

# BANGLADESH

## NATIONAL REPORT ON EDUCATION 1996

### Part-1

#### Development of Primary & Mass Education

##### Introduction :

Bangladesh is one of the most densely populated area in the world with about 120 million people within an area of 147,570 thousand square kilometers. Its vast human force is one of the major resources. But the problem lies in transforming the vast potential people into a more productive labour force and ensuring a dynamic environment for social, economic and political development. This has become difficult due to prevalence of numerous odds like poverty, wide spread illiteracy (65 percent according to 1991 population census), low per capita income and rapid population growth. The Government recognizes human resources development through removal of illiteracy as a basic weapon to combat poverty and overall socio-economic backwardness.

The Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh has provided for establishing a uniform, mass oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children. It has also provided for relating education to the needs of society, producing trained and motivated citizens to serve the societal needs and removing illiteracy.

Primary Education has been made compulsory for children aged 6-10 years by an Act (1990). The compulsory primary education means - "Unless there is a valid ground, the guardian of each child living in an area where primary education has been made compulsory, shall, for the purpose of giving primary education, have his/her child admitted to the nearest primary education institution located in that area"

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Prepared by Primary and Mass Education Division, Government of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh

The duration of primary education is 5 years beginning at the age of 6 years. Primary education is tuition free and textbooks supplied to the students free of cost. There are 59,894 primary schools in the country of which 37,710 are government primary schools and 22,184 are non-government primary schools. Primary schools are run in two shifts. Classes for grades 1 and 2 are held for two hours between 10 A.M.-12 noon and classes for grades 3 to 5 are held for four hours between 12:15 to 4:15 P.M. The present teacher student ratio is 1:38 for grades 1 and 2 and 1:35 for grades 3-5. The medium of instruction at the different grades of primary level is Bangla (mother tongue). Academic year begins from 1st January and ends on 31.st December

In the international forum to remove illiteracy the Government expressed its commitment to the World Declaration on Education for All in Jomtien (1990), World Summit on Children in New York (1990) and EFA summit of Nine High Population Countries in Delhi (1993)~

As an expression of the firm determination of Bangladesh to make a serious effort to improve the literacy situation of the country, a National Plan of Action has been prepared under the guidance of a National Committee, setting the following targets:

- a) to raise gross enrolment ratio from 76% in 1991 to 95% by 2000.
- b) to raise completion rate from 40% in 1991 to 70~0 by 2000.
- c) to increase adult literacy rate from 35% in 1991 to 62% by 2000.

Since World Declaration for Education for All a number of steps have been initiated by the Government. To give due priority to "Education for All" a new Division with the status of Ministry has been established in August 1992 giving it full responsibility to deal with matters concerning primary and mass education. This Division is under the charge of the Hon'ble Prime Minister. Primary and Mass Education Division is responsible for policy formulation, planning, evaluation and execution of plans and initiating legislative measures relating to primary and mass education/ non-formal education.

At the central level the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE) headed by the Director-General executes the policy decisions and controls, co-ordinates and regulates the field administration of the primary education. The Director-General is assisted by 4 Directors, 10 Deputy Directors, 22 Assistant Directors and other supporting staff. Under DPE there are 5 Divisional offices headed by Deputy Directors, 64 district offices headed by District Primary Education Officers and 481 Thana Education Offices headed by Thana Education Officers. Thana Education Officers is assisted by a number of Assistant Thana Education Officers. The Directorate of Non-formal Education headed by the Director-General executes the non-formal education programmes. It controls and regulates the field level administration of the non-formal education. Director-General is assisted by 4 Directors, 11 Deputy Directors, 23 Assistant Directors, 64 District Co-ordinators and other supporting officers and staff.

The National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) is the apex institution of primary teacher education which conducts training and research in the field of primary education. NAPE also looks after the academic programmes of the Primary Training Institutes (PTIs) and conducts final examination for one-year Certificate-in Education (C-in-Ed) course. There are 53 Primary Training Institutes spread over the country. The annual intake capacity of the PTIs is around 10,000. The PTIs offer C-in-Ed course for the primary school teachers. The PTIs also conducts action research.

### **Development:**

**Access :** To meet the target of Education for All, various efforts have been mounted. Compulsory Primary Education (CPE) was introduced in the country in 1992 in a limited scale and was extended all over the country since 1993. Along with the introduction of CPE, a strong social mobilization process has been initiated to create awareness and elicit participation of all. Such activities include formation of village level committees, organizing 'mothers rally', 'students brigade' and use of mass and electronic media. As a result, people has become more conscious and aware of the need for education and the enrolment in the school is increasing and the completion rate is improving. The cohort student flow analysis indicated that in 1991 the completion rate at the primary level was about 40 percent. Now it is about 60 percent.

For serving the needs of increased number of students in primary schools, various programmes are being implemented for construction of new schools in unschooled areas, reconstruction and rehabilitation of existing government and non-government primary schools, construction of additional class rooms. Low cost community primary schools are

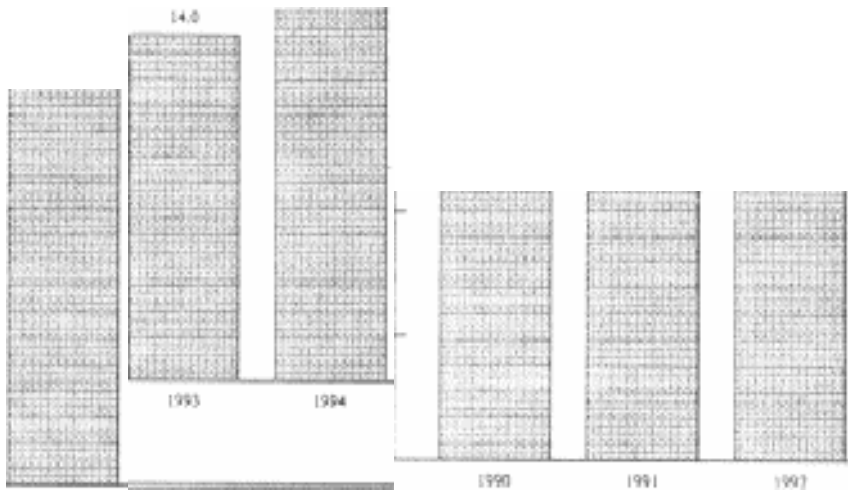
being constructed in the unschooled areas with community involvement. Since 1991, 1,458 new schools have been constructed, 1,786 new schools are in different stages of construction and 15,258 schools have been reconstructed and 10,483 schools repaired. Additional classrooms are being provided depending on the number of students. Latrines have been constructed and tubewells sucked in each of the constructed and reconstructed schools for providing better sanitation system with sound environment. Currently 15 projects have been under implementation for construction, reconstruction and renovation of primary schools. An unprecedented cyclone and tidal surge (1991) damaged many primary schools in the coastal areas and many people died. In the coastal areas the government primary schools are being constructed as school-cum-cyclone shelter, so that people of that locality can take shelter during natural calamities

With a view to encouraging full participation of younger children of grades 1 and 2, two hundred experimental satellite schools have been established at their doorsteps so that young children do not have to travel long distance to attend primary schools. Teachers are paid a monthly honorarium of Tk. 500. These schools run for 3 hours. These two-class satellite schools are staffed by local female teacher and are specially managed by local school management committees. These schools have nearly 100 percent attendance and drop-out is virtually non-existent. Based on the satisfactory enrolment, a programme has been undertaken for establishing 4,000 satellite schools with community support. It has been planned to establish more satellite schools depending on the local needs with community involvement.

A Food for Education Programme is one of the innovative programmes. The programme is aimed at increasing enrolment and attendance and reducing drop-out in primary schools particularly for the children of the very poor and distressed family. The programme was introduced in July 1993 in an economically and educationally disadvantaged 'union' in each of 460 thanas. In 1994, 1,000 unions of the country has been brought within the ambit of Food for Education Programme. Under this programme very poor parents of the primary school children are entitled to receive 15 kg. wheat/rice of equivalent price for sending one child and 20 kg. for sending two children in the school, if the child maintains 85% attendance every month. As a result, poor parents are now keen to send their children to schools instead of employing for income earning activities. This programme has a salutary impact on preventing child labour. An early assessment made by the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) revealed that enrolment has increased by 20.4%, attendance increased by 14.7% and the drop-out rate decreased by 7.6% over a one-year period in the project area. Under the programme, coverage is being given to one-fourth area of the country. Now about 2 million children of poor families are being benefited from the programme. In each institution forty percent of the children of poor families are being covered under this Programme area.

Another new intervention to make the school attractive to the pupils is introduction of school attractiveness programmes. These programmes of experimental nature are under implementation in 10 thanas of 5 districts of the country. It has shown increasing trend in enrolment.

All these efforts taken by the Government have produced positive impact in increasing enrolment. As a result primary education enrolment is steadily rising in Bangladesh from 12 million in 1990 to 16.8 million in 1995. The gross enrolment rate has increased from 76% in 1991 to 92% in 1995.



Private non-government primary level institutions for primary school aged children are also in existence providing education that vary in duration, curriculum and modality. education is also being given to the disabled children special type of schools.

**Quality:** Measures have been taken for qualitative improvement of the primary education. Primary school curriculum has been revised to make it need based and life oriented. Textbooks have been reviewed, revised, tested and introduced up to grade ~ by 1995. Revised textbooks of grade 5 will be introduced in 1996. The textbooks for grades 1 & 2 include Bangla (mother tongue), Mathematics and English whereas for grades 3-5 textbooks are included Bangla, Mathematics, English, Science, Social Study and Religious study (Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity). There is no prescribed textbooks for Environmental Studies in grades 1 and 2 and for Music, Art and Craft and Physical Education for grades 15. All these subjects are compulsory. Teachers guide are supplied to the teachers for teaching of these subjects.

The newly introduced curriculum is competency based. To facilitate teaching and learning and ensure mastery learning, 53 learning competencies have been identified for primary education and teaching materials such as teacher's guide and annual lesson plan have been developed on the basis of the new learning objectives. Besides, teaching aids and instruction materials have also been prepared. As the effective use of these materials depends on the competencies of the teachers and their understanding of these materials a nation-wide curriculum dissemination programme covering orientation of both government and non-government primary school teachers has been implemented with the purpose of providing adequate exposure to the teachers so that they are able to translate the curriculum objective into reality.

The present curriculum has abandoned the summative assessment in the form of annual examination in each grade. Instead of this, a system of continuous pupils' assessment has been introduced. The system requires the teachers to assess a student regularly for every competency acquired in a particular lesson through observation, oral/written assessment and to record the achievement at three scales namely grade A, B & C on monthly basis. For grades 1 & 2 all students get promoted to the next classes and for grades 3-5 promotions are given on the basis of students' achievement. No certificate is awarded after completion of 5-year primary schooling but a scholarship examination is held annually for 20% of students of grade 5 on the basis of which scholarship is awarded to successful students.

The total weekly teaching hour is 36 hours. Besides, 7.5 hours are spent for teacher's preparation of lesson plan, making contact with parents & community members and making annual survey of primary school-age population. The weekly teaching hours for Bangla & Mathematics is the same and is 3 hours each at each grade while excepting music, art & craft and physical education for which teaching hours is build to 0.5 hour each week, it is 2.5 hours for other subjects.

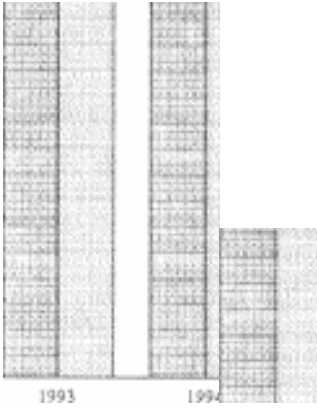
Cub-scouts and co-curricular activities have been promoted in primary schools for developing character of young children.

The number of teachers at the primary school is 164,948 at government schools. Each of the non-government primary school has a minimum of four teachers. Teachers of Government schools receive monthly salary as per national pay scale like other government employees. Teacher salary subventions are provided to non-government registered primary schools and selected Ebtedayee Madrasahs. Most of the government school teachers (nearly 90%) have certificate-in-education training while about 10% of non-government school teachers have this certificate. However, teachers of all government and non-government registered schools have been accommodated in the cluster/sub-cluster training programme. At present the government has the policy that 60 percent of new teachers recruited will be female for which the education qualification has also been relaxed. The entry qualification for a newly recruited teacher is Secondary School Certificate (SSC) for female and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) for male. The salary, status and opportunities for promotion of male and female teachers are the same. Teachers have a respectable position in the society and specially female teachers are widely revered in the family and society and this helps ensure greater enrolment and retention of girl students. The Assistant Teachers have opportunities of promotion to the post of Head Teachers on the basis of seniority and the Head Teachers have 20% quota for recruitment in the post of Assistant Thana Education Officers.

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**Gender issue:** At present average class size of the primary school is 50 students and the boys and girls ratio is 53:47 as against the ratio of 55:45 of boys and girls in 1990. Introduction of free education for girls up to grade 10 and provision of stipend for girls in the rural areas have accelerated enrolment and improved completion rate of girls both at primary and secondary level of education. As a matter of policy, 60~ of teaching posts at the primary level are being filled up by female candidates. Only 20~ of teachers were female in 1990. It has increased to 27% in 1995.

**Boys and Girls Enrolment Rate:**  
**1 990-95**



### **Non-Formal Education/Mass Education:**

To reach the target of adult literacy rate to 62 percent by the year 2000 two pronged actions are under implementation. One is universalization of primary education and the other is implementation of non-formal education for the out of school children, adolescents and adult illiterates. The Non-formal Education Programme provides for :

- a) Non-formal basic education for out-of-school children aged 8-10 years,
- b) Non-formal education for adolescent boys and girls aged 11-14 years,
- c) Non-formal education programme for adults aged 15-35 years, and
- d) Continuing education for neo-literates

In order to stop neo-literate to relapse into illiteracy, libraries have been put into operation to provide opportunities for life long continuing education. Center supervisors and teachers have been imparted training. Primers, teachers' guide, teachers' training manual, supervisors training manual have been printed.

All these programmes are being implemented by the NGOs (funded by the Government) as well as by government. Besides, outside the GOB resources the NGOs/voluntary organization are also organizing non-formal education courses to about half a million out-of-school and drop-out children and youth and adults.

In the context of commitment of Education for All, the government has taken it as a challenge to make 15 million literates to raise literacy rate to 62 percent by the year 2000. A Total Literacy Movement (TLM) was launched in 1994 in the District of Lalmonirhat with the active participation of people of all strata for the society. The District Administration provides the leadership of all out social mobilization in the district. On the basis of the experience gained in Lalmonirhat, TLM is being expanding where appropriate local initiatives have been taken.

In addition to this, an integrated non-formal education programme to cover 2 million out-of-school children, adolescents and adults is currently under implementation. New projects have been under preparation to meet the target set for 2000 in the EFA national Action Plan

**Budget :**

As a share of GDP, government expenditure on education averaged 1.2% during the First Five Year Plan (FYP), 1.3% during the Second, 1.8% during Third, and 2.2% during the Fourth FYP (1990-95). In the year 1994-95 the share of GDP rose to nearly 3 percent. Despite this steady pattern of growth in allocations, Bangladesh's public investment in education, as a share of GDP, is among the lowest in South Asia. Education expenditure as a share of total government expenditure averaged 9.4% during the First Five Year Plan (1973-78) to 13.6% during the Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95) ~ a level of allocation that compares favourably with that of most South Asian countries.

Government's recognition of the importance of primary and mass education is reflected in the share of development expenditure allocated to primary and mass education sub-sector which is 58% in FY 96 out of the education sector budget. Government has made a commitment to develop and improve quality of primary education. Subsequent increases in allocation to the sub-sector will ensure that gains already made are sustained, the quality of schooling improved and that basic and mass education can be provided nation-wide, thus meeting Government's EFA objectives.

The proportion of allocation to the primary and mass education sub-sector out of the combined revenue and development budgets allocated to education remained more or less constant around the average figure of 51 percent during the period 1990/91 to 1995/96.

Proportion of the Education Budget Allocated to the Primary and Mass Education Sub-sector are given below :

Budget	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95
Revenue	5,269	6,704	7,621	8,473	8,659
% of education revenue budget	44.57	48.52	45.51	46.95	43.13
% annual increase	9.29	27.23	13.67	11.17	2.19
Development	1,908	3,615	4,028	6,485	8,928
% of education development budget	61.06	69.38	67.90	67.90	58.81
% annual increase	1.47	89.46	11.42	60.99	37.67
Total	7,177	10,319	11,649	14,958	17,587
% annual increase of total education budget	6.22	43.77	12.89	28.40	17.57
	48.01	54.24	51.38	54.20	49.88

### **International Assistance:**

External resources (loan and grants) supported about 16 per cent of the total education expenditure during the 1990-1995 period. Over 75 per cent of these resources was spent on primary and non-formal education, reflecting both government's and its development partners' priorities in the sub-sector. Donors included IDA, ADB, IDB, EU, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, DGIS, SIDA, NORAD, FRG, CIDA, Saudi Arabia, Japan and OPEC. UNESCO is also providing support in the form of technical expertise.

## **Social Mobilization:**

Mass communication and publicity media like radio and television are being used to create awareness of the people regarding primary and mass education programmes. The programmes for creating mass awareness are continuing through posters, short films, dramas and musical sessions organized through Department of Mass Communication. Primary education Fortnight and International Literacy day are observed every year in the months of January and September respectively when numerous awareness activities receive social emphasis

## **Constraints and Future Programmes**

The main objectives in the field of primary education are to enrol all primary school age population in the primary level institutions and retain them for five years. For these, various measures have been undertaken. Despite successes achieved, problems and obstacles still persist. Classes in the schools are over crowded. Inadequate accommodation is putting serious strain on school contact time. The schools run in two shifts, in the morning classes are held for grades I and II for two hours and in the afternoon classes are held for grades III, IV and V for four hours. As a result the contact time in school is for less than the desired time. Moreover, the children's opportunity to learn outside the classroom is very limited in view of the fact that most of them come from a background where parents are illiterate and unable to contribute to the instructional needs of the children at home.

Poor management and administration, lack of adequate supervision, want of accountability and inadequate contact time have been amongst the impediments to create proper learning environment as well as to ensure quality primary education. Another major impediment is the illiteracy and poverty of the parents, It is not possible for many parents to fund private cost of primary education. There is also a lack of sufficient teaching learning materials in primary schools.

## **Primary Education :**

Most important problems in the way to enrol all primary school age population in the primary school and to retain them for five years are listed below :

- want of school within accessible distances.
- shortage of classrooms and overcrowding.
- lack of proper teaching aids and learning aids.
- shortage of furniture and other supplies.
- lack of equipment and supplies for the students.
- lack of motivation and professional skill of teachers.
- weak community involvement and lack of awareness and interest of Parents.
- unattractive teaching/learning environment. shortage of teachers.

Following programmes have been identified to meet the objectives set forth for primary education.

a) Additional classrooms will be provided depending on the increased enrolment. The ultimate aim is to have minimum five class rooms in each school. Additional classrooms will be provided with necessary furniture. Programme for reconstruction/renovation of government primary schools/ registered non-government primary school will continue.

- b) Additional teachers will be recruited for additional classes
- c) For getting reliable and dependable data on various activities on primary education an effective system of information base will be established.
- d) Teacher training programme and teaching learning materials will be improved. Training of teachers will be conducted and reviewed. Thana Resource Centres will be established to conduct in-service/refresher training of teacher.
- e) National Academy for Primary Education will be strengthened with greater functional autonomy as a centre of excellence.
- f) One primary school in each thana will be developed as a model school for demonstrating innovative teaching and learning practices and for facilitating refresher training for teacher in localised school sub-cluster.
- g) Efforts to develop participatory and interactive ways of teaching and learning will be continued in order to enhance the quality of learning by all children in the primary school classroom.
- h) Primary and Mass Education Division will be strengthened and Directorate of Primary Education will be reorganized to facilitate the quality improvement in the management of the primary education system.

### **Non-formal Education**

To achieve the targeted literacy rate to 62 by 2000 the following Programmes have been identified

- a) Literacy centres will be established in each village utilizing courtyard, outer house, premises of educational institutions, etc. for running literacy centres.
- b) Programme of Total Literacy Movement will continue with greater participation of local people.
- c) Primers for illiterates and continuing education materials will be developed. printed and distributed on a continuous basis.
- d) Training programme for the teachers, supervisors other personnel will continue.
- e) Management Information System Unit of the Directorate of Non formal Education will be strengthened. Professional manpower of the central organization will be trained.
- f) Social mobilization programme will be strengthened for organizing intensive non-formal and adult literacy programmes and for organizing communities to become more involved in the planning and implementation of EFA programme.

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## **Part 2**

### **Secondary & Higher education sub-sector**

#### **Socio-Economic indicators.**

The Socio-economic indicators reflect the national effort at improving the socio-economic condition of the Country. The population stands at 122.21 million with a growth rate of 2.2%; a GDP per capita income of US \$ 220 (1991); a public investment in education of 2%; a literacy rate of 35%; and gross enrolment ratios of 77%; 19% and 3.4%

for the first, second, and third levels respectively. Only 4% of pupils entering grade 1 Complete the 12 years of general education. The drop out rate at primary level is about 57% . These factors need improvement to enable the Country to achieve economic growth.

### Educational Policies and Reforms.

Since Bangladesh is yet to have an education policy document? there has been no official statement of the goals and objectives of secondary education in the country. The Bangladesh National Education Commission, however, in its report (February, 1988) laid down the following as aims and objectives of secondary education:

- a. to extend and consolidate **basic education** received by pupils at the primary level.;
- b. to provide pupils with basic knowledge of different subjects (language, mathematics, science, religion, history, geography, economics, civics, home economics, environment, art and crafts, etc. );
- c. to make pupils aware of moral and spiritual values;
- d. to prepare pupils as part of dutiful and skilled manpower needed for economic development of the country;
- e. to develop pupils as good citizens so that they become aware of their responsibilities' duties, and rights;
- f. to develop among pupils knowledge based democratic beliefs and a sense of moral values;
- g. to help develop fully the potential abilities and possibilities of pupils;
- h. to prepare meritorious pupils for higher studies in accordance with their merit and aptitude;
- I. to help pupils develop confidence in their own thoughts and reasoning and become respectful to others' opinions;
- j. to give pupils an education which would enable them to live better lives in their families. communities, and the whole world;
- k. to prepare pupils for suitable vocations by increasing their ability for work; and
- l. to improve the learners' physical and mental health.

In the recent days the strategy and mode of planning mechanism is underway of reformation.

Bangladesh is trying to switch over from short term Plan to medium or long- term Perspective Plan. In this context draft Perspective Plan for 1995-2010 is being prepared and the objectives of the perspective Plan for Secondary & Higher Education sub-sector have been identified. The objectives within the sub-sector includes:

- the attainment of universal secondary education with particular emphasis on work-oriented education;
- accelerated expansion of female education at all levels;

- emphasize vocational education at the secondary level in order that secondary graduates are employable self employed at home and abroad;
- make technical and vocational education more job oriented **through establishing** linkages with the market;
- reduce the rural-urban gap in educational facilities;
- expand facilities at secondary and higher secondary levels to accommodate additional enrolment; and
- encourage and have a pronounced bias in favour of private initiatives in establishing higher educational institutions.

The means towards the attainment of the above objectives include:

- consolidation and optimum utilisation of existing physical infrastructure;
- introduction of double shifts in all educational institutions:
- reduction of gender gap through extensive stipend and scholarship programmes for girl students;
- improve the standard and quality of education in addition to revising the curricula to suit the technological base of modern times;
- continue emphasis on science education at secondary and higher secondary stages; enhancement of proportion of enrolment in agriculture, engineering, science and medicine;
- introduction of computer science and engineering in all technical institutes and agriculture as a subject in all secondary and prevocational levels;
- upgrading the technical institutes to university status and establishment of new institutes at the old district headquarters level;
- accelerate the production of skilled workers through formal and non-formal vocational training;
- establishing a university college at all district headquarters;
- encouraging private sector to participate in the provision of college and university level education and the involvement of the community in the maintenance and establishment of secondary schools; and
- introducing teachers training and periodic re-orientation for university teachers; provision of incentive compensation to quality teachers.

In addition to the above' the plan would also include the expansion of Cadet Colleges and Cantonment Public Schools and the training of Imams through the Imam training facilities in the districts as well as the translation and publication of Islamic literature and the proliferation of Islamic cultural centres at the thana level.

Physical implementation of the public sector objective of increasing support to education has worked remarkably well in collaboration with NGO's. This approach would be continued and further strengthened. The joint operation would also aim at evolving an effective management system for schools particularly by involving local level institutions in school management. Specific attention also needs to be provided to the problems faced in the urban slums. Schooling for poor children in the urban slums would also be supported with NGO collaboration.

### **Structure and organisation of the Education system.**

The educational pyramid of Bangladesh consists mainly of the following levels: (a) pre-primary, (b) primary, (c) secondary, (d) higher secondary or intermediate, (e) first degree? and (f) master's degree.

Following one or two years of pre-primary education (available mostly in the cities and some of the district headquarters), the primary level extends over a five-year period (grades 1-5) and caters for children of the age-group 6-11. One of the major objectives of the Third Five-Year Plan (1985-90) was to enrol 70 percent of the primary age-group children by 1990 and ensure their retention for completion of the primary cycle in order that universal primary education (UPE) could be achieved by the end of the century. In 1940, the numbers of pre-primary and primary schools were reported to be 1,515 and 15,917 respectively.

The secondary level consists of grades 6-10 (generally divided into two sub-levels viz. "junior secondary" consisting of grades 6-8 and "secondary" consisting of grades 9 and 10). At the end of grade 8 there is a Junior Scholarship Examination taken by about 10 percent of the children of grade 8, and at the end of grade 10 is the first public examination known as the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination which must be passed by all candidates seeking to move to the two-year higher secondary; level grades 11-12. At the end of grade 12 there is a further public examination leading to the Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC), which is a requirement for admission to first degree courses and appointment to secretarial positions in government services. While the bachelor's degree extends over two years in the case of pass graduates and one year for honours graduates. A diagram explaining in outline the present educational structure of Bangladesh is given in Figure 1.

Figure 1

### **Administration of the Education System.**

The principal management institutions in the education sector are: (a) the primary and Mass Education Division under the Prime Minister, (b) the Ministry of Education, (c) the Directorate of primary Education, (d) the Directorate of Secondary and higher Education, (e) the Directorate of Technical Education, (f) the Directorate of Inspection and Audit, (g) the National Curriculum and Textbook Board, (h) the Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education, (i) the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board, (j) the Technical Education Board, (k) the National Academy for Education Management, (l) the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics, (m) the Facilities Department, and (n) the University Grants Commission. One major institution viz. the Bangladesh Educational Equipment Board, which was developed with financial assistance from the Asian Development Bank has recently been liquidated.

The Ministry of Education (MOE) has overall responsibility for planning, guiding, and controlling the development of education. There is a growing feeling among educators that as the principal policy-making body in education, MOE should focus its efforts on developing policies and programmes rather than routine matters. While Secondary and higher education continue under MOE, Primary and mass education have recently been placed as a new division under the Prime Minister.

### **Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education**

The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) is the Principal agency for implementing government policies in secondary education. It has under its control 10,715 secondary schools (including 2,000 junior high schools), 870 colleges (intermediate: 323, degree: 547 and 5,959 madrasahs (DakhiL Alim, Fazil, and Kamil) In addition, there are 15,986 Ebtedayee or primary-level madrasahs under its administrative jurisdiction.

In the recent years, there has been a noticeable increase in the number of educational institutions. In 1988, there was an addition of 870 new institutions (secondary schools: 182; colleges: 52 madrasahs: 636). increase in the number of institutions not only creates pressure on the public exchequer but also brings in its wake administrative and management problems and increased workload. added to this are problems resulting from the nationalization of a number of secondary schools and colleges in the recent Years.

DSHE has a total administrative and supervisory staff of 212 ( 36 at the national Headquarters, 48 at the zone level, and 128 at district level). one of its most difficult task:, is the central administration of payment of salary subventions to nearly 250~00Q teachers and employees of non-government secondary schools, colleges, and madrasahs.

Traditionally the management role in education has been performed exclusively by the public sector. However, since 97% of the secondary schools are privately managed non-government institutions? their involvement in planning, execution, and management has to be secured to ensure their participation in the development efforts.

### Planning

Planning for education has particular significance for countries with resource constraints. The available resources should be so utilized as to produce maximum returns and benefit the maximum possible numbers. Resources have to be directed to desirable directions and diverted from areas where they have proved to be of doubtful use. Education plans need to be consistent with the goals and objectives of national socio-economic policies.

Educational planning in Bangladesh appears to have been viewed as an exercise in allocating development resources to individual projects.. The planning and monitoring units or the MOE and DSHE are small and have not received adequate support. Planning from top has been the usual pattern, and as yet local-level planning is non-existent. Need assessment being the first step, the planning process should begin from appropriate lower levels, and local -level programming should be integrated with planning at the national level.

One constraint in improving the planning capability at different levels is the lack of opportunities for training in planning and monitoring. It should be possible to find an answer to it by providing for suitable courses within the` ; country.

It has been noted that very often the planned allocations cannot be fully utilized or absorbed, one main reason being non-release of the allocated resources in time. The issue has to be addressed by introducing appropriate reforms in development financing and bringing about changes in financial rules.

It is generally concluded that planning in education is a particularly weak area. The database at all levels is weak; and does not permit forward planning and a realistic assessment of the needs and priorities. In most cases, the development projects do not have the support of necessary studies or the benefit of a prior mapping exercise

### Financing of Education.

Education's share as percent of total government in Bangladesh increased from 8.2% in 1980 to 10.6% in 1989 Clearly, there is a case for increasing Bangladesh's public

expenditure on education as a means of development its human capital. The distribution of resources among the sub-sectors of education however, has great significance.

Generally teachers' salaries and allowances constitute a major part of the total public expenditure on education. A recent analysis of UNESCO data on public expenditure on education in 90 countries shows the overall share of teachers' emoluments in total public current expenditure on education to be around two-thirds. In Bangladesh, classified expenditure data on education are hardly available. The available data, however, suggest three conclusions. First per-student public expenditure on government institutions (secondary schools, colleges and madrasahs) is significantly higher than on non-government institutions. Second, per-pupil recurrent expenditures of urban secondary schools greatly exceed per-pupil expenditures of rural secondary schools. Third average annual per-pupil private cost of education at the secondary level comes to around Tk. 3,000. Tables 1,2 and 3 support these conclusions.

TABLE- 1

**PER-STUDENT ANNUAL PUBLIC RECURRENT EXPENDITURE ON  
PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS, COLLEGES AND MADRASAHs.**

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In calculating expenditures of non-government institutions, contributions alone have been taken into account .

A UNDP-GOB survey in 5 Thanas (1992) shows actual per-pupil expenditure of non-government secondary schools ( including junior high schools) from all sources (both government and non-government ) to be Tk; 1,072.80.

TABLE -2

**DISPARITIES BETWEEN URBAN AND RURAL .SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

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TABLE - 3

**COMPOSITION OF AVERAGE ANNUAL PER-PUPIL PRIVATE COST OF  
EDUCATION AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL (GRADES 6-10)**

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.Although the non-government secondary schools are managed by their respective managing committees, the major source of their expenditure is the government salary subvention for teachers and non-teaching employees (49.2%) . The next important sources are tuition fees (24.3%) and other student charges (18.5%). Tuition fees for girls of grades, 6-8 in the rural areas have been abolished since January 1990. Consequently a subsidy: for tuition fee exemption for girls is paid by the Government to the concerned non-government secondary schools.

Table - 4 gives total public expenditures on education since 1973-74 and Table - 5 gives direct educational expenditure by purposes.

TABLE - 4

PUBLIC EXPENDITURE ON EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH  
FROM 1973-74 TO 1992-93

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TABLE - 5

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It is revealed from Table - 4 that total public expenditure on education tends to become more than two-fold every five years. sustaining this trend will perhaps be a difficult task. However, to achieve UPE by the Year 2000 increase the literacy,` rate to 50 percent, and enhance the quality, of education at all levels, additional resources must be created. Based on the present socio-economic scenario. rough estimates of public expenditures on education, as shown in Table - 6, will be of the order of Tk. 34523.00 million by the Year 2000-01 and Tk. S9542.00 million by the Year 2010-11.

TABLE - 6  
PROJECTED TOTAL EDUCATIONAL EXPENDITURE OF BANGLADESH

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In the recent years, a number of issues in the area of financing of education have been raised . One of these is the nationalization of non-government secondary, schools and colleges. Nonalization benefits two groups viz the teachers and employees and the students. The teachers and employees are benefited by having a higher salary' and retirement benefits that are not available to teachers and employees of non-government institutions.) The students' benefit comes in the form of lower tuition fees payable in government institution. While successive governments have nationalized a number of institutions, there has been no dialogue or debate on the issue and the Parliament also did not have the **opportunity to** discuss it. The planning commission, however, has boldly raised the issue .. Even if the nationalization policy is not abandoned, it can be linked with quality enhancement measures. An alternative to the nationalization policy would be to develop selected existing schools, government or non-government, as pace-dieting institutions, which would develop and disseminate sound educational practices and innovations and serve as resource centers for other schools in the Thana.

Another important issue in the financing of education is the recovery of costs. Tuition fees in the Universities have remained at 1960 level. In the government schools and colleges also, tuition fees are substantially lower than those in the non-government institutions. Mobilizing additional resources for education. however, is unavoidable. In this process, the possibility of enhancing user fees and allowing the setting up of institutions of higher leaning in the private sector can be considered.

### **The Educational Process**

#### **Curriculum**

The current secondary curricula and guidelines for preparing textbooks were formulated in 1977 by the National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee ( NCSC) 'The corresponding textbooks for grades 6-8 were produced during 1980-82 and those for grades 9-10 in 1983. Science is Compulsory at Junior Secondary level, i.e. grades 6-8 and integrated science curriculum is being followed . At the Secondary level, i.e. in grades 9 and 10 science education is optional and a general science curriculum is being followed.

Curriculum] specialists, teacher educators, and planners have strongly advocated making both general science and social science required subjects in grades 9 and 10. Practical work in general science has been identified as a weak area. In the process of curriculum development and textbook writing, secondary school teachers are rarely involved, and this may be one of the causes of lack of interest in using the teaching guides.

The national Curriculum and syllabus Committee ( 1977) recommended that work-oriented education as a practical subject should be compulsorily taught in grades 6-10. A field survey ( undertaken by a UNDP/GOB study) of 170 secondary schools in five thanas (small administrative units, one step lower than district) revealed that 39 per cent of the schools provide some form of work-oriented education at the Junior Secondary level ~ grades 6-10. While 12 per cent of the schools reported availability of work experience in grades 9-10, 90 per cent of the head teachers would be in favour of including productive work in h- 10.

Generally, curriculum reforms have been without a research base. Although an autonomous body, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board's (NCTB) functions ( including the appointment of professionals) have been greatly controlled by the Ministry of Education. The textbook, being the principal instrument of curriculum implementation, is supposed to reflect instructional objectives as embodied in the Curriculum. The need for designing content in keeping with the curriculum objectives is generally recognized and appreciated.

### Examination

Secondary education in Bangladesh has been largely examination oriented. Life chances depend on educational qualifications because employers in the labour market use educational qualifications in the recruitment and selection of personnel. Students and teachers follow strategies of learning and teaching which maximize their chances of gaining the qualifications which will secure them a job, i.e. students and teachers have become examination oriented. Moreover, regarding the students belonging to the science group ( those who choose general science as an elective subject), after passing the SSC Examination. the majority of them enrol subsequently for higher secondary classes in the science group ( either pre-medical or pre-engineering) At the end of grade 12, there is a further public examination leading to the higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) which is a requirement for admission to first-degree courses. There is heavy competition to enter into first-degree courses, especially for certain prospective subjects, including medicine and engineering. As a criteria of the selection of candidates, the total marks obtained by the candidates in both the public examinations carries added weight in the public examinations. Parents send their children to the science teachers for private lessons and spend a lot of money for this purpose. This trend is seriously affecting classroom science teaching because it seems that teachers do not discuss lessons deliberately, so that students come to them for private lessons.

One of the causes of examination orientation is the role of science teachers in pursuing private tuition as a means of supplementary income. In this context it may be recalled that in Bangladesh, the education sector is no longer able to attract qualified personnel in science teaching due to lack of incentives, limited facilities available for teachers in general, and science teachers in particular. The quality of service deteriorates because of the demotivation of the teachers; absenteeism rises; perhaps also a growing number of public sector employees, sometimes outside the public sector, for survival"

One major weakness of the present examinations is that they do not attempt to measure the wide range of learning outcomes adequately. The syllabuses of the public examinations prepared by NCTB and made available to the secondary schools through the BISEs, shows the topics included and the distribution of marks? there being no reference to course objectives or expected learning outcomes. The examinations mostly test knowledge or ability to recall facts and information, and hardly any attention is given to the higher abilities of reasoning, understanding, application, analysis and synthesis. ~ most cases, the affective and psychomotor domains are not addressed at all.

Traditionally both public examinations and internal assessments used essay tests exclusively. Scores on essay tests, however, vary greatly from examiner to examiner and from subject to, and generally such tests have low validity and reliability. Consequently, efforts have been made to introduce objective test items gradually. The 1992 examination assigned ~t) per cent of the total marks of each paper to essay examination and the remaining 50 per cent to multiple-choice test items. While in the case of 1991 SSC examinations, the proportions of examiner placed in the First and Third divisions' were 13.69 per cent and reversed ( 45.52) per cent in the First division and 13.35 per cent in the Third division). The reversal has been ascribed to the introduction of objective test items in all subjects except mathematics. Whether to continue widely or change the present proportions of essay and objective tests h~ now being widely discussed. The wisdom of including in each of the 1999 SSC papers 'O objective e items from among the 500 already supplied to schools has been seriously questioned. It has been argued that the introduction of objective tests will result in a larger percentage of: passes with a concomitant larger number of students coming into the higher secondary and fuss-degree levels, and it has also been equally argued that the style of introduction of objective tests will further deteriorate the quality of secondary science education. Students of grades 9 and 10 may become less interested in classroom lessons both in theoretical and practical sessions (though practical classes are not being conducted at all in some schools).

## HIGHER EDUCATION

The role of higher education (as opposed to that of primary and secondary education in a developing society is often not clearly understood. To what extent access to higher education should be opened, how to improve the quality of higher education ``without affecting the quality at other levels, and what should be the respective involvement of the public and private sectors in higher education have produced divergent answers. Current thinking on these issues appears to be far from conclusive.

Higher education enrolment per 100,000 inhabitants ranges from 5,591 in the United States and 5,102 in Canada to 21 Tanzania and 16 in Mozambique (1990). In Bangladesh, third level enrolment per 100,000 inhabitants increased from 272 in 1980 to 382 in 1990. The gross enrolment ratio at this level during 1980-90 rose from 3.2% to 3.4%. 0, the 19°O ratios for males and females being. 5.4% respectively.

The major higher education institutions in Bangladesh include: (a) 547 degree-level liberal arts colleges affiliated to a recently established affiliating university (The Bangladesh National university) 9 publicly supported universities including a University of Engineering and Technology and an Agricultural University, (c) 6 private Universities established under the Non-government Universities Act (Act 34 of 1992), (d) autonomous institutes of technology, previously called engineering colleges. (e) 3 agricultural colleges, (f) 10 medical colleges, (g) 1 dental college, (h) 1 college of text-tie technology (i) 1 college of leather technology, (j) 11 teachers' training colleges (including one in the private sector), and (k) 2 colleges of physical education. There is, in addition an Open University

established under Act 38 of 1992. While each of the universities conducts its own examinations, the Bangladesh National University is responsible for conducting bachelor's and master's examinations of the affiliated degree colleges throughout the country. Table 19 gives basic statistics of the higher education sub-sector in Bangladesh.

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Division means gradation of examination results. Pass marks in each subject: 33 per cent . Minimum marks for First Division: 60 per cent. Second Division: 45 per cent . Third Division: 33 per cent.

### **Major Concerns.**

Many of the ills in the sphere of higher education are due to the fact that a conscious higher education policy and a plan of action for its implementation have not been attempted as yet. This has resulted in frustration among the graduates and less than optimum utilization of the available resources. In the present context, a high priority should be given to formulating a higher education policy, identifying, inter Alia, the objectives **and roles** of higher education at different levels. A pertinent question to be answered is **Should the doors of** higher education be open to anyone who wants to go through them ?

5. A number of key issues in the area of higher education have of late received public attention. These are often interlinked with the prevailing social political, and economic situation. The following have been known to be some of the major concerns facing higher education.

a. inadequate duration of the bachelor's and master's degree courses of general education.

b. session jam in degrees in some of the institutions resulting in the student taking a longer than normal period to complete the courses ( at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, the students remain idle for about 15 months after their admission for classes to commence);

c. inadequate number of places in the institutions of science and technology, engineering, agriculture, and medicine;

d. widespread student unrest resulting from, the politicization of education . and at times, from understating of the institutions ( see editorial of the Bangladesh Observer dated 9 march 1994 entitled "One of the Causes of Student Unrest" ~

e, large-scale unemployment among the graduates, particularly among those majoring in the liberal arts;

f: low quality of education in general and lack of research in the institutions of higher learning.

g, low efficiency reflected in large failures at the first degree ( pass ) level (see Table 16)

h. absence of uniformity among the higher education institutions at the operational level (notably in matters relating to admissions, examinations, Teacher-student ratios, etc.)

The place of English in the universities is a matter of great concern. Today, the English language compasses the globe and English is the medium of 80 percent of information stored in computers around the world. A Recent study suggests that although English is the native tongue of barely a dozen countries, it is used as an official language in over 60 countries. more that any other international language, Some 70 percent of the students of the general universities of Bangladesh, however, answer their examination papers in Bangla, and the teachers also mostly use Bangla as medium of instruction, although appropriate textbooks and reference materials in many subjects are hardly available in it. Furthermore. because of weak command of the English language, many students fail to make use use reference materials in English and in some cases fail to pursue advanced courses at institutions of higher leaning abroad. The Bangladesh National Education Commission ( 1988) recommended that students who would go for higher studies is science should have one paper of English at the bachelor's level (pass and honors). Currently steps are being taken to make English a required subject at the first degree level. Furthermore, to improve the standard of English, particularly spoken English native speakers of the language may be appointed for a certain term on the staff of university departments of English and teachers' training colleges. Simultaneously selected Bangladeshi teachers of English may be sent abroad for higher studies in the subject.

One of the reasons for a craze for higher degrees is the belief that they can ensure white collar jobs. Very often university graduates in large numbers have been competing for clerical positions for which a degree is not required at all. The pressure on the universities can pet traps he r educed by delinking degrees from jobs. An effort can be made to identify jobs or positions for which specific skills rather that higher degrees ~e required. Also. \* would be necessary to establish `without delay a link between higher education and manpower? planning so that the graduates may be given appropriate guidance on employment opportunities.

Unemployment among the educated is a major problem facing Bangladesh. Various reports reveal that the employment prospects of the educated have worsened over Asian Countries which achieved rapid economic growth made investment of about 25% of total budgetary resources in education.

### MADRASAH EDUCATION (Special Education)

Madrasah education. as a parallel system, has drawn considerable attention in the recent years. The number of madras has increased as a result of increased as, a result o in creasing government salary subvention to non-government institutions. The Ministry of education issued circulars equating the Ibtedayee, Daldul, and Alim levels with the primary, secondary, and higher secondary Levels respectively. It is possible for a student passing the Dakhil Examination of the Bangladesh Madrasah Education Board to be admitted to the HSC course in a college. Similarly, a student passing the Alim Examination with science subjects can. subject to performance at an admission test be admitted to an agricultural college, a medical college, or an institute of technology.

The origin of the madrasah system can be traced back; to 1780 when the Calcutta Madrasah the first government college in the Indian sub-continent was set up. The original purpose of establishing the Madrasah was to produce officials well versed in Islamic laws. Over the years the number of madrasahs went on increasing as religious institutions, although the original purpose of' establishing them was already lost.

In 1974, there were a total of 1,11X postprimary-level madrasahs ( Dakhil: 651, 'Alim: 355; Fazil: 483; kamil: 29). The number increased to 2.466 n1 198V and 5.959 in 1991.

Only 3 madrasahs one in Dhaka, one in Sylhet and one in Bogra--are managed by the Government. Furthermore there are 15 986 Ibtedayee or primary-level madrasahs (1991) as against 4,685 in 1984. The total enrolment of the madrasahs of all categories is reported to be 2,758,624 ( including 1.730 491 in the Ibtedayee or primary level madrasahs). Girls passing the Dakbil and Alim Examinations of 1993 account for 12.60% and 5.94% of their respective totals.

### **Teacher education**

In 1991 the number of secondary schools in Bangladesh was 10 715 including 2 000 junior high schools and 8715 high schools. The total number of secondary teachers was 129 616 ( male: 116 905 or 90.19 per cent; female: 12 711 or 9.81 per cent ). In the absence of a nation-wide survey of secondary schools dependable detailed statistics of professionally trained teachers of various categories are not available . A recent UNDP/GOB survey of 170 secondary schools in five thanas (July-August 1992) found that around 50 per cent of the teachers are professionally trained graduates; another 25 per cent are untrained graduates; and the remaining 25 per cent are non-graduates and the remaining 25 per cent are non-graduates ( B.Sc) are also recruited as science teachers in the secondary schools. Arrangements for on-the-job training ( mainly B.Ed.) are usually made afterwards by the school authority , but the scope is also very limited due to lack of space in the Teacher Training College.

There are at present 11 Teacher Training Colleges ( government 20; non-government 1) and nine Secondary Education and Science Development Centres ( SESDCs) under the Directorate of Secondary and higher Education. one Institute of Education and Research (ER) in the University of Dhaka one Institute of Distance Education (BIDF) in the Bangladesh Open University. There is an acute shortage of teacher educators in the teacher training institutions. As of July- August 1992 out of a sanctioned teaching staff of 305 in TTC . 164( or 53. 7 per cent ) posts were vacant. The total number of teacher educators in the country was 235 ( 141 in TTCs. 54 in the SESDCs and 40 in the ER of the University of Dhaka).

There is realization that there is a need for new directions in teacher education and a new pedagogy aimed at enhancing the quality of education . The present B.Ed. diploma in the Education Programme has become obsolete and is considered inadequate for meeting content deficiency of the students in science subjects and providing them with adequate experience in educational theory and practice. The content component of the programme is particularly weak. The particular subject areas of weakness in the TTCs are science and mathematics. As of August 1992. five TTCs were without a teacher of Mathematics. In some TTCs, the science teachers do not have a degree in a basic science subject ( physics or chemistry). The proportion of science graduates among the B.Ed. students is also relatively low accounting for approximately 3.1 per cent.

The need for recruiting to the teaching profession at all levels men and women of the highest abilities has been well recognised. It is also believed that the training of teachers should be considered a matter of emoluments, the teachers of government and non-government institutions have been treated differently. This has resulted in occasional teacher strikes on the part of the non-government institutions. The issue of salary, salary subventions, and service conditions of teachers needs and in-depth examination is its entirety by a high level committee. However, instead of a uniform pay scale for all teachers without regard to their qualifications, a policy of higher salary for higher qualifications can be thought of Secondary teachers already in service can be encouraged to obtain higher degree in education ( MA/Med.) by allowing such teachers the pay scales admissible to

colleges lecturers . Higher secondary and degree-level teachers having a professional diploma in education can be provided with advance increments in pay . To generate a sense of security among the teachers of non-government institutions, provisions need to be made for provident fund and retirement benefits. A trust fund for teachers of non-government will contribute can be created. ( Such a fund, which was promised earlier, is yet to be taken too operationalized a system of teacher registration / certification for all secondary-level teachers.

A good academic background and subject relevance are two important factors in improving classroom teaching in secondary schools. It would, therefore, be desirable to recruit initially well qualified persons although they may not have a degree or diploma in education. Such teachers may be deputed to a TTC after one year's teaching experience . The responsibility for recruitment of teachers of non-government secondary and higher secondary schools and madrasahs may be given to: ( a ) an Education Improvement Trust that may be created as an autonomous body or ( b ) an Education Service Commission. or (c) District Selection Committees to be constituted by the proposed District Education Boards,. The implications of the different alternative need to be closely examined by the Government . \While an autonomous Education Improvement Trust or an Education Service Commission will result in shifting the decision-making point by a great distance and may create a feeling among the managing committees/ governing bodies that their powers have been curtailed. a properly constituted District Selection Committee will remain half way between the two extremes. The main purpose of an Education Improvement Trust or an Education Service Commission or a District Selection Committee, however, is to eliminate academically weak candidates in the first instance so that subsequent training becomes meaningful and leads to quality enhancement.