

Looking at Ins and Outs

A Process Documentation Research on Education for Indigenous Children Programme



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Abstract

Looking at Ins and Outs is a process documentation study on BRAC's Education for Indigenous Children (EIC) programme. BRAC's EIC programme was designed with a view to ensuring the general provision of education for indigenous children. Since out-set in 2002, it has been receiving enthusiasm from many stakeholders and non-stakeholders. When a planned extension of this programme was undertaken, a Process Documentation Research (PDR), a unique way of monitoring and assessing development work, seemed very useful. In this study, the different stages up to school opening process had been documented. Following were the stages consider for the study: 1) Staff foundation training, 2) School inaugural workshop, 3) School opening session, 4) Material development. Though there are many pros and cons, we found EIC programme striving to make an indigenous child friendly schooling system. Targeted community people seemed co-operative and optimistic. To ensure a compressive inclusion of the indigenous children in primary education and to give a break through in overall development of indigenous people, EIC programme requires many pragmatic supports from different stakeholders. PDR team, as a close stakeholder, was committed to give knowledge support through documentation. PDR findings would be justified if it could make some contribution on the planning and successful implementation of the programme.

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Introduction

Bangladesh is known for its diversity in culture. In addition to mainstream Bengalis, there are 45 different ethnic minority groups¹, each with their unique cultural heritage, living in Bangladesh for centuries. Despite many natural, political and socio-economic changes, there is a common feature among all these groups that they have been striving to keep their unique cultural traditions alive. Still today they speak in their own languages, dress differently, perform different rituals, and even worship different gods and goddesses.

According to the 1991 population census, 1.2 million are indigenous or ethnic minority population that is about 1.13 per cent of the total population of the country. But unfortunately there are no national statistics providing educational data on indigenous groups. Education Watch survey of 2001 shows that the children of ethnic minorities were less likely enrol into school than those of Bengalis, the majority group. Untrained teachers, insufficient and inappropriate educational materials, insensitive pedagogy, fragile management systems and lack of provision for practising mother language result in a hostile environment for indigenous children at school (Chowdhury et al 2002). Furthermore the needs of indigenous children living in plain land have never come in limelight as those of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) area. Even the general provision of basic or primary education has not yet been assured in any real sense, as it requires some extra efforts.

BRAC's Education for Indigenous Children (EIC), which was designed to ensure the general provision of education for indigenous children, has been striving to make an indigenous-friendly schooling system. Since outset in 2001, it has been receiving enthusiasm among many stakeholders. With the planned extension of this programme, a process documentation research, a unique way to assess development work, seemed very useful.

¹ There is no consensus on the figure. Some mentioned that the number of distinct indigenous group is 70, and some have given the range of these groups 30- 70, BRAC EIC documents mentioned 45. See also Poulson N. 2004, and RDC 2004.

The Education for Indigenous Children (EIC) Programme

It is very unfortunate that although the government of Bangladesh does acknowledge the needs in education of indigenous peoples but in practice does little for them (RDC 2004). In the National Plan of Action (2002-2015) Section 3.2.8, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) states that it will address the educational needs of disabled, socially disadvantaged and indigenous children, (Singh. P., undated) *PEDP II: Tribal development plan* -has address the issue comprehensively (Paulson 2004) but GoB has no plan for introducing indigenous friendly curricula or medium of instruction. NGO initiatives are not adequate for their total development. Even government 'Tribal development plan notes, nearly ½ of the indigenous children between 6 and 10 are not enrolled in school (Paulson 2004).

In 1999, BRAC began enrolling indigenous children in ethnic minority regions and started providing basic primary education under its NFPE system. Having seen a bleak scenario in primary education provision for plain-land indigenous children, BRAC has undertaken EIC programme, an education programme especially sensitive to the indigenous issues such as language, curricula and pedagogy. In 2003, the ongoing EIC programme extended under its New Initiatives Unit, 700 schools were opened and 1400 teachers and a number of new staff from indigenous population was recruited.

Table 1. BRAC schools for indigenous students

Region	No. of school		Curricula		Funding	
	Old	New	Old	New	Old	New
Chittangong Hill Tracts	268		NFPE		NFPE	
Other areas	928	700	NFPE	EIC	NFPE	CIDA

EIC programme had four main objectives: a) to increase enrolment, b) to boost the self-esteem of students, c) to use mother tongue in primary education, and d) to create positive attitude among the mainstream community towards indigenous people. Specifying these objectives this programme have been serving 1,896 schools in four

indigenous prone areas of Bangladesh. They have been developing new materials considering of indigenous cultures and societies.

The implementation of the EIC programme is more challenging than other past interventions. As a development initiative EIC programme is unique in the sense that it is not only targeting the poor and deprived, but also different culturally, underprivileged socially and marginalized politically. Their economic exploitation and social exclusions made it very hard to access education and resources. As a result, over time, a passive outlook on development has been developed among the indigenous population. On the other hand, the mainstream was always, until recently, more or less, showed careless or insensitive approach in their issues. For example, people of ethnic minority groups do not like to be addressed by the word *Upazati* (tribe), which mean sub-nation, but it is a common practice of general people as well as government to use that term while referring them.

Box 1. EIC Programme at a glance

Working area of EIC: 14 of 40 BEP regions
Number of teams working in EIC: 76 of 518
Number of working districts: 19
Number of working Upazilas: 55
Number of schools: 928
Number of indigenous students: 14,289
Rate of girl students: 56.7%
Number of indigenous teachers: 421
Number of indigenous staff: 176
Number of students who have received scholarships: 3,291
School opened under the new initiative: 700
Teacher to be recruited in new initiative: 1,400

Source: EIC programme, BRAC-BEP

So, when BRAC entered in this field, it had to consider many issues. The EIC programme had planned to be sensitive to the norms and values of the target groups, and use their languages as medium of instruction. Indigenous teachers will teach in

3

these schools. Besides, here is a provision of one scholarship to the indigenous students from post-primary to tertiary level. Apparently all these initiatives are ushering a new hope for educational development of indigenous children.

Education for Indigenous Children Programme Implementation Process of EIC new initiative

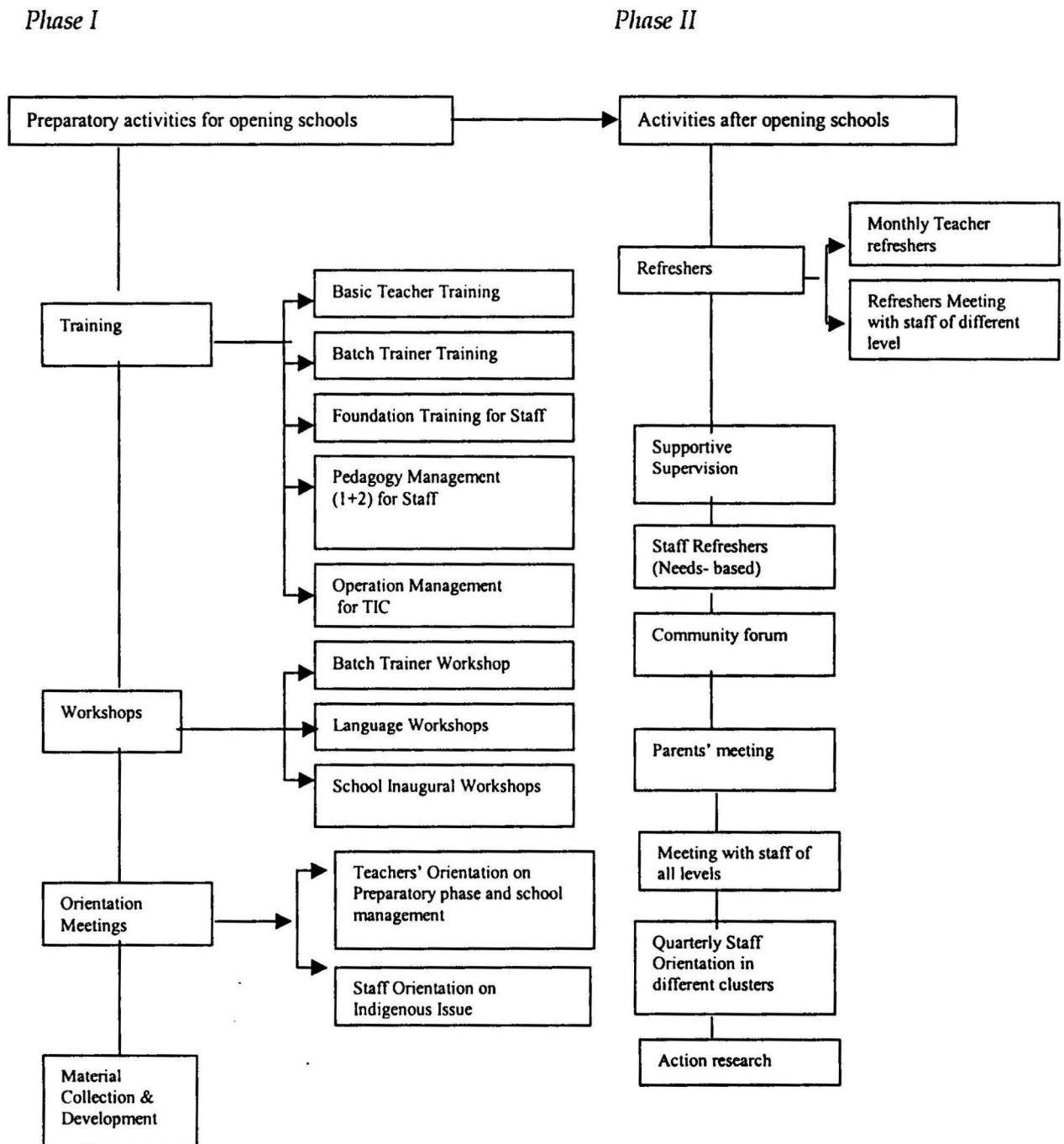


Figure 1. Two Phase of the EIC Program

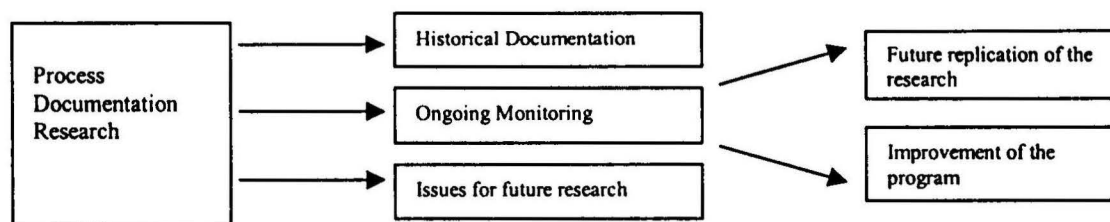
Phase I is a cluster of activities before opening schools and Phase II is activities after opening schools (Fig.1).

The Process Documentation Research

Process documentation research (PDR) was developed in the mid-1970s as a unique methodology in social research. Being philosophised from qualitative approach, it gave a paradigmatic shift in the field of formal planning, monitoring and evaluation systems. From the beginning, it is becoming increasingly popular as an effective management tool in monitoring and assessing the implementation of development initiatives. Generally, it is a study of documenting the important questions: what, who, when, where, how and why during the operation of a programme PDR can be conceived of ensuring more accurate application of participatory approaches in development work. In short, PDR is a tool that can help development workers discern more properly what is happening, how it is happening and why it is happening. Amita Shah has noted, "It [PDR] is an open-ended in-depth process that explores the interface between the organisation and the people it work with." (Amita Shah 1997)

Least we should not mislead, it should be noted, PDR is not formal evaluation but lessons learned through PDR can and should inform evaluation as M J Arul expressed, "Mine is a process documentation project, not an evaluation study, success and failure is no concern of the study. I am to capture the processes that occurred in the field." (Arul M J . undated). However, PDR could be shown in the following chart:

Figure 2. Possible programmatic and research benefits of PDR



Source: Adapted from *Stories of Targeting: Process Documentation Of Selecting the Ultra Poor for CFPR/TUP Program*, July 2003, RED, BRAC

The Rationale behind PDR of EIC Programme

Process documentation research (PDR), as a new and increasingly fruitful research method, has some special features. First of all, it gives an opportunity to gain a narrative picture of a programme. Further, as has been shown in figure.2, PDR fulfils three need of a field level implementation project i.e., it gives a systematic record, provides an ongoing monitoring report and gives new researchable issues which ultimately give a clearer indication of improving the program for future replication. Nonetheless, findings of the study can be shared frequently in a way that is easy to understand and incorporate into existing plans and efforts. In context of EIC, it was hoped that PDR would:

1. give a real description of the field-level programme implementation,
2. serve as on-going monitoring,
3. provide historical documentation,
4. raise issues for further research,
5. give cumulous feedback from different stakeholders,
6. be easy to understand and share findings and affect planning, and
7. provide an opportunity to get lessons from right and wrong.

So, in general, it is hoped that this application of PDR in EIC not only studies the process but also gives a clear overview of the flux and progress of the programme.

Objectives of the Study

The main objective of a PDR of the new initiative of EIC programme is to draw description of the field-level programme implementation. The specific objectives of this study were:

- 1.to record the interaction between and among the different stakeholders;
- 2.to analyse different intervention and their outcomes; and
- 3.to find out patterns and trends in the process of programme implementations.

Areas of Inquiry

Using PDR methods, data are principally generated through documentation of on-going events. It was mentioned earlier that the EIC programme's new initiative had two phases in its implementation. Phase I is a cluster of activities before opening schools and Phase II consists of activities after opening schools. We had decided to document the process of phase I.

Thus the following activities were documented in this report:

- 1) Staff foundation training,
- 2) School inaugural workshop,
- 3) School opening session, and
- 4) Materials development.

Research Methodology

It is worth mentioning that PDR is qualitative in nature, usually done by a research team independent from the project or programme. In this study, I conducted the field level observations, documentation, and consolidation of the raw data. A committee of two senior researchers supervised the study. Data were collected through participant observation, informal interview, and from secondary sources.

Participant Observation

Participant observation had been a significant way of gathering data. I myself was a participant observer. For participating in different occasions of the programme, I travelled to Bogra, Netrakona and Joypurhat districts.

At Bogra

When I reached Bogra TARC for observing the staff Foundation Training, it was 6 o'clock in the evening. It was about a five-hour journey from Dhaka by bus. The bus stopped just beside the TARC. It was my first time visiting a TARC. With an enthusiastic mind I approached the gate and I had to sign a register book as a researcher come to observe training. The guard at the gate showed me a room and

suggested me to get for further help from there. I entered the room and found some people gasping. There I met a known person. He was a trainer I met in a meeting a few days ago at BRAC Head Office (HO). He smiled at me and asked the responsible people to arrange my boarding. The TARC-in-charge was on leave and I was introduced to the some other trainers. Waiting some 20 minutes I found to a room in a hostel.

I was informed that all trainees had arrived by that time and the aforementioned known person was the trainer of the session I would observe. I spent some time talking with the trainer in his room. He tried to know about me in detail. He seemed little concerned about my visit because this kind of observation by outsiders was totally new for him. I tried to convince him about the purpose of my visit, but it seemed to me that he was partially convinced, as in many cases during the course of the training, he wanted to reassure many of his statements by saying: *Ki bolen Mahbub vai? (What do you think Mahbub?)*.

I observed the Staff Foundation Training for 6 consecutive days. At the time of the training session, the trainees welcomed my presence. Sometimes both trainees and trainer took tea with me during the tea break. They asked about the programme and my work. Trainees were asking repeatedly about the sustainability of the EIC programme.

In the course of the training, I sat with the trainees although a chair beside the trainer was offered. Although I was seating with trainee's desk, I was not treated as a trainee. In my introductory words, I expressed the general objective of the study. I did not explain everything in detail. I got all of the materials (Books, note pads etc.) provided by the trainer during the training. I seldom asked any questions during the session. I never tried to break the rhythm of interaction between the trainees and the trainer on which I had had a closer look.

At Netrokona

It was a *Hartal day* (Strike) when I was supposed to leave Dhaka to go to Netrokona by bus, so I had to start after 6 pm when the *hartal* broke up. But there was no direct bus for that day. So I had to get on a local bus, which would go up to Mymensingh. It made so many delays on different stopages that when I reached Mymensingh it was 11 o'clock at night and there was no bus there for Netrokona. I had to spend a night at Mymensingh TARC. From there I started early in the morning for Netrokona. When I reached Netrokona it was raining continuously. Still then I had to travel a long unknown way by tempo, boat and rickshaw to reach the spot where the school inaugural workshop was supposed to be held.

It was 12 o'clock when I reached Nazirpur, the spot for the occasion. First I went to a BRAC office. Some BDP staff of BRAC helped me find the spot. The meeting was going on in a big room in Nazirpur high School. I entered the room and was offered a seat on the front line of the audience. Organizers, the guests and announcer were in front of me on dais. I was among the audience. The announcer introduced me and asked me to say something. I gave a short introduction of my purpose and myself.

The workshop was supposed to have started earlier but it was delayed due to rough weather. Therefore, when I went there, I was not very late. The programme had begun just half-hour ago. I observed the workshop and noted down the diverse expressions of the organisers and community. I talked with the audience informally, most of whom were the teachers and assistant teachers for EIC schools. I talked with the local Upazila Parishad chairman and a Upazila Education Officer who was present in that meeting. I participated in a lunch served by the organisers.

Coming back from Nazirpur I stayed Durgapur BRAC office. The next day Team in Charge of BRAC-BEP took me to observe 'school opening meeting'. The weather was rough. Hilly paths were full of mud and it was challenging to reach that spot by riding a motorcycle. A team in charge for EIC had driven me to the spot.

I reached the spot of the 'School Opening Meeting', I found a big gathering of children, parents and other people there. They all gathered in a half made *school ghar* (schoolhouse). The students and parents were from the *Garo* community. During the meeting I sat with the BRAC staff. I had to give a short statement of my purpose of being there. I found people with no reaction in their eyes when I said I am doing a research. It may be that research was a matter quite unknown to them.

At Joypurhat

I went to a village in Joypurhat with the EIC core team to participate in the final field test of the material development. To reach there we had to change from rickshaw to bus and bus to rickshaw. Then we took a *Nasimon* (a locally made motorised vehicle). The *Nasimon* broke down while driving over a bridge. We fell down but were fortunately unhurt.

We visited some schools for indigenous children, which BRAC had started before this EIC programme. We visited an EIC school also. Here I directly participate in the test. I read out some stories and observed the students. The team visited several schools to test the materials developed for different classes.

Informal Interview

Some need-based informal interviews were conducted with different people and key informants i.e., 10 trainees, one regional manager, two regional sector specialists, two team in-charge. We expected to capture a general but real perception on and attitude to the on-going programme. Besides, I had many sittings with the team leaders, material developers, and consultants of the programme.

Secondary Sources

Some data were also gathered from secondary sources, i.e., the project proposal, funding proposal, research reports, minutes of different meetings, consultant's notes, etc.

Limitations of the Study

The study had many limitations. The followings were some of them:

1. Could not cover all stages of the programme,
2. Covers only some purposively selected area where the programme was being implemented,
3. Could not cover an occasion more than once, and
4. Human resource was limited--- as a result there was no documentation from long-term observation of the programme implementation.

Time-frame

Activities were held in different regions at different times. The field level office on the basis of local conditions and feasibility decided many of the activities. So, no hard and fast time frame was possible. The study began with the programme orientation in mid-August, 2003 and ended in April 2004.

Staff Foundation Training for EIC Programme

In BRAC's Non-formal Primary Education (NFPE) system, all new staff are to undergo a foundation training. It introduces them with BRAC, BEP and help build a capacity for working effectively with the programme. Although EIC resembles with NFPE system, it differs in some aspects such as curricula, pedagogy and medium of instruction. So the training was also different than the usual foundation training.

A core team (popularly known as EIC team) headed by a team leader was responsible for overall policy decisions, management and for material development. They modified the existing training module through a daylong consultation meeting with trainers and senior trainers (of different TARCs). These trainers had pre-experience of working with indigenous people. EIC team thought that they devised the training in a way in which it could best serve the purposes of EIC programme.

This training was for the newly recruited POs (indigenous) who were hired to supervise and manage the EIC schools. The 6 day long training was aimed at familiarising and internalising the trainees with BRAC in general and EIC in particular. Five training sessions were conducted in different TARCs, and 176 staff received such training. When we started the PDR, 3 such training sessions were to be held. We had covered one full 6-day training session. Here we focused on a few of the salient aspects of the training:

- ▶ Beginning and first few minutes,
- ▶ Self-introductory session,
- ▶ Purposes of the training,
- ▶ Trainee's expectations of the course,
- ▶ Objectives and goals of EIC,
- ▶ Forming *Binodan* committee and their activities,
- ▶ Familiarizing BRAC- BEP & EIC,
- ▶ Teaching how to teach, and
- ▶ Evaluation and home tasks.

Beginning and First Few Minutes

It was a sunny morning in late September. A trainer was lifting the national flag slowly. The trainees and trainer with other staff of the Training and Resource Centre (TARC) were standing still in an assembly making six lines concentrating the dais of the flag stand. The national anthem was playing loudly through a cassette player and everybody was tuning their voice with the song emphasising some of its words. Everybody was staring at the nation flag and showing honour and love to the country.

Once the anthem was over the trainees entered into a big hall. The room was selected earlier as the venue of training for EIC program staff. The trainer entered the room within a few minutes with hands full of equipment such as posters, charts, books, pen, nameplates, etc. Every trainee stood up as an expression of respect to the trainer. Nobody took a seat again until the trainer said, "*Shabai Bosen*" (Sit down everybody).

After exchanging formal greetings the trainer inquired whether there was any problem in living at the TARC. "*We have no mosquito net,*" complained some of trainees. The trainer, with an exclaimed expression, took note of the room numbers lacking mosquito nets. Then he asked them about food. Being convinced that there was no problem from the trainees' side, the trainer told his experience about serving *Khichuri* to some *Garo* (an ethnic minority group) people who had not enjoyed that.

All on a sudden he asked the audience "*How long have you been in service with BRAC?*" "*Most are for three months but it varies because there were two recruitment for this*" replied a trainee. "*So what training is it?*" asked the trainer. "*Foundation*" the only word used by one trainee to answer. "*Is there any exception here?*" The trainer asked promptly. But it seemed too early to ask about exception, as nobody was able to answer the question. The trainer stepped forward and stood just in the middle of the surrounding trainees. He asked again, "*Was there any school only focusing on the indigenous children?*" "*No*" replied the trainees instantly. "*So, this is the exception, the staff for those schools are indigenous and it is a foundation course for indigenous staff,*" explained the trainer. Then

he turned every participants' attention to a board where the objectives of the course were written in bold black letters on yellow paper. Then he told a popular joke of Vanu, which amused the participants. The trainer came back to the topic. Before he started discussing the objectives, he asked the audience whether they knew the elaboration of the EIC. Only one trainee tried to answer but was able to utter only one word 'Education'.

Box 2. The background of the trainees

The trainees were aged between 20-35 years. Among 23 participants, there were three female participants. Most of them had education of higher secondary level (HSC). Some had higher degrees also. Most of them had had a break of study and many had a record of failure in different public exams. Some had a bachelor degree. They, more or less, came from illiterate and relatively marginalized family. Agriculture was the means of livelihood of most of their families. Before joining BRAC, many had past experience of working with NGOs in educational or micro-finance programme. They were polite, cultured, and simple. According to ethnicity, they can be grouped as Uroan 14, santal 6, Mahato 1, and Rajbongshi 2.

Only one participant copied the objectives of the training. The others were attentively listening to the trainer's discussion. Once the trainer asked the audience "What is communication?" Nobody knew the answer. The trainer tried to explain the communication process.

At this stage of the session the trainer suddenly left the room saying, "I have left out a thing". Some noise was made in the absence of the trainer, and it stopped after two minutes when he came back. Then he finished speaking on the objectives and started telling the history of BRAC, BEP and EIC. The history was long, started chronologically from the creation of "Help Bangladesh," and many personal experiences of the trainer were reflected upon.

Box 3. The trainer

The trainer was an experienced one. He had been working with BRAC for about 12 years. He had past experience with conducting training and working with ethnic minority people. He had a post-graduate degree in psychology. He was a tall man of mid 40s with an amiable personality and a smiling face.

Self-introductory Session

At the self-introductory session, the trainer asked the participants to come to stage and give a short description for self-identification. Further, each participant was asked to make a cultural performance i.e., singing, dancing, acting, etc. The trainer asked the participants to use her or his mother tongue while doing this.

Although many of them performed songs in their mother tongue they used Bangla while introducing themselves. These indigenous groups were so much habituated in using Bangla that they unconsciously speak it when they come to this kind of formal gathering of multicultural group. It seemed that Bangla became the *lingua franca* of the session.

In many instances when a song became very attractive to the audience (some songs seemed really melodious and the singer sang very passionately), they were making sounds like *Tabla* (a Bengali musical instrument) by striking their desk. Once a song not only moved the trainees but also the trainer and he was giving *Tal* (rhythm) by his right leg. The audience was not unconscious to encourage a performer by clapping after a good performance.

Once a trainee came to the stage bare footed to introduce him. The trainer did not notice it. It was observed that many of the trainees were barefooted (by keeping shoes aside) while they were sitting in their seats. Perhaps, it was giving them more comfort in the humidity of late summer. So, it might have happened that when he was asked to come in stage he forgot to wear his shoes again in excitement.

In some cases the trainer interrupted in the middle of a performance saying, "We will listen to it later". One trainee was too nervous to perform anything before the audience, but he could not escape from it. One of the trainees recited a Bangla poem and he was asked to translate it into his own language. But it took time and seemed very difficult for him to translate it. One trainee recited a *Chara (lyrics)* from her notebook. A trainee from *Rajbongshi* group sang a song in *Santali* language. He told latter that *Rajbongshi* had a language of their own but it is lost now and they use Bangla. But he learned the *Santali* song from his *Santali* friends.

Once the trainer was singing a song at the roof. He seemed very nervous. But the next performer held the audience spellbound by singing a melodious song. Being moved by the song, the trainer said, '*Tali hobee*' (Give a clap). Once a trainee told a joke. But it seemed not very appropriate in such an official training environment. Instead of breaking into laughter everybody kept silence.

Once, a trainer came with a childish *Bangla chara (lyric)*:

Hati ma tim tim

Tara mathe pare dim....

This childish *Bangla chara* recitation by an adult person in an official gathering also seemed odd. The session ended with a lovely *Bangla* modern song sang by the trainer.

Describing the Purposes of the Training

The trainer presented a yellow poster where the purposes and main focus were written in black letters. The trainer finished reading the purposes in a breath. He told the trainees to copy those points down in their notebook. After everybody completed writing, the trainer gave a short conclusion on the course objectives and main focus of the course.

When the posters had clipped off from the board, some complained that they had not completed copying down yet. The trainer reattached it again on some other boards that were in two corners of the room.

Trainee's Expectation from the Course

The trainer wrote in bold letters *Protyasha* (expectations) on the board. Then he asked each trainee to write down 3-4 expectations about what they intended to gain from this training. They were asked to say only one that did not overlap with others. The trainer asked the participants, took one point from each and wrote it down on the clip chart. It comprised a long list, which explicitly drew up trainees' motivation. Actually it was a nice way to realise the attitude and enthusiasms of the staff for the training on one side and the project on the other. Analysing these expectations could easily make smooth communication between the trainer and trainees.

Box 4. Purpose of the Training

Getting through the course, the trainer affirmed, the participants would expect to be able to:

- ▶ Explain the role of BRAC-BEP in the development of primary education in Bangladesh
- ▶ Explain the goal, objectives and justification of the EIC programme
- ▶ Be acquainted with the use of books for each class/grade and other materials
- ▶ Explain the significance of 'Preparatory stage' of EIC schools
- ▶ Acquired the right way and strategy for teaching preparatory to class V (Bangla, Mathematics, social sciences, and English)
- ▶ Explain human relations irrespective of nationality, religion or caste, through BRAC values
- ▶ Explain different salient features of school supervision
- ▶ Explain strategies of successful communications and work motivation
- ▶ **Main Focus:**
To develop skills and quality of staff for supervising and managing the schools for indigenous children

Box 5. Trainees' expectations from the course

The trainees' expectations from the course:

- To know about the goal and objective of BRAC, BEP, EIC
- To learn the salient features to be seen in school supervision
- To learn the strategy to use materials
- To know the logic of considering EIC as a separate programme
- To know about the continuity of different subjects
- To know different strategies for giving lessons
- To know the relation between teacher and students
- To know the strategy to analyse pictures in class
- To know subject based assessment strategies
- To know the lot of indigenous children after they have completed this course
- To know the possibilities of opening *Shishu Class* in the EIC programme
- To know the measures BRAC has taken for the development of indigenous people
- To know possibilities of opening schools again after completion of KK School
- To know how the indigenous language would be used in this educational intervention
- To know the possibility of development of Education
- To know good and bad sides of the Programme
- To know how long this EIC programme will be continued
- To know the content of parental meeting
- To know the procedures of opening schools in the EIC programme
- To know the possibilities of opening secondary schools in the EIC programme

Forming *Binodon Committee* and Their Activities

One of the attractive parts of the training course was the performance of the *Binodon committee* (amusement committee). The trainer instructed the participants to form

small groups containing a group leader. When all of the participants were clustered into small groups, they were named after *Shapla, Diganto, Golap, Rajani gandha, and Jui*. Leader from each group was elected through consensus of group members. The trainer told each small group to sit together. These committee members performed a small cultural session before beginning every session of the training. They performed songs, dances, recitation of poem, story telling etc.

In every session (training had two tea breaks and a lunch break) a group had to perform some cultural activities. Group leaders also performed. Two of the five group leaders were female.

Box 6. A Self composed song performed in Binodon Committee

Manik Toppo, a trainee, performed a self-composed song. This song could be an expression of commitment of a trainee for EIC:

*We will give education
Education, and education
Come to BRAC School
Those who are devoid of
The light of education
Come to BRAC School
Those who want to learn
Come to BRAC School
Those who are deprived
Come to BRAC School.*

Sharing Experience

"Have you seen the BRAC School?" the trainer asked. A trainee replied, "Yes, we saw when we were in school attachment period." But one of the participants complained that he was not in attachment at all. Following him, another participant also complained that he was not attached. Then those who had been attached with school were asked what they had gained from being there. They replied, "We got practical experience." The trainer then asked to present their experience by dividing into the previously formed

small groups for *Binodon committee*. He fixed the topic to different groups, which is as follows:

Table 1. Topic of experience sharing by group name

Group name	Experience/Subject topic
<i>Shapala</i>	Concerning school matters
<i>Golap</i>	Concerning staff matters
<i>Rajanigandha</i>	Concerning refreshers
<i>Jui</i>	Concerning parental meeting
<i>Diganto</i>	Concerning co-curricula activities

The trainer asked the groups to discuss and write their experiences on the given topic. Trainees within a particular group shared their experiences of BRAC school which they had got through working with BEP team offices before coming to this training. Each group developed a draft. They finally wrote it down on a poster paper to present it to the audience. A member of the group (usually the leader) presented the group experience.

While all the trainees gathered in a circle for sharing experiences, one of the trainees, for some unknown reason, did not join his group. He was writing something alone sitting in his desk. For some time the trainer did not see it, but when he saw him out of group, he expressed anger and said, "*Hay... why are you there?*" The trainee simply replied, "*I could not pay attention.*"

The groups firstly pointed out problems with given topic. After presenting the problems they were asked to sit again and devise solution to the problems they had delineated. The problems and solutions are documented below group wise:

Group1 named *Shapla* (Water lily) presented their problems and solutions as follows:

Problems relating to schools:

1. *Shekhika* (Female teacher) comes late to school
2. Teacher breaks up school before scheduled time
3. Teacher writes lesson plan after coming to school instead of at home
4. There are some problems with *Hajira* (attendances)
5. Giving fake-attendance
6. Students do not come to school on time
7. *Shekhika* comes to class unprepared
8. Some student dropout from school
9. Some schools have problems with window, tin and fence
10. Owners of school *ghar* are not conscious
11. *Dealika* (Wall journal) is not written in appropriate way
12. There is some lack of cleanliness

Solutions to the problems relating school:

1. Make the teacher aware about the beginning and ending time of school. It should be followed up regularly
2. Ask the teacher to prepare lesson plan at home and keep checking
3. Increasing attendance through guardian meetings
4. Convince the teacher about the bad effect of missing school
5. At parental meetings, guardians should be convinced to send their children to school timely and regularly
6. Advise the teacher to prepare herself before teaching
7. Convince parents about the value of education so that student would not dropout
8. Owners need to be concerned for schoolhouse and their repairs
9. Teacher will have their students write *Dealika* (Wall journal)
10. To make the Teacher and students aware about cleanliness and check it

The group 2 named *Diganto* (Panorama) containing 5 members presented the problems regarding co-curricular activities.

Problems regarding co-curricular activities:

1. There are some inconsistencies between instruction and performance of dance/song
2. Girls' participation is less in the co-curricular activities
3. Co-curricular activities are not performed regularly
4. Some students hesitate to participate in co-curricular activities
5. Teachers do not teach co-curricular activities properly
6. There is no discipline in co-curricular activities
7. The songs and dances are not standard

Solutions regarding co-curricular activities:

1. a) To include and present dance /song according to the MT module of refreshers training
b) *Shekhika* will teach co-curricular activities according to routine.
2. Female students have to participate *Jutee badhe* (in-group) in co-curricular. Here *shekhika* should help them
3. Staff will check the co-curricular activities
4. Staff will participate in the co-curricular activities to encourage others
5. Ensure the participation of *Shekhika* in the co-curricular activities while they are in refreshers
6. Discussion has to be done to convince students about discipline
7. To teach *Ruchi shamoto* (standard) dance and songs at refreshers and reflect it at school

The group 3 named *Golap* (Rose) presented the following issues:

Problems relating to staff:

1. Lack of skills training for staff
2. There are some problems with supervising schools for natural and catastrophic reason

3. Supervision problems create when school cluster is not compatible with school distance.
4. Supervision work becomes interrupted when teacher does not come timely
5. Supervision work becomes interrupted when students do not come timely

Solutions of the problems regarding staff:

1. The problems have to be checked by different training like weekly meetings, regional office meetings
2. Taking note of those schools for further supervision, which are not supervised due to natural calamities
3. Weekly working plans have to be prepared according to school cluster
4. Teacher should be asked to come regularly and follow it up
5. To discuss in parental meeting so that the students come to school timely

The group 4 named *Rajanigandha* presented the problems with refreshers. They presented the following issues:

The problems regarding refreshers:

1. Teacher does not come to refreshers timely
2. Teacher does not perform the task that they are asked to perform
3. Some school cannot complete course in time
4. Sometimes they cannot get right decision on some matters
5. Workbooks are not followed according to the decision of refreshers meeting
6. Weak teachers participate less in the refreshers
7. Sometimes Master Trainer does not prepare enough before refreshers

Solutions to the problems regarding refreshers:

1. Convince teachers about the importance of coming timely at the refreshers meetings
2. To take the appropriate measure to ensure the task to be done which is instructed at the refreshers meeting
3. To ensure the completion of course before time the following steps can be taken:
 - a) To come to school timely
 - b) Follow the guide in teaching
4. To give clear and right decision on different subjects
5. According to the decision of the refreshers steps should be taken to ensure following the workbook
6. Teacher who is weak in some subjects has to be taken to the refreshers more and more
7. Use of all material should be ensured in the refreshers
8. Master trainer has to take preparation for refreshers

The leader of the group 5, named *Jui* presented the followings problems and solutions regarding parents meeting:

Problems regarding parents' meeting:

1. All parents do not attend the parents' meeting
2. Dilemma on the subject matter of discussion
3. Male representation is relatively few
4. Parents do not take meeting seriously
5. All parents do not come to the meeting on time
6. All committee members do not come to the meeting on time
7. Sometimes women feel shy when there are males in the meeting

Solutions to the problems regarding parents' meeting:

1. Parents' attendance has to be ensured through personal contact
2. Discuss different social awareness subjects
3. Discuss the need of punctuality

4. The members of the committee have to be convinced about their duties.

It took a long time to finish the task. It is because the trainer did not fix any schedule. The trainer expressed dissatisfaction over the performance of the groups that had pointed out only a few issues.

The trainer gave an instant solution of a problem described by group 5. He said, *"In meetings we want only mothers. We do not bother about fathers because they usually kept them busy with income earning. Only mothers take care of all sides of their children. And in most cases fathers are not responsible. They would not come to the meeting promising ten times. You have to understand it. So you have to depend mostly on mothers."*

Then the trainer inquired if there were any further comments on the meeting. Nobody passed any comment. The trainer added that usually the parents whose children do not come to school regularly are not inclined to be present at the meeting, as they have to give account for it. The trainer suggested that they had to tell something new in the meeting. He said, *"Khali mukhe to mache pore na. Mistee kichu thakte hobe"* (Fly concentrates on honey). The trainee argued that the parents are busy in work and do not come to meeting. The trainer told them, *"You have to make them understand that the best work in life is to develop a child, give a good education. They have to be convinced that it is a kind of investment."*

Box 7. A group could not understand what to do

In experience sharing session a group, according to the trainer's view, could not understand the instruction. The trainer blamed them that neither their problems nor the solution was appropriate. Following was the reaction of the trainer:

"What have you written all these?" shouted the trainer. He exclaimed that none of the group could understand the instruction. He said that they should have asked earlier if they could not understand the instruction. He said:

"How could it be possible that none of you have understand it? How have all of you fallen in to a group!"

Three groups had finished their writings but two groups were making delay. The trainer shouted, "*Koi, time is over.*" But there was no time fixed for finishing the task. In this term also, group 3 was the last to finish the work. The trainer gave order to finish in a hurry. It took 10 minutes more but that group could not finish and the other group was waiting for that group. The trainer asked again, "*How long would you take?*" The group replied, "*Ai to aar ac-too*" (Some little bit of time more).

Sometimes the trainer complained over the points of solution. He condemned those as had been expressed in vague term. He said, "*Here you have gone like frog when it jumps.*" He added, "*You have to check those up. Only convincing won't work. You have to follow them up timely.*" He kept on saying, "*One teacher could teach a same lesson for three days. So you have to stick to the teacher. You said, you have to take steps. But it signifies nothing. What you have to do is to observe their classroom. You have to find out why some students cannot do well, and you have to take decision. Simply you have to teach them "Hatee kolomee"(practically).*"

Box 8. Preaching negative impression on teachers

Once the trainer expressed dissatisfaction over the issue raised by a trainee in experience sharing session. The issue was about natural calamities, which obstructs school supervision. Underestimating the issue he advised them to be very strict in their supervision. By the way, he gave a negative impression about the teachers. It seemed from his speech that teachers are in general behaving in deceptive way. The impression could be realised from the comment drawn by the trainer:

"If you want to catch the thief, you have to devise some techniques. I have caught many hiding myself in the Bashjhar(Bamboo horde)."

Familiarising with BRAC- BEP & EIC

The trainer started this part saying, " *Now we will do something jhat pot*" (in a hurry). He gave impression that BRAC believes that human beings are equal. He remembered that it was asserted in Islam also. He said:

"In mosque every one is equal. BRAC also believes that human beings should not be discriminate on the grounds of religion, caste, nation or group. We learn our lesson from our surroundings. We are the reflection of the socio-economic condition of our parents. Everybody is equal before BRAC. Someone is Hajong and someone is Hindu is not the concern. Please turn back to the last page of your katha and see the 18 values of BRAC."

The trainer defined the BRAC values and explained each one briefly. Trainer also briefed about the goal of BRAC education programme. He told that through education there not only poverty will be eradicated but it will also bring empowerment. He cited a case where fellows used to call a man indecently or jokingly because that man had no education or money.

Box 9. Familiarising with BRAC values

When the trainer was familiarising the BRAC values, for example 'Peoples capacity', he explained asserting, "*What I can do can be done by others too. It will take more or less same time*". About "teamwork" he explained that in a game if someone is week the defeat might come because of his weakness. So in a group you have to ensure your participation and you have to help the week and give him the chance. About the value 'Professionalism' he gave example of a Dargi (Tailor). He said, "*Some Dargi gets more order than others. Why? Because, he keeps his words, delivers timely a well-finished product. He has to keep his excellence continuing. Like Dargi you have to develop your skill continuously. If you are not virtuous, you will not be valued by your organisation."*

Box 10. Goals and objective of the of BEP

Goals:

To eradicate poverty through education and empowerment of the poor people

Objectives:

To create a provision of education for the children of poor family and reduce the rate of illiteracy

To ensure the participation of women in education programme

To involve the community in the education programme

To work for ensuring Education for All, by 2015

To help developing "a *Para-professional* " class of teachers in society, specially by women

To help build firm determination on moral values

To raise awareness besides education like population control, health and cleanliness

To finish primary education in limited time

To develop life oriented curriculum

To develop students as worthy of secondary school

In one case the trainer told that they wanted to fulfil some purposes through BRAC programmes such as eradicate poverty, empower the poor people, empower the women, and advocacy for nationally and internationally recognised issues of the extreme poor.

Box 11. Goal and Objectives of EIC

Goal:

To create equal opportunity in education for indigenous children.

Objectives:

To ensure the participation of indigenous children in the mainstream education

To ensure the participation of indigenous people in BRAC education programme

To aware the indigenous people of their own rights

To create positive attitude towards indigenous people

To help the underdeveloped group of people to come the in walk of development

To enhance the co-operation among indigenous and the Bengali people

To create positive attitude about culture and values of indigenous people

By the way of speaking about BEP, he asked the audience, "Do you know, in which programme do we belonging?" Some responded, "BEP". The trainer differed and said, *no, we are people of EIC*. Then he discussed detailed on the goal and objectives of the EIC.

The trainer gave a long but modest lecture on BEP and its different components, policy, management etc. He talked on NFPE school, KK Kendro, Shishu, formal school, PRIME, ADP, APON, secondary, ESP, Gano Kendro, EIC, etc.

Box 12. Trainer's explanation for preferring female teachers in BRAC School

While describing about developing paraprofessional, the trainer adds explanation of developing paraprofessional especially from women .He said, *"Look, Chalera (males) cannot teach with such passionately and industriously. On the other hand women can do this with motherly care. Further no male can bring his family with this meagre income. As women in our society usually have little scope for job, they are giving this option. Although they might not continuing teaching in future life, but this provision will make them such a way to be a good teacher of her children in family."*

One trainee asked, *"What are the component of EIC?"* *"This question would have come earlier,"* the trainer said. One trainee reported that he had asked it earlier. Although the trainer told that he had not heard that and he was sorry for that. But he did not clear what were the components of EIC. In the latter part of the lecture he described about scholarship opportunity option and other facilities of education for indigenous students at secondary and other higher level.

Box 13. Scholarship opportunity- could a PO apply?

While talking about stipend for indigenous students the trainer said, *"We will give scholarship to 500 students to pay fees in different exams from SSC to MA. Some trainees wanted to know whether they could apply for that. The trainer replied, "You can ask for a leave to participate in those exam but you should not ask for the money. You are earning. Who can earn should not go for begging. Man should have a strong sense of self-respect."*

The trainer discussed in details about similarities and dissimilarities of NFPE, KK and EIC Schools. Dissimilarities are in curriculum and span of different classes. Similarity is that all schools give basic education. *"In NFPE system we initially select 40 students. From among them we finally take 33 where 70 per cent will be girls. But in EIC we would be satisfied with 20 if no more is available, disregarding boy and girl ratio"* he said. But the

trainees disagreed. According to their experience male-female ratio was not being followed. Then the trainer suggested them to prefer girls and then boys of similar age. He added, "You can take Bangalee girls/boys if they are inhabitants of the same Para (locality)." When one trainee asked about possibilities of enrolling handicapped children in EIC schools, the trainer gave his consent and asked to consider other factors along with the distance of home of those students.

Box 14. Dilemma about the student selection

The trainees asked whether they could take more than 33 children in a class? In reply, the trainer told a jock, "You need two metres of cloth for a shirt. You have bought two meters and asked the tailor to prepare a shirt for you and a dress for your baby. What will happen?" You can start a school with 15 students if you can get permission from the programme. But I don't suggest you to have a mixture of *Bengali* and *Adivashi*. One trainee complained that there were *Adivashi* boys but to fill girl ratio some *Muslim girls* were taken. "Why were those boys left?" The trainer exclaimed. Then when came the question of taking Bengali boys in EIC school, trainer told them: "There could some seat vacant after including all school age indigenous children (Boys and girls) around EIC school. Then you can take some school age Bengali children. If they live in a same community, same *samaj*, and same *para* then there is no problem."

The trainees asked the trainer if only the *Adivashi* would be recruited as teacher. The trainer nodded his head and said, "yes". "But there are some *Muslim boys* (participants use *Muslim* instead of *Bengali* to mean *Bengali*) and *girls in EIC school*" he complained. Trainer said, "We will teach them in *Bangla*, only preparatory phase will be in the mother tongue for *adivashi baccha* (indigenous children). You have to consider that the *Bengali children* you are taking have friendship with indigenous children. You have to understand that we do not teach the children of well-off family. " Thus the trainer discourage to take *Bangali children* in EIC schools. One trainee adds, "Yes we should not take the *Muslim children* because it will be difficult to teach them religion." The trainer said, "No we do not teach *Arbee* (*Arabic*) in school." One trainee expressed dissatisfaction and said "Inclusion of *Muslim children* will create many problems.

Box 15. Considering the risk (Communal clash)

The trainer said, "All over the world there are some conflict between the majority and minority. Suppose in India the Hindus, in England the Catholics dominate the society. So you should not do something what office did not instruct you." While talking about the inclusion of the Bengali children in EIC schools trainer asked the trainee to consider the risk and discouraged to include them. He told, "Look at Bangladesh, adivashis are not more than two million. Bengali are majority. Somehow children could make quarrel in school. Elders of Bengali community could influence differently and harm the smooth process of EIC. You have to understand .You have to look back how difficult it was your path to come to this stage. You should not prefer to repeat that for your people."

Familiarising with Educational Material

One of the purposes of this training was to familiarise the trainees with class-based educational materials. The trainer would show more materials those are related with indigenous concern and give logic on them.

The trainers started, however, without informing the audience that he was going to discuss on that topic. He just begins inquiry of whether they have seen any school and/or books. Having found two of the participants without attachment and unfamiliar with school and materials, he suggested them to ask for one set of books for each class from the Team in-charge (TIC). He opined that they should have given manual and instruction for responsibilities by the time.

The difficulties that the trainer had to face were non-availability of books and materials in that TARC. According to the trainer all books should been available but the in charge of books in TARC was absent. So searching the storeroom to find the needed books was not possible. However, some books and guides were given to the trainees. One participant claimed that there were some dissimilarity in the books and teacher guide. The trainer asked him not to speak *andazee* (in fancy).

Teaching How to Teach Children

In preparatory phase, the medium of instruction will be pupils' mother tongue. The trainer gave instruction on how to teach in preparatory phase. It is very important because in this phase the student will practice their mother tongue that is called L1 (First language). Trainer indicated time for particular lesson. He tried to make them understand that in this stage mother tongue have to be given supreme consideration. The trainer asked a participant to read out from the book named *Shishu Path* (Lesson for a child). One trainee came and unable to read it out. But another one was reading very well, but some how the trainer stopped him. In the meantime he had written something on the board, but he wiped those out instantly before everybody finished copying. He advised them to copy from their fellow trainees. Then he very swiftly showed how to read out. He was acting like a teacher in a classroom and the all trainees were acting like students by reciting the voice of teacher.

The trainer described how the teachers and the assistant teachers would use language in bilingual classes. Then he tried to make them understand how children would be taught Bangla, Mathematics, English and Social studies after they had finished a preparatory phase. He emphasised on *Hatee kolom a Shikha* (learning by doing) citing the use of Kathi (sticks) and *Bichee* (Been) in mathematics class. He also told about the trick of giving *Ador* (affection) in the course of teaching. He suggested them to follow the trick themselves and instruct the teacher to do the same.

The trainer wanted to know if the trainees had ever seen *Ango Parichitee* (familiarizing with the parts of body) class. Only three people found to have seen that. The trainer called one of them to come on. He was asked to show how to do that. He did that. Then trainer asked the audience to show how to do that again. Everybody raised his or her hands. The trainer asked a trainee but his performance did not satisfy the trainer. The trainer showed the activities again and instructed them that they should have the children to practice it again and again. At last, two trainees were asked to play the role of teacher and the rest of the trainees as students in practising the activities.

Box 16. Teaching 'how to teach'

The trainer was instructing how to teach *ango porichitee* (Familiarize with the parts of body). He told the trainees, "You have to show different parts of your body and say the name. The students will follow you. They have to practice it again and again. BRAC has 3/5/7 method. Some children can do only practising three times, some can with 5 times and someone takes 7 trails. There will be three kinds of child. You can follow the middle one. But, following the method, you would find that 5/6 still would not be able to do. In such cases you have to give an extra care for those children."

Box 17. Continuation of *shishu path*

Trainer wrote down the continuation of *shishu path*:

Related discussion

Open up text book and discussion on picture

Teacher will read words loudly, the students will listen, fingering on word and read silently

Teacher would read and students would read out. 7/8 will ask to come board and they will do like teacher and everybody will follow her/him

Teacher will check the lesson by asking them.

The trainer wrote *Path ticca* (Lesson plan) on board and asked the audience, "What is called *Path ticca*?" Nobody tried to give answer. Then the trainer defined it. He told, "Planning by a teacher of what lesson and how long that would be taught by following what materials is called *Path ticca*." The trainer inquired whether they have seen *Path ticca* and know its five steps. Some said that they have seen but they saw but knew only four steps. The trainer wrote down the five steps as follows:

1. Pre lesson Management-
 - a) Preparation
 - b) Evaluating past knowledge
2. Purpose of the lesson plan
3. Lesson presentation

4. Evaluation

5. Homework

He mentioned that sometimes the *Path ticca* is formed into 4 steps. Then the trainer showed a practical view of the *Path ticca*.

Formal and Informal Interaction and Suggestions

Sometimes the trainer was writing so fast that the participants could not complete copying. Off and on the trainer asked them to do hurry. But they could never been very fast in writing. On the other hand they complained that they could not understand the handwriting from such a distance.

The trainer gave a brief idea of how to behave with community people. He explained the need of good relation with people. Describing his own experiences, the trainer tried to convince the trainees the advantages of keeping good relation with local people of all stage.

Box 18. A general suggestion to the trainees

At the last part of training once the trainer suggested the trainees:

"You have to know how to conquer human mind. You have to develop your own plan to convince people. The plan of collecting and selecting children for school has to be devised from your 'Tool Box' (indication of brain). You have to keep relation with every people of the locality." A trainee asked, "Why should we do this?" The trainer replied, "You have to be a leading figure in the locality you would be working. You might have to depend on a beggar. You have to create your own environment. You have to turn the situation in your fever. But you have to look that you would not be allowed to do something, which break office rules."

Evaluation of the Trainee

The trainer asked different issues which had been discussed in the training. When the aim of EIC was asked in the third day of the training, the first two could not give answer, the third one tried to depict history, the fourth one could said only 2/3 points and the fifth one could rightly answer the question. The trainer reminded that he said that he would ask what had been discussed.

The trainer asked about the aim of BRAC Education Programme. One by one they took their seat off and kept their mouth shut up. Many could not answer. The trainer checked their notebook. He asked, "*What happened?, You have written in note book, but could not speak it out.*"

The trainer took the home task from the participants and made comment on their notebooks.

At the last hour of the training, the trainer took a test for evaluation. It was surprising that although it was training for the EIC program, there was no reflection of the indigenous issues as there was no question on indigenous matters.

School Inaugural Workshop

School inaugural workshop created an opportunity for different stakeholders to gather and exchange views, experience, expectation, and enthusiasm. This formal way of exchanging news and views among the programme implementers, management, and the community people strengthen trust, ties and friendliness. In any development programme, live and effective community participation is a must and school inaugural workshop can be regarded as a gateway or building block of such participation in EIC programme.

Thirty inaugural workshops had taken place all over the programme area under EIC programme. When this process documentation research (PDR) started then only one such workshop was waiting to be held. We planed to cover that. In writing this part, we used many field reports documents written by the *Team In-charges* on the inaugural workshops.

The objectives of the workshop:

- ▶ Making better relations with the community
- ▶ To give idea about BRAC and its divergent development initiatives
- ▶ To familiarise with BRAC Education programme
- ▶ To describe the EIC programme
- ▶ To discuss on the situation and development of ethnic minority groups
- ▶ To discuss on the importance to preserve the language and culture of ethnic minority
- ▶ To tell the community about the development plan with ethnic minority
- ▶ To inaugurate the EIC program in the area

As chief guest, usually the Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) was invited, but in many cases the UNO could not come. In such situation some other government officers (i.e., Upazila Project Officer) came as representative. Head masters of primary and

secondary school of the locality, teachers and the staff of the EIC programme, local journalists, local politicians, and other respected members of the community had been the participants of these workshops. UNO or Upazila Education Officer (UEO) rare found in many occasions. In one occasion we found an Assistant Commissioner (land) as chief guest. In a workshop, we found BDP area manager of BRAC to preside over the session.

So we found different types of people attended in these workshops. At the zenith, in the platform of workshop, the local socio-politico elite such as UP chairman, political leaders, head teachers of high and primary schools, indigenous community leaders and some other government administrative or educational officials were present. In the same way BRAC's regional managers for BEP were the key figure on those occasions. The BRAC staffs such as team-in-charge, POs etc participated and contributed in organising the workshops. Along with them, the newly recruited indigenous teachers and assistant teacher had had a live participation. All teachers for the EIC schools were female. Someone was carrying their children on their back.

The activities of the observed workshop had been reported into following five headings:

- ▶ Welcome address: Greetings, introduction
- ▶ Speech on EIC
- ▶ Open Discussion: Feedback--quarries of the audience
- ▶ Inauguration, Entertainment and Lunch

Greetings, Introducing and Welcome-address

The inaugural session was started at 11 a.m. two-hours latter than the schedule. It was drizzling from dawn, so the participants came late. We heard that those participants came from a long distance walking on foot. Further the roads were hilly. But there were a sufficient number of people, in such rough weather, for such a meeting. Workshop started with recitation from the *Quran, Gita and Bible*. A *Garos* song was

sung. The meaning of the song was that the *Adibashi* people respect nature and live in close contact with nature. One of the BRAC BEP staff was moderating the session. The announcer introduced the guests with the audience.

Speech on EIC

The BRAC staff in their speech tried to give a good impression of BRAC and its activities. They tried to explain the rationale behind the EIC and its procedure of implementation and the expected outcome. Similarly, when the *Adibashi* staff or teachers spoke, an expression of hope, vigour and expectation was observed. Sometimes emotional congruencies were cut out. In their speech they asked to all to help EIC programme to be a successful one.

On the other hand, the community leaders whether *Adivashi* or not, the village leaders or *Mondols*, and other government and non-government officials who gave speech expressed very much optimistic view. They gave many suggestions, which could be crucial for the programme.

Box 19. BRAC Regional Manager's speech

The Regional Manager (RM) to give his welcome speech of BRAC gave speech successfully. Everybody was very attentive and enthusiastic to his speech. His voice was politely loud and assertion was very deep. His main focus was to describe the aims and objectives of the EIC program. He tried to speak simply and with examples. He urged the support from all the stakeholders and non-stakeholders. His speech concerned the following:

- 1) Review of Education programme of BRAC
- 2) Quality primary education and BRAC is position
- 3) BRAC's work beyond Bangladesh i.e., Afghanistan and Sudan
- 5) Importance of Education for All by 2015
- 6) The rationale behind the EIC project
- 7) The materials to be used in the EIC Project
- 8) Rules and regulations of BRAC school
- 9) Practice of own culture —a human right
- 10) Goal and objectives of EIC programme

Box 20. Opinion and expectation of the community people

One chief guest opined that there should be some mutual understanding between the GoB and the non-governmental organisations. He suggested, "*There should not be any conflict among EIC school and other schools.*" Chandri Soran, a village-head from Chapai Nawabgonj maintained, "*Adibashis are very shy, so they always remain underdeveloped.*" He praised BRAC for undertaking EIC programme, which he believed would turn them towards development. A UP chairman, perhaps not understanding the matter properly, commented, "*Adibashi Culture is a part of the Bangladeshi culture which is gradually distinct.*" At the same time he praised the EIC programme for taking provision to preserve the culture. He, further, promised to help the programme as best as he can.

Feedback

Quarries and expectation of the audience had been the main tone of these sessions. In a workshop at Naogaon region, Boidho Nath Toppo from Adivashi Development Organisation, in his speech, asked to protect indigenous languages and develop alphabet. At the same workshop, Mr. Abu Said asked to extend the BRAC Education Programme.

A head teacher of local government primary school discussed on quality education and asked for sustainability of that education. His remarkable conclusion was, '*Each educated person of Bangladesh should teach one illiterate child.*' One local UP chairman in his speech compared education system of Bangladesh with that of the developed world. According to him, developed world's education is three/four times advanced than us. So, he condemned the teachers for their attitude. He calls for leaving up traditional thinking in education development. One indigenous participant commented, People have to come out of fundamental thinking. By comparing quality of BRAC school with other he said, "*Look, who is ensuring the quality education.*"

Open Discussion

The Regional Manager of BRAC-BEP called everybody to participate in the *Muktoo alochona* (open discussion). For first few moments nobody respond. All on a sudden a middle-aged indigenous man stood up and started to speak, "*We are pauperised. So those who have come to help us with this project should be welcomed. Now we face the time to work so that our next generation could walk with majority population equally.*" He claimed that BRAC office situated far way from their locality. He wished it would be better if the office would be closer somewhere in their locality.

One participant asked about provision of training for the teachers. One newly recruited teacher of EIC school told, "*Please give a bell for our school. To show our respect to our nation we want a national flag also*".

Following her, another teacher told, '*If you can manage, please give us a wall-clock.*" One audience told, "*BRAC is a humanitarian organisation. We asked to rethink the salary of assistant teacher. They get only tk.300 per month. How could you think she would teach properly without filling her stomach?*" One of the participants requested, "*Where there are no scope for drinking water around school, provide a tube well.*"

A participant asked, "*Would children have to seat on mat up to Grade -V?*" Another participant asked whether there was any provision of help for the high school and college students? Another lady asked, "*We have heard that our mother tongue would be used in these schools. Are you going to write books in our language?*" A person of Hajong community appealed the authority to increase the amount of money for making schoolroom. He thought that *Hajong* community was too poor to arrange the amount of money for that purpose. He also expected sustainability of EIC programme. They used to spend their children to Church schools. But now they are sending them to BRAC. So if the program had stopped, they would fall into trouble. An officer of Church of Bangladesh complained about the age of children of BRAC schools. Director of Adivashi Development Organisation, a local NGO, asked to introduce alphabet in indigenous language.

School Opening Meeting

School opening meeting was a forum for interaction between parents and the programme staff. The most important occasion of this phase was the formation of School Management Committee (SMC). SMC is formed through consensus of parents and other community figures who had some kind of influence in society. School opening meetings were very important phase of the EIC programme in the sense that it was a real start of an individual school with participation of the community members. The meeting we had chosen for process documentation research was one of last of this kind. So, the organisers supposed to have strong expertise to perform such sessions. Following were the aspect of the meeting:

- ▶ Greeting and orientation
- ▶ Brief descriptions on BRAC and EIC school
- ▶ Formation of school managing committee
- ▶ Distribution of books and materials
- ▶ Cultural activities and congratulating guests
- ▶ Declaration of school opening
- ▶ Social environment
- ▶ End with tea-session

Greetings and Orientation with BRAC, BEP & EIC

The meeting began with greeting speech of Team-in-Charge (TI) and Regional Sector Specialist (RSS) for EIC of local BRAC BEP office. He introduced the BRAC staff with the audience. The newly built glittering tin-shade house of EIC school was almost totally filled by the students, parents, and other community people.

The RSS thanked everybody for attending the meeting. He described BRAC's objectives and goals and gave a brief overview of the development activities of BRAC in Bangladesh and beyond. He spoke on the NFPE and its different components. Then he spoke on the EIC programme-its goals, objectives etc. He used local dialect of Mymenshingh. Once it seemed monotonous and unattractive to the indigenous

audiences as he was prolonging his speech by some repetitions. It appeared that most of the people are illiterate and daily labourers who work in field. They seemed have little interest to hear about the speaker. At least four audiences were drizzling. Some mothers came with their babies, who were crying. Some mothers were busy with breast-feeding their babies.

Discussion

It is expected that the parents would ask their queries regarding the EIC. It was seen that nobody asked any question or comment spontaneously. Why did they do this? We were informed that the BRAC staff were keeping close contact with those individuals for such a long time that they were completely convinced of the purpose and motivation of EIC programme. Furthermore, it was evident that indigenous people of Bangladesh think in a simple and positive way. This silence could be an indication of receiving something good from the programme.

Forming School Management Committee

Like other BRAC non-formal schools, the EIC schools also have provision of forming school managing committee. A managing committee is consisted of six people including a president. The group members suppose to be enthusiastic in education. The following chart shows the structure of a committee:

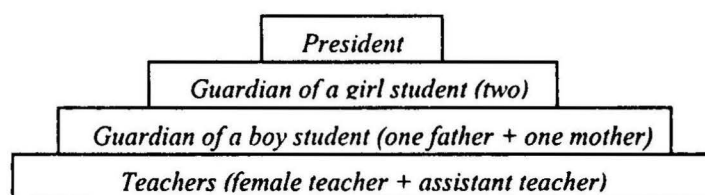


Chart 2: School management committee

When the RSS asked the audience to select a president, there were no excitements among the audience. Then a female staff of BRAC spoke something in their own language and it was shortly realised that two people were supposed to be present in the meeting for possible candidate for the committee. But none was present. Wife of one person was present. Everybody asked his wife to call him. The person showed up

shortly. Then the same staff asked the audience again to assign a person for the post. The audience, somehow, chose the person who was absent few minutes ago. The person seemed happy being selected for the post. He was smiling. He was clapped when he was greeting the audience standing and raising his hand. Then the other members of the committee were selected which seemed selected by the BRAC staff. Only their name were written in the note book in the session. Then the BRAC staff took a signature of assurance from each of the parents on the conformation of continuing schooling in EIC school.

Distribution of Educational Materials

The newly elected precedent of school managing committee was asked to distribute the educational materials. Each of the students came and took the materials (Book, Slate etc.) from the president. They shook their hands with the president and the BRAC staff. Students looked very cheerful and happy while they were getting the educational materials. After the materials distributed, the BRAC staff asked whether anyone else did not get the materials. There were two boys who claimed for materials. But there were some complexities that their admission process was still not finalised. The staff assured that their cases would be dealt letter.

Two boys stood up when BRAC staff asked whether there was anybody else who did not get the materials. These two boys were Bengali and live in other *para* of the village. BRAC staff had nothing to do with them, as there was no provision for this type of the children in EIC school. They were looking pale by this disappointment. One very little girl stood up asking for materials she was already refused to admit into the school for under- age.

Cultural Performances

At the end of the material giving session, the president announced formally that the school is open. Then came the cultural activities. Two little girls danced while some other was singing a song in local indigenous language. Four little children came with

bouquets made by local flower to present the president and the BRAC staff. It was a very pleasant experience for the BRAC staff.

End with Tea-session

The meeting was formally ended with a short lecture of the Team-in- Charge of the local BRAC office when he handed over the responsibility to the community for looking after the school. He expressed the overall development of the community.

Then the owner of the *school ghar* took BRAC staff in their house. They were entertained with tea and *Muree* (puffed rice). Tea and *Muree* was also served to the audience presented in the session.

When the BRAC staffs were coming out of the spot, one middle-aged Bengali woman came with two children. She was shouting claming why her children would not be admitted into the school. It was informed that her daughter could be admitted but her son would be deprived in the present policy of the EIC.

Material Development

Material development for EIC is a very challenging and important task to be done. One of the crucial goals of EIC programme was to use mother tongue as medium of instruction in primary education. But the targeted communities were not uniform in terms of language usage. So it was felt beyond capacity with existing set up to include minority literacy in EIC schools. Recently a pilot program has been taken to check its feasibility. For the supplementary purpose, BRAC decided to use oral instruction of the language of a particular community. Following are the three stages we would like to focus in this part of the report:

- ▶ Initial stage
- ▶ Material collection
- ▶ Final field test and material development

Initial Stage

Material development is a continuous process starting since May 2003 (guideline set by consultants through a discussion with EIC staff). But the core EIC team working at the head office, lead by a team leader, is responsible for the overall programming, managing, and editing materials work initially about three years ago. At the initial stage, they had conducted two creative workshops with three clusters at - Sylhet , Comilla and Dianajpur. They termed it as *Child writer's workshop* where some children with indigenous background were asked to write some stories. The stories were analysed to understand the ideas, feelings, interest culture and lives of ethnic minority children.

Then the core group conducted three FGDs with Headmen and age-old experienced persons, schoolteachers to assess the material needs for EIC schools. These FGDs were conducted in Chittagong, Sylhet and Rajshahi cluster.

From their need assessment, the FGD participants pointed out the following contents as necessary for indigenous students:

1. Folk tale
2. Health awareness
3. Tradition and culture

The core team collected some materials from different communities. But when they had tried to give it a written form, they found that it severally lost the real tone. So the EIC group decided to use some ethnic origin material collectors who would be able to extract the material from respective community.

Material Collection

Six young male graduates were recruited who had some writing skills. A work plan was set. EIC material development group decided to collect materials through the local BRAC staff (PO, TIC and RSS) who were involved in work at the indigenous locality.

Box 21. A lyric in ethnic language sent by a field staff

A field staff sends a *chara* (lyrics) in indigenous language:

Etra-ara atra-ara
Erma alra kala nagnar
BRAC school tara
Nam har matha tirka ka dada
Nam dangha ghi najina

---Lipi Aroti (PO)
Language: Oroan (Kurukh)

Translation:
Look hither and thither
All are going to school
There is BRAC School
But we all are lagging
Lagging behind in idleness.

Material collectors, in the process of material development, followed the following steps:

1. Focus group discussion (FGD)
2. Need assessment
3. Topic selection
4. Collect and writing stories in easy language
5. Meeting with BEP to discuss about the draft materials
6. Field test
7. Second meeting with BEP to discuss about field test
8. Editing
9. Final field-test
10. Finalising materials

At FGDs the Material collectors (MC) tried to find out the type and pattern of the material that the indigenous community would like to see in the books of their children. Then they selected possible topic on different issues. They searched the materials in the community and whenever they got something they write or taped them. Then they wrote some stories in easy language. They discussed with the BEP about the draft materials. There were some modifications of the material after the suggestion of BEP. With these modified materials, the MCs again went to a field test. MCs pointed out the following problems with the materials:

1. Language was hard
2. Word was hard
3. Story was too large
4. Lack of picture (Usually picture was set on the BRAC book)

After taking care of and further modifications, the material collectors went for a final field test. They found some word still hard to the students. So, when they produced their final materials, they tried to make them more lucid and easy.

Final Field-test and Material Development for 'Grade I'

After getting got the final materials the core EIC team took another field-test for the materials of grade I only. The following steps were followed:

1. Material developers read out the materials to the students and observed their reaction
2. Discus with teacher about the materials
3. Feedback analysis
4. Final edit of the material

Having considered the feedbacks, the EIC team has finalised the materials and waiting for publishing.

Conclusion

Education Watch 2001 pointed out that, "Children of ethnic minorities, whose mother tongue is not Bangla and who generally fall in the low socio-economic category...are at a distinct disadvantage with regard to access and participation in primary education".³ To ensure a comprehensive inclusion of indigenous children in primary education and give a break through in overall development of indigenous people, the EIC programme will require many pragmatic support from different stakeholders. PDR team is, as a close stakeholder, committed to give such a knowledge support through this documentation. PDR findings would be justified if it could make some contribution on sound and successful implementation of the programme.

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