

**ANNUAL REPORT  
NON-FORMAL PRIMARY EDUCATION  
(Under Rural Development Programme )  
December - 1987**

**February - 1988**



**Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee  
66 Mohakhali Commercial Area  
Dhaka - 1212**

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1. Introduction : Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC) is a registered non-governmental rural development organisation founded and managed by Bangladeshis. Started as a relief and rehabilitation effort in the aftermath of the Bangladesh War of Liberation, BRAC today is an established comprehensive multi-faceted development institution.

Rural Development Programme (RDP) is a major integrated programme of BRAC has been functioning with Integrated approach of development with a view to promoting the quality of life of the rural poor. In RDP, BRAC mobilises the disadvantaged men and women in to co-operative groups, who then plan, initiate and control collectives activities that lead to self reliance. These includes Health, Nutrition, Education, Poultry, Agriculture, Pisciculture etc.

Primary Education : Effective development is dependent on human development and human development in its turn, is dependent on education. In Bangladesh the existing primary education system fails to provide adequate education facilities to 54% of primary school going children and is mainly concerned with preparing children for secondary education. Of those that do enrol 50% drop out within a year or two before attaining numeracy and literacy through lack of motivations, lack of encouragement from (mostly illiterate) parents, irrelevance of the curriculum to their lives, the need for child labour, high cost of materials etc.

The out of school population is spread all over the country, and it is difficult to reach them through the formal education system, as most of them are involved in some kind of income generation or income saving activities. Moreover the system is very formal, rigid and inflexible. The average literacy rate in Bangladesh is 26% but only 15% for women. Traditionally women in Bangladesh are bound by the custom of "Pordah" to work in the home and are socialised from a very tender age into the role of wife and mother. Although boys and girls attend school roughly in equal numbers at an early age, it is girls who usually drop-out first as they are obliged to help their mothers with household chores and look after the younger siblings, parents attitude is that education for girls is an unimportant luxury.

## 2. Education of girls :

BRAC however is trying to emphasise the education of girls not only because they are disadvantaged in a society having a cultural

preference for boys, but also because health research has indicated a direct relationship between child mortality rates, nutrition status of children, adoption of family planning and female education. In other hands the more years schooling a women has had the likely she is to limit the size of her family and the better the health of the children. There are therefore demographic and health objectives as well as educational one perse embodied in BRAC's non-formal education project.

3. Taking this situation into account BRAC developed a non-formal primary education programme (NFPE) for disadvantaged children of rural poor, who have never been enrolled in formal primary schools or who have drop-out. This is a part time, need based life oriented, basic education programme with an innovative curriculum (Comprising literacy, numeracy, basic science, social studies, health and hygiene and are conducted by local trained teachers.

Initial objective of NFPE pilot project:

- To develop an innovative 3 years curriculum for the 8-10 age group
- To design test and evaluate materials to meet the identified needs and interests of rural children.
- To develop teachers training modules in order to develop para professional teachers in the community.
- To experiment with different modalities of community participation to encourage future support for the NFPE programme on a national scale.

4. Special features of NFPE:

NFPE schools can be distinguished from formal schools or other non-formal schools operating in Bangladesh for the following reasons:

- The comprehensive three year curriculum is community oriented.
- The functional NFPE course comprises basic literacy, numeracy, health, hygiene and social studies. The syllabus is carefully designed and graded.
- To keep the teaching learning situation within the teachers control, not more than 30 children are enrolled in each class.
- Emphasis is also given to activities such as drawing and crafts, physical education, dance and singing which make the course more interesting and varied.
- A teacher student relationship is fostered which is friendly and relaxed. Discipline is emphasised but not punishment.

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- The 2½ hours school day suits the life situation of the children who have little free time because of the work they do to help their parents at home or in the field.
- NFPE has developed an on-going evaluation system to assess children's performance through weekly tests. There are no formal examination.
- As most parents are illiterate, they cannot help their children with homework, NFPE has noted this fact and therefore, home assignment are specially designed for the children to handle independantly.