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Jomtien, EFA goals and lessons from Bangladesh

Dieser Aufsatz ist eine Zusammenfassung eines längeren Beitrages, in dem die Autoren die Ergebnisse einer von ihnen durchgeführten Studie über die Situation der Grundbildung in Bangladesh vorstellen. So tauchen in der Zusammenfassung hier die von den Autoren ermittelten Zahlen auf, ohne dass die Erläuterung der angewandten Methodik hätte Platz finden können. Im Blickpunkt der Analyse steht das Leistungsbild der in Bangladesh existierenden Schulformen.

Redaktion

Bangladesh ranks among the bottom 20 countries in the literacy-league table. Between 1980 and 1995, the literacy rate in the adults rose marginally from 32% to 38%; the rate for females remaining at only about half of males. Recent statistics provided by the government indicate that the literacy rate has now reached 56% in 1999, a figure which needs to be confirmed by independent sources. Over the past several years the country has seen increased commitment and actions of the government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and donors to the cause of primary education. According to government statistics, over 37,000 primary schools owned and managed by the government with an enrolment of 12 million students constitute the core of the national system of primary education. Approximately 23,000 similar primary schools with an enrolment of 4.5 mio. students, set-up with local private initiative, are managed with limited government subvention. The Ebtedayee madrassas, which are also estimated to be over 7,000, provide education with a religious focus to about 0.5 mio. children. Several NGOs have given special attention to primary education; the number of students served by them is estimated to be 1.4 mio. The last in the category of primary level institutions are the English medium schools, whose number remains unknown.

Low attendancy rates

It has been found that 33% of the enrolled students were from outside the primary age group and 27% were over-aged'. Of the students enrolled at primary level, the government-run schools has the highest number of them, with two-thirds of all students enrolled in such schools. A far-second in enrolment is the non-government registered (i.e. formal) schools with 12% of all students. The non-formal schools, which are run by NGOs in most cases, are the third with 8.5% of enrolment. The Madrassas, have 6% of students; of these Ebtedayee, which is equivalent to the primary level, has 1.3% share.

Others such as English-medium schools are much less significant. In our sample, 73% completed the cycle over a period of 6.6 years (instead of 5), and 27% dropped out. The girls did slightly better than boys – the proportion of girls who actually complete the full cycle in five years without repetition are 48.6% for government primary, 34.% for Madrassas and 87.9% for English medium schools. The highest rate of attendance was reported for non-formal schools (81%) closely followed by the English medium schools (79%). The lowest was 47.4% for Madrassas. If one assumes that 20% of absenteeism is random, then the proportion of children who are regular in

schools is approximately 82% (=62+20). When this is considered in association with the net enrolment rate of 73%, the effective enrolment turns out to be about 60%.

Among the children aged 11-12 years only 29.6% satisfied the minimum levels in all four areas of competency including reading, writing, numeracy and life skills/ knowledge. Boys did better than girls and the children of urban areas did much better than their rural peers. The level of basic education varied according to the type of school the children were attending at the time of survey. For obvious reason, the children currently enrolled in secondary schools showed the best performance. Students attending government and non-government primary schools performed very poorly. The Performance of students attending other schools NGO, Madrasa and English medium was also only moderate.

The government-run primary schools, which is the dominant type, has 4.4 teachers per school on an average, whereby the urban-rural-disparity is 7:4. The ratio is not very different for non-government schools. The NGO non-formal schools have generally only one teacher per school. The government primary schools have the highest teacher-pupil-ratio 1:73 followed by non-government schools 1:55. NGO-Schools and Ebtedayee madrassas have more favorable ratios. In English medium schools the ratio is 1:18.

Reducing the gender gap

The enrolment-situation is better than what was a few years ago. Both gross and net rates have increased over the past few years, but one third of all children enrolled in primary level institutions are from outside the official age-group i. e. 6-10. The issue of equity mainly affects several disadvantaged groups including girls, the poor, ethnic minorities, and street and working children. The country has made spectacular progress in reducing the gender gap in enrolment. This is unique in South Asia. This spectacular accomplishment can be traced to a number of 'positive discriminatory actions' that the State and NGOs have initiated. A most important contribution to this is the scholarships that the State provides to girls attending secondary schools; as of June 1999, the government provided 4.8 billion Taka (1US \$ = 50Taka) to 7.8 mio. girls. The schools also simultaneously received a small contribution from the State for every girl enrolled. Primary education in Bangladesh is free for all, secondary education only for girls². In addition, a favorable school environment has also been created by increasing the number of female teachers, both in public and NGO sectors.

