	2000	2005	2000	2005
Bangladesh	1.07	…	1.13	…
Bhutan	1.05	…	1.00	…
India	0.99	1.00[-1]	0.96	0.96[-1]
Maldives	0.97	1.09[-1]	…	1.10[-1]
Nepal	1.23	1.10*	1.02	…
Pakistan	…	1.07[-1]	…	1.07[-1]
Sri Lanka	…	…	…	…

GPI for Adult and Youth Literacy Rate, Before 1995 and After 2000, Sub-Region

Country	Adult Literacy		Youth Literacy	
	Before 1995	After 2000	Before 1995	After 2000
Bangladesh	0.58 (1991)	0.82** (2007)	0.73 (1991)	0.90 (2001)
Bhutan	…	0.59 (2005)	…	…
India	0.55 (1991)	0.71** (2007)	0.67 (1991)	0.80 (2001)
Maldives	1.00 (1990)	1.00** (2007)	1.00 (1990)	…
Nepal	0.35 (1991)	0.62** (2007)	0.48 (1991)	0.75 (2001)
Pakistan	…	0.59 (2006)	…	0.69 (2005)
Sri Lanka	…	0.96 (2006)	…	1.01 (2001)

Percentage of Female Enrolment in Primary, Secondary and TVET Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	Female Enrolment in Primary				Female Enrolment in Secondary				Female Enrolment in TVET			
	Year	Total	Latest Year	Total	Year	Total	Latest Year	Total	Year	Total	Latest Year	Total
Bangladesh	2000	48.9	2004	49.6	2000	49.7	2004	49.6	2000	24.8	2004	27.1
Bhutan	2000	46.1	2005	48.7	2000	44.7	2005	47.1		…	2005	33.7
India	2000	43.6	2005	47.1	2000	39.6	2005	42.9	2000	20.4	2005	15.2**
Maldives	2000	48.6	2005	47.8	2000	51.3	2006	51.9	2000	44.6	2006	30.0**
Nepal	2000	42.6	2006	47.4	2000	40.1**	2006	45.5**	2000	21.1	2006	22.2**
Pakistan	2000	39.1**	2006	42.4	2001	39.4*	2006	42.3	2001	17.0*	2006	39.2
Sri Lanka	2001	48.8	2005	49.1**		…	2004	49.4**	…	…	…	…

Percentage of Female Teachers in Primary and Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	Female Teachers in Primary				Female Teachers in Secondary			
	Year	Total	Latest Year	Total	Year	Total	Latest Year	Total
Bangladesh	2000	33.7	2004	34.2	2000	13.5	2004	18.1
Bhutan	2000	34.5	2005	38.2	2000	34.2	2005	31.0**
India	2000	35.6*	2004	44.0**	2000	34.3	2004	33.9
Maldives	2000	60.4	2005	66.2	2000	29.3		…
Nepal	2000	22.7**	2006	30.1**	2000	11.0**	2003	13.5
Pakistan	2000	44.9**	2006	45.4		…	2004	51.0*
Sri Lanka		…	2005	78.5**		…	2004	63.2**

Goal 6: Improving all aspects of the quality of education, and ensuring excellence of all so that recognized and measurable learning outcomes are achieved by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills.

Survival Rate to Grade 5, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	65.5	63.4	67.8	2003	65.1	63.1	67.3
Bhutan	2000	91.0	89.2	93.2		…	…	…
India	2000	59.0	59.2	58.7	2004	73.0	73.1	72.9
Maldives	2000	111.8	113.4	110.1	2004	92.1	88.5	96.4
Nepal	2000	45.8	41.9	51.6	2005	78.5*	75.0*	82.8*
Pakistan		…	…	…	2004	69.7	67.8	72.4
Sri Lanka		…	…	…	2004	108.8**	…	…

Percentage of Trained Teachers in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	65.0	64.2	66.4	2004	48.3	46.6	51.6
Bhutan	2000	94.8	94.8	94.8	2005	93.8	93.3	94.7
India		…	…	…		…	…	…
Maldives	2000	98.4	99.1	97.8	2005	100.0	100.0	100.0
Nepal	2000	49.9**	52.4**	41.1**	2005	30.5	32.0	27.0
Pakistan		…	…	…	2006	84.6	92.4	75.2
Sri Lanka		…	…	…		…	…	…

Percentage of Trained Teachers in Lower Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	2000				Latest Year			
	Year	Total	Male	Female	Year	Total	Male	Female
Bangladesh	2000	36.8	34.1	54.3	2004	37.6	36.2	44.4
Bhutan	2000	95.0	95.1	94.9	2005	93.5	92.8	94.9
India		…	…	…		…	…	…
Maldives	2000	76.3	74.6	80.7	2005	84.7	82.3	88.9
Nepal	2000	32.6	32.5	33.4	2005	30.1	30.6	27.8
Pakistan		…	…	…	2006	62.4	76.8	54.7
Sri Lanka		…	…	…		…	…	…

Pupil/Teacher Ratio in Primary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	Year	Total	Latest Year	Total
Bangladesh	2000	57.1	2004	50.9
Bhutan	2000	41.1	2005	31.1
India	2000	40.0*	2004	40.2**
Maldives	2000	22.7	2005	20.1
Nepal	2000	42.6**	2006	39.7**
Pakistan	2000	33.0**	2006	39.0
Sri Lanka	2002	23.4**	2005	21.9**

Pupil/Teacher Ratio in Lower Secondary Education, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	Year	Total	Latest Year	Total
Bangladesh	2000	45.0	2004	33.7
Bhutan	2000	35.7	2005	31.5
India	2000	35.6	2004	37.2
Maldives	2000	15.9	2005	13.9
Nepal	2000	37.1	2006	55.7**
Pakistan		…	2006	16.3
Sri Lanka	2001	20.9	2005	20.3**

Public Expenditure on Education as a Percentage of GDP, 2000 and Latest Year, Sub-Region

Country	Year	Total	Latest Year	Total
Bangladesh	2000	2.38	2005	2.46
Bhutan	2000	5.55		…
India	2000	4.41	2004	3.75
Maldives		…	2005	7.72
Nepal	2000	2.98**	2003	3.38
Pakistan	2000	1.84	2005	2.25
Sri Lanka		…		…

Annex 2: Country Profiles

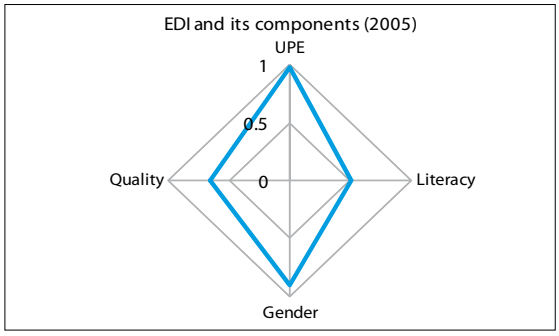
Bangladesh - Progress toward achieving EFA Goals (Post Dakar)

Social and Demographic Context (2005)

Total Population (000)	141,822
Annual population growth rate (%)	1.9
Sex ratio (women per 100 men)	96
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	64
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	54
HIV prevalence rate % in adults (15-49)	0.1
GDP (US$ million)	60,033.5
Human Development Index	0.5
Population age 0-14 (%)	33.0
School life expectancy ISCED 1-6 (years)	9.0[-1]
Total number of enrolment (Primary)	17953300[-1]
Total number of teachers (Primary)	352683[-1]
% Under-Fives Suffering from Stunting	43
Children immunization rate (% of under 12 months)	
Immunized against DPT3	88
Immunized against measles	81

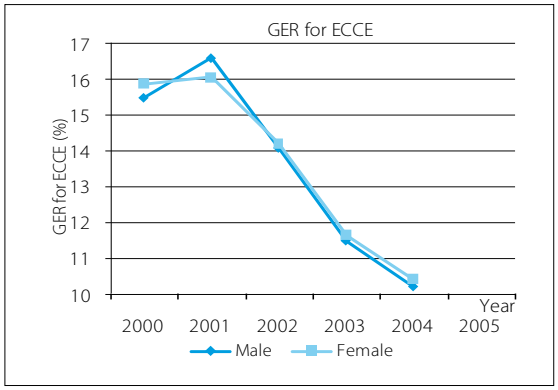
Overall Achievement in EFA (2000 - To date)

	2000	2005
EFA Development Index	0.697	0.759



Goal I: Expansion of ECCE

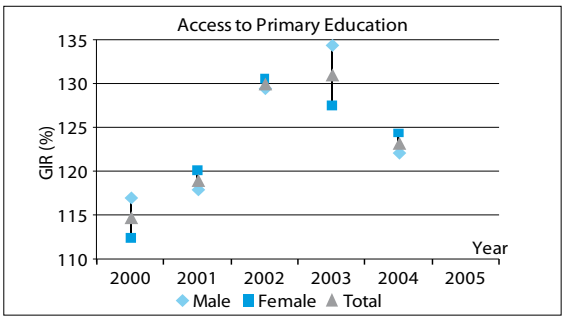
for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Enrolment Ratio	11[-1]	10.9[-1]	11.1[-1]
Net Enrolment Rate	9.9[-1]	9.8[-1]	9.9[-1]
% of new entrants with ECCE Exp.	23.3[-3]	24.3[-3]	22.3[-3]

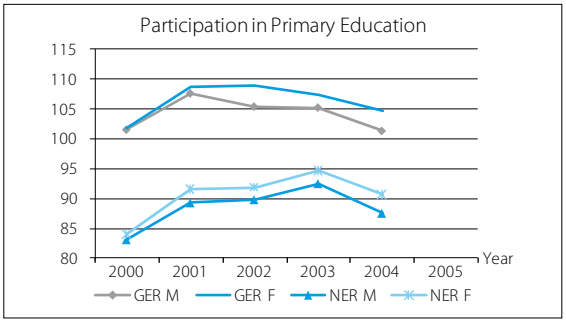


Goal II: Universal Primary Education

Primary education age-range	6-11

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Intake Ratio	123.2[-1]	122.1[-1]	124.3[-1]
Net Intake Rate	85.7[-1]	82.9[-1]	88.4[-1]
Gross Enrolment Ratio	102.9[-1]	101.2[-1]	104.6[-1]
Net Enrolment Rate	88.9*[,-1]	87.4*[,-1]	90.5*[,-1]





Goal III: Learning Needs of All Youth and Adults

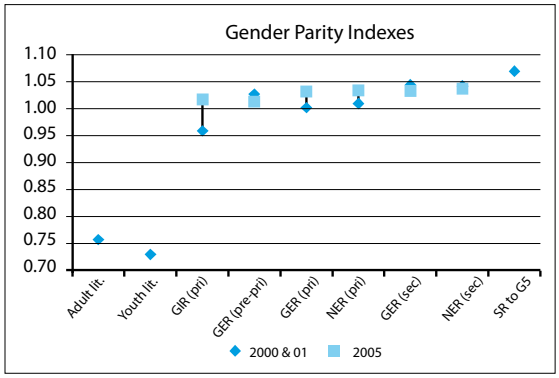
		2000	2005
Transition rate from primary to secondary (general programme)	T	84.1	89.3[-2]
	M	79.2	86.5[-2]
	F	89.1	92.1[-2]
Gross Enrolment Ratio, Total secondary (all programmes)	T	46.2	43.8[-1]
	M	45.2	43.0[-1]
	F	47.2	44.5[-1]
Tech / Voc enrolment as % of total enrolment (in ISCED 2 & 3)		1.0	1.6[-1]
Unemployment rate		3.3	4.3[-2]

	Earliest	Latest
%Contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, any method	39.9[(91)]	58.1[(04)]
%Condom use to overall contraceptive use among curently married women 15-49 years old	6.3[(91)]	7.2[(04)]

Goal IV: Literacy

			T	M	F
Adult Literacy Rate	Bangladesh	2001	47.5	53.0	40.8
	South & West Asia	2005	60.0	71.0	47.0
	World	2005	82.0	87.0	77.0
Youth Literacy Rate	Bangladesh	2001	64.0	67.0	60.0
	South & West Asia	2005	75.0	82.0	67.0
	World	2005	88.0	91.0	84.0

Goal V – Gender

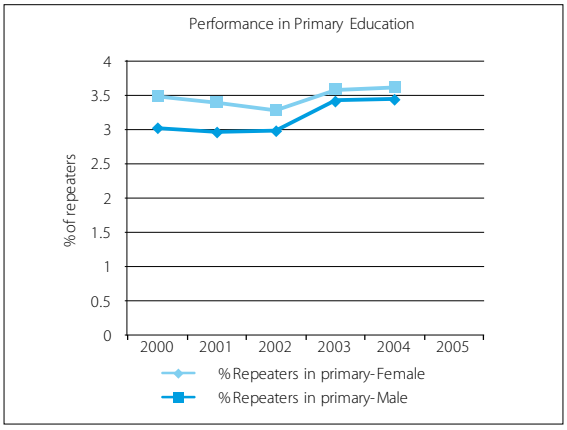


Goal VI: Education Quality

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Primary Graduation Ratio	…	…	…
Percentage of repeaters	7.0[-1]	3.6[-1]	3.4[-1]

Goal VI: Education Quality (Cont.)

		2000	2005
Survival Rate to G5	T	65.5	65.1[-2]
	M	63.4	63.1[-2]
	F	67.8	67.3[-2]
Pupil-teacher ratio (Pre primary)		24.4	33.8[-1]
Pupil-teacher ratio (Primary)		57.1	50.9[-1]
Pupil-teacher ratio (Secondary)		38.4	27.4[-1]
% of trained teachers (Pre-primary)		…	41.0[-1]
% of trained teachers (Primary)		65	48.3[-1]
% of trained teachers (Secondary)		29.7	31.5[-1]
% of repeaters (Primary)		6.5	7.0[-1]

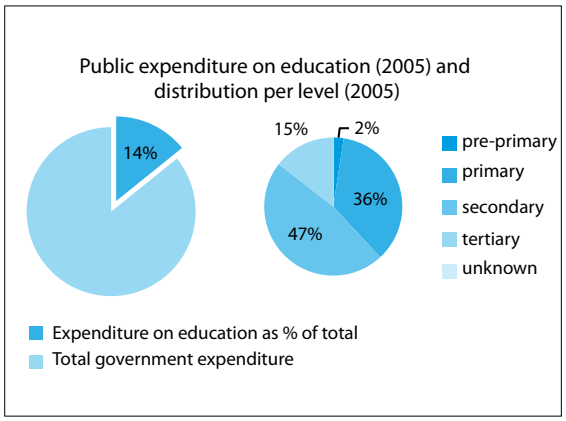


Financing in EFA

Education expenditure as % of total educational expenditure (2005)

Pre Primary	2.7**	Primary	40.0[-1]
Secondary	43.4	Post Secondary	1.7
Tertiary	12.9		

	2000	2005
Total public expenditure on education		
as % of GDP	2.4	2.5
as % of total govt exp	15	14.2
Public current expenditure on primary education per pupil (US$ PPP)	71.5	101.6**



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…	No data available

*	National estimation
**	UIS estimation
-	Magnitude nil or negligible
.	Not applicable

Sources:
UNESCO Institute for Statistics
World Bank
International Labour Organization
UNICEF
UNESCAP

ISCED & Regions : Please refer to ANNEX C and ANNEX D of Global Education Digest 2007
http://www.uis.unesco.org/publications/GED2007

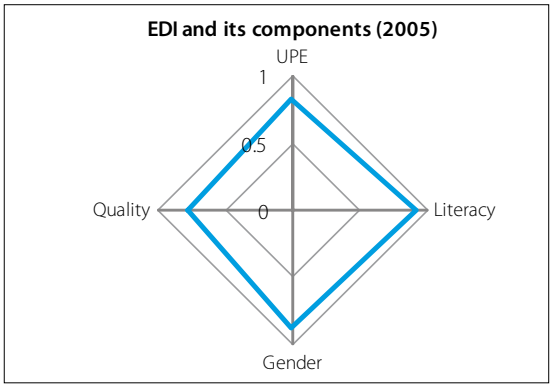
Bhutan - Progress toward achieving EFA Goals (Post Dakar)

Social and Demographic Context (2005)

Total Population (000)	637,013
Annual population growth rate (%)	2.2
Sex ratio (women per 100 men)	97
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	63.5[-1]
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	65
HIV prevalence rate % in adults (15-49)	0.1
GDP (US$ million)	827.5
Human Development Index	0.6
Population age 0-14 (%)	…
School life expectancy ISCED 1-6 (years)	…
Total number of enrolment (Primary)	99,458
Total number of teachers (Primary)	3,203
% Under-Fives Suffering from Stunting	40
Children immunization rate (% of under 12 months)	
Immunized against DPT3	95
Immunized against measles	93

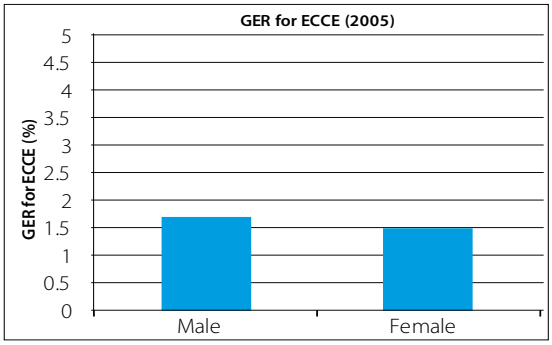
Overall Achievement in EFA (2000-To date)

	2000	2005
EFA Development Index	…	0.85



Goal I: Expansion of ECCE

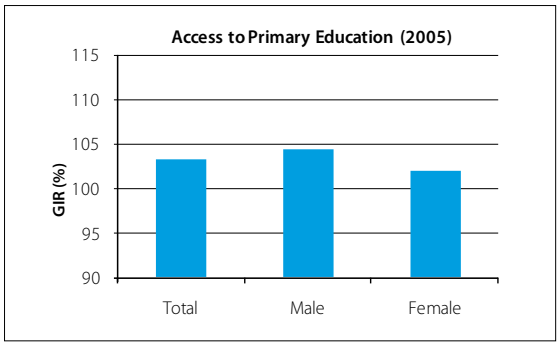
for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Enrolment Ratio	1.6	1.7	1.5
Net Enrolment Rate	…	…	…
% of new entrants with ECCE Exp	…	…	…

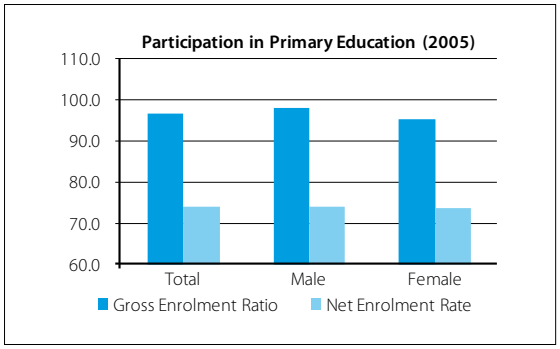


Goal II: Universal Primary Education

Primary education age-range	6-13

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Intake Ratio	103.2	104.3	102.0
Net Intake Rate	32.1	32.3	31.9
Gross Enrolment Ratio	96.7	98.1	95.3
Net Enrolment Rate	73.9	74.0	73.8





Goal III: Learning Needs of All Youth and Adults

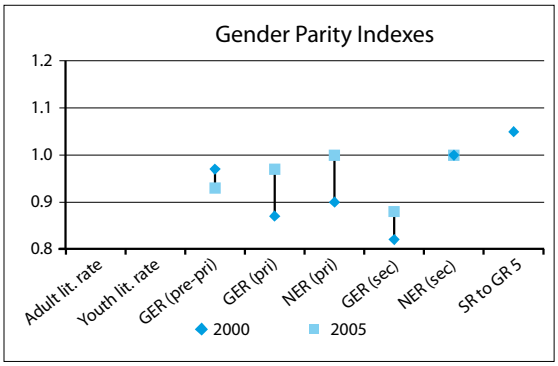
		2000	2005
Transition rate from primary to secondary (general programme)	T	82.3	…
	M	82.3	…
	F	82.6	…
Gross Enrolment Ratio, Total secondary (all programmes)	T	41.7	46.1
	M	45.8	49.1
	F	37.6	43.2
Tech / Voc enrolment as % of total enrolment (in ISCED 2 & 3)		1.7[+1]	1.5
Unemployment rate		…	…

	Earliest	Latest
%Contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, any method	18.8[(94)]	30.7[(00)]
%Condom use to overall contraceptive use among curently married women 15-49 years old	1.6[(94)]	3.9[(00)]

Goal IV: Literacy

			T	M	F
Adult Literacy Rate	Bhutan	…	…	…	…
	South & West Asia	2005	60.0	71.0	47.0
	World	2005	82.0	87.0	77.0
Youth Literacy Rate	Bhutan	…	…	…	…
	South & West Asia	2005	75.0	82.0	67.0
	World	2005	88.0	91.0	84.0

Goal V – Gender

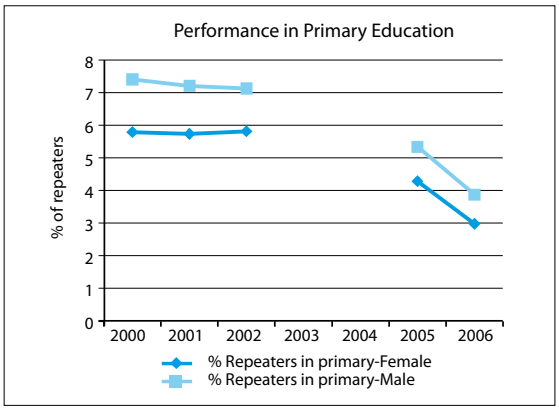


Goal VI: Education Quality

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Primary Graduation Ratio	…	…	…
Percentage of repeaters	9.6	5.3	4.3

Goal VI: Education Quality (Cont.)

		2000	2005
Survival Rate to G5	T	91.0	…
	M	89.2	…
	F	93.2	…
Pupil-teacher ratio (Pre primary)		22.4	23.1
Pupil-teacher ratio (Primary)		41.1	31.1
Pupil-teacher ratio (Secondary)		32.5	28.1
% of trained teachers (Pre-primary)		93.8	…
% of trained teachers (Primary)		94.8	93.8
% of trained teachers (Secondary)		95.0	…
% of repeaters (Primary)		13.2	9.6

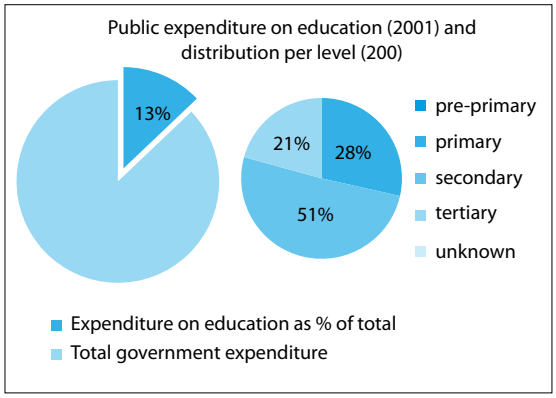


Financing in EFA

Education expenditure as % of total educational expenditure (2005)

Pre-Primary	-	Primary	26.9**,-5
Secondary	47.9**,-5	Post Secondary	5.7**,-5
Tertiary	19.6**,-5		

	2000	2005
Total public expenditure on education		
as % of GDP	5.6	5.6-4
as % of total govt exp	13.8	12.9-4
Public current expenditure on primary education per pupil (US$ PPP)	…	…



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…	No data available
*	National estimation
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-	Magnitude nil or negligible
.	Not applicable

Sources:
UNESCO Institute for Statistics
World Bank
International Labour Organization
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UNESCAP

ISCED & Regions : Please refer to ANNEX C and ANNEX D of Global Education Digest 2007
http://www.uis.unesco.org/publications/GED2007

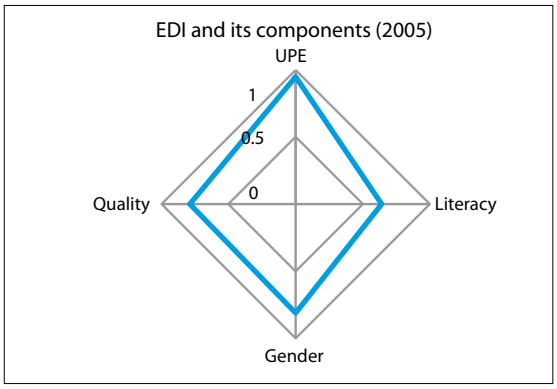
India - Progress toward achieving EFA Goals (Post Dakar)

Social and Demographic Context (2005)

Total Population (000)	1,103,371
Annual population growth rate (%)	1.4
Sex ratio (women per 100 men)	95
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	64
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	56
HIV prevalence rate % in adults (15-49)	0.9
GDP (US$ million)	805,732.0
Human Development Index	0.6
Population age 0-14 (%)	29.9
School life expectancy ISCED 1-6 (years)	10.5**
Total number of enrolment (Primary)	125,568,597[-2]
Total number of teachers (Primary)	3,038,204[-2]
% Under-Fives Suffering from Stunting	46.0
Children immunization rate (% of under 12 months)	
Immunized against DPT3	59
Immunized against measles	58

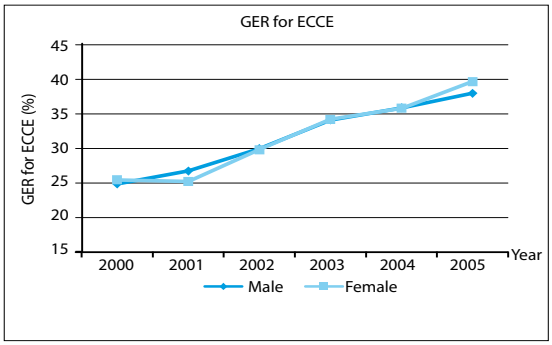
Overall Achievement in EFA (2000-To date)

	2000	2005
EFA Development Index	0.658	0.797



Goal I: Expansion of ECCE

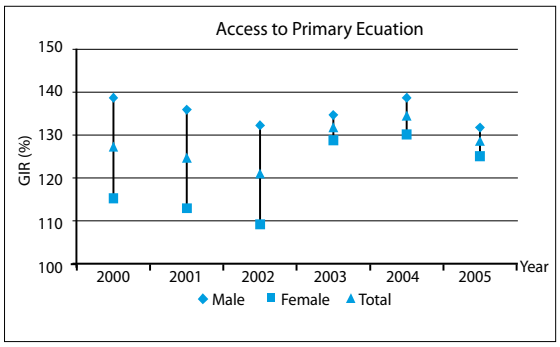
for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Enrolment Ratio	38.8	38.0	39.7
Net Enrolment Rate	…	…	…
% of new entrants with ECCE Exp	…	…	…

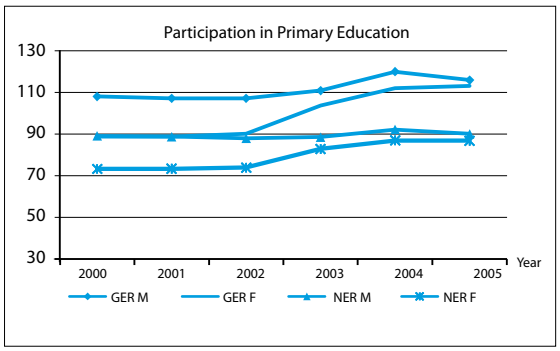


Goal II: Universal Primary Education

Primary education age-range: 6-11

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Intake Ratio	128.6	131.7	125.1
Net Intake Rate	…	…	…
Gross Enrolment Ratio	114.6	115.9	113.2
Net Enrolment Rate	88.5	90.1	86.8





Goal III: Learning Needs of All Youth and Adults

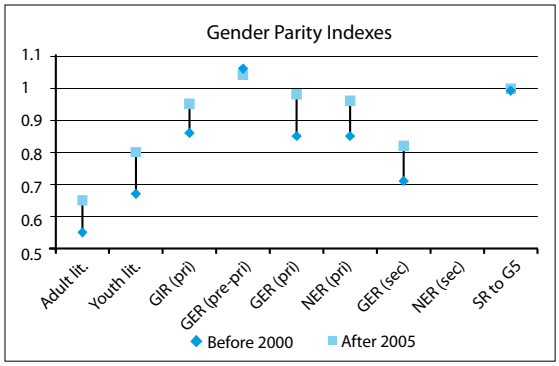
		2000	2005
Transition rate from primary to secondary (general programme)	T	86.6	85.1[-1]
	M	88.1	86.5[-1]
	F	84.5	83.4[-1]
Gross Enrolment Ratio, Total secondary (all programmes)	T	46.3	54.0
	M	53.7	59.0
	F	38.2	48.6
Tech / Voc enrolment as % of total enrolment (in ISCED 2 & 3)		0.9	0.8
Unemployment rate		4.3	…

	Earliest	Latest
%Contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, any method	40.7(93)	56.3(06)
%Condom use to overall contraceptive use among curently married women 15-49 years old	5.9(93)	9.4(06)

Goal IV: Literacy

			T	M	F
Adult Literacy Rate	India	2001	61	73	48
	South & West Asia	2005	60	71	47
	World	2005	82	87	77
Youth Literacy Rate	India	2001	76	84	68
	South & West Asia	2005	75	82	67
	World	2005	88	91	84

Goal V – Gender

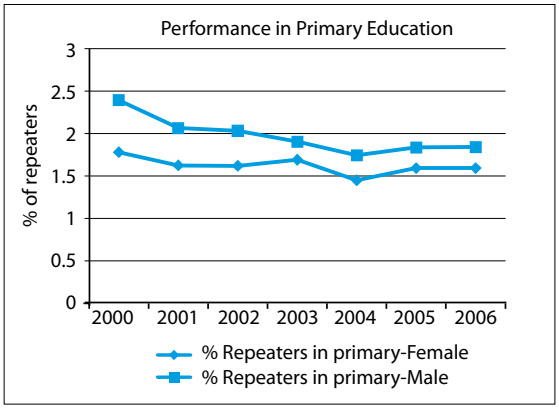


Goal VI: Education Quality

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Primary Graduation Ratio	…	…	…
Percentage of repeaters	3.4	1.8	1.6

Goal VI: Education Quality (Cont.)

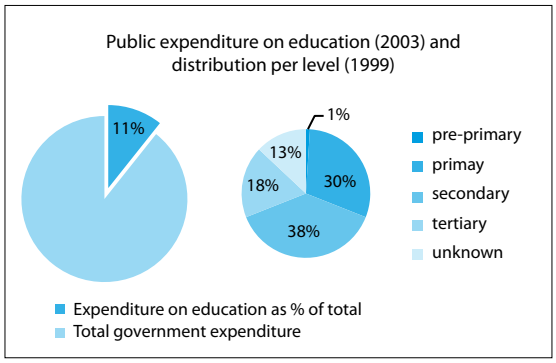
		2000	2005
Survival rate to G5	T	59.0	73.0[-1]
	M	59.2	73.1[-1]
	F	58.7	72.9[-1]
Pupil-teacher ratio (Pre primary)		35.4	40.5*[,-1]
Pupil-teacher ratio (Primary)		40.0*	40.2*[,-1]
Pupil-teacher ratio (Secondary)		33.6	32.4[-1]
% of trained teachers (Pre-primary)		…	…
% of trained teachers (Primary)		…	…
% of trained teachers (Secondary)		…	…
% of repeaters (Primary)		4.2	3.4**



Financing in EFA

Education expenditure as % of total educational expenditure (2005)

Pre-Primary	1.2[-1]	Primary	32.8[-1]
Secondary	37.5[-1]	Post Secondary	0.6[-1]
Tertiary	27.9[-1]		



	2000	2005
Total public expenditure on education		
as % of GDP	4.4	3.8-1
as % of total govt exp	12.7	10.7-2
Public current expenditure on primary education per pupil (US$ PPP)	286.1**[,-1]	358.5**[,-4]

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*	National estimation
**	UIS estimation
-	Magnitude nil or negligible
.	Not applicable

Sources:
UNESCO Institute for Statistics, World Bank, International Labour Organization, UNICEF and UNESCAP

(g) Projected at the National level (593 districts) on the basis of age-wise data collected for ISCED level 1 in 193 districts under the District Information System on Education (DISE).

ISCED & Regions : Please refer to ANNEX C and ANNEX D of Global Education Digest 2007
http://www.uis.unesco.org/publications/GED2007

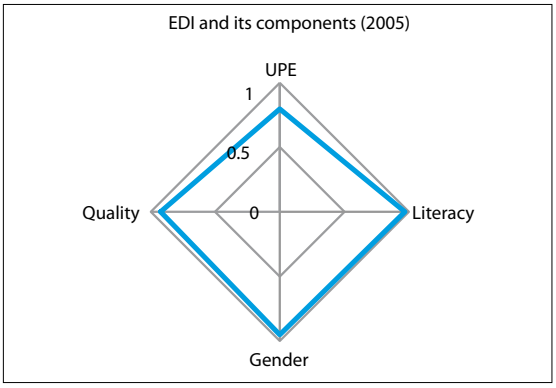
Maldives - Progress toward achieving EFA Goals (Post Dakar)

Social and Demographic Context (2005)

Total Population (000)	329
Annual population growth rate (%)	2.5
Sex ratio (women per 100 men)	95
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	68
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	33
HIV prevalence rate % in adults (15-49)	0.2
GDP (US$ million)	755.9
Human Development Index	0.7
Population age 0-14 (%)	37.9
School life expectancy ISCED 1-6 (years)	11.2**,-1
Total number of enrolment (Primary)	57,873
Total number of teachers (Primary)	2,882
% Under-Fives Suffering from Stunting	25
Children immunization rate (% of under 12 months)	
Immunized against DPT3	98
Immunized against measles	97

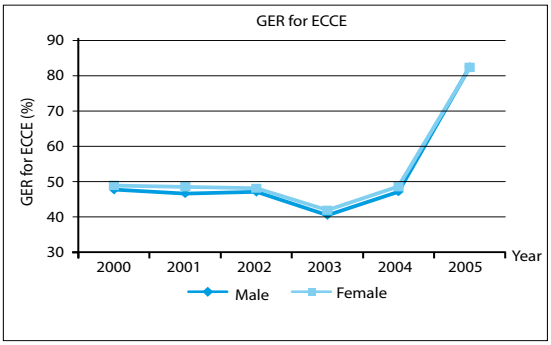
Overall Achievement in EFA (2000-To date)

	2000	2005
EFA Development Index	0.980	0.910



Goal I: Expansion of ECCE

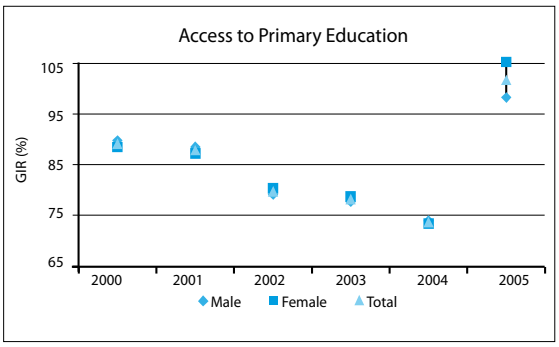
for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Enrolment Ratio	82.4+1	82.4+1	82.3+1
Net Enrolment Rate	42.0	42.0	41.9
% of new entrants with ECCE Exp	81.06	82.66	81.06

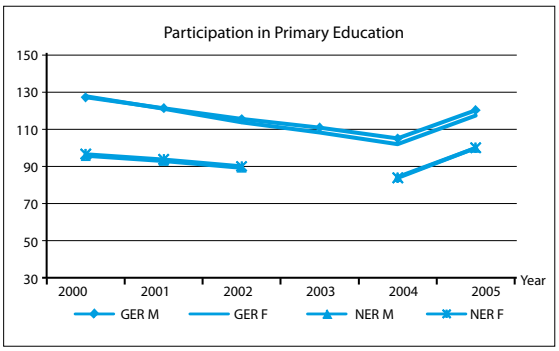


Goal II: Universal Primary Education

Primary education age-range	6-13

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Intake Ratio	101.3	97.9	104.8
Net Intake Rate	88.4-3	88.4-3	88.4-3
Gross Enrolment Ratio	118.7	120.2	117.2
Net Enrolment Rate	100.0	100.0	100.0





Goal III: Learning Needs of All Youth and Adults

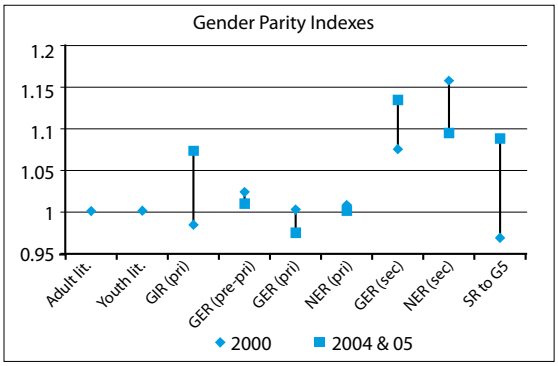
		2000	2005
Transition rate from primary to secondary (general programme)	T	61.6**,+2	78.2-1
	M	56.6**,+2	74.6-1
	F	66.6**,+2	82.2-1
Gross Enrolment Ratio, Total secondary (all programmes)	T	55.3	73.4**,-1
	M	53.3	68.9**,-1
	F	57.4	78.2**,-1
Tech / Voc enrolment as % of total enrolment (in ISCED 2 & 3)		2.3	3.9**,-1
Unemployment rate		…	…

	Earliest	Latest
%Contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, any method	23.0(91)	39.0(04)
%Condom use to overall contraceptive use among curently married women 15-49 years old	8.7(91)	23.1(04)

Goal IV: Literacy

			T	M	F
Adult Literacy Rate	Maldives	2000	96.0[-10]	96.0[-10]	96.0[-10]
	South & West Asia	2005	60.0	71.0	47.0
	World	2005	82.0	87.0	77.0
Youth Literacy Rate	Maldives	2000	…	…	…
	South & West Asia	2005	75.0	82.0	67.0
	World	2005	88.0	91.0	84.0

Goal V – Gender

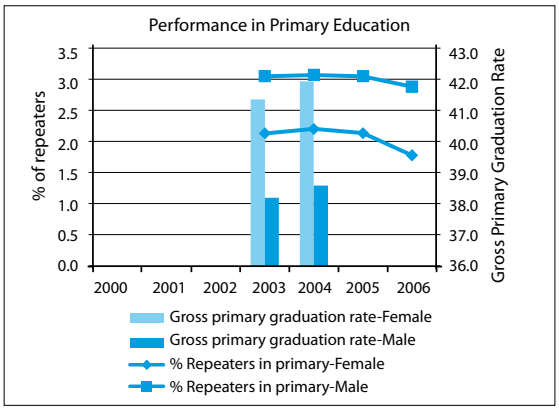


Goal VI: Education Quality

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Primary Graduation Ratio	40.3[-1]	38.6[-1]	41.9[-1]
Percentage of repeaters	5.2	3.1	2.1

Goal VI: Education Quality (Cont.)

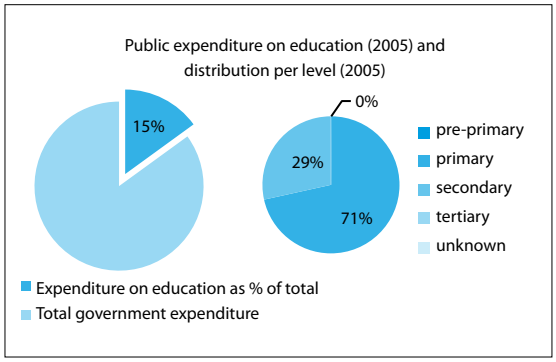
		2000	2005
Survival rate to G5	T	…	92.1[-1]
	M	…	88.5[-1]
	F	…	96.4[-1]
Pupil-teacher ratio (Pre primary)		31.4	26.2
Pupil-teacher ratio (Primary)		22.7	20.1
Pupil-teacher ratio (Secondary)		15.3	13.7[-2]
% of trained teachers (Pre-primary)		47.2	40.9
% of trained teachers (Primary)		66.5	64.3
% of trained teachers (Secondary)		81.5[+2]	…
% of repeaters (Primary)		5.2**,[+3]	5.2



Financing in EFA

Education expenditure as % of total educational expenditure (2005)

Pre-Primary	1.2[-1]	Primary	32.8[-1]
Secondary	37.5[-1]	Post Secondary	0.6[-1]
Tertiary	27.9[-1]		



	2000	2005
Total public expenditure on education		
as % of GDP	4.4	3.8[-1]
as % of total govt exp	12.7	10.7[-2]
Public current expenditure on primary education per pupil (US$ PPP)	286.1**,[-1]	358.5**,[-4]

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*	National estimation
**	UIS estimation
-	Magnitude nil or negligible
.	Not applicable

Sources:
UNESCO Institute for Statistics
World Bank
International Labour Organization
UNICEF
UNESCAP

ISCED & Regions : Please refer to ANNEX C and ANNEX D of Global Education Digest 2007
http://www.uis.unesco.org/publications/GED2007

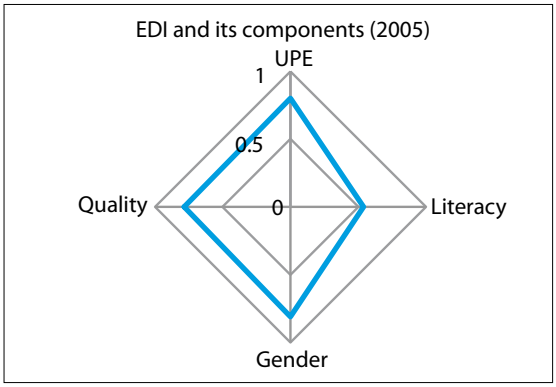
Nepal - Progress toward achieving EFA Goals (Post Dakar)

Social and Demographic Context (2005)

Total Population (000)	27,133
Annual population growth rate (%)	2.0
Sex ratio (women per 100 men)	102
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	63
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	56
HIV prevalence rate % in adults (15-49)	0.5
GDP (US$ million)	7,390.7
Human Development Index	0.5
Population age 0-14 (%)	36.4
School life expectancy ISCED 1-6 (years)	8.9**,-2
Total number of enrolment (Primary)	450,2697+1
Total number of teachers (Primary)	101,483
% Under-Fives Suffering from Stunting	51
Children immunization rate (% of under 12 months)	
Immunized against DPT3	75
Immunized against measles	74

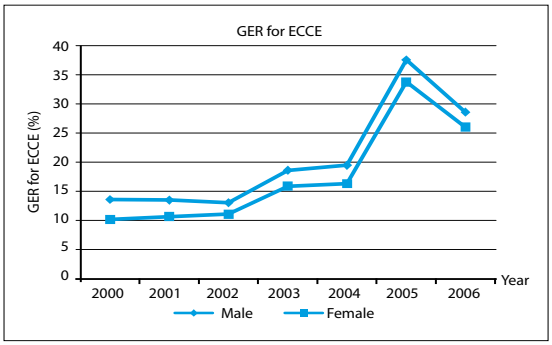
Overall Achievement in EFA (2000-To date)

	2000	2005
EFA Development Index	0.607	0.734



Goal I: Expansion of ECCE

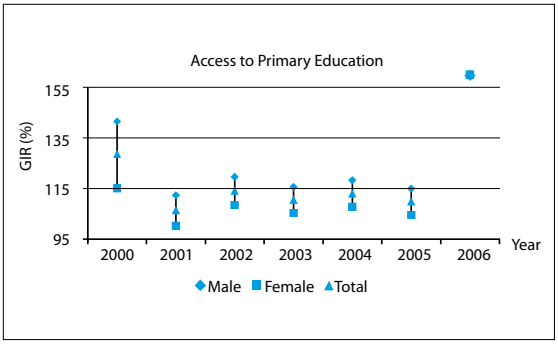
for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Enrolment Ratio	27.3+1	28.6+1	26.0+1
Net Enrolment Rate	…	…	…
% of new entrants with ECCE Exp	18.7	19.0	18.4

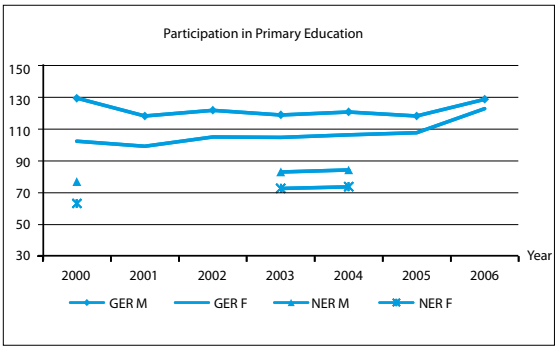


Goal II: Universal Primary Education

Primary education age-range	5-10

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Intake Ratio	160.2+1,c	160.0+1,c	160.4+1,c
Net Intake Rate	…	…	…
Gross Enrolment Ratio	126.1+1	129.0+1	123.0+1
Net Enrolment Rate	79.2-1,c	84.3-1,c	73.8-1,c





Goal III: Learning Needs of All Youth and Adults

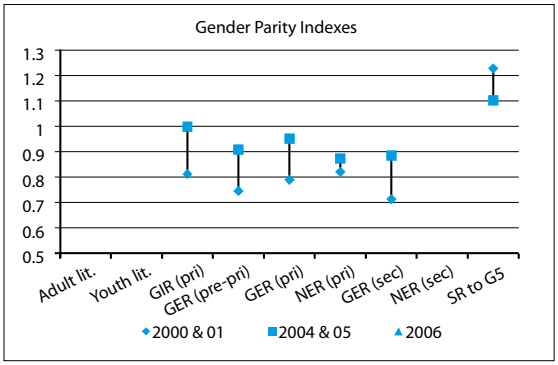
		2000	2005
Transition rate from primary to secondary (general programme)	T	71.6	76.7**,-2
	M	70.9	78.7**,2
	F	72.6	74.3**,-2
Gross Enrolment Ratio, Total secondary (all programmes)	T	35.3	43.2**,+1
	M	41.0	45.7**,+1
	F	29.3	40.5**,+1
Tech / Voc enrolment as % of total enrolment (in ISCED 2 & 3)		1.4	1.1**,+1
Unemployment rate		1.8-1	…

	Earliest	Latest
%Contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, any method	22.7(91)	38.3(04)
%Condom use to overall contraceptive use among curently married women 15-49 years old	2.6(91)	7.6(04)

Goal IV: Literacy

			T	M	F
Adult Literacy Rate	Nepal	2001	48.6	62.7	34.9
	South & West Asia	2005	60.0	71.0	47.0
	World	2005	82.0	87.0	77.0
Youth Literacy Rate	Nepal	2001	70.0	81.0	60.0
	South & West Asia	2005	75.0	82.0	67.0
	World	2005	88.0	91.0	84.0

Goal V – Gender

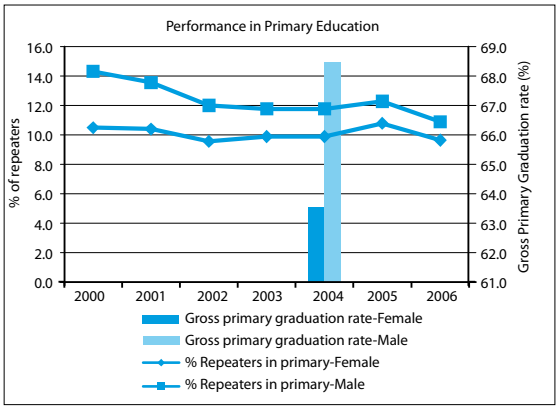


Goal VI: Education Quality

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Primary Graduation Ratio	44.7^{-1}	47.6^{-1}	41.7^{-1}
Percentage of repeaters	23.1	12.3	10.8

Goal VI: Education Quality (Cont.)

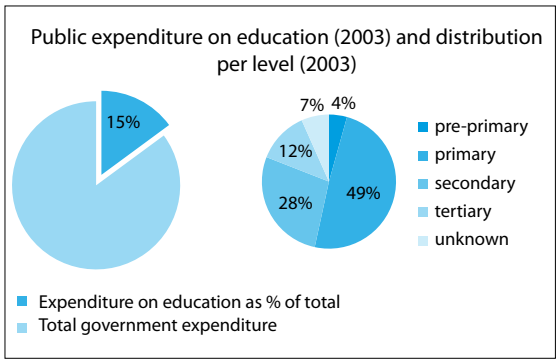
		2000	2005
Survival rate to G5	T	45.8	78.5
	M	41.9	75.0**
	F	51.6	82.8**
Pupil-teacher ratio (Pre primary)		23.5**	20.3^{-2}
Pupil-teacher ratio (Primary)		42.6**	39.7^{-1}
Pupil-teacher ratio (Secondary)		30.2**	34.7^{-2}
% of trained teachers (Pre-primary)		-	-
% of trained teachers (Primary)		51.8^{+1}	30.5
% of trained teachers (Secondary)		28.2^{+2}	…
% of repeaters (Primary)		24.8	20.6^{+1}



Financing in EFA

Education expenditure as % of total educational expenditure (2005)

Pre-Primary	5.0^{-2}	Primary	56.5^{-2}
Secondary	22.1^{-2}	Post Secondary	.
Tertiary	10.3^{-2}		



	2000	2005
Total public expenditure on education		
as % of GDP	3.0**	3.4^{-2}
as % of total govt exp	13.2**	14.9^{-2}
Public current expenditure on primary education per pupil (US$ PPP)	88.9**	115**,$^{-2}$

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*	National estimation
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-	Magnitude nil or negligible
.	Not applicable

Sources:
UNESCO Institute for Statistics
World Bank
International Labour Organization
UNICEF
UNESCAP

(c) Policy change: Introduction of free universal primary education.

ISCED & Regions : Please refer to ANNEX C and ANNEX D of Global Education Digest 2007
http://www.uis.unesco.org/publications/GED2007

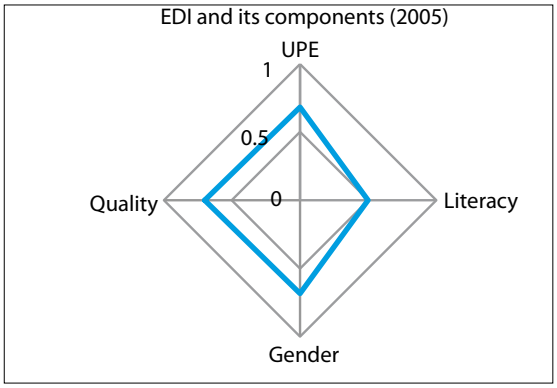
Pakistan - Progress toward achieving EFA Goals (Post Dakar)

Social and Demographic Context (2005)

Total Population (000)	157,935
Annual population growth rate (%)	2.4
Sex ratio (women per 100 men)	94
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	65
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	79
HIV prevalence rate % in adults (15-49)	0.1
GDP (US$ million)	111,298.9
Human Development Index	0.6
Population age 0-14 (%)	35.6
School life expectancy ISCED 1-6 (years)	6.6**
Total number of enrolment (Primary)	17,257,947
Total number of teachers (Primary)	450,136
% Under-Fives Suffering from Stunting	37
Children immunization rate (% of under 12 months)	
Immunized against DPT3	72
Immunized against measles	78

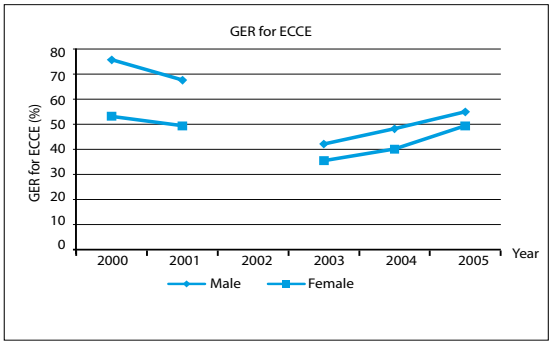
Overall Achievement in EFA (2000-To date)

	2000	2005
EFA Development Index	0.528	0.640



Goal I: Expansion of ECCE

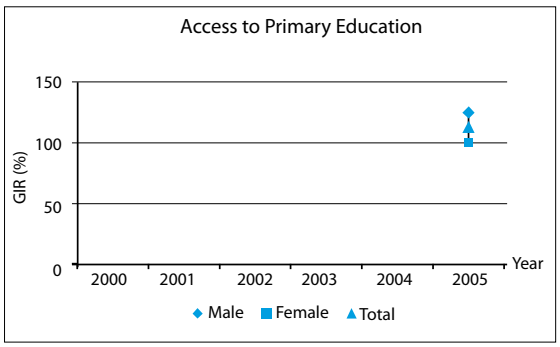
for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Enrolment Ratio	52.5	55.2	49.6
Net Enrolment Rate	41.2	43.5	38.6
% of new entrants with ECCE Exp	56.7	51.7	63.2

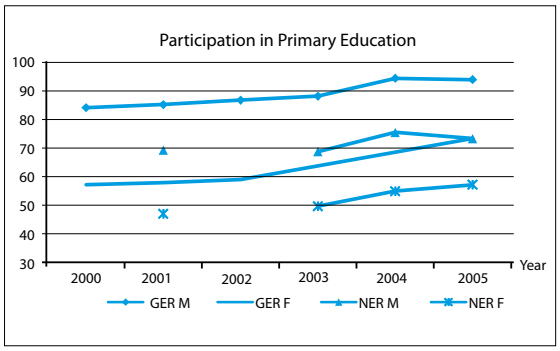


Goal II: Universal Primary Education

Primary education age-range: 5-10

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Intake Ratio	113.0[+1]	124.9[+1]	100.4[+1]
Net Intake Rate	88.1[+1]	97.4[+1]	78.3[+1]
Gross Enrolment Ratio	84.1	94.2[+1]	73.5[+1]
Net Enrolment Rate	65.6[+1]	73.5[+1]	57.3[+1]





Goal III: Learning Needs of All Youth and Adults

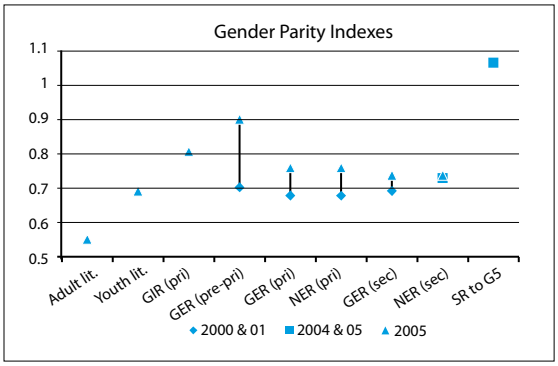
		2000	2005
Transition rate from primary to secondary (general programme)	T	…	71.7
	M	…	69.3
	F	…	75.2
Gross Enrolment Ratio, Total secondary (all programmes)	T	24.7*,[+1]	30.0[+1]
	M	29.0*,[+1]	33.7[+1]
	F	20.1*,[+1]	26.2[+1]
Tech / Voc enrolment as % of total enrolment (in ISCED 2 & 3)		1.3*,[+1]	3.4[+1]
Unemployment rate		7.8	6.2[+1]

	Earliest	Latest
%Contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, any method	11.8[(91)]	27.6[(01)]
%Condom use to overall contraceptive use among curently married women 15-49 years old	22.9[(91)]	19.9[(01)]

Goal IV: Literacy

			T	M	F
Adult Literacy Rate	Pakistan	2005	54.9[+2]	68.7[+2]	40.2[+2]
	South & West Asia	2005	60.0	71.0	47.0
	World	2005	82.0	87.0	77.0
Youth Literacy Rate	Pakistan	2005	65.0	77.0	53.0
	South & West Asia	2005	75.0	82.0	67.0
	World	2005	88.0	91.0	84.0

Goal V – Gender

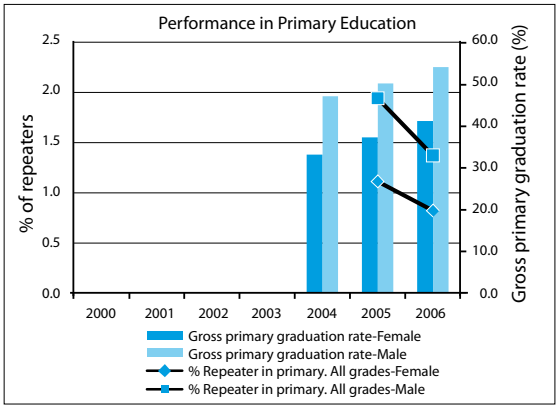


Goal VI: Education Quality

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Primary Graduation Ratio	43.8	60.3	37.3
Percentage of repeaters	3.1	1.9	1.1

Goal VI: Education Quality (Cont.)

		2000	2005
Survival rate to G5	T	…	69.7
	M	…	67.8
	F	…	72.4
Pupil-teacher ratio (Pre primary)		…	41.3**,-1
Pupil-teacher ratio (Primary)		33.0**	38.3
Pupil-teacher ratio (Secondary)		…	36.9*,-1
% of trained teachers (Pre-primary)		…	…
% of trained teachers (Primary)		78.0[+4]	85.5
% of trained teachers (Secondary)		…	…
% of repeaters (Primary)		…	3.1

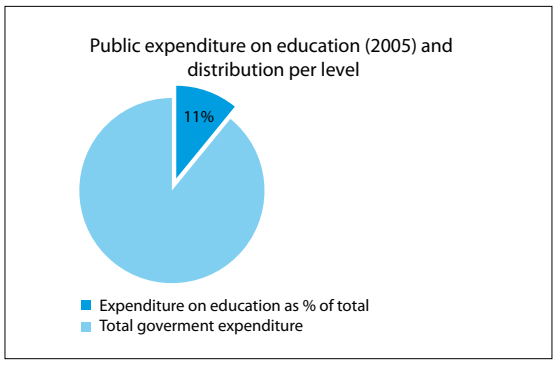


Financing in EFA

Education expenditure as % of total educational expenditure (2005)

Pre-Primary	…	Primary	…
Secondary	…	Post Secondary	…
Tertiary	…		

	2000	2005
Total public expenditure on education		
as % of GDP	1.8	2.3
as % of total govt exp	…	10.9
Public current expenditure on primary education per pupil (US$ PPP)	…	…



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http://www.uis.unesco.org/publications/GED2007

Sri Lanka - Progress toward achieving EFA Goals (Post Dakar)

Social and Demographic Context (2005)

Total Population (000)	20,743
Annual population growth rate (%)	0.8
Sex ratio (women per 100 men)	97
Life expectancy at birth, total (years)	75
Infant mortality rate (per 1,000 births)	12
HIV prevalence rate % in adults (15-49)	0.1
GDP (US$ million)	23,538.2
Human Development Index	0.7
Population age 0-14 (%)	22.5
School life expectancy ISCED 1-6 (years)	…
Total number of enrolment (Primary)	1,612,318**,-1
Total number of teachers (Primary)	71,669**,-1
% Under-Fives Suffering from Stunting	14
Children immunization rate (% of under 12 months)	
Immunized against DPT3	99
Immunized against measles	99

Overall Achievement in EFA (2000-To date)

	2000	2005
EFA Development Index	…	…

EDI and its components (2005)

No data available

Goal I: Expansion of ECCE

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Enrolment Ratio	…	…	…
Net Enrolment Rate	…	…	…
% of new entrants with ECCE Exp	…	…	…

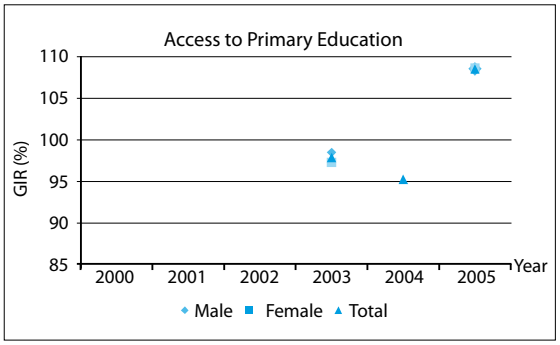
GER for ECCE

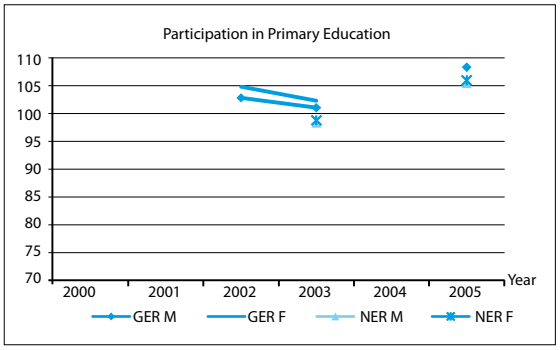
No data available

Goal II: Universal Primary Education

Primary education age-range	5-10

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Intake Ratio	108.7**	108.7**	108.8**
Net Intake Rate	97.5-1	97.6-2	97.4-2
Gross Enrolment Ratio	108.3	108.4	108.3
Net Enrolment Rate	105.7	105.5	106.0





Goal III: Learning Needs of All Youth and Adults

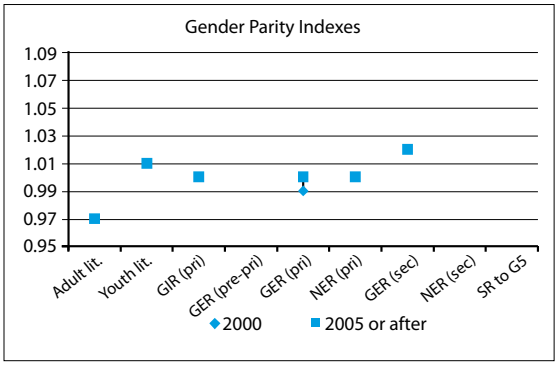
		2000	2005
Transition rate from primary to secondary (general programme)	T	97.0**,+2	…
	M	96.4**,+2	…
	F	97.7**,+2	…
Gross Enrolment Ratio, Total secondary (all programmes)	T	86.0**,+2	87.2**,-1
	M	83.4**,+2	86.4**,-1
	F	88.8**,+2	88.0**,-1
Tech / Voc enrolment as % of total enrolment (in ISCED 2 & 3)		…	…
Unemployment rate		8.0	7.2

	Earliest	Latest
%Contraceptive use among currently married women 15-49 years old, any method	66.1(93)	70.0(00)
%Condom use to overall contraceptive use among curently married women 15-49 years old	5.0(93)	5.3(00)

Goal IV: Literacy

			T	M	F
Adult Literacy Rate	Sri Lanka	2001	90.7[+1]	92.3[+1]	89.1[+1]
	South & West Asia	2005	60.0	71.0	47.0
	World	2005	82.0	87.0	77.0
Youth Literacy Rate	Sri Lanka	2001	96.0	96.0	96.0
	South & West Asia	2005	75.0	82.0	67.0
	World	2005	88.0	91.0	84.0

Goal V – Gender

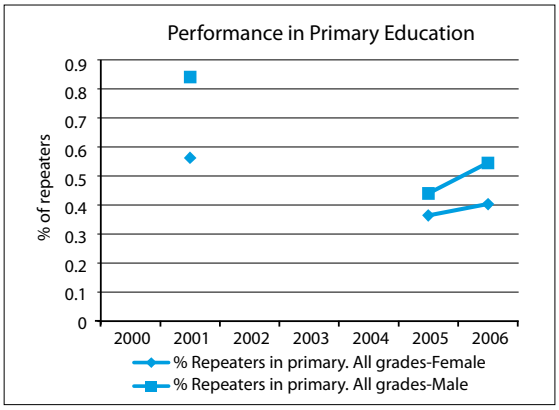


Goal VI: Education Quality

for 2005	T	M	F
Gross Primary Graduation Ratio	…	…	…
Percentage of repeaters	0.8	0.4	0.4

Goal VI: Education Quality (Cont.)

		2000	2005
Survival rate to G5	T	…	…
	M	…	…
	F	…	…
Pupil-teacher ratio (Pre primary)		…	…
Pupil-teacher ratio (Primary)		23.4**[,+2]	22.5**[,-1]
Pupil-teacher ratio (Secondary)		19.6**[,+2]	19.5**[,-1]
% of trained teachers (Pre-primary)		…	…
% of trained teachers (Primary)		…	…
% of trained teachers (Secondary)		…	…
% of repeaters (Primary)		…	0.8



Financing in EFA

Education expenditure as % of total educational expenditure (2005)

Pre-Primary	…	Primary	…
Secondary	…	Post Secondary	…
Tertiary	…		

	2000	2005
Total public expenditure on education		
as % of GDP	…	…
as % of total govt exp	…	…
Public current expenditure on primary education per pupil (US$ PPP)	…	…

No data available

…	No data available
*	National estimation
**	UIS estimation
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ISCED & Regions : Please refer to ANNEX C and ANNEX D of Global Education Digest 2007
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