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Universalising Primary Education and the Child Labour Problem in
Bangladesh

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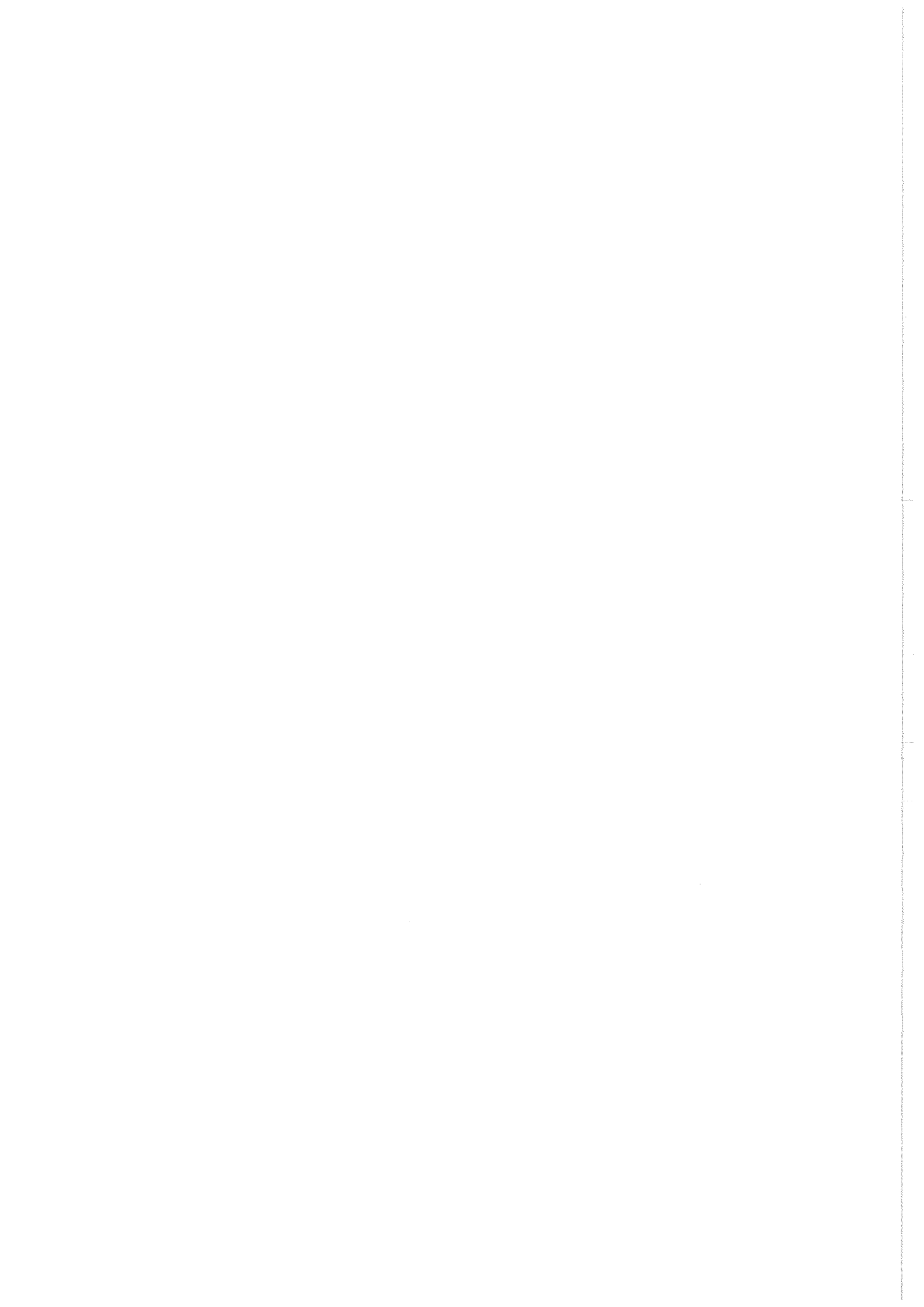
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Dedication

I dedicate this study to my parents, Mr. Mohammad Ali Khan and Mrs. Mushtari Khan. Their continuous support to every pursuit of my life is the biggest inspiration forever.



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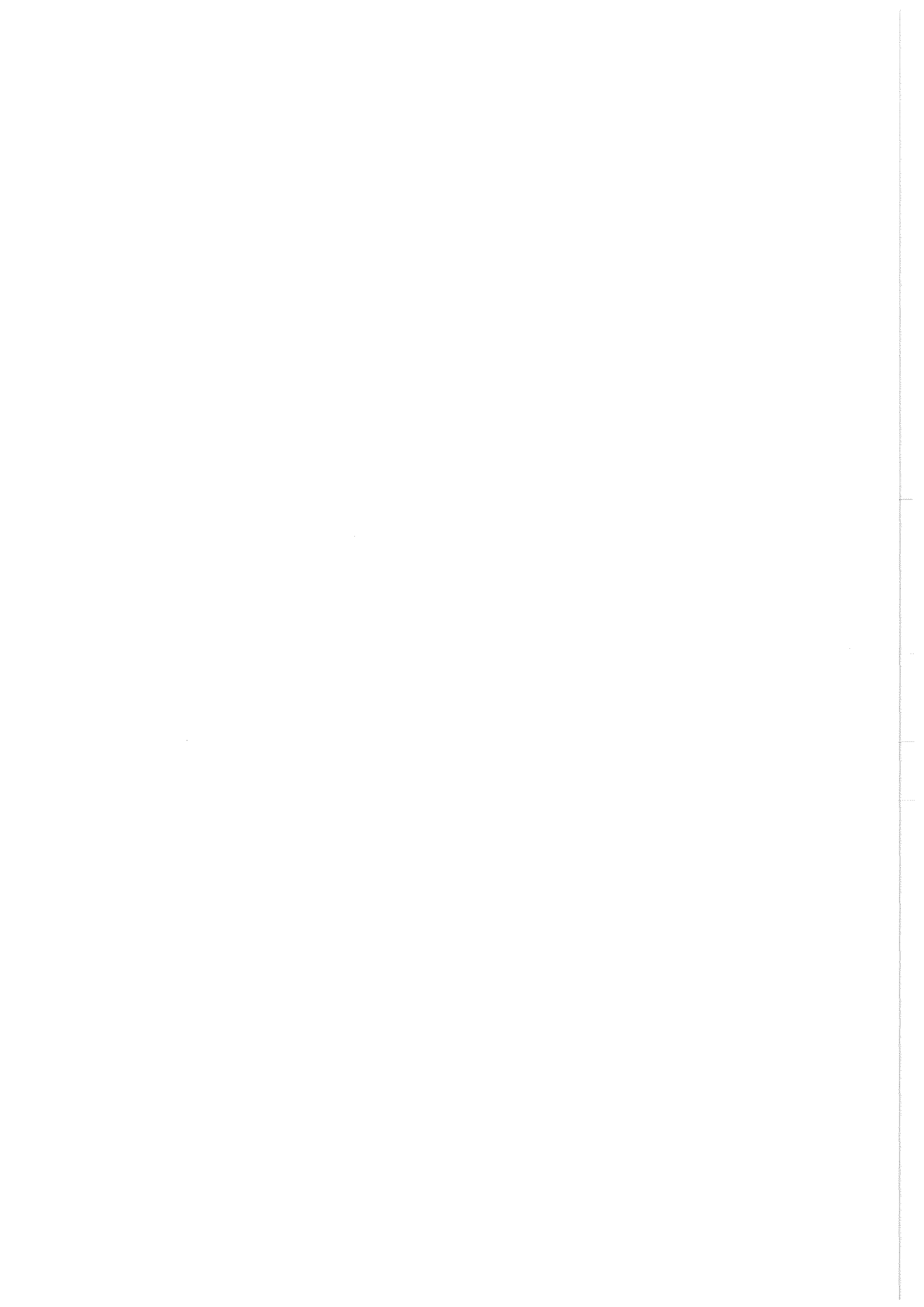
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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AUEO	Assistant Upazila Education Officer
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BEPS	Basic Education and Policy Support
BEUWC	Basic Education for Urban Working Children
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee
CPD	Centre for Policy Dialogue
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CEDAW	Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women
C-in-Ed	Certificate in Education
CMC	Centre Management Committees
CPEIMU	Compulsory Primary Education Implementation and Monitoring Unit
CRC	Convention on the Rights of the Child
DFA	Dakar Framework for Action
DPE	Department of Primary Education
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EFA	Education For All
EMIS	Education Management Information Systems
ESTEEM	Effective Schools Through Enhanced Education Management
FFE	Food For Education
FPE	Formal Primary Education
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GER	Gross Enrolment Ratio
GO	Governmental Organization
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate

IDEAL	Intensive District Approach to Education for All
ILO	International Labour Organization
IPEC	International Programme for Elimination of Child Labour
IPU	Inter-Parliamentary Union
MOE	Ministry of Education
MOPME	Ministry Of Primary and Mass Education
NAPE	National Academy for Primary Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NCLS	National Child Labour Survey
NEP	National Education Policy
NER	Net Enrolment Ratio
NFBE	Non-Formal Basic Education
NFE	Non Formal Education
NFPE	Non Formal Primary Education
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PESP	Primary Education Stipend Project
PMED	Primary and Mass Education Division
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PSPMP	Primary School Performance Monitoring Project
PTI	Primary Teachers' Training Institute
ROSC	Reaching Out-of-School Children
SKT	Shishu Kalyan Trust
SLE	Safe Learning Environment
SMC	School Management Committees
UDHR	Universal Declaration of Human Rights
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

UPE	Universal Primary Education
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCEFA	World Conference on EFA (Jomtien, 1990)
WEF	World Education Forum
WFP	World Food Programme



Chapter 1: Introduction to the Problem

1.1 The Problem and the Objective of the Study

This study aims to investigate whether the Universal Primary Education (UPE) policies in Bangladesh take into account the reasons why the children especially the child labourers do not enter or complete primary education. To do this, this research tries to locate the recognition of the link between child labour and education in UPE Policies.

About 18 percent of the 5 to 9 year children did not go to school in Bangladesh in 2002-03 (BBS 2003: 38). The primary school drop out rate is still high at 33 percent and only 67 percent children finished their schooling up to grade V in the latest figures in 2001 (MOPME 2003: 33). About 6 percent of the non-attending 5-9 age group is economically active (BBS 2003: 54). About 2 percent children in this group are claimed to be involved with household work and about 15 percent are beggars, receive informal education¹, street children or disabled etc. respectively (ibid. 52). Today, the children who are going to school may drop out from school any day and involve in work and this may violate their right to education and hinder their development. Moreover, non-school going, working children may never be attracted to school because of various issues. The research will deal with issues for achieving UPE but will give particular attention to working children. To look at the general issues of the primary education is as important as identifying various groups of children (child labourers, household workers, discriminated girls, street children) and formulating and implementing policies and programmes. Therefore, in examining the government policies and programmes this study asks two questions: *a) Do the universal primary education policies recognize the link between education and child labour? and b) How far are primary education policies and programmes designed to address the problems faced by children that lead them to poor results in school and more involvement in work?*

The decision for a child to go to school or to work is a single decision mainly from a family's perspective (International Conference on Child Labour 1997: 15). Taking the entire context with various factors into consideration, they take this decision. But when

¹ Education outside formal primary schools may be at home or arranged in the community without formal recognition of the education.

the government policies try to influence this decision, they approach it from different perspective with different policies e.g. EFA (Education for All) or universalizing primary education policy and child labour policy. Apparently, the child labour problem is separated from the educational attainment but “Children cannot be divided up into sectoral problems of ‘child labour’ and ‘education’.” (Fyfe 2001: 84). So, there is a clear link between child labour and basic education (Lieten and White 2001:1).

1.2 Improvements and Limitations of Primary Education

The development of primary education was under the ‘five year plans’ starting from 1973. Consequently, Primary Teachers’ Training Institute (PTI), National Academy for Primary Education and the Department of Primary Education was established (Rahman et al. 2001: 10). However, the development process really found pace in the beginning of the 1990s after making primary education compulsory. Following the World Conference on EFA in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, the Bangladesh government adopted the National Plan of Action (NPA I) on EFA. A new ministry named Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) was set up in 1992 for achieving the goals of Universal Primary Education (UPE) and EFA. Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Unit (CPEIMU) was also established to monitor programs under compulsory primary education act (ibid. 10). Primary education has been given utmost importance in the latest education policy (draft) formulated in 2000. The second National Plan of Action (2003-2015) is in final stage awaiting the Prime Minister’s approval.

In 2002-03, out of the pupils who received education, 98.2 percent did in a formal institution (BBS 2003: 39). Almost half of the primary schools are government run. Registered non-government schools are 25 percent and Community schools² and Satellite schools³ constitute about 10 percent (MOPME 2003: 33). Recently Bangladesh has attained considerable improvements in primary education. In 2000, the gross enrollment rate has reached about 97 percent with no gender disparity, drop out rate has declined from 52 percent in 1995 to 33 percent and primary school completion rate has increased to 67 percent (ibid. 3). Girls’ net enrolment was higher (84 percent) than boys’ (81

² The government has introduced less expensive community schools in areas with no school. It contributes to teachers’ salary of these schools.

percent) in 2003 (UNICEF 2004: 2). The total number of primary schools reached 78,200 in 2001 (CPD 2003b: 5). About 70 percent of the able children from poor families are now enrolled in primary schools (Rahman et al. 2001: 13).

But in many areas, the situation has not improved, as it should have been. Especially the quality factor of the education has not improved satisfactorily. Teachers still use traditional and conventional methods of teaching, classes are crowded, pupils are afraid of abusive teachers and of failing, there are poor facilities for vulnerable groups like girls, and the curriculum is unsuitable. There is also lack of proper supervision and accountability in the whole system (Rahman et al. 2001: 14). Repetition rate is quite high at about 40 percent. On average a child needed 6.6 years to complete the 5-year primary education cycle. In 1998, the CAMPE survey found that only 29 percent of children could satisfy the minimum levels in all four competency areas of reading, writing, numeracy and life skills (CPD 2003b: 7). High teacher-student ratio is a major negative factor for ensuring quality of primary education.

1.2.a. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE)

The rationale behind basic education is child development and preparing children for adulthood. Basic education helps structuring the thinking pattern, behaviour, societal expectations etc. It starts with Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). It is pre-primary education, which contributes to achieve above. It also prepares children to enter into primary education. It is a comprehensive area, which cuts across nutrition, health, education, social services etc. (MOPME 2003: 27). The current ECCE programmes focus only on introducing child to education but lack the other areas (ibid.). One important concern of not doing ECCE and entering primary education is children of illiterate parents often enter primary school without required preparation and perform poorly (ibid. 28). Currently, the baby classes (for ECCE) in the primary schools lack a formal structure, appropriate curriculum, and trained ECCE teachers among other issues. But NPAII aims to formalize 'baby classes' and provide full ECCE as 30% by 2005, 50% by 2010 and 80% by 2015 (ibid. 30).

³ Feeder schools to help disadvantaged children, especially girls, enter the government schools. These schools are managed by female teachers.

1.3 The National Child Labour Situation

In Bangladesh, although 6 to 10 years is generally considered the age for primary education, it is not strictly followed in every school. Sometimes, children misreport their age to be eligible to enroll in primary school. 82 percent of 5-9 year children go to school. This age group has 18.16 million children. Among those not enrolled in school, only about 2 percent are recorded as working, and about 17 percent neither work nor go to school (BBS 2003: 52). The greatest problem is with those children who work only and do not go to school. It is significant because they are the most inaccessible to the education that they need. Very often it is seen that this part of the children population are bonded labour, full-time factory worker, domestic household workers, and other activities from which it is difficult to come out. This group is already engaged in work and for educational programmes, it is difficult to reach out them compared to the group who are sitting at home and not working. But the 17 percent children are also significant to target because they are not going to school and may start working any time. A vulnerable group of this population is girls. Because of many reasons, girls tend to work full-time, at home or elsewhere instead of going to school and 0.93 million girls never enrolled in 2003 (UNICEF 2004: 2). About 15 percent of the economically active children⁴ in Bangladesh work in hazardous situation in the age group 5-11 years (BBS 2003: 63).

Integrating child labour issues in policies for universalizing primary education would bring a two-fold advantage. Kabeer (2003: 355) pointed out, ‘...in policy terms, the correlation between child labour and educational outcomes suggests that measures addressing one aspect of the problem may also succeed in addressing the other’.

1.4 The Research Method

This study titled “*Universalising Primary Education and the Child Labour Problem in Bangladesh*” believes that the issues responsible for both child work or child labour and poor educational consequences should be integrated into the UPE policies and

⁴ Working/Economically Active/Employed Children- These three words are synonymous by definition in the NCLS 2002-2003. Children who were working one or more hours for pay or profit or working without pay in a family farm or organization or enterprise or found not working but had a job or business from which he/she was temporarily absent is a working child (BBS 2003: 17)

programmes to accelerate the process of universalizing primary education as well as dealing with the current problem of child labour in Bangladesh. The study looks at the objectives, principles, strategies and targets of the national policies and plans on primary education and EFA to find out if these explicitly express the links between child labour and education. The National Plan of Action (NPA II) for EFA and the National Education Policy include objectives, strategies, principle and targets to achieve UPE. The study examines whether these policy directives mention 'working children' or 'child labour' and take account of the fact that a poor policy and poor delivery of education may open up scope for children to work. It is also examined if there are strategies or objectives for the marginalised or most disadvantaged children in the society. True meaning of universal primary education is to make education available to every child of the country including the children in hazardous conditions, girl children not being permitted to come out of their homes for cultural reasons, the child who works in his/her own household etc. In a separate chapter, this research investigates the objectives, components, sub-components and actions of current and upcoming programmes and projects to find out whether they are designed to address the issues that lead children to work and achieve poor educational results. It examines if they contain measures to address issues like compensating economic loss (poverty), creating a favourable environment for children, providing access to school, quality of teaching, physical facilities at the school, adequacy of teachers, fear of studying, suitability of curriculum & teaching methods, efficiency of management of educational operations and discrimination against vulnerable children, especially girls. These factors are very important for explaining working children's educational failure. The study analyses whether the significant quantitative achievements in primary education are matched by qualitative improvements. Qualitative aspects will be covered and measured by looking at the delivery of primary education⁵ and thus educational outcomes. This research therefore requires understanding of the contents and implications of government policies, programmes, their results and current situation of service delivery.

⁵ The points (or issues) that are used to measure the quality aspect are mentioned in page 13.

1.4.a. The Data and the Sources:

The National Education Policy (NEP) and National Plan of Action II (NPAII) help mainly to answer the first research question about (non-) recognition of the relation between child labour and education.

The National Education Policy 2000 – This policy document is significant because it provides the national priorities for primary education and strategies to achieve those priorities. The strategies reflect whether the policy makers recognize the link between education and child labour. However, this policy document was published in 2000 with little participation by stakeholders and carries little value compared to the NPA on EFA (BEPS 2002a: 10). It focuses mainly on organization, duration and physical expansion of programmes rather than quality issues (CPD 2003b: 21).

The National Plan of Action II (2003-2015, draft) – This is the most important document for this research. It contains vision, principles, objectives, strategies and targets for achieving EFA. It also includes the issues, situation review and the action recommendations for the formal primary education. This is the latest national document, from which the policy makers' line of thought should be more evident revealing whether they identify the link between child labour and education. This document also may be used to find out whether the education programmes are designed to address the issues of the children. This is possible from the Program Activities part of the document, where recommendations for programmes have been made.

The following documents mainly answer the second research question. From the following items, five government programmes/projects have been chosen in this research because they are functioning at present (excluding the ROSC project) and information on these is accessible to the researcher. The ROSC project will begin its activities fully from January, 2005. This study has not attempted to examine any completed project although it will refer to some such projects for greater clarity.

Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP II 2003-2008) - This document is a summary of the PEDP II plan. It is the most comprehensive primary education programme in the country. The objective, strategies and components of the

programmes are the highlights of this document. This information will help us to answer the second research question regarding the design of programmes.

IDEAL Project: Quality and Innovation in Primary Education – This gives an overview of the project including the three components. This project emphasizes particularly the quality aspect of primary education including teaching method and related areas. Therefore, it relates to one of the issues to be described later in the analysis chapters.

The Bangladesh Primary Education Stipend Project: A Descriptive Analysis – It is a descriptive document for PESP. It includes a discussion on the PESP components and provides an outsider's view of how the project is organized. It is specially required for the 'household poverty' part of the analysis.

Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC) Project- This document is particularly important for the 'household poverty' and 'disadvantaged children' issues. The project is a very recent one. The study will examine this document to see whether the marginalised out-of-school children are appropriately targeted or not.

Effective Schools Through Enhanced Education Management (ESTEEM)- This project is dealing with improving the institutional capacity of the primary education sector. Therefore, the information on this project directly helps to find out more on efficiency of the management for primary education in chapter 5.

The National Child Labour Survey (2002-3)- This is the latest comprehensive survey carried out with information and statistics on child labour. It also includes numbers on children's schooling and education, which are referred to at various points in the study.

Bangladesh Education Sector Review 2002- This USAID funded project carried out a study on Bangladesh's basic education sector and published a series of five reports. The first report provides an overview of the sector with an emphasis on the functions of the primary education system. The second and fourth reports are dedicated to the status of gender equity and teachers & teacher training respectively. These reports are examined for information on the issues mentioned in the second question of the research.

Task Force Report on Education Policy by CPD- This is an education policy study including primary education. It also highlights various defects of the system and the issues like quality, teaching, and efficiency. The strength of the document is that it examines the education system more rigorously than other documents.

CAMPE Education Watch 1999, 2000, 2001 and 2002- These are the annual reports on progress of primary education in Bangladesh. Each study is based on a survey and brings out results, which are very relevant to enrolment, students' achievement, quality, teachers, efficiency of the system etc.

Basic Education Studies in Bangladesh 2004- This is a very recent study published by UNESCO. It provides some crucial survey results on quality and physical facilities of primary education.

It will also be required to examine reports published from and by UNICEF, ILO-IPEC, autonomous government agencies and other NGOs on primary education and child labour.

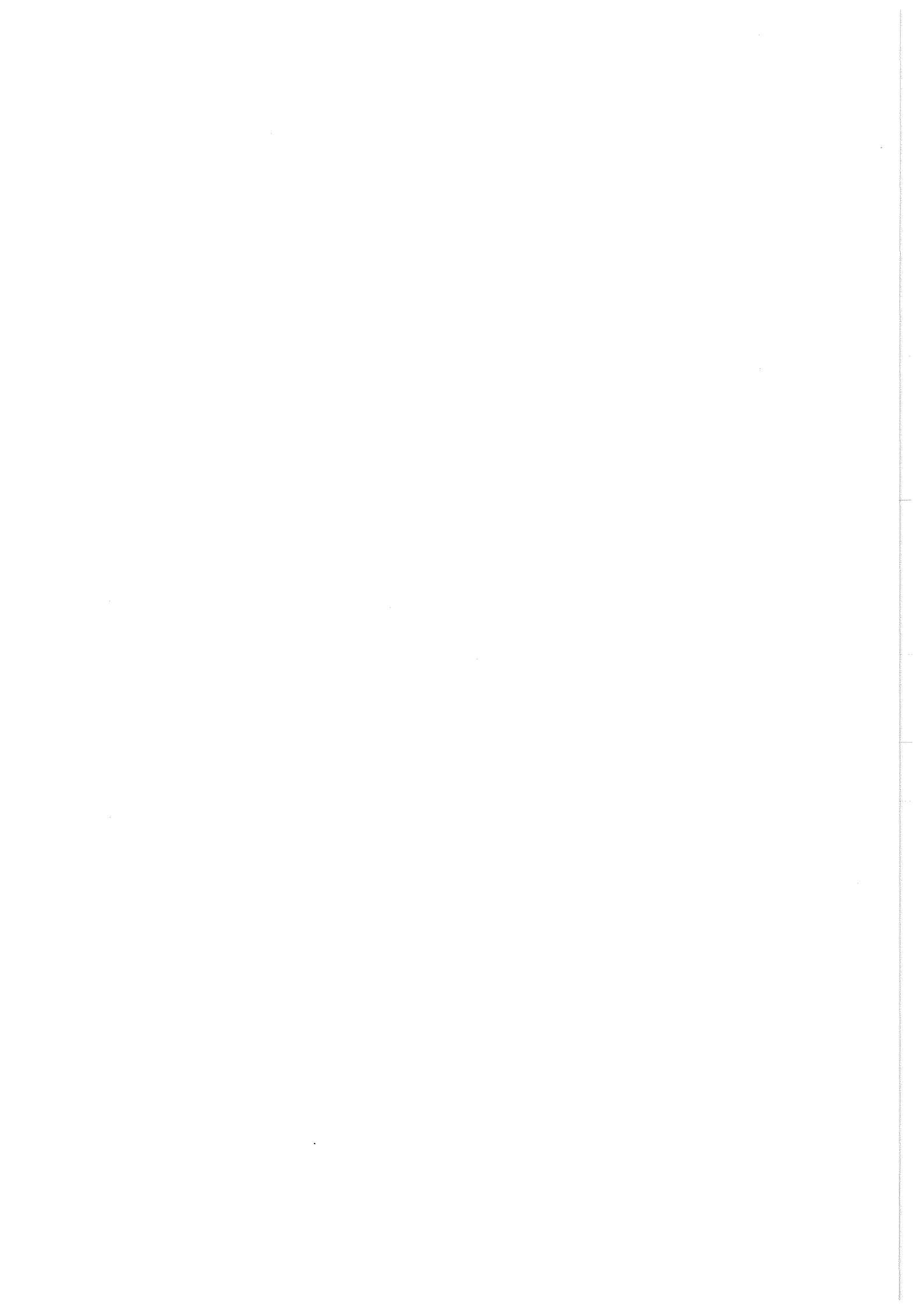
1.4.b. Limitations of the Study

The research is based on secondary data and mainly relied on the policy documents and programme information documents. The policy directives often provide a general idea of national strategies. So, a deep insight even intended has not been entirely possible due to lack of adequate background information on the policies. The study could not analyse the past programmes which are already finished because of limitation of length. It could also not verify the effects that the programmes had directly on the children and their families because of lack of direct access to them.

1.5 Organisation of the Research Paper

In the next chapter, the main, commonly held approaches on education and child labour are discussed. The analytical framework of the research is part of the same chapter to show the relationship between the different concepts used in this research for better understanding of the problem. A review of policy studies and researches on primary

education and child labour are made in the following chapter. The review of studies is required to know whether studies in this area reflect or state that child labour problems can be integrated into UPE policies. Then, the findings of the research are presented and analyzed in two chapters. In the first of these two, the objectives, strategies, priorities and targets of the NPA II and NEP are presented and analysed. In the following chapter, components, sub-components and actions of the various programmes and projects are diagnosed and presented. In the last part of the paper, concluding remarks of the research is presented.



Chapter 2: General approaches to child labour and education and the analytical framework

2.1 General Approaches to the Problem

Child labour or child work can be of many types starting from strenuous household work and agricultural work in rural setting to scavenging, working at automobile workshop or in various factories in urban setting as well. Child work could be in formal sectors (e.g. ready-made garment industry) or in informal sectors (e.g. welding, street-side-restaurant boy etc.). The varying types of child work and their extent are relevant to the ways in which policy makers understand and evaluate the problems of child labour and poor educational outcomes (Kabeer 2003: 353).

There are various policy approaches to look at child labour and education. Six approaches are briefly summarized below: the first two approaches have been taken from Kabeer (2003: 353-355), and the last four approaches have mainly been taken from Myers (2001: 30-43), who argues that all these approaches have some validity and that they are not always incompatible with each other.

2.1.a. The Realist Approach:

The first is the 'realist' position. This views child labour as an unavoidable product of poverty and stresses that only eradication of poverty could bring good results for child labour and poor educational outcomes. It emphasizes the strategy of prohibition against hazardous child work and regulating non-hazardous child work by laws and other means. However, the definition of hazardous work is different in different countries. In Bangladesh, there is yet to be a consensus on the list of works that should be in this category.

A pragmatic but close to realist approach upholds the economic reasons for children's participation in the labour market. It claims that a singular, formal education system, which does not address the economic reality of the children, would push parents to send

them to work than school. And non-formal education is seen as a permitting option for marginalised children to 'earn and learn', which otherwise would not have been possible.

2.1.b. The Idealist Approach:

The second stance is referred to as 'idealist' or 'purist' (Arvind 1999). This position views all forms of child labour as a violation of the rights of the child and a failure of the society and of policy makers to act for the children. It stresses the need to stop all kinds of child labour and make education both compulsory and justifiable. It does not separate child work as hazardous or non-hazardous and supports full-time, formal education. Non-formal education or any sort of education that is not full time and formal is thought to be 'hazardous' for the future development of children.

A pragmatic but close to Idealist approach (as mentioned by Kabeer 2003: 354) believes that non-formal education bring about both child labour and 'social inequality'. The reason is that non-formal education allows children to combine work and school and it is an 'inferior form of education'. Supporters of this approach prioritize social mobilization and policies to deal with both child labour and poor educational outcome through UPE (ibid.).

2.1.c. The Rights Approach:

This approach has children as the 'primary clientele' and is guided by issues that harm 'children's growth and violate their rights' (Myers 2001: 39-40). 'It conceives of child labour as that work which undermines children's well being and individual and social development, and it judges the appropriateness of any work according to its effect on a child' (ibid.). The principle of UNCRC (1989, article 3) 'in all actions concerning children...the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration' is at the centre of the rights approach. It opposes the universal usefulness of the minimum age legislation of ILO (No. 138) and compulsory education (Fyfe 2001: 70). Supporters of this approach see these mechanisms 'ineffective' and far from 'realities faced by the poor developing country families and their children' (ibid.). This approach claims that both legislative prohibition of child employment and compulsory primary education limit the options for children to survive (withdrawing children from work to school even if they

are very poor) and develop and that these may result in negative impact (Bissell & Sobhan 1996:32).

2.1.d. The Labour Market Approach:

It is the most dominant approach internationally and nationally in many countries. It considers children as innocent and uninformed of their best interest and it shares the notion that child labour may replace adult workers creating adult unemployment and poverty (Myers 2001: 30-31). It emphasizes that the state should exclude children from workplaces using a combination of compulsory education laws and minimum age legislation and considers compulsory education as a tool to stop children from entering labour market (ibid.). It believes any type of work is detrimental to children. This approach has attained huge acceptance and it was reflected in ILO conventions (e.g. Minimum Age Convention No. 138, 1973). As a whole, this approach promotes total abolition of child's participation in economic activities and full implementation of compulsory primary education with the support of minimum age laws for entering in work.

2.1.e. The Human Capital Approach:

This approach considers child labour as a product of underdevelopment and stresses to eliminate poverty and its causes. It looks at childhood as a preparatory time to contribute to economic development as an adult. It strongly encourages children's education. It also advocates social behavioural changes towards child work instead of minimum age legislation for work. It promotes policies and activities the skills, attitudes and capacities i.e. the human capital to contribute to economic development. It often supports the study-incentives, income-generating programmes, improvement of school quality etc.

2.1.f. The Social Responsibility Approach:

It sees child labour as a result of greater social exclusion, unfair use of political and economic power and deterioration of values. It considers child labour as exploiting, alienating and oppressing children from society's normal protections. Vulnerable children like ethnic, religious minorities and refugee children, girl children etc. are important to address according to the supporter of this approach. The solution to child

labour problem is programmes targeting families, communities, basic services etc. It supports non-formal education, community schools, work-study arrangements etc.

There is a small transition evident in the government policies on child labour in Bangladesh from labour market perspective to more rights based approach although the former dominates them more than the later does. However, this research looks at the research problem from a combination of the Realist and Idealist approaches as described by Kabeer (2003).

2.2 The Analytical Framework

The Realist and the Idealist approaches are primarily based on the following cause and effect relationships:

Poverty \Rightarrow child labour \Rightarrow poor educational outcomes

Delivery of education \Rightarrow poor educational outcomes \Rightarrow child labour

The research problem can be put in a simple framework based upon the relationships mentioned above. This research takes an approach to the problem combining both the relationships. Any one of the two approaches may not address the problem comprehensively. This research will look at these relationships to understand the policies and interventions on UPE that can integrate child labour problems. Three concepts are used - **Issues faced by the children**, **Poor Primary Education Outcomes** and **Child Labour** within a policy context for universalizing primary education. What this framework is suggesting is that poor delivery of primary education results in increasing poor educational outcomes and thus child labour and also poverty results in child labour and thus poor educational outcomes. It does by no means imply that poverty is the only cause of child labour and poor educational outcomes.

2.2.a. Issues Faced by the Children:

This is the first and most important concept in the framework. This includes issues, which force children into work (child labour) and produce poor outcomes for primary education. This concept can also be explained as why (factors) children ultimately drop out or not enroll in school. The issues could be separated in **two** categories, representing

the demand side issues and the supply side issue respectively. **The demand side issues** include household income poverty, household tasks performed by the children and the cultural barriers for girl children to go to school. *The household income poverty* is considered a major reason for children being involved with work in developing countries although not the only one. Haider (1998) found the reason to be valid for Bangladesh as well. But for this research, household income poverty will be considered as one of the issues faced by the children to become involved with work. Many children in Bangladesh cannot go to school because they take care of their siblings at home or help adults in *household work*. Another group of children are neither at workplaces nor at school. This group is also of high importance to bring into attention. Many children are not involved with full-day work at factories or in workshops but may be involved in household work and taking care of siblings. While this group of children is not directly working for commercial purposes or economic purposes, their education is thoroughly denied. Many of these children might have started primary school and have discontinued and now are above primary school age. A majority of this group consists of girls (Kabeer 2003: 384). Culturally, expectation from girls is very low to be a high achiever (UNICEF 2004: 3). Their families are worried about their safety and security and a 'good marriage'. So, the families prefer their girl children to stay at home and learn their 'future household duties'. This group of children does not have access to education because of *cultural (gender) barriers*. Child labour ultimately reflects in poor primary education outcomes (the third concept) as do household work and discrimination against girl children.

The supply side issue is the poor *delivery of primary education*. It consists of access to primary school, physical facilities at the school, quality of teaching, suitability of curriculum, efficiency of management of educational operations and discrimination against vulnerable children, especially girls at the school etc. According to the framework, poor delivery of primary education results in poor primary education outcome i.e. low completion rate, lower competency levels, low school attendance, higher gender discrimination at school etc. and this is the situation when children have already lost interest in school. They are no longer in school and at least they become involved with work.

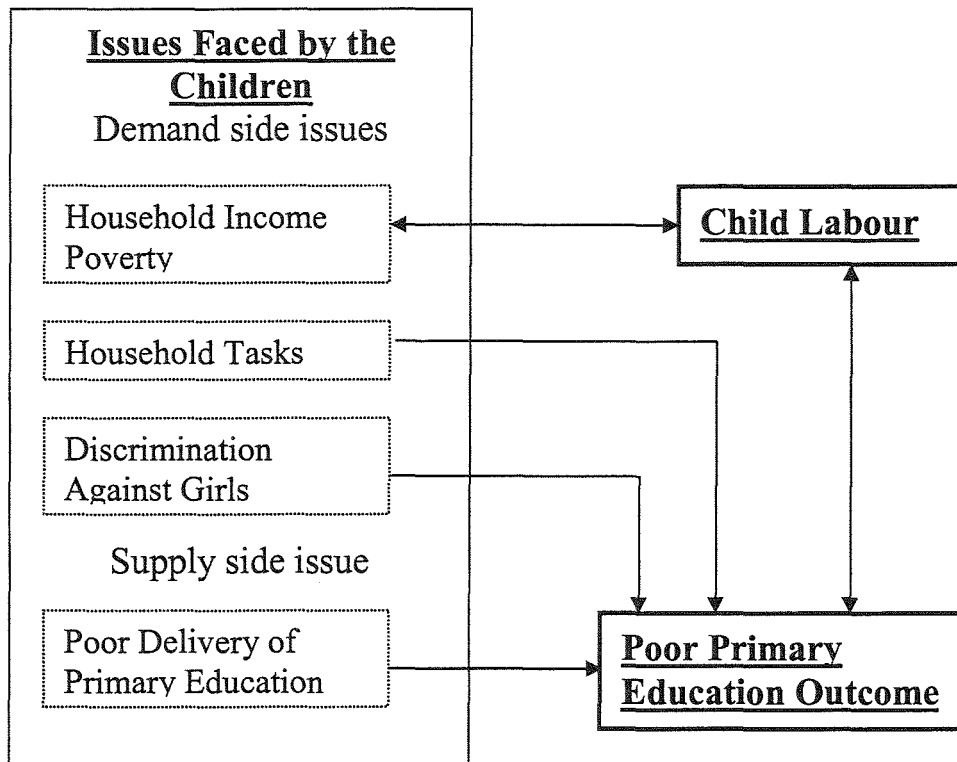


Figure 1: The Analytical Framework

2.2.b Poor Primary Education Outcomes:

This refers to the effect of the primary education caused by issues faced by the children, both demand and supply side delivery. For example, many children especially the girls, cannot attend school regularly because it is far from their home, many do not find interest to attend school for poor quality and facilities of teaching (e.g. no separate toilet facilities for girls) etc. For all these issues mentioned in the previous concept, some are forced to leave school and rather stay home, some fail in examinations, and some very reluctantly continue studying without much learning. This phenomenon also reflects in poor learning achievement and lack of motivation to study.

2.2.c. Child and Child Labour:

There are many debates about the exact definitions of ‘child work’ and ‘child labour’. Specially, what type of work could be under child labour and how long a work is done are the main reasons for debate. But the definition usually, should be context specific.

However, there are general definitions found in the literature. ILO defines child labour as work that 'is mentally, physically, socially or morally dangerous and harmful to children, and interferes with their schooling by depriving them of the opportunity to attend school, by obliging them to leave school prematurely or by requiring them to attempt to combine school attendance with excessively long and heavy work' (ILO-IPU 2002: 15).

Blanchet describes that various studies in Bangladesh have defined 'child labour' in Bangladeshi context differently by disagreeing on some works as productive or reproductive (Blanchet 1996: 76). She also stresses that the bias for productive work by children tends to dominate the Bangladeshi definition of child labour ignoring many other dimensions of child labour (ibid. 77).

Now, the other hindrance with this definition is the age for a child. In Bangladesh a person below 18 does not have the right to vote. The age of majority in Bangladesh is set at 18 years under the Majority Act 1875, although the National Children Policy defines boys and girls under 14 years as children (MOE 2000: 12). UN Convention on the Rights of the Child defined child age as less than 18 years (UN 1989, article 1). ILO definition of the worst forms of child labour⁶ (ILO convention no. 182) stipulates persons from 5 to 17 excluding 12-14 years old who spend less than 14 hours at work and including 15-17 years old. For Bangladesh, the minimum working age is not uniformly defined in national laws ranging from 12 to 15 years. A draft labour code has prescribed a single minimum age of 14 years according to ILO minimum age convention, 1973 (No. 138). ILO convention 138 (1973) states, 'the minimum age...shall be not less than the age of completion of compulsory schooling and, in any case, shall not be less than 15 years' (Article 2.3). This research will follow the ILO definition of child labour and considers most comprehensive and relevant to the research topic. The NCLS used a definition⁷

⁶ ILO convention 182 (1999, Article 3) defines it as a) all forms of slavery or practices similar to slavery, such as the sale and trafficking of children, debt bondage and serfdom and forced or compulsory labour, including forced or compulsory recruitment of children for use in armed conflict; b) the use, procuring or offering of a child for prostitution, for the production of pornography or for pornographic performances; c) the use, procuring or offering of a child for illicit activities, in particular for the production and trafficking of drugs as defined in the relevant international treaties; d) work which, by its nature or the circumstances in which it is carried out, is likely to harm the health, safety or morals of children.

⁷ All children under 18 years of age who are economically active except i. those who are under five years old and ii. those between 12 to 14 years old who spend less than 14 hours a week on their jobs, unless their activities or occupations are hazardous by nature or circumstance. Added to this are 15 to 17 years old children in WFCL (including hazardous work and work of 43 hours or more per week).

based on the ILO minimum age convention, 1973 (No. 138). The statistical references are based on this definition.

The NCLS covered 05-17 year children (BBS 2003: 16). This research will talk about children ranging from 5/6 – 10 year old because it is the primary schooling age. However, since the NCLS provides figures for children in categories of 5-9, 10-14 and 15-17 years, statistical reference is only possible for children from 05-09 years. There could be many different categories of child workers. But for research statistical purpose, ‘children who are working one or more hours for pay or profit or working without pay in a family firm or enterprise or organization’ will be considered as *working children* as mentioned in the NCLS (ibid.). Child work force will include this population and children seeking for economic activity or work.

Child work does not end in the definition of child labour as presented above. As indicated above, children work in their households or with family members for example, taking care of their siblings/old/sick, use/clean durables, prepare meals, transportation of goods, clean/maintain dwellings etc. (ibid.). These children are involved in ‘household chores’ as referred in NCLS and represents 1.8 percent of the 05-09 population (ibid. 52). The reasons for this could be many including cultural and demanding situations in the household. Many children simply live in the city streets, beg in the streets, and sometimes even sell small items (and surveys are not able to obtain complete information on them always) reflect another dimension of children’s state which is difficult to define. This population is about 15 percent of the same age group and mentioned as ‘Others’ in the NCLS (ibid.). Both the groups constitute 16.5 percent of the 05-09 age group population and put in broad category of ‘neither at work nor at school’ in the NCLS (ibid.). The issues of these groups have been identified in the demand side issues faced by the children in the analytical framework.

2.3 What is Universalisation of Primary Education?

Primary Education is the study from grade I to grade V in a formal educational institution i.e. school. The general age group for primary education is 6-10 years. Universal primary education refers to universal access to primary education for all

citizens of the country, ensuring equal participation irrespective of sex, race, religion, tribe and ethnicity (Okwany 2004). A rather quantitative definition would be 'full enrolment of all children in the primary school age group, i.e. 100 percent net enrolment ratio'⁸ (MOPME 2003:129, UNESCO 2000: 3). Colclough and Lewin (1993: 41) defined UPE as 'the circumstance of having a primary GER'⁹ of 100 or more'. A GER of 100 will be enough when repetition and over-age enrolment are reduced to insignificant proportions. In Bangladesh, education policies and programmes are reinforced by Compulsory Primary Education Act (1990) to achieve UPE. The law has provisions to fine the legal guardian of the child if he/she is not sent to school (Haider 1998: 47). UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) mentions that all states shall make primary education compulsory, free and available to every child (Article 28).

The meaning of UPE could go beyond just institutional education for school aged children. In a UNESCO (2004: 15) report, early childhood development in Bangladesh has been emphasized because of mainly two reasons: children as early as 7/8 years of age, i. start taking care of younger siblings and do other domestic works and ii. start working to supplement parents' income. Clearly, the early childhood enters the age range of primary school age children. Therefore, the notion of early childhood care and education should be part of this research.

⁸ It is the number of pupils in the official school-age group expressed as a percentage of the total population in the same age group

⁹ It is the total enrolment of pupils in a grade or cycle or level of education, regardless of age, expressed as percentage of the corresponding eligible official age-group population in a given school year (MOPME 2003).

Chapter 3: Review of Policy Studies and Researches Related to the Problem in Bangladesh

This chapter reviews selected available policies studies in order to identify whether studies have discussed about integrating child labour problems into UPE policies. This will give an idea whether the activists, donors, academics in this sector realize that issues faced by the children can be integrated into UPE policies. This is important because these groups often influence the policy making process with their ideas. It is expected that the studies include issues on education delivery but this study requires to observe whether recommendations have been made to address the issues comprehensively (including working children) to achieve UPE. Studies analysed Primary, Secondary and Non Formal Education and specific programmes under these sub-sectors. Some other studies focused on child labour policies and programmes in Bangladesh. Most of the studies in this area have been conducted by or for the international donors in education sector. Some local organizations also carried out studies on this sector. Therefore, to keep a balance two studies have been selected from local prominent organizations and foreign donor organizations each. They include chapters on linkage between child labour and education and stress that education is both cause and consequence of child labour. However, it has hardly been seen in the studies that integration of child labour issues into UPE policies have been identified as a problem. Burra (1989: 1) generally pointed out, ‘Studies on the universalisation of primary education have tended to neglect the problem of child labour’.

3.1 Policy Study by Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)

A study on Bangladesh’s education sector was carried out by Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD) in 2003. It includes a review of the primary education sub-sector including various programmes, achievements, failures and how the government manages it. The study pointed out some key issues of this sub-sector namely access to all school age children, equal opportunity for extremely poor households and vulnerable groups, quality improvement of the teaching, relevance of the curriculum and efficiency of the system (CPD 2003b). It acknowledged substantial progress in access although the majority new schools were NGO schools. It also reported that enrolment rates considerably vary by

socio-economic groups- 'A sizeable number of children from very poor households were never enrolled and many of those enrolled dropped out before completing the full five year cycle as their families depended on child labour for survival' (ibid. 6). Furthermore, 'specific action proposals focus on organization and duration of programmes and physical expansion rather than the difficult issues of quality assurance, relevance and outcome of education, or indicating effective measure for fulfilling the rights and entitlements of citizens in education (ibid. 21). Although the study did mention some child labour issues, it did not focus on UPE policies and incorporation of child labour issues into them.

In a separate study on child labour policy in 2003, CPD emphasized the need for considering economic and other problems of the families and children for the promotion of universal education. It underlined more in-depth research 'to explore how education policies and practices could better address the needs of working children' (CPD 2003a: XV). It emphasized the need to analyze current education programmes from the working children's perspective and assess the means of making school programmes viable, attractive and acceptable to them. Suggestions came to 'incorporate informal schooling with technical training' and to discover ways of reducing costs of education and involved employers in making school accessible for children.

3.2 Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE) Study on Primary Education

Education Watch was set up by CAMPE to produce annual report on Bangladesh's primary education. The last report was published for the year 2002 in June 2003.

Education Watch 2002 stressed the need for income-generating skills and post literacy skills on a large scale (Ahmed, M.; Nath; and Ahmed, K. S. 2003:13). While this is a future-benefit for families to send their children to school now, the report did not mention the relationship between child work and thus failure of educational achievement.

In 2001, Education Watch (Ahmed et al. 2002) found that the non-enrolled students belong to socio-economically-disadvantaged families and illiterate parents. Various actions were proposed including mobilizing national political commitment for EFA, promote EFA in a framework clearly linked to poverty elimination and development

strategies, ensure civil society participation in formulation of education strategies, develop participatory and accountable systems of educational management etc. The report suggested taking up education programmes to combat an issue of HIV/AIDS in the country, but surprisingly did not mention the much broader problem of child labour to consider.

In Education Watch 2000 (CAMPE 2001), quality of primary education was the main focus. Special attention was recommended for highly deprived rural areas and instructional methods to combat traditional attitudes about girls' education. It pointed out that the current training programs for the teachers are not producing best results in teachers' skills and that decentralization of the educational management is necessary. The policy implication of this study identified family-related factors as hindrance for schooling. These factors include schooling costs and inflexible school-hours for working children. This is the only issue that came up in this report about working children.

Education Watch 1999 (CAMPE 1999) was the very first annual report by CAMPE. It showed that although the state of primary education was improving the pace was slow. There was much more to be done to reach the goal of universal primary education. But no child labour issues were mentioned in this study to consider achieving UPE.

3.3 Primary Education Sub-sector Study for Asian Development Bank

A review of recent programmes, policies and plan has been conducted in this study for ADB. The review included the achievements and failures of the primary education emphasizing the quality issue. It showed that gender disparity in enrolment and drop out has already been eliminated. Primary Education Development Programme's (PEDP) priorities including universal enrolment of 6-10 year age children and others have been highlighted in this review. The indicators for primary education development (and outcome) such as student-teacher ratios, enrollment rates, number of institutions etc. have been highlighted. A crucial finding was that the number of government primary school remained unchanged resulting in high student-school and student-teacher ratio (ibid. 20). It pointed out that 'conventional strategies and traditional methods' did not bring fruitful result for UPE in the past (ibid. 9). Although the study concluded that child

labour is a factor for non-expansion of primary education (ibid. 48), it did not recognize the claim made by Kabeer (2003: 355) that in policy terms, the progress in the supply of education may both increase the 'demand for education' and reduce the 'supply of child labour'. It is not to say that the study is incomplete or not successful in achieving its objective but to indicate that this study did not recommend addressing child labour issues for achieving better outcome in primary education.

3.4 Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) Study for USAID

Basic Education and Policy Support (BEPS) conducted a study on Bangladesh's basic education sector. In the first (Overview) of the series of reports it mentioned that primary education now has good-quality curriculum, good textbooks and institutions for training teachers. But it is still lacking in instructional system and stakeholders have little voice in guiding policy and practice (BEPS 2002a: 28). In the second report, the study focused on gender equity. It pointed out that 85 percent of the garment industry (the biggest formal sector for women) workers are women and that the figures of child labour do not include much of the hidden work done by the girls in rural areas (BEPS 2002b: 9). It also criticized that the eight laws related to child labour are not at all enforced (ibid.). It illustrated that the effect of poverty is more on girls and there is cultural bias towards boys over girls for education. The report emphasized that 'the education system is obsessed with numbers' and 'there is a great need for attention to the kinds of skills and competencies that are needed in order to achieve gender equity' (ibid. 16). It referred that there are better facilities for girls and more female teachers (therefore less harassment by the teachers to female students) in the NGO schools than in government schools (ibid.). So, the second report did establish a link between child labour (especially for girls) and education. Poverty is seen as a barrier to girls' participation in education.

3.5 Concluding Remarks

The study reports included child labour issues like schooling costs, family poverty, girl-working children's opportunity for schooling and inflexible class-scheduling and other delivery related issues. So, a relationship between child labour and education has been established. But studies did not mention about incorporating these issues into UPE policies or programmes for achieving universally educated children in the country.

Chapter 4: - The Link Between the Education and Child Labour: Visible in Policies?

This chapter looks into the NPA and NEP and tries to find whether these policy papers distinguish the link between child labour and education. It examines whether they recognize that issues faced by the children may lead to child labour and poor educational outcomes. In section 4.1, the relevant (not all) objectives, strategies and principles of NPAA are analysed. In section 4.2, the objectives and strategies (relevant) of the NEP are analysed to search for any explicit references to the above-mentioned link.

4.1 UPE in National Plan of Action on EFA

The National Plan of Action II (NPAA 2003-2015) was adopted as a follow-up plan of the first National Plan of Action (1995-2000) on Education for All (EFA). The theme, EFA was first adopted in the NPA I after the World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA) at Jomtien, Thailand in March 1990 (PMED 1995: 2). The Jomtien conference set the goal for universalisation of access and increasing completion rates for primary education. Both of these resulted in the NPA I vision to: Universalizing access and promoting equity; focusing on learning, broadening the means and scope of basic education; enhancing the environment for learning and strengthening partnerships (ibid. 53). The government set some quantitative targets for children's primary enrollment rate and completion rate. The overall aim was 'to enhance both quantitative and qualitative dimensions of primary and mass education and also take up all other feasible supportive programmes so that the targets set for 2000 can be successfully attained with the participation, assistance and cooperation of all concerned' (ibid. 58).

The World Education Forum (WEF), Dakar 2000 reviewed the Jomtien EFA targets and extended the timeline to reach the goals till 2015. It also proposed a Framework for Action known as Dakar Framework for Action (DFA). The DFA goals and strategies, achievements of NPA I and basic education needs of the country at the end of 2001 provided the framework for NPA II (MOPME 2003: 3). The NPAA overall goal is 'to lay the foundations of a knowledge-based and technologically-oriented learning society by enhancing and sustaining access, retention and provision of quality basic education to

meet the learning needs of children, young persons and adults in a competitive world, both in the formal and non-formal sub-sectors of basic education' (ibid. viii).

4.1.a Objectives, Policy Guiding Principles and Strategies in NPA II

The NPA II covers Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), Non-Formal Basic Education (NFBE) and Formal Primary Education (FPE) and a small section on Female Education. Among these, FPE occupies the major part of the NPA. Here, UPE¹⁰ could be referred to as universalizing FPE. The relevant parts of NPA II for this research are objectives (MOPME 2003: 23-24), guiding principles (ibid. 20-21), targets (ibid. 24) and strategies (ibid. 21-23). They are common for ECCE, NFBE and FPE. However, most of them relate directly or indirectly to universalisation of FPE. So, the objectives, guiding principles, the quantitative targets and the overarching strategies¹¹ are analysed in the following section. But the part on FPE and its activities and proposals (relevant for programmes) are discussed in chapter 5 as that chapter discusses the second research question on issues confronted by the children.

The guiding principles (ibid. 20-21) are based on the national constitution, PRSP, UDHR, CRC, CEDAW, national children policy, DFA goals. The principles reflect free and compulsory education, equal opportunity, poverty reduction and improving stakeholder participation.

4.1.b. Analysis of the Findings in National Plan of Action (II) on EFA

Analysis of the Objectives:

The objectives of the NPAAII are broad and talk about universalizing basic education for all including adults. However, the analysis only highlights children's primary education. The objectives clearly cover all children including anyone working or not working. The intention of the policy makers is clear - universalizing education. The second objective emphasized the marginalised and vulnerable groups of children. Girls and the ethnic minority children were focused. While this is certainly an important area to target, there was no mention of child workers or even children in hazardous working situations. The

¹⁰ Please see section 2.3 for a complete definition.

third objective indicated that the education would be appropriate for each group of children so that they can apply their learning in employment. This may be good for child workers of 14 years and above to take up appropriate skill training programme similar to their interests and previous working expertise. But 6-10 age group requires primary education in order to be able to properly acquire and apply skill training lessons. Primary education is required for children development during their early ages. The next objective mentioned about the absence of gender disparity in the enrolment and emphasized to maintain this parity. But maintaining gender parity and targeting new girls, who never went to school, are two different tasks. No emphasis to those girls who are out of education because of cultural barriers at home has been specified in the objectives.

Analysis of the Target:

The quantitative target that the NPAAII has set is certainly plausible. Gross enrolment rate of 110 percent has been targeted for 2015. Drop out rate has been expected to reach 25 percent from 33 percent in 2000. Drop out rate of 14 percent in 2010 and 5 percent in 2015 have been targeted. However, the problem lies in a different fact. From an interview¹² with the Director of an education project, the following can be said- if there is 100 percent enrolment in a particular school, this shows that it has utilized all of its capacity to enroll students. But there could be other children from different age groups, who cannot go to school just because there are not enough schools for them. This problem relates problem of re-entrant children who are usually over primary school age but want to go to primary school. In grades I to V, about 65 and 34 percent children range from 5-9 and 10-14 years respectively (BBS 2003: 40). So, there is no scope for complacency with the high figures of enrolment. This is entirely a problem of access, which these targets fail to show. Also, what these targets do not show is who are being targeted. For instance, which 5 percent children will be out of school in 2015? Certainly, these 5 percent children are at most risk and are most difficult to bring to school. The explanation of this 5 percent could easily include child labour, children at household work including girl child.

¹¹ Please see Annex- A for the objectives, targets, guiding principles and strategies of NPAAII.

¹² The interview was taken in Dhaka in July'04 with the Project Director, Intensive District Approach to Education for All (IDEAL), Bangladesh.

Analysis of the Guiding Principles of the Policies:

The principles cover a general and broad area based on the national consensus to promote EFA and removing illiteracy. One credible part of the principles was the inclusion of UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) in the underlying principles. But it is not clear in the principles whether the policy makers recognise every right mentioned in the CRC. For example, article 32 (UN 1989) mentions, 'the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous and to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, spiritual, moral or social development'. Therefore, if the CRC sets underlying principle to achieve EFA, attention must be given to children who are exploited in any manner, while forming objectives or strategies of EFA. Many of these children are deprived of their right to education because of work.

Poverty reduction has been highlighted to enable children to receive education. However, what is not present is that poverty is one major reason for children to become child workers although not the only one. Children become involved with work and at the end many of them turn into child labourers. The link between household poverty, child work or child labour and poor educational outcome is ignored. So, a reference to child labour is much relevant as both cause and consequence of poor educational outcome. There is no mention of national child labour laws in these directive principles. But child labour laws could guide the policy makers' decision on children's primary education as these two are linked. It should be noted that the national child labour policy has not been finalized.

The principles include the components for a traditional policy that only looks at one particular area i.e. primary education without considering other factors and issues causing problems for it. But strategies addressing child labourers, which may support the success of UPE is inherently absent. They completely miss the child labour issue, which constitute a major part of the reason for educational failure. This shows that the link between the child labour and education is not present when the policy makers begin to think on basic education policy. But it is too early to conclude that if child labour is out of the agenda for UPE policy or not. Let us keep this in mind that these are only guiding

principles. From these, strategies and programmes come out, which may address the missing link.

Analysis of the strategies:

A focus on the quality aspect of the primary education is recognizable in the strategies. Efficient use of resources, better coordination between ministries and organizations (public and private), improving quality of teachers, community awareness and empowering to participate, decentralization of responsibilities at local level, reduction of gender inequity, decrease the burden of poverty, transparency/accountability in the education system, improvement of the quality of the curriculum and accessories and inclusion of issues like HIV/AIDS and arsenic contamination¹³ are included in the strategy. But it is not clear that by not mentioning the problem of access and emphasizing only on quality, whether the policy makers tend to refuse the need for more schools. Also, reduction of poverty has been highlighted as it hinders enrolment, causes drop outs etc. But, how poverty stops children from going to school and what do the children do instead of going to school have not been stated. The strategies missed that the link between poverty and educational failure may include child work or child labour in between. Although not in every case but often, because of poverty, the children stops going to school and start working simultaneously. And once the child is earning a good income, after providing incentives he/she may have been brought back to school but reduction of involvement in labour does not occur proportionately (Ravallion and Wodon 1999: 16). Another noticeable gap in the strategies is the suitability of the curriculum. Issues like HIV/AIDS and arsenic are included but a relevant issue for children like hazards of child labour is not emphasized. Child workers have different needs in terms of learning and curriculum than general pupils. Some are experts in their working fields, some are half-literate and some are totally illiterate. Therefore, strategies need to consider working children's background of work and education and assess their educational needs. Boyden, Ling and Myers emphasized the same (1998: 269). To do this, children's participation is vital to understand the exact needs of the working children. However, only relying on children's views is not enough to formulate effective strategies. Children's view should be incorporated during the strategy formulation

¹³ Arsenic is a substance that is found in the ground water and if used, it can cause severe skin diseases. Recently, Bangladesh has suffered from epidemic by arsenic contamination.

process. Although the overarching strategies did not mention explicitly the role of the children in the school management committees and what the policy makers expect from them, they have kept the option for listening to children's view. Schedule of classes for working children is also distracting for employers. So, it is obligatory that the strategies identify employers and parents as partners to achieve UPE to get their co-operation.

From the strategies, it can be said that the planners had noble intention to make a favourable environment for the children to be attracted to and receive education. Achieving this definitely will broaden the scope for working children to go to school but there are more in-depth areas, as mentioned in analysis that must be integrated to meet the needs of working children.

4.2 UPE in National Education Policy

The last publicly available national education policy was published in 2000. According to NPAII (MOPME 2003: 20), it is expected to be reviewed and updated once every three years. But no updated version of the policy is published yet. It consists of policies on all the education sub-sector starting from Pre-primary, non-formal to higher education and other specialized and professional education. One of the beginning chapters of the policy document is Pre-primary and primary education. Under the primary education, the policies that have a direct or indirect effect on UPE are discussed. In addition, cross cutting topics like teacher training, educational administration, curriculum, measures irrespective of levels of education etc. are part of the policy. These will be discussed in chapter 5 as these have direct relevance with universalizing primary education and are issues faced by children.

4.2.a. Objectives and Strategies of Primary Education in National Education Policy

Primary education is given utmost importance for the national life. It is considered critical stage for organizing the entire education system to turn the population into skilled human resource and it should be universal, compulsory, free and of the same standard for everybody (MOE 2000:3). The objectives and the strategies¹⁴ (ibid. 3-9) of the primary education are analysed in the next section.

¹⁴ Please see Annex- B for the objectives and strategies of primary education in NEP

4.2.b. Analysis of the Findings in National Education Policy

Analysis of the objectives:

The objectives of primary education in the national education policy are quite straightforward. A standard practical literacy, social and moral values and patriotism are most highlighted in the objectives. Another objective has been set to attract children for 'income generating physical labour'. Although it is not clear which group of children are being targeted but it seems the government is emphasizing the importance of vocational training for children. A large number of child labourers at later ages and after receiving basic education engage themselves in various industries. For them, primary education with income generating vocational training will be important. There has been no mention of girl child specifically in the objectives.

Analysis of the strategies:

Two points can be raised about the duration of the primary education. First, extension of duration from five years to six years has not been implemented yet. Second, although the issue of access has been highlighted here unlike NPAII, the target year for achieving UPE is 2010 in NEP contrary to 2015 in NPAII. Therefore, it shows that on the same issue, two policy documents are portraying two different targets.

A unified curriculum for primary level is rightly emphasized because of different streams of education in the country. Child labourers themselves consist of different aptitude levels and often need special attention and guidance. After adopting eight-year primary education, inclusion of vocational subjects in the last three years is relevant, as many child workers will have their option to utilize that education in their employment. Therefore, the curriculum needs to be suitable for all children.

The entry age into primary education has been fixed at 6 years. But there is no strategy for late entrants or re-entrants who want to go to school at post primary age. Often these children hesitate to take classes with the normal school goers and feel left out from the regular pupils. Many might have missed school because of work during the primary

school age. Attention must be given to this population and enrolment regulation and procedures could be designed to facilitate them.

Strategies on primary education include both quality and structure of delivery system. Both are very important reasons for explaining why children do not want to come to school, which will be discussed elaborately in chapter 5. As far as NEP is concerned the directives on these issues are rather general and lack explicit targets without clearly specifying the responsible authority to ensure measures. For instance, on the issue of community participation to manage the schools and to raise fund for schools, nothing is explicit as to what exactly the strategy will be and who will take initiative to do these ambitious tasks at every upazila (sub-district) of the country.

Lastly but very importantly, filling the gap of schools where not present has been emphasized to achieve UPE. But surprisingly the improvement of physical facilities such as playground, toilets, has not been pointed out in the strategies. No such strategies have been set.

4.3 Concluding Remarks

The NPAAII indicates the current issues of supply side interventions of education and only touch the demand side issue like poverty in broader sense. However, the link between demand/supply side issues (household income poverty, poor delivery of education etc.), child labour and poor educational outcomes for children, is not found. Since the 6-10 year old children could belong to heterogeneous groups such as full time child labourers, occasional workers, family unpaid household workers etc. it is imperative to specify strategies for each group. What this chapter looked at specially is the child labourer group, but there was no mention of child labourers as target group. This is another illustration of how the policy makers miss the point that child labour could be both cause and consequence of poor educational outcomes. So, targeting this group inevitably will bring better educational outcomes for children.

The NEP does not recognize the general issues of primary education of the country let alone the link between child labour and primary education. The objectives of NEP seem

a 'wishlist' of the government with incomplete strategies of how to achieve these. The strategies are incomplete also because these lack two major issues like discrimination against girl child and lack of physical facilities. When it comes to the issue of child labourers, NEP does not specify any single strategy to bring them into school. In fact, this is not evident in the strategy because the policy makers do not recognize that the link this chapter is trying to locate, exist. While the NEP is short of directives for improving only the delivery of primary education, it is natural that it does not highlight the above-mentioned link. The NEP has been greatly a 'closed' and 'non-transparent' process and has little legitimacy (CPD 2003b: 21, BEPS 2002a: 9). Either for this or for any other reasons, it has not come out as sound directives for education sector as a whole. NEP has been found to have less authority than the NPAAII (BEPS 2002a: 10).

Chapter 5: Design of the Policies and Programmes- How Far are They Designed to Address the Issues Faced by the Children?

In Bangladesh, about 36 percent remain non-literate¹⁵ or semi-literate¹⁶ after completing five-year cycle of primary education (Ahmed, M.; Nath; and Ahmed, K. S. 2003: 7). Poor quality primary/basic education negatively influences the quality of all-level and socio-economic development in future (MOPME 2003: 13). Therefore, the importance of proper delivery of interventions is high. In chapter four, we have found that the policies do not identify the link between child labour and primary education but focus on various issues of primary education. There are some existing issues for children irrespective of child labourers or non-child labourers. The firm recognition of the fact that there are issues, which lead to child labour and poor educational outcome (drop-out and not enroll, fail etc.) is not visible in the policies. These issues are stated in the analytical framework under *Issues faced by the children*. Some of them have been mentioned in the policy documents. This chapter looks into the programmes and their proposals in order to assess whether and to what extent they are designed to address these issues not only faced by the working children but by primary age group children and older children intending to attend primary school also. Each issue is discussed in light of the NPA II programme activities, NEP recommendations and various programmes/projects currently functioning in the country. Already completed programmes or projects are not analyzed because of limited space of the research. Some references are made from studies on these programmes and issues.

Analysis for each issue includes explanation of the issue, condition of the children and how the programmes/projects incorporate this issue in their designing or components.

¹⁵ **Non-literate:** Lack of ability to decode alphabet, recognise words, write words and count objects; and, therefore, inability to use literacy skills in life situations. Source: Education Watch 2002, CAMPE

¹⁶ **Semi-literate:** Ability to recognize and write some words, to count objects and use numbers at a very basic level; extremely limited use of the literacy skills in life situations. Source: Education Watch 2002, CAMPE

5.1 Household Income Poverty

Poverty has been mentioned as a major reason for child labour in Bangladesh (CPD 2003a, Haider 1998). Poor families have greater necessity for survival for supplementary income from their children's work (International Conference on Child Labour 1997: 4). Households with 'low productive occupations' see more child work in Bangladesh (Ahmad and Quasem 1991: 13). The national child labour survey showed that about 97 percent working children contributed their income to their families fully or partially (BBS 2003: 101). The same survey showed that about 69 percent parents believe that if their children did not work their living condition would fall and 9 percent believe it would be hard to survive (ibid.). Although there are other reasons for child labour, we need to concentrate on this because poverty leads children to work and often working children face poor educational outcome (Tietjen 2003: 3, International Conference on Child Labour 1997: 4).

One major problem for poor households to send their children to school is that it involves significant cost. Although the books are provided free of cost, 'free' compulsory education comprise only 20 percent of the total cost of schooling (ibid.). Other costs such as uniform, transportation to school, writing materials, examination fee, sports fee, Milad fee (religious congregation) etc. are also involved with children's education (ibid. Chowdhury 2003: 295). 'There is also the indirect "opportunity cost" of schooling, the loss of income incurred by a family whose child is in school rather than working' (International Conference On Child Labour 1997: 4). In various cases, children are engaged in full daytime fieldwork throughout a season; look after their younger siblings etc. Psacharopoulos (1999: 5) pointed out, 'Child time devoted to schooling activities is often treated as a mirror image of schooling time'. So, education becomes opportunity cost for them as they work.

Analysis of the programme design:

In the NPAIL, on the list of challenges for programmes, family poverty has come in the last but one point. Out of non-attending children, (5 to 17 years, no data for 5/6-9/10 years) about 45 percent cannot attend school because of economic reasons (BBS 2003:

42). This data shows the intensity of this issue. In the programme activities, proposal for continuing scholarship programmes for girls beyond grade V and that examining the same for boys from hardcore poor families has been suggested (MOPME 2003: 56). The provision for 'selectively' providing girls with uniform and experimental nutrition programme is another incentive-based programme. The plan also mentioned about supplying free stationery, pencils, workbooks, drawing books etc. to children in all institutions. While these are some good steps towards compensating some costs of education, these do not entail many major costs like transportation and various fees for the child. And also, scholarship programmes cover only a part of the children population, those who are comparatively sound in achievements. And high achievers are usually regular students with little to think about their household income. But many child labourers cannot attend school regularly and drop out and some even never attend school. So, financial incentive could work for the child workers if it was on non-scholarship basis. Moreover, it becomes problematic to apply on a mass scale all over the country (Bequele and Myers 1995: 132).

A similar project is the Primary Education Stipend Project (PESP). This has objectives of increasing enrolment, attendance and completion cycle including eradication of child labour (Tietjen 2003: 5). It provides Tk. 100 per child/Tk. 125 for more than one child only to parents of poor households. Now, let us take an example of a family who has one working girl child. She earns Tk. 810/month¹⁷ from her work. If she does not work, she will receive Tk. 100/month, which is only 12 percent of her monthly income (For boys, it is about 10 percent) (BBS 2003: 72). This percentage becomes almost half of previous when there are two working children or more in one family. In addition, the family does not have to incur additional school fees and transportation costs. The free textbooks, some materials and if she is lucky one uniform remains out of her calculation because she would not have needed it anyway. Therefore, we need to design the programmes very carefully thinking about how much realistically the cost could be covered with these stipends.

Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC) is a complementary project for PEDPII. The key objective of this project is 'to reduce the number of out-of-school children through

¹⁷ Average monthly income for a girl worker in Bangladesh.

improved access, quality and efficiency in primary education, especially for the disadvantaged children, in support of GoB's national EFA goals (World Bank 2004b: 4). One of the components to reach this objective is *Improving Access to Quality Education for Out-of-School Children*. In this component, children will receive education allowance after the schools/learning centres meet minimum standards and quality (e.g. quality of teaching, regular attendance etc.).

The more important issue here is to support these families economic survival and this may not be possible with only education intervention but is a part of much greater problem of poverty (Bissell and Sobhan 1996: 35).

5.2 Discrimination Against Girl Children and Household Work

Girl child is often 'marginalised by language, lifestyle and culture' (UNESCO 1990 cited in Farell 1999: 161). During 2002-03, proportion of girls attending schools was slightly higher than boys (BBS 2003: 38). But 3.11 million (34 percent of primary school aged girls) and .93 million girls (10 percent) did not complete or never enrolled in school respectively in 2003 (UNICEF 2004: 2). So, substantial number of girls is not receiving education. We have seen before that 'free education' also has some costs and parents spend less for girls than they do for boys (BEPS 2002b: 13, UNICEF 2004: 3).

Girls are socially discriminated in Bangladesh. A girl child is preferred to stay at home and learn household duties and help their mothers. Parents believe, learning domestic work is more important than schooling as she will need to carry out the same after her marriage. Since they already confront the discrimination, poor quality education doubly disadvantages them (UNICEF 2004: 5). Education fails to prepare them with skills and confidence to take part in social and economic pursuit and this turns them back from school and gradually they are forced to work.

Household work being the reason for not going to school is for about 7 percent 5-17 year children (no data for 5/6-9/10 year, BBS 2003: 42). Being weak in education (8.2 percent), unwilling to study (7.2 percent) and no consent by family to study (4 percent) are some reasons which could result from household work. So, the impact of household

work could be worse than it can be thought. ‘The poor quality of education results in low achievement levels for girls and boys, and limited options for girls and women within the greater society exacerbate the problems of inadequate schooling for girls’ (UNICEF 2004: 2). It has been pointed out that access to and completion of primary education may be hampered because of ineffective methods of teaching, large class sizes, low contact hours, high teacher absenteeism, poor accountability systems and a lack of sanitary facilities for girls in schools and insufficient provision of schools (ibid. 3). So supply side issues aggravate these primarily demand side issues.

Analysis of the programme design:

Under the component of *Improving and Supporting Equitable Access to Quality Schooling* in PEDPII, one sub-component is *Improving Access for Disadvantaged Children to Quality Schooling*. Under this sub-component, one strategy to bring girl children taking care of siblings at home is to begin ‘baby classes’ at rural primary schools, in partnership with schools and community. (World Bank 2004a: 53). In addition, existing Female Secondary Stipend Programme is proposed to be extended for older (11-12 years) girl children from poor families for primary education. One of the actions under the component *Enhancing Institutional Capacity of DPE at Central and Decentralized levels* is advising communities and SMCs on the importance of building a strong and equal role for girls and women in the development of Bangladesh.

A project called BEUWC (Basic Education for Urban Working Children) has been launched this year to provide non-formal education, pass on livelihood skills for older adolescents and carry out social mobilization activities to raise awareness of child labour issues (UNICEF 2004: 11). Sixty percent of the beneficiaries of the project are female children.

All programme activities will bring real results only if quality education is provided with effective monitoring and evaluation of the interventions. What these interventions lack is that special attention to girl children with disabilities, who need extra care and attention and interventions addressing cultural issues for not sending girls to school. It has been discussed before that girls with disabilities are ‘doubly disadvantaged’ because of the social construction. This makes them most vulnerable in the children population. In

Bangladesh, despite of the gender parity in enrolment, girls' education is socially less expected than that of boys (ibid. 3). This issue has to be dealt with very seriously for universalizing primary education.

Even if there is gender parity in primary school enrolment, to maintain this, factors for discriminating girls like teacher behavior, poor sanitary facilities etc. need to be emphasized in all the interventions for UPE. These issues have already been discussed in the physical facilities, access to primary school and in quality of teaching sections.

While it is understandable that cultural reasons for girls that discourage them to attend school, once they are in the school, curriculum should try to include contents that make them understand that being in the school is equally or more important than learning 'post-marriage responsibilities'. This is where delivery of education becomes important to act against cultural barriers for girls' access to education. Even though the girls' attendance was slightly higher than that of boys, a significant proportion of girls did not enroll or did not complete school. Therefore, interventions should aim to address the cultural issues, teaching behaviour, suitable curriculum, physical facilities to bring more girls to school.

5.3 Access to Primary School

In Bangladesh, although the situation of physical access has improved every village does not have a primary school' (Chowdhury 2003: 296). This is the simple picture as it is. The density of school is now one school in every two square kilometres (NPAII 2003: 35). The direct implication for children is that because of unavailability of schools nearby, they cannot attend schools. The implication is more acute for girls as many parents show reluctance to send their daughters to a far away school for cultural reasons (Chowdhury 2003: 296, MOPME 2003: 35, and UNICEF 2004: 3). This is the first physical requirement for universalizing education. It is important to note here that the total number of government primary schools remained unchanged over the last decade (Rahman et al. 2001: 17, CPD 2003b: 5), and the rate of increase of all primary schools was much lower than that of total enrolment (ibid.).

Physical access has just been discussed. Making flexible schedule may also give the child labourers the scope to attend school. Many working children cannot attend school for longer (six to eight hours) daily (Boyden, Ling and Myers 1998: 273, Bequele and Myers 1995: 133). Some workers try to continue schooling and work together and some cannot attend school. Reducing school fees, installing adequate physical facilities, good teacher behaviour and non-discrimination are some major factors, which can make schools more accessible to children. This is another type of access. These issues will be discussed in the following parts of the chapter as they form big issues themselves.

Analysis of the programme design:

Inconvenient and distant school location has been identified as a major challenge in NPAAI. The national plan proposes to launch a new composite survey and mapping of schools to among others identify the 'under-served and un-served areas'. Based on the survey findings, location of additional schools will be identified and construction will be completed by 2009/10 (MOPME 2003: 55). But the NEP does not mention about improving the physical access.

The ROSC project identifies that 'children in remote rural areas have very limited access to education' although there is optimum gender parity (World Bank 2004b:1). So, the project aims to carry out interventions to bring marginal and 'missing' children into non-formal primary schools. It also has provisions for financing the Shishu Kalyan (child welfare) Trust (SKT) schools.

SKT runs 45 primary schools in the country only for the working children. The overall objective of the trust is 'to assist the underprivileged working children in receiving general education and in acquiring technical skills and health care so that they can join others in the mainstream of economic activities thereby improve their present sub-standard living conditions' (DPE, year not mentioned). Schools run by the trust operate in flexible hours, meritorious students are provided with stipend, medical facilities are available for students of the SKT schools. Future action plans of the trust include: i. providing technical education, expanding number of schools in different locations, free supply of learning materials along with books etc.

In connection to coverage of schools, the IDEAL project introduced school catchment map provision (UNICEF 1998: 9). The maps show all the primary education facilities in the union together with human settlements. Through these maps, un-served and under-served areas can be identified. It is also easier to monitor the enrollment, drop out, attendance etc. through these maps.

For the longer hours working children, to lessen the pressure of study during regular hours and work simultaneously become unbearable. To, bring both this and the 'only working' groups to schools, initially, rescheduling of lessons to fit work schedules, including 'seasonal variations in work', and 'condensing curricula' could be part of programmes (ibid.). Gradually the schedules can be changed to regular by continuous encouragement and once the children develop an attachment to the schools. Flexible scheduling is one of the effective strategies to increase the school participation of children in satellite schools (Chowdhury, K. P. 1999 cited in Avura 2000: 48).

Without the financing of SKT schools in ROSC project, no extensive interventions have been taken in these projects for the working children. And there are only 45 schools in the country run by SKT providing primary education to 8,000 working children (DPE, year not mentioned). These projects and programmes will only be successful when these will be able to bring and retain all the children ensuring and including working children to the schools. The reality that more than half of non-attending children is working has been largely avoided in the designing of the programmes.

5.4 Physical Facilities at the School

Physical facilities are important to attract and retain students. Less crowded classrooms, separate toilets for girls, continuous electric and water supply, playground, furniture and good seating arrangements are essential in a primary school. However, studies showed that as a whole the physical condition of primary schools in Bangladesh is not satisfactory (Begum and Rahman 2004: 167, Rahman et al. 2001: 28). In 2000, a little more than half of the schools had tolerably acceptable accommodation and funds for repair work were being inefficiently managed (MOPME 2003: 35). CAMPE researchers found that only over a third of school buildings are brick-built (CAMPE 1999). They

also revealed that only 42 percent and 60 percent of rural and urban schools respectively have drinking water facilities (CAMPE 1999 cited in BEPS 2002a: 14). It also found that over one third of schools have no toilet facilities and at least half of these toilets are maintained poorly (ibid.). In addition, only about half of the schools had playgrounds (ibid.).

Analysis of the programme design:

NPAII indicated that based on the national survey, facilities like toilets, play grounds, renovation etc. will be finished by 2010 and all facilities will be standardized (MOPME 2003: 55). PEDP II has one component completely dedicated for *Improving Infrastructure*. This includes fulfilling the requirement of physical facilities to improve the quality of education. The actions include classroom construction & renovations, water & sanitation facilities, primary teacher training institute facilities, upazila (sub-district) offices & upazila resource centres and physical infrastructure improvement at MOPME, DPE and other educational institutions and professional fees & construction supervision (World Bank 2004: 51-3 project appraisal).

IDEAL project has taken the initiative to generate additional resources locally in order to bring about improvements in the schools, which the local community needs (UNICEF 1998: 11). This is usually done through the local plan.

In the ROSC project, only in the *Grants to Learning Centres/Schools* sub-component, a portion of grant is at the discretion of the management committees to use. Therefore, this grant can be used to improve and acquire new physical facilities for the schools/centres.

The interventions did not emphasize the importance of quality of construction materials so that the structures and facilities at the schools last for longer period. Need for proper maintenance is also not mentioned to save money from installing same facilities again and again. This money could go for other items for school improvement.

5.5 Quality of Teaching

For better or worse, schools and teachers reflect societal values (International Conference on Child Labour 1997: 9). One of the major issues of primary education in Bangladesh is the poor quality of teaching (BEPS 2003b: 20). ‘The feeling that education is useless is also characteristic of situations in which children learning to read and write do not find that literacy improves their lives. It may not lead to recognizable economic opportunities, and they may be too poor to purchase recreational reading material, even if interested. In such circumstances, they and their parents may complain that education is not useful to them and that they could therefore better spend their time working (Bequele and Myers 1995: 139). This is a broad unfavorable effect that poor quality teaching can have on children. The teacher is considered the most crucial factor among many factors affecting poor learning achievement (BEPS 2002c: 20, Kabeer 2003: 376). ‘Teachers are still using traditional and conventional methods of teaching which are not amenable to the new curriculum’ (Rahman et al. 2001: 14). The PSPMP (Primary School Performance Monitoring Project) study showed that only 40-50 percent of the schools start on time. Close to 30 percent teachers come late to the schools even by one hour, 50 percent go to class late, they often do not take scheduled lessons, their attendance is irregular and they receive very little guidance from Headteachers and the supervisors (BEPS 2002c: 19). It was also pointed out that there is less interactive and proactive teaching in government schools and that the level of counteractive teaching in formal schools is much higher than in NFE centres’ (ibid. 20). ‘Perverse forms of teacher behaviour include widespread absenteeism, often to work on their other economic activities; drunkenness during school hours and pressure on pupils to supply them with liquor; using children to run errands and do their domestic chores; keeping the educational aids locked up for fear they might be blamed for their loss or damage; keeping toilets locked up or only for the use of the teacher; inflating enrolment ratios, making school registers “singularly inauthentic” sources of information’ (Kabeer 2003: 376.). ‘Many teachers have not mastered the subject matter they are teaching, and most have not been well trained in how to teach’ (BEPS 2002a: 13). In 1994, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) conducted the grade V scholarship Mathematics examination to a sample of primary teachers and only 29 percent passed the examination (BEPS 2002c: 16). Teachers try to keep their students disciplined by keeping them in a ‘state of fear, and attitudes toward

children in general and working children, in particular, can seriously undermine children's self-esteem' (International Conference On Child Labour 1997: 9). These are evidences that teachers do create a major problem.

Only thinking about formal teacher training and its spreading out will not help develop the quality of primary education. The premises and assumptions of the current programmes regarding 'why training is not making the expected contribution to better learning outcome- have to be proved rigorously, followed by a fundamental rethinking about effective teacher training and creating the conditions for use of the training in classroom' (CAMPE 2000: v). As stated before, children achieve poor educational outcomes as a result of poor quality of teaching. For example, on average, primary school students achieved 60 percent of all competencies tested and rural schools have lower levels of achievement than urban schools in every subject; and only less than 2 percent of all students completing primary education were able to acquire all the 27 competencies tested (CAMPE 2000: ii).

The number of teachers is also an issue. High teacher-student ratio is a barrier to good quality teaching. Only about 13 percent of primary schools had teacher-student ratio of 1:40 or less (CAMPE 1999).

Contact hour in Bangladeshi schools is very low - 3840 hours annually against the international average of 5367 (Chowdhury 2003: 296, CPD 2003b: 7). The usual problem is that low contact hours leave the children early providing them scope for work. While this is a problem another problem lies with inflexible scheduling or hours of work. Bequele and Myers (1995: 133) have showed that working for longer hours and going to schools in the same day takes a great effort and children manage to do it with considerable exhaustion. So, schedules may be made flexible so that the children do not have to work and study in the same day. Therefore, they will not need to come to schools exhausted and concentrate more on studies. It also facilitates access to schools.

Analysis of the programme design:

NPAAII emphasized on raising the teachers' qualification and various teacher training programmes. The first objective of PEDP II is to improve the quality of teaching and

learning, and enhance student management. It directly relates to improving the quality of teaching. The component corresponding to this objective is aimed to do this through innovations, such as reducing class size, establishing a minimum primary school quality level and competitive innovation grants to improve quality of teaching and administration to be implemented by teachers and local level administrators. Other initiatives include strengthening primary education apex institutions, initial and in service teacher training and improving curriculum and textbook development.

The principal goal of IDEAL project is to improve the quality of primary education (UNICEF 1998: 2). This is fulfilled through interventions designed to enhance teaching-learning methods, the school environment and children's learning achievement. The second component *school quality* directly relates to the teaching quality. This project uses new approaches in teaching, decorations and set up in classrooms and methods of teaching. It uses child-centred, participatory and group-oriented methods of teaching and learning (ibid. 15).

ROSC project's first component is *Improving Access to Quality Education for Out-of-School Children*. *Grants to Learning Centres/Schools* is a sub-component under this. This means grants will be allocated for non-formal primary schools/centres based on minimum quality and standards of schools. A portion of the grant will be used for improvement of quality and management of the schools/centres and the rest of the grant will be used by the management committees according to the need of the centres/schools (World Bank 2004b).

Development of the teachers is one of the first key measures to improve quality of primary education. Teacher-training has been emphasized in NPAII, PEDPII and IDEAL projects, but teachers barely exercise what they learn at the training institutes and although there are provisions for refreshers training, these happen occasionally (Chowdhury 2003: 295). Improving teaching quality is as much important as raising sincerity of the teachers. But the projects only highlight various training programmes without identifying the real issue of teacher sincerity and seriousness of the job. For example, being late in the class or behaving rudely with children cannot be stopped always with training. Close monitoring and supervision and a strong mental shift are required to address these issues. It needs to be understood, although BRAC NFPE

teachers are less qualified they perform their duties better than the government primary teachers do (BEPS 2002c: 20). Reorganization of class rooms, decorations, new methods of teaching etc. will bring good results in bringing all including working children to schools only if the teachers carry out their responsibility fairly and properly. Otherwise all these innovative approaches will have little effect on the issue of quality of teaching. The children need to see the good practices of the teaching system so that they feel attracted to schools. Issues like low contact hours and flexible scheduling for working children have not been part of interventions at all.

5.6 Suitability of Curriculum

World Bank has identified 'ineffective curriculum development' as one of the main issues in primary education (World Bank 2004a: 5). Interest of the children to the subject matters depends much on curriculum. If the topics are not interesting and relevant for them, children often can find themselves in boredom and ultimately achieving poor performance or dropping out from schools (Kabeer 2003: 376). One important aspect to remember with regard to curriculum is the heterogeneity of the children population in Bangladesh. Different groups of children have different needs to learn. Therefore, standardization of curriculum may not address all the needs of the diversified group of children. It has been pointed out that, 'Standardization (of the curriculum) further implies a static conception of children's lifeworlds, and the imposition of a unitary concept of "ideal childhood" is far from a reflection of the diverse realities that obtain in India and Bangladesh.' (Kabeer, Nambissan and Subrahmanian 2003: 28). The issue thus, for the children is to find their curriculum not suitable to their needs. They cannot relate the content of the curriculum to their practical lives and thus at the end, lose interest. This, being a reason for drop out, children often involve themselves with work. It is also showed that quality relates to the content of curriculum among others (ibid. 29).

Analysis of the programme design:

NPAlI talked about improving and restructuring the curriculum that would stimulate the urge for reason and to be analytical and creative and to tune children to the technology oriented society (MOPME 2003: 56). The second component of PEDPII namely

Improving Quality in Schools and Classrooms includes *Improving the Learning Environment* sub-component (World Bank 2004a: 48). Curriculum and textbook development have been the part of this. Instead of describing actions on curriculum development, measures to improve the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) has been emphasized here. NCTB will be restructured to strengthen its personnel and the capacity to produce & distribute high quality textbooks and learning materials etc. (World Bank 2004: 48). The IDEAL project introduced the Safe Learning Environment (SLE) in a few schools, where knowledge is transferred about personal hygiene, health, food and nutrition, safety and security, rights and gender-related issues into practice (UNICEF 1998: 17).

Regarding the quality of curriculum, ADB pointed out that it has undergone significant changes already from 1992 but significant improvement has not been achieved (Rahman et al. 2001: 11). Information about the hazards of the workplaces or work itself could be inserted in the curriculum (Bequele and Myers 1995: 141). This will help working children realize the dangers and loss of working in such hazardous working places. If disinterest is grown in them against such work, it will be the most effective learning, which they can apply on themselves and come away from hazardous work. Neither NPAPII nor the projects brought up the necessity of the working children on what they want or need to learn at schools. No specific reference has been made about the basic problems and addressing those problems of curriculum. The programmes emphasized reorganization of the NCTB instead of emphasizing what should be inside the curriculum. More administrative issues have been emphasized instead of qualitative issues in curriculum in NPAPII and other projects. Only IDEAL project began to incorporate some practical issues like child rights, safety and security etc. But to make curriculum suitable for various children including the working children requires rigorous research on curriculum development to identify and design curriculum to meet the needs of this diversified group of children.

5.7 Efficiency of Management in Educational Operations

NPAPII mentioned internal inefficiency as one of the major constraints of the primary education system (MOPME 2003: 19). The management of primary education is 'highly

centralized' and 'it is through a chain of bureaucratic apparatus reaching to the upazila level and beyond (Behrman, Deollikar and Soon 2002: 17; CPD 2003b: 16). Although SMCs have been formed in all primary schools, they are not very active towards school development and administration (ibid. and Rahman et al. 2001: 14). Local level planning and management become ineffective when the management is not efficient. One study showed i. non-cooperation by the committee members in school operation, ii. insufficient financing and iii. lack of coordination among committee, teachers and administrators are the major constraints of the management of the primary education (ibid. 51). It also showed that 'the current structure of management is not operating efficiently for effective involvement of community' and non-cooperation by the committee members is a major problem (ibid.). The school authorities have very little power and authority for delivery of education (CPD 2003b: 16). One example of the inefficiency of the management became visible to the country, when six thousand primary school teachers did not have received their salaries for over a year (Hossain 2004). In a separate survey, it has been found that many primary schools 'require students to pay' for services that are supposed to be free including admission fees, books etc.' (BEPS 2002a: 27). All these issues result into poor management of schools, poor teaching quality, disinterest & non-cooperation in local schools by community (poor delivery as a whole) and the children attending schools or even who are considering attending schools or the parents, feel disinterested to the schools. Therefore, ultimately, not going to school allows them to have free time. They use this free time to occasional or household work and gradually they often become involved with work that is detrimental to them.

Analysis of the programme design:

Effective School Through Enhanced Education Management (ESTEEM) is a project aimed at strengthening the institutional capacity to better manage the primary sector. The Headteachers, SMC members and Assistant Upazila Education Officer (AUEO) go through a training process that they gradually convey to the teachers and other local level administrators.

In PEDPII (World Bank 2004a: 45-48), under the component of *Quality Improvement through Organizational Development and Capacity Building*, there are four sub-components aimed at i. *Enhancing capacity of MOPME and DPE*, ii. *Enhancing the*

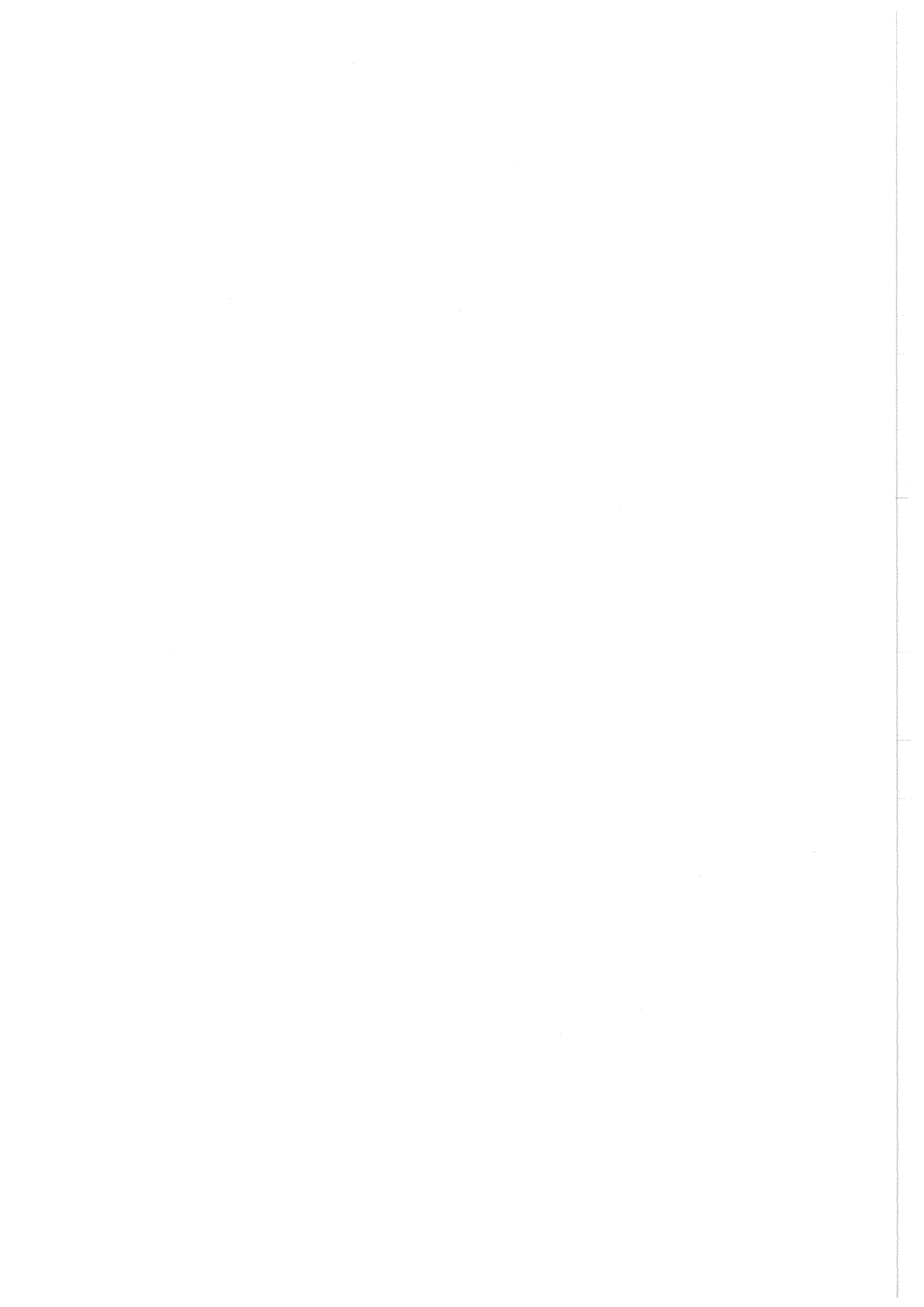
capacity of EMIS (Education Management Information Systems), iii. Enhancing field capacity at divisional, district and upazila levels and iv. Enhancing organizational and management capacity at school level respectively. All these sub components consists actions (such as training) to improve the personnel of MOPME, DPE, districts, upazilas, Head Teachers, SMC members and restructuring of education departments etc. The last sub-component includes developing SMC roles and responsibilities, proper planning and monitoring for school improvement, with strong links with communities.

Both the projects have emphasized on the training programmes of the administrators, education department personnel, teachers, SMC members etc. While training programmes and restructuring of the departments may bring new systems, the likelihood that the same personnel working in old systems for many years without satisfactory outcome will suddenly generate good results in a new or restructured system is low. For example, there may be new systems of management for the schools, but how a teacher is going to be motivated if he/she requires carrying out additional responsibilities with the same remuneration? How will better coordination between Parents Teachers' Association and SMCs take place? Who is going to motivate the SMC member to be cooperative? These are apparently minor issues but can have negative effect on the management of the delivery of education. These issues were not part of the projects mentioned above.

'A decentralized, well-functioning education system with a proper balance of resources and authority at the school level that is accountable to the communities might result in a better allocation of resources and contribute to improvement in the quality of education. This is the most forceful argument in favour of decentralization of education in Bangladesh' (Behrman, Deollikar and Soon 2002: 18). 'One important strategy for sustaining an educational approach that is responsive to the needs of working children in different groups and categories is decentralization of certain decisions to the local level' (Boyden, Ling and Myers 1998: 271, MOPME 2003: 19). Decentralization of education planning and management has received strong support from World Bank (*ibid.*). It is very important that the school authorities have adequate power and authority to run schools, the educational administrators play the role of facilitator rather than regulator (CPD 2003b: 16). Membership rules for SMCs could be modified so that only genuine contributors could be part of the management of education (*ibid.*).

5.8 Concluding Remarks

The design of current programmes and projects does not adequately address the issues faced by the children. PEDPII is the largest primary education programme in the country, along with other smaller projects like IDEAL, PESP, ROSC etc. These interventions tried to address the issues but could not appropriately design considering children's and their families' actual need. For example, few components only provide grants for schools but do not consider what share of this grant would actually fulfill the needs of the children. Some had the option for teacher training and the numbers of teachers covered by these training. But whether training is rightly applied to teaching and children are benefited from the teaching are not focused in the projects. Components addressed more administrative issues including re-organization and re-structuring rather than qualitative issues on curriculum development. Only IDEAL project includes innovative approach towards curriculum and teaching method. Demand side issues are difficult to be part of the delivery-related interventions. Since children and their families do not separate these issues in economic terms, it is realistic to include more demand oriented components such as continuous motivational activities to parents to send their girl children to schools, supporting poor parents in short/long term schemes to support economically, are also crucial to bring children to schools. The programmes have not specifically targeted working children. Their needs such as income loss and flexible schooling hours are also largely avoided. Only few schools dedicated to them by SKT and funding opportunity for these schools by ROSC project are two explicit actions for them. Finally, this study observed lack of proper coherence amongst the programmes and projects as their components overlapped with similar objectives.



Chapter 6: Conclusion

The research tried to identify areas where policies and programmes on UPE could be strengthened, particularly considering the working children's perspective. It should be understood that a child is never born as a 'working child' or 'child labourer'. There are some common factors that lead children to work and to leave school. Therefore, a general but comprehensive look at the current issues was required by the research. It is recognized that there are problems of poverty or delivery of education, which are factors for children to leave or not even enroll into schools. But interventions do not address the Household Income Poverty issue in particular to the extent that the families suffer. The financial compensation provided compared to the cost incurred to the families is much less. Although gender parity has been achieved in enrolment but interventions are lacking in creating more awareness amongst the parents to send girl children to schools and move out of low cultural expectations from girls. The programmes do not address this issue at all. Similarly, a big part of primary age children misses school because simply they are involved in household work. No specific action has been proposed in any of the interventions to bring them into schools. Along with the demand side issues, the supply side issues of primary education (poor delivery of education) need to be addressed to attract and retain students. The interventions address the issues to much less degree than it is required. Distant schools, fewer schools and no flexible scheduling for child labourers are major constraints to access schools. There is much to be done to improve physical facilities. Maintenance and construction of facilities with good materials are not highlighted in the programmes. Unless these are ensured, facilities will not last long to serve the students' need. Programmes stressed the need for teacher training but teacher development will not happen only with training. Interventions fail to realize that much more need to be done than just training, for example, improving teacher behaviour and capacity of retaining children in classes. But bringing these children into schools means addressing their real problems, which often include their work. Therefore, an effective policy to bring these children to school should have more in-depth look into issues faced by the children. Programmes and projects should also reflect the same ideas to be successful in their own objectives.

The objectives or the policies in general, reflect proper intention of the policy makers to achieve universal primary education but only to a general extent. But the programmes cannot be considered comprehensive because the possibility for children to get into work has been greatly missed both in strategies and in components. Although the projects and programmes touch the crucial issues like cash incentives for working children, concern remains about children overburdening themselves with work and school. Schools should be able to influence the children in their practical lives by being more pragmatic in delivery of education. If the children cannot relate their studies with their practical lives, it will be difficult for them to apply what they learn at school.

Therefore, policies need to be able to establish a link between child labour and education and programmes need to be able to consider the demand and supply side issues in-depth manner as discussed in the analysis of programmes. Specific targeting for various groups of children including child labourers, girl children, and children in households is required. Addressing child labour problems into UPE will lead towards integrating child labour problems into UPE policies. Not only this, but the general issues like proper facilities, suitable curriculum etc. need to be addressed comprehensively without any gap to attract and retain children in the schools for the overall benefit of UPE, not only for working children. Only then, will all children in Bangladesh enter and complete primary education.

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ANNEX – A

(Objectives, Policy Guiding Principles and Strategies in National
Plan of Action II, 2003-2015)

Chapter V

5. Guiding Principles and Over-arching Strategies of NPA II

A. Guiding Principles

5.1 Formulation and implementation of all policies relating to basic education - covering primary and non-formal education - will be guided by the Constitutional provision of ensuring free and compulsory education to all children and removal of adult illiteracy, and UDHR, UNCRC, UNCEDAW, WDEFA, DFA and other international instruments to which Bangladesh is a signatory. National Education Policy will be reviewed and updated once every three years;

5.2 Ensuring availability of all necessary facilities for comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children of 3-5 years;

5.3 Ensuring equal opportunity for all school age children (6-10 years) to have free access to an agreed minimum quality of education, regardless of the stream followed (mainstream primary schools, Madrasah, others) or by management (government, non-government, private, local government) of the institution attended;

5.4 Making available textbooks and other relevant education materials and aids free of cost to all children enrolled in primary school, regardless of what type of institutions they attend, instead of keeping them limited to only the Government Primary Schools (GPS) and other schools supported by the government (Registered non-government primary schools, Community Schools and Satellite schools) as it is the responsibility of the State/Government to ensure free and compulsory primary education to all children, without discrimination;

5.5 Introducing a public examination at the end of Grade V of primary school to ensure a basic minimum level of competence for the children graduating and entering secondary school and also to give them a certificate of accomplishment (the examinations can be set nationally, conducted locally and assessed regionally) to avoid any underhand interference;

5.6 Ensuring adequate allocation for basic education (beginning with 4% of GDP from 2003-2004, and raising it to at least 10% by 2015) to cover the cost of required physical facilities, secure environment, books and educational accessories to guarantee minimum agreed quality in light of vision and goals of this Plan and DFA on EFA;

5.7 Relating education to poverty reduction strategy - reducing poverty by 50% of the current level by 2015 (MDG), to enable children to pursue education that would help reduce their poverty as they grow up; and skills development opportunities and access to micro-finance for neo-literate adolescents, young and older adults to enable them to engage in gainful activities to move out of the morass of poverty;

5.8 Ensuring necessary facilities, a congenial environment and law and order situation, risk-free movement of children - both boys and girls to and from school, opportunities for participation in creative activities conducive to development of talents and latent qualities, and pursuit of life-long learning leading to establishment of a "learning society";

5.9 Ensuring that no corporal punishment (CRC, Article 28) or verbal punishment or offensive language is used in dealing with children in schools or learners under NFE;

5.10 Making Non-Formal Education broad-based to serve all relevant segments of population that are not or cannot be served by the formal education system; and ensuring close cooperation between government, NGOs and broader civil society to share responsibility in program development and management to attain DFA/NPA II goals; and

5.11 Ensuring involvement and participation of all stakeholders – parents/guardians, local community, civil society, NGOs, others - in the planning and managing of implementation, monitoring and assessment of basic education programs and projects; involving local government units at all tiers for the same purpose in their respective jurisdictions.

B. Overarching Strategies

5.12 *GO-NGO-Private sector collaboration and coordination:* Given the very large size of the target population of basic education, and limited organizational and financial resources, the achievement of EFA goals can be accelerated only through ensuring close collaboration, effective coordination and development/use of all human, organizational, and financial resources of the government, civil society, NGOs, private sector, local communities, local government and development partners;

5.13 *Inter-ministerial coordination and cooperation:* Basic education covers a diverse range of population, from age 3-45 years. To perform well in their educational pursuits they need access to other services such as health, nutrition, water and sanitation, recreational and cultural programs as well as social, psychological and other individual needs-oriented support, which cut across several ministries/departments and sectors of development. MOPME will ensure linkages with and coordination of activities of relevant ministries for the benefit of participants of basic education programs, schools and learning centers, through direct contacts and under the auspices of the National Council for Primary and Mass Education (NCPME) as well as the National EFA Forum;

5.14 *Convergence of services and community outreach:* Besides linkages and coordination between government departments/different types of organizations for better programming and resource utilization, this NPA will emphasize bringing together the relevant services at the primary schools and non-formal learning as well as continuing education centers, providing access to children and learners as well as serving as outreach points to bring the health and nutrition, water and sanitation services with emphasis on changing hygienic behavior; preservation and promotion of environment in the surrounding community, thereby making the school or learning center a community resource and a conduit or an associate for effective delivery of different social development services;

5.15 *Community empowerment and participation:* For achievement of EFA goals community participation and ownership of and support to activities is essential to ensure sustainability of programs and their outcomes; effective measures will be instituted to ensure and enhance community empowerment through communication, awareness generation, alliance building and promotion of people's participation in community-based institutions and clientele and institutions mapping, local level planning and resource mobilization/coordination, program implementation, monitoring and evaluation;

5.16 *Decentralization:* Central control and directions from national level inhibit initiative and committed work, beside causing delays, at different tiers of governance and management of programs. Priority will go to devolution of authority to concerned officials of government and non-government organizations to handle administrative, program management and monitoring, financial and

organizational responsibilities at Divisional, district, Upazila and other appropriate levels of respective departments and organizations; planning proposals from district level officials, in areas characterized by disparities and special needs, particularly tribal and isolated areas, will be encouraged and incorporated in annual plans to accelerate achievement of EFA goals;

5.17 *Gender inequity and disparity reduction:* Affirmative discrimination in favor of girl students/learners (or boys where necessary) and women teachers (actual and potential) will have special priority focus of this NPA in all activities in both the formal and non-formal sub-sectors of basic education until equity is fully achieved (the target is 2010);

5.18 *Sustainability:* While giving importance to the need for infrastructure development as part of the Annual Development and Five-Year Plans due care will be taken to improve and expand the existing institutions to meet the assessed needs and make enhanced and equitable allocation of resources for achieving all EFA goals within the Plan period;

5.19 *Poverty reduction:* Poverty hinders enrolment, attendance, retention, completion and quality achievement in education. High priority will go to programs of reducing/alleviating the burden of poverty of basic education clientele, particularly in the primary and NFBE sub-sectors, skills training programs of adult education (Focus: young adult(s) and Continuing education; planning for basic education will be linked to and integrated with manpower development and poverty reduction strategies (PRSP) of the country;

5.20 *Teachers:* To improve the quality of education the teachers' role and performance are of critical importance and at the core of both primary and non-formal education; the Plan will thus give priority to enhance the status, morale and professionalism of teachers (following DFA strategy) through raising their basic qualification, quality of professional training and achievement and regular refresher training;

5.21 *Ensuring Quality:* While maintaining and enhancing the current trends (up to 2001) in access and enrolment the Plan will give high priority to improving the quality of basic education through regular attendance of teachers and pupils, retention and particularly the content and delivery of contents; through improved school environment, physical, security and other facilities; provision of adequate teaching learning aids and supplementary reading materials; use of child-centered and interactive teaching learning methods, effective assessment procedures, effective academic supervision, both in formal and non-formal sub-sectors;

5.22 *Special programs:* Include contents in the curriculum to create awareness and generate actions to combat the HIV/AIDS pandemic as well as arsenic contamination and remedies as a matter of urgency;

5.23 *Inclusive education:* Ensure access and enrolment of children with disabilities of physical/mental, social and ethnic nature to normal schools and provide/create necessary facilities, including special equipments; development and introduction of modules on inclusive education in training programs at NAPE, PTIs, Upazila Resource Centers and sub-cluster training, and ensuring each PTI has one such instructor and each school, one such trained teacher; it would be done in cooperation with experienced NGOs and other concerned ministries;

5.24 *DFA EFA Strategies:* EFA strategies as listed in the DFA are incorporated in the above strategies but they will all the same be kept in view as a source of guidance in the process of NPA II implementation, particularly in preparing, providing necessary resources, outsourcing and managing

programs and projects; and coordination with other ministries, development partners, NGOs and civil society;

5.25 *Transparency and Accountability:* In all matters relating to management of formal and non-formal basic education transparency and accountability will be of prime concern in all dealings, managerial, recruitment/transfer and promotion, enrollment and attendance (of both learners and teachers), classroom transaction, assessment of learning achievements, and supervision from national to local school level, and procurement of services and goods;

5.26 *Children's participation and representation:* Children and participants of all basic education components – primary school, ebtedayee madrasah, NFE learning centers - will be represented on the SMC and CMC and be involved in the management of all affairs of the school and learning centers and in relating to the surrounding community for undertaking practical learning projects, and in the organization and delivery of various services (health, sanitation, etc).

C. NPA Goal, Objectives, Targets and Strategic Framework

5.27. In re-affirming the vision of EFA as stated in the World Declaration made at Jomtien and while adopting the Dakar Framework for Action, *Education For All: Meeting our Collective Commitments* the World Education Forum re-stated the vision in the following words:

"All children, young people and adults have the human right to benefit from an education that will meet their basic learning needs in the best and fullest sense of the term, an education that includes learning to know, to do, to live together and to be. It is an education geared to tapping each individual's talents and potential, and developing learners' personalities, so that they can improve their lives and transform their societies".

5.28 In light of the vision, the goals and strategies set in the DFA (See Annex 4), the state of basic education in Bangladesh in 2000/2001, the lessons learned from the implementation of the first EFA: NPA I and needs of the country the main goal, objectives and targets of this NPA II are stated below:

(i) NPA II Goal

5.29 To establish a knowledge-based and technologically-oriented competent society ensure every school age child has access to primary level institutions that provide all necessary facilities, continue in school to receive and achieve quality education and provide opportunities to pre-school children, young persons and adults to meet their learning needs in a competitive world, both in the formal and non-formal sub-sectors of basic education without any discrimination.

(ii) Objectives of the NPA II

5.30 The objectives of NPA II are to:

- (a) Institute a well organized and coordinated program of early childhood care and education for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children, using both formal and non-formal channels, with emphasis on family and community-based programs;
- (b) Bring all primary school-age children, particularly girls, the disabled, those in difficult circumstances and belonging to ethnic minorities, and enable them to complete primary education (already free and compulsory) of good quality;

- (c) Establish programs of appropriate learning and life-skills to meet the learning needs of all young people and adults, and ensure their access, participation and successful completion of relevant courses;
- (d) Increase adult literacy rate (among persons of 15 to 45 years of age) from 56 percent (I-PRSP) in 2000 to 80 percent by 2015 (reducing adult illiteracy by half, MDG), especially for women, through equitable access to quality basic and continuing education for all youth and adults;
- (e) Sustain and enhance the present near gender-parity in primary and above parity for girls in secondary education to achieve gender equity in education by 2005 and gender equality in 2015 by ensuring full and equal access of boys and girls to and achievement in basic education of good quality;
- (f) Improve the quality and excellence of basic education in all respects and ensure achievement of recognized and measurable learning outcomes by all, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills (DFA goal 6); and
- (g) Institute an agreed core of equivalence between formal and non-formal basic education sub-sectors and between/among different streams of formal sub-sector and between public and NGO and private programs to ensure comparable standard of quality of education across the board and transferability from non-formal to formal and between streams to enable those who want to join the main stream and continue further education or switch from one to another stream to pursue a chosen career path.

(iii) NPA II Targets

5.31 A summary of the EFA NPA II targets is given in the table below. The EFA targets achieved by 2000 in pursuance to NPA I goals are shown as benchmark for this NPA II (see table 1.2):

Table 5.31: Summary of targets of EFA NPA II, 2003-2015 for Primary Education and NFE

Indicators	Benchmark 2000	Targets for the selected years (In Percent)		
		2005	2010	2015
Primary education				
Gross Enrolment rate (Total)	96.5	103	108	110
Gross Enrolment rate (Boys)	96.0	102	107	110
Gross Enrolment rate (Girls)	97.0	104	107	110
Net Enrolment rate (Total)	80	83	92	95
Net Enrolment rate (Boys)	82	87	91	95
Net Enrolment rate (Girls)	85	89	93	95
Dropout rate	33	25	14	05
Completion rate	67	75	86	95
Quality achievement in Pry. Education	05	30	65	90
ECCE (both through formal & NFE)				
Primary attached Pre-school Class	22	(# 1.0 m)	(# 1.0 m)	(# 1.0 m)
NFE		15	20	15
Non-Formal Education				
NFBE - Access/Coverage	11	19	48	33
Adult Literacy Rate (15-24 age group)	66	73	82	95
Adult Literacy Rate (15-45 age group)	56	70	78	90

ANNEX – B

(Objectives and Strategies of Primary Education in National
Education Policy, 2000)

Chapter Two

PRE-PRIMARY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

A. Pre-Primary Education

Most of the children of our country are first generation learners and the environment for developing proper physical and mental qualities to start formal education is limited for them. So pre-primary education for preparation of going to school could be useful for them. This preparatory education with the other children will help create eagerness for education in the child. Therefore, one-year course of pre-primary education can be implemented. In this phase the main target of curriculum will be to create interest in the child towards education and school. The pre-primary class will be for the 5+ age group children.

It is expensive to create an additional post of a teacher and increase a classroom in the school for pre-primary education. Considering all these things, one-year pre-primary course can be implemented in phases, not in all the schools at a time. Starting immediately, students can be admitted in the schools in class one at the age of five and a half for starting preparatory education for the first six months. Side by side preparation can be made for implementing one-year pre-primary course in the schools so that pre-primary course for the 5+ age group can be implemented in all the primary schools by the year 2005. Local government will take initiative for this and proper steps will be taken to ensure public participation in its financing and management.

B. Primary Education

Aims and Objectives

Primary education is of prime importance in our national life. It is the critical stage for organizing the education system for all the people of the country to turn the population into skilled human resource. Quality primary education for all is a must for the development of the country. Proper steps should be taken to make the standard of primary education appropriate for the times. Many people start their career after completion of primary education. As education at this stage provides the foundation of all the successive stages, it is essential to provide appropriate primary education of the required standard. Primary education should be utilized for the benefit of the nation by removing its

prevailing problems. Primary education should be universal, compulsory, free and of the same standard for everybody. The aims and objectives of the primary education are as follows :

1. To ensure standard practical literacy for a child and make him eager and capable of receiving higher level education.
2. To enable the child fulfil the basic needs of education by acquiring essential knowledge, skill, attitude, values and social consciousness for leading life properly and prepare him for the next stage of education.
3. To inspire the child develop patriotism and encourage him to nation building activities by arousing consciousness about the Liberation War.
4. To enable the child acquire competence for solving the problems of life by developing creative capacity and attraction towards income generating physical labour.
5. To help the child develop moral and spiritual qualities like righteousness, sense of responsibility, discipline, good manners, human rights, tendency to lead a simple life, curiosity, amicability, friendliness, diligence etc. and to create aptitude in him for science and culture.

Strategy :

Duration

1. Duration of primary education will have to be extended gradually to six years by 2003, seven years by 2006 and eight years by 2010. So the physical facilities of primary schools and number of teachers need to be increased gradually. Measures will be taken to ensure that universal compulsory primary education of eight-year duration is implemented by 2010. Financial outlays will be made keeping in view the phased implementation of the programme.

Adjustment among different streams

2. In the constitution of Bangladesh, it is clearly pledged that there shall be a uniform course of basic education for all. It is a constitutional necessity to introduce a unified curriculum for primary level in all educational institutions across the country. The existing disparity in the Government and non-government primary schools, kindergarten, ibtedayee madrasahs and the schools run by different NGOs will be removed to

create the opportunity for all of getting education of the same standard and characteristics through the mother tongue. However, the kindergarten schools which would act as feeder schools of the next phase English medium schools offering O-Level and A-Level courses, can use English as their medium of instruction with prior permission of the Government.

3. To enhance the standard of education and to develop the skill of the learners the ibtedayee madrasahs will implement eight-year education course and will follow the new integrated curriculum of the primary level.

Curriculum and Syllabus

4. Subjects in the primary level will include mother tongue, mathematics, environmental studies, social science and science. Fine arts and crafts, physical education, music etc. will also be included. There will be provision of teaching English in classes one and two as an additional subject and it will be made compulsory from class three. Religious and moral education will be made compulsory from class three. There may be some supplementary reading materials from class one. Some vocational education suited to the life and environment of the learners will be given in the last three classes of primary level, i. e. from class six to eight so that those students who do not continue studies after class eight may be able to manage a job.

Age for admission

5. The present rule of admission into class one at the age of 6+ will be made compulsory. To implement this successfully, the system of registration of birth and death will also be made compulsory.

Teacher-student ratio

6. The ratio of the teacher and the learners will be 1 : 40.

Teaching Aids

7. According to the objectives of primary education and the curriculum structure, National Curriculum and Textbook Board will prepare terminal competencies and classwise attainable competencies for the primary level and on the basis of these the Board will prepare subjectwise teaching aids, i.e. textbooks and, if necessary, supplementary reading materials and Teacher's Guide (not note books - but books containing analysis, examples and exercises).

Teaching Method

8. With a view to developing creative thinking and skill the child will be given opportunity to work individually or in groups by following practical teaching methodology. Encouragement and assistance will be given for research on developing, testing and implementing effective teaching methodology.

Evaluation of the Learner

9. In the primary schools continuous evaluation system for classes one and two and terminal and annual examinations from class three to all classes will be introduced. Scholarship examination will be held on completion of class five and a public examination will be held on completion of class eight, i.e. all the students who have completed class eight will appear at this examination. After completion of class eight scholarship can be awarded according to the result of the public examination.

Involvement of the society for the development of the schools and improvement of education

10. On the basis of proper consideration to ensure participation of the society in the developmental activities of the school, the school management committee can be endowed with more power to make it more active in the field of management. But at the same time the accountability of the committee will have to be ensured. Steps will be taken to form guardian-teacher committee to encourage the guardians to be more interested about the school and the education of their children. In addition, for the development of primary education and to make it generally acceptable, teachers, school management, local leaders and local government would be encouraged to hold final examination at the end of class five and pre-public examination at the end of class eight with uniform

question paper and under proper invigilation. Moreover, efforts will be made to encourage them to arrange test examination so long as SSC examination exists. This will increase the initiative and responsibility at local level and help enhance the standard of primary education. These activities should not be expensive, because it needs no new establishment or manpower. Basically local level efforts will run these projects. Initially a permanent fund of Taka ten to twelve lac may be created in every thana in the name of Foundation for Quality Education or in any other suitable name. The expenditure for these activities can be borne from the income of this fund. The fund can be created with donation from local well-to-do people.

Teacher recruitment and promotion

11. The lowest qualification for teacher recruitment will be HSC/ Secondary with second division for class one to five for primary level (when according to this education policy the examination at the end of class twelve will be called secondary examination) and Degree Pass with second division for class six to eight. Afterwards these teachers will be required to undergo training and acquire C-in-Ed. For direct recruitment of headmaster, the lowest qualification will be Degree Pass with second division and he/she is to acquire C-in-Ed and B Ed (Primary) within three years. Teachers can be encouraged by creating opportunity for promotion by arranging the grades of the teachers and the salary scales realistically (such as, Assistant Teacher, Assistant Headmaster, Headmaster).
12. Effective measures will be taken for teacher training and opportunities will be created for in-service training. Where necessary and feasible, foreign training can also be arranged. The skill and training capacity of the training institutes within the country will have to be increased. Arrangement should be made for these institutions to get suitable teachers and sufficient training materials. Their libraries should also be improved.
13. Linkage should be established between the teachers' training and promotion. Provision should be made for filling up of higher posts by direct recruitment of persons having higher degrees and for their accelerated promotion.

Recruitment of Teachers

14. A separate teacher recruitment committee like the Public Service Commission should be formed to select teachers on the basis of merit and in a rational manner for all Government and Government approved and aided non-government primary schools and ibtedayee madrasahs. This commission should be formed with persons involved in education and administration. The commission will perform the task of selecting the teachers by taking proper written and oral examinations. This selection can be made on the basis of thanas and districts. The appointing authority will appoint teachers in various schools from the candidates selected by the commission. Each year, the schools will indicate their subjectwise need of teachers (if any). A consolidated list for the thana will be submitted to the commission. The subject and thanawise target for recruitment would be set on the basis of this. This commission can be given the responsibility to select the teachers of secondary and non-government (Government aided) degree colleges. A proposal in this regard has been made later at the appropriate place.

Supervision and monitoring of classroom teaching in the schools

15. The headmasters are responsible for internal supervision of the schools. It is necessary to provide special training to the headmasters so that they can perform their duties effectively. The external supervision and monitoring of the school should be decentralized as far as possible. It is desirable to involve local government with these activities. The officers involved with these activities (as ATPO) need to be assigned with number of schools on practical basis so that they can supervise and monitor each school properly taking sufficient time.
16. For expansion of universal primary education necessary number of schools should be established and facilities should be increased. Steps would be taken to establish schools after a survey to determine which villages are without any school and which villages need more schools. Establishment of non-government schools will be encouraged simultaneously. It should be ensured that the teaching standard of both Government and non-government schools is improved and made equivalent.

Miscellaneous

17. As a national level institution, the National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) should be made a centre of excellence so that it can perform its duties effectively through innovative activities for upliftment of primary education. These activities include training programme for academic staff of PTIs and grass-root level officials and project officials, development of curriculum for basic teacher training and its approval, training supervision, conducting examination for training and award of diploma certificates, experiment for development of primary education, arranging workshops, conferences and seminars etc.
18. The whole nation must devote all its efforts to ensure quality primary education for all.

