

Some selected publications of D.Net

Economic Policy Paper on Benchmarking Regional SME Policies: Identification of Policy Intervention Areas for Bangladesh by Ananya Raihan and Ruba Rumana.

Pallitathya : An Information and Knowledge System for the Poor and Marginalised (Abridged); Edited by Ananya Raihan.

Access to Information for Improvement of Rural Livelihood, Experience from Nilphamari by Md. Forhad Uddin & Mahmud Hasan.

Pallitathya Help Line: A Precursor to People's Call Centre by Ananya Raihan, Mridul Chowdhury, Mahmud Hasan, Forhad Uddin.

JEEON (version-2): Eight CDs on contents namely, agriculture, non-farm economic activities, law, education, health, appropriate technology, disaster preparedness and rural employment - in Bangla Language.

You can collect D.Net Publications from [www.bdresearch.org.bd](http://www.bdresearch.org.bd)

6/8, Humayun Road, Block B, Mohammadpur, Dhaka 1207 Bangladesh.

E-mail: [info@dnet.org.bd](mailto:info@dnet.org.bd) • Web Address: [www.dnet.org.bd](http://www.dnet.org.bd)

Tel: +88 02 8156772, 9131424, 8124976 • Fax: 88 02 8142021

**D.Net**

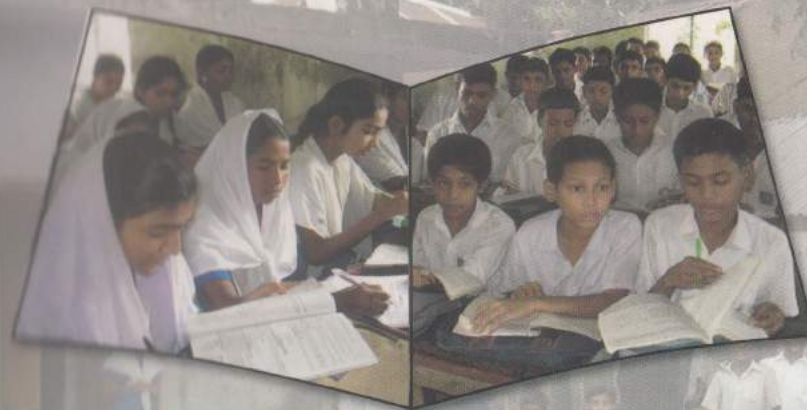
Development Research Network



9 843000 009175

ISBN: 984-300-00917-5

# Bangladesh Education in Transition



Policy • Performance • Way Forward

Editor  
Mahmudul Alam

**BANGLADESH EDUCATION IN TRANSITION**  
**POLICY • PERFORMANCE • WAY FORWARD**

*Edited by*

**Mahmudul Alam**

*Assisted by*

**Johirul Islam Mullick  
Irene Parvin**

**BANGLADESH EDUCATION IN TRANSITION  
POLICY . PERFORMAN**

*Edited by*  
Mahmudul Alam

*Assisted by*  
Johirul Islam Mullick  
Irene Parvin

*Copy Edit* : Syeda Shamin Mortada and Md. Meftaur Rahman

*Cover Design & Photograph*: Kazi Saifuddin Abbas, Motiur Rahman

*Lay-out* : Shaiful Hasan

*Some Rights Reserved*

(Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No derivative works 3.0)

First Published : February Boi Mela, 2008

Published in Bangladesh by Morshed Alam Sohel

**D.Net** (Development Research Network)

6/8 Humayun Road, Block B

Mohammadpur, Dhaka 1207, Bangladesh

E mail : info@dnet.org.bd URL: www.dnet.org.bd

Tel : +88 02 8156772, +88 02 9131424, +88 02 8124976

Fax : +88 02 8142021

ISBN 984-300-000917-5

Price: Tk. 250

US\$ 20

Distributor

A H Development Publishing House

143, New Market, Dhaka-1205

Bangladesh

Phone : 88-02-8627650

Mobile : 01715022927

E-mail : aynul101@bdonline.com

Printed in Bangladesh at Pathway

*The views in this publication are those of authors only and do not necessarily reflect the views of the organisations involved in this publication.*

This book is dedicated to the three pioneering  
educationists of Bangladesh

*National Professor M. Shamsul Huq (1911-2006)*

*Professor M. Ferdouse Khan (1920- )*

*Professor Manjushree Chowdhury, Ph.D. (1923- 2006)*

## Contributors

### M. Shamsul Haque, Ph.D.

Vice-chancellor  
Northern University of Bangladesh (NUB)  
Dhaka

### Mahmudul Alam, Ph.D.

Professor, School of Education  
Bangladesh Open University (BOU)  
Gazipur

### Delwar Hossain, Ph.D.

Professor, Institute of Education and Research (IER)  
Dhaka University  
Dhaka

### Syed Fahad Siddique

Research Officer  
Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)  
Dhaka

### Romij Ahmed

Statistician, MIS  
Directorate of Primary Education (DPE)  
Government of Bangladesh  
Dhaka

## Contents

List of Tables, Appendix Tables, Figures, Appendix Figures,  
Charts, Appendix Chart and Appendix Box

Foreword		xiii
Foreword		xv
Acknowledgements		xvi
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>BANGLADESH EDUCATION SECTOR-AN OVERVIEW</b>	<b>1</b>
	<i>Mahmudul Alam</i>	
	<i>Syed Fahad Siddique</i>	
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>POLICY-MAKING IN EDUCATION SECTOR OF BANGLADESH: ROLE OF STATE, DONORS AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS</b>	<b>5</b>
	<i>Mahmudul Alam</i>	
	<i>Delwar Hossain</i>	
2.1	Policy-making in Education Sector: General Principles and Specific Bangladesh Context	5
2.2	How Policy-Making Takes Place	7
2.3	Education Sectoral Intentions of the State as Reflected in Major Policy Documents, 1990-2006	10
2.4	Education Sectoral Policy-Making and Implementation: Ways Forward	13
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>UNIVERSAL PRIMARY EDUCATION (UPE) IN BANGLADESH: ASPECTS OF EFFICIENCY AND EQUITY</b>	
	<i>Mahmudul Alam</i>	
	<i>Romij Ahmed</i>	
3.1	Major Issues of UPE, State's Role and Recent Development Interventions	19
3.2	Data for the Chapter	21

3.3	Performance of Primary Education Subsector	21
3.4	Correlates of Performance Indicators	32
3.5	Major Findings	38
3.6	Challenges and Way Forward	40

**Chapter 4 BANGLADESH SECONDARY EDUCATION: PERFORMANCE AND CORRELATES**

*Mahmudul Alam*

4.1	Major Issues	47
4.2	Developmental Interventions by the State—Regular and One-off Types	49
4.3	Methodology and Data for the Study	52
4.4	Performance Indicators of Secondary Education Subsector in Bangladesh	53
4.5	Correlates of Educational Efficiency Indicators	66
4.6	Institutional Level Management and Performance	71
4.7	Major Findings	74
4.8	Challenges and Way Forward	76

**Chapter 5 PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN BANGLADESH: SUSTAINABLE INNOVATIONS OR PROMISING FLICKERS**

*M Shamsul Haque  
Mahmudul Alam*

5.1	Major Issues of Bangladesh Private University Education	87
5.2	Growth of Private Universities and Some Indicators of Performance	95
5.3	Graduates from the Private Universities and the World of Work	99
5.4	Financial Aspects - Access to Information, Funding Sources and Tuition Fees	100
5.5	Sustainable Private University Subsector—Lessons Learned and Index Way Forward	106

List of Tables, Appendix Tables, Figures, Appendix Figures, Charts, Appendix Chart, Box and Appendix Box

**Tables**

Table 2.1	Bangladesh Education Sector: Present Policy-making and Way Forward	13
Table 3.1	Bangladesh: Average Promotion Rates (per grade) in Primary Education By Major Delivery Mechanisms, Gender and Broad Regions, 2005	27
Table 3.2	Bangladesh: Average Repetition Rates (per grade) in Primary Education By Major Delivery Mechanisms, Gender and Broad Region, 2005	27
Table 3.3	Bangladesh: Average Dropout Rates (per grade) in Primary Education By Major Delivery Mechanisms, Gender and Broad Region, 2005	28
Table 3.4	Bangladesh: Primary Scholarship Examination Results by Different Types of Mainstream Schools, 2005	31
Table 3.5	Bangladesh: Primary Scholarship Examination Results for Mainstream School (GPS and RNGPS) Participation Rates and Pass Rates by Gender, 2002-05	32
Table 3.6	Bangladesh Mainstream Primary Schools: Distribution (Per cent-share) of Institutions with Basic Physical Facilities, 2005	33
Table 3.7	Bangladesh Mainstream Primary Schools: Contact Hours, Availability of Free Textbooks and Instructional Materials, 2005	34
Table 3.8	Bangladesh Mainstream Primary Schools: Distribution of Teachers by Some Salient Features, 2005	35
Table 3.9	Bangladesh: Public Recurrent Expenditure Per Year of Primary Education by Delivery Mechanisms and Rural-Urban Locations, 2000	36
Table 3.10	Bangladesh: Annual Private Cost of Primary Education by Delivery Mechanisms, Rural-Urban Locations and Gender, 2000	36
Table 3.11	Bangladesh: Annual Private Cost of Primary Education by Rural-Urban Locations, Socio-economic (Food Consumption) Status and Gender, 2000	37
Table 4.1	Bangladesh Secondary Education: Development Projects under Implementation, 2006	49

Table 4.2	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Attendance Rate by Major Educational Institution Types and Broad Regions, 2003	58
Table 4.3	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Promotion Rate by Major Educational Institution Types and Broad Regions, 2003	60
Table 4.4	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Cycle Dropout Rate by Major Educational Institution Types and Broad Regions, 2003	61
Table 4.5	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Average (Per Grade) Repetition Rate by Major Educational Institution Types and Broad Regions, 2003	63
Table 4.6	Bangladesh Secondary Education: SSC and Dakhil Examination Pass Rate (%), 2003	65
Table 4.7	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Average Owned Land By Institution Type and Broad Regions (strata), 2003	67
Table 4.8	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Distribution (Per cent- Share) of Institutions with Basic Physical Facilities by Institution Type and Broad Regions, 2003	68
Table 4.9	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Distribution (Number) of Teachers by Highest Qualification Levels, Institution Type and Broad Regions, 2003	69
Table 5.1	Bangladesh: Number of Private Universities, Total Enrolment, Teacher-Student Ratios, 1997-2003	97
Table 5.2	Financial Statements of North South University (NSU), Financial Year (FY) 1998-2000	99
Table 5.3	Financial Statements of North South University Foundation, 1998-2000	102
Table 5.4	USTC Financial Statements, Financial Year (FY), 1998-2000	103
Table 5.5	Financial Statements of Jana Sheba Foundation (of USTC), 1999-2001	104
Table 5.6	Tuition Fees by Programmes, North South University (NSU), Dhaka and University of Science and Technology (USTC), 2000	105

## Appendix Tables

Table 3.1A	Bangladesh: Promotion Rates (per cent of total) in Mainstream Schools (GPS and RNGPS) by Grades 1 to 5, 1997-2000	42
Table 3.2A	Bangladesh Primary Education: Overall Gross Enrolment and Gross Enrolment Rates (GERs), 1997-2005	42

Table 3.3A	Bangladesh Primary Education: Gross Enrolment, GPS, RNGP, Experimental, Community and Satellite School Enrolment and Gross Enrolment Rates (GERs) in Mainstream Institutions, 1997-2005	43
Table 3.4A	Bangladesh Primary Education: Gross Enrolment and Gross Enrolment Rates (GERs) in Schools Outside of Mainstream, Ebtedaiye Madrasha, Kindergarten, NGO (complete), Attached to High Madrasha, Attached to High School Mainstream Institutions, 1997-2005	44
Table 3.5A	Bangladesh Primary Education: Net Enrolment in Mainstream and Other Institutions by Gender, 1997-2005	44
Table 4.1A	Bangladesh Secondary Education: Gross Enrolment and Gross Enrolment Rates (GERs) in Mainstream Schools, 1997-2006	80
Table 4.2A	Bangladesh Secondary Education: Enrolment in Mainstream Schools by Gender, 2001-2006	81
Table 4.2A1	Bangladesh Secondary Education: Gross Enrolment and Gross Enrolment Rates (GERs) in Dakhil Madrashas (grades 6-10), 1997-2006	82
Table 4.3A	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Average Annual Expenditure of Institutions by Institution Type, Major Sources and Broad Regions, 2003	83
Table 4.4A	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Average Annual Income of Institutions by Institution Type, Major Sources and Broad Regions, 2003	84

## Figures

Figure 3.1	Bangladesh Primary Education: Gross Enrolment of Both Sexes, 1997-2005	21
Figure 3.1a	Bangladesh Primary Education: Gross Enrolment of Male, 1997-2005	22
Figure 3.1b	Bangladesh Primary Education: Gross Enrolment of Female, 1997-2005	22
Figure 3.2	Bangladesh Primary Education: Net Enrolment of Both Sexes, 1997-2005	23
Figure 3.2a	Bangladesh Primary Education: Net Enrolment of Male, 1997-2005	23
Figure 3.2b	Bangladesh Primary Education: Net Enrolment of Female, 1997-2005	23
Figure 3.3	Bangladesh Rural Enrolment Rate of 6-10 years old by Poverty Status and Regions	25

Figure 3.4	Bangladesh Urban Enrolment Rate of 6-10 years old by Poverty Status and Regions	25
Figure 3.5	Bangladesh Primary Mainstream Schools: Average (Grades 1 to 5) Rates (as per cent of total) of Promotion, Repetition and Dropout, 1997-2005	29
Figure 3.6	Bangladesh: Survival Rates (%) of Student Cohorts in Mainstream Primary Schools, 1997-2005	30
Figure 3.7	Bangladesh: Coefficient of Efficiency (in per cent) in Mainstream Primary Schools (GPS and RNGPS), 1997-2005	30
Figure 4.1a	Gross Enrolment in Bangladesh Secondary Schools (Mainstream) By Both Sexes, 1997-2006	54
Figure 4.1b	Gross Enrolment in Bangladesh Secondary Schools (Mainstream) By Male, 1997-2006	55
Figure 4.1c	Gross Enrolment in Bangladesh Secondary Schools (Mainstream) By Female, 1997-2006	55
Figure 4.2a	Net Enrolment in Bangladesh Secondary Schools (Mainstream) By Both Sexes, 1997-2006	56
Figure 4.2b	Net Enrolment in Bangladesh Secondary Schools (Mainstream) By Male, 1997-2006	56
Figure 4.2c	Net Enrolment in Bangladesh Secondary Schools (Mainstream) By Female, 1997-2006	57
Figure 4.3	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Attendance Rate by Major Educational Institution Types and Six Divisional Rural Strata, 2003	58
Figure 4.4	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Promotion Rate by Major Educational Institution Types and Six Divisional Rural Strata, 2003	60
Figure 4.5	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Education Cycle Dropout Rate by Major Educational Institution Types and Six Divisional Rural Strata, 2003	62
Figure 4.6	Bangladesh Secondary Education Subsector: Repetition Rate by Major Educational Institution Types and Six Divisional Rural Strata, 2003	63
Figure 4.7	Bangladesh Secondary Education: SSC and Dakhil Pass Rate (%) for Non-government Schools and Madrasahs by Gender, 1998-2003	64
Figure 4.8	Bangladesh Secondary Education: SSC and Dakhil Pass Rate (%) by Rural Regions (Administrative Divisions), 2003	65
Figure 4.9	Bangladesh Non-government Secondary Schools: Annual Expenditure	

	Per Pupil by Rural Regions, 2003	70
Figure 5.1	Growth of Private Universities in Bangladesh, 1992-2003	96
Figure 5.2	Number of Teachers in Private Universities of Bangladesh, 2003	98

### Appendix Figures

Figure 4.1A	Bangladesh Non-Government Secondary Schools - Distribution of School Teachers by their Highest Qualifications and Rural Regions, 2003	85
Figure 4.2A	Bangladesh Government Secondary Education Schools -Distribution of School Teachers by their Highest Qualifications and Regions, 2003	85
Figure 4.3A	Bangladesh Dakhil Madrasahs - Distribution of Teachers By their Highest Qualifications and Rural Regions, 2003	86
Figure 4.4A	Bangladesh Non-government Secondary Schools: Annual Income Per Pupil by Rural Income/Pupil Regions, 2003	86

### Charts

Chart 2.1	Bangladesh: Organisation of Educational Planning	8
Chart 4.1	Organisation of Secondary Education System in Bangladesh, 2006	48
Chart 5.1	Organisation of Tertiary Level (First Degree and Above) Education System in Bangladesh, 2004	90

### Appendix Chart

Chart 3.1A	Organisation of Primary Education System in Bangladesh, 2004	45
------------	--	----

### Box

Box 5.1	Bangladesh Private Universities: Courses on Offer, 2003	96
---------	---	----

### Appendix Box

Box 4.1A	Organisation of Secondary Education in Bangladesh	79
----------	---	----

## Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to write a few words in lieu of a foreword for Mahmudul Alam's edited volume on education in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh good research is a rarity. The universities, being primarily teaching universities, provide little scope and incentive for research. The private research outfits are basically consulting outfits. The lead research institute in the country, BIDS (Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies), seem to be going through a crisis of capacity and leadership. In this context some individuals have endeavoured to devote themselves to research as a passion. Mahmudul Alam is one such person.

In Bangladesh, following the lead given by PIDE (Pakistan Institute of Development Economics), economic research has been concentrated in areas of rural development, poverty and to a limited extent in monetary, fiscal and trade issues. Industry and Demography seem to have lost its impetus and Agriculture has become a marginalised area. The area of social economics remains largely peripheral. Health Economics research has made a little headway. In this not so encouraging environment, Mahmudul Alam has devoted his time and energy to work on the issues related to education in Bangladesh. He has published at home and abroad. This is a selection of his writings, five essays of which four are jointly written. Primary and secondary educations are his primary concerns. The volume opens with a short overview of education sector followed by deliberation on policy formulation and role of stakeholders. The volume ends with a short discussion on private Universities in Bangladesh. These essays are an attempt to address important issues in a limited way and as has been said the deliberations are not comprehensive nor are the conclusions final words on the subject.

I consider the compilation as a good endeavour. I hope Mahmudul Alam would continue his work with greater vigor in future. I am confident that people interested in education research would benefit from reading the book. I wish a wide readership for the book.

Dated  
Dhaka, January 14, 2008

**Muzaffer Ahmad**  
Economist and Former Professor  
Institute of Business Administration (IBA)  
University of Dhaka.





## Foreword

It is my pleasure to write a foreword for a research publication on Bangladesh education sector edited by Dr. Mahmudul Alam, Professor, School of Education (SoE), Bangladesh Open University (BOU). The book is a collection of policy-oriented research articles on important issues such as primary, secondary and tertiary levels of education of Bangladesh/Renowned educationists/researchers of the country have contributed in this volume.

In recent times rapid transformation of economic structure, policies and institutions are being observed on a global scale. More so for education sector because this is identified as crucial factor for sustainable economic growth and achievement of development goals. Although the country has witnessed a significant development in education sector, still much more to be done. The general observation is that if plans, policies and procedures of any programme are drawn up in accordance with the demand of the real situation, then success of the programme can be expected. This edited volume of research studies is an attempt to explore a sensible approach towards that end.

Any research on education sector should be of immense value to the relevant stakeholders such as policy makers, academicians and practitioners. To illustrate, it should be mentioned the education sector of our country absorbs the highest amount of public (state) resources; it is about 14 per cent of the total budgetary allocation and 2.2 per cent of the GDP. Citizens (mainly parents), philanthropic organisations, NGOs spend another 5-6 per cent of GDP in the sector. Education sector is one of the largest employers in the economy; it generates employment for about 10-12 lakhs people in the country. Therefore, I consider this volume is likely to play an important role to the development of this sector.

I wish this book a wide readership. I commend that the contributors keep up this type of valuable effort.

**Professor Dr. M. Farid Ahmed**  
Vice Chancellor

Dated: July 22, 2007

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to my teacher, Professor Muzaffer Ahmed for his foreword. He has always been a source of inspiration and guidance to me. Professor M. Farid Ahmed, Vice-chancellor, Bangladesh Open University (BOU), Gazipur, has been kind enough to write a few words on the volume. I am also very grateful to him. Dr. Mushtaque R. Chowdhury (Deputy Executive Director, BRAC, Dhaka) has given a number of constructive suggestions on the draft; I am indebted to him. Dr. Manzoor Ahmed (Director, BU-IED, Dhaka), and Ms. Rasheda K. Chowdhury (Director, CAMPE, Dhaka) have been highly supportive. I acknowledge my great debt to my publisher D-Net, especially Dr. Ananya Raihan, Ajoy Bose, Syeda Shamin Mortada, Sohel Morshed and Shuvo Ahmed, without their wonderful support this volume would not have been materialised. I have received generous data-related support from the relevant agencies, e.g. BANBEIS, DPE, DSHE and NAEM.

This publication has benefited from the research support of Syed Fahad Siddique (BIDS, Dhaka). Obedur Rashid Picaso (Department of Economics and Social Sciences, BRAC University, Dhaka), and Nazrul Islam (BIDS, Dhaka). Lutfur Rahman Patwary (BIDS, Dhaka) and Md Shaiful Hassan (CPD, Dhaka) helped me with their word-processing skills. Meftaur Rahman (BIDS, Dhaka) did a splendid job in editing the manuscript. For remaining inadequacies, I owe responsibility.

**Mahmudul Alam**

Dhaka  
January 14, 2008

## BANGLADESH EDUCATION SECTOR – AN OVERVIEW

**B**angladesh as a country aspires to achieve the status of a reasonably educated society. The constitution of Bangladesh<sup>1</sup> enshrines the right of every citizen to free universal primary education. The emergence of Bangladesh after a bloody Liberation War in December 1971 gave impetus to the goal of universal primary education. Different political leaders and State functionaries running the country have given importance to this goal. As Bangladesh became relatively more open in the 1970s and started interacting more with the western capitalist countries, the State/government shared the world view of UN-agencies in the field of universal primary education (UPE)/basic education. As one of the most active least-developed countries (LDCs), Bangladesh has supported UPE by participating in the World Conference for Education for All (WCEFA), Jomtien, Thailand in 1990 and in the Dakar Conference on Education for All in 2000. Therefore, both by historical antecedents (of the Liberation War/ Constitutional imperative) and through international treaties and commitments, Bangladesh has given high priority to the attainment of basic education to its citizens.

In the education sector, Bangladesh — a populous and low-income agriculture-dependent economy — started off the twenty-first century with a mixture of achievements and challenges. The achievements were (a) high rate of growth of primary school enrolment (gross), from around 85 per cent in 1990 to about 104 per cent in 2000; (b) high rate of growth of secondary school enrolment (about seven per cent per year in 1991-2000); (c) gender-parity in both primary and secondary enrolment; (d) an innovative and cost-effective non-formal primary education (NFPE) delivery system organised by NGOs, such as BRAC, Proshika, CMES, and DAM, for the socio-economically disadvantaged children bypassed by the mainstream system; and (e) development of private universities (numbering around 50 in 200), bringing in long-felt elements of competitiveness, market-orientation and diversity in the higher education subsector of the country. On the flip-side,