

The Primary education given priority in TFYP

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On July 1, next the country will be formally entering the Third Five Year Plan 1985-90 (TFYP) period. The ultimate objective of the plan is to bring about a visible and significant improvement in the material and cultural welfare of the people. To achieve this plan objective, education and human resource development is a key factor. For the first time we have not only prepared a broad framework for the education sector plan for the TFYP in advance, but have also taken some preliminary steps for launching the project's and programmes in time.

It need hardly be emphasized that success of our projects and programmes in the TFYP will depend crucially on efficiency of our timely action and quality and texture of our implementation. We have to coordinate our activities with our Donor Agencies, so that there is no timelag in our implementation schedule.

Let us discuss more specifically the implementation and monitoring strategy for the Second Primary Education Project for UPE. The project is to be assisted by a number of donor agencies including the World Bank, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO and SIDA.

PLAN PRIORITIES

In education, our main priorities are on primary education, literacy work, technical education and secondary level science education. Less than 26 per cent of the population is enumerated as literate and the three-fourths of the population are illiterate.

So while we shall be striving hard to achieve the objectives of the UPE programme by the end of the Third Plan, a substantial reduction in our adult illiteracy must also be achieved side by side. Along with this thrust towards UPE and literacy, emphasis will also be given to skill development through strengthening of technical education and a major reorientation of secondary science education programme.

Under the present educational plan, certain concrete measures have already been initiated while more administrative actions are being processed. A substantial increase has been provided in the plan allocation for these priority programmes in the education sector. For the Second Primary Education Project for UPE, expenditure for the Third plan period will be around Tk. 535 crores. For the comprehensive Technical Education Project the estimated expenditure is about Tk. 136 crores. For the Secondary Sci-

ence Education Project estimated expenditure is around Tk. 120 crores. The proposed literacy work will also require around Tk. 450 crores.

In all, the Education Sector as a whole will require an outlay of about 1500 to 2000 crores of taka for developmental expenditure during the Third Plan period.

UPE IMPLEMENTATION

The Second Primary Education Project for the introduction of UPE is in fact a revision of the on-going Introduction of Universal Primary Education (National) Project but the operation is going to be on a much bigger scale. Since January 1981 the two UPE Projects in Bangladesh have been in operation. Out of the 493 upazilas, 44 are covered under the IDA assisted UPE (IDA) project and the remaining 449 upazilas are under the UPE (National) project. The UPE (IDA) project will come to an end by June 1986. However due to resource constraints and other factors, UPE (National) project could not be fully operational during the SFYP. Through the revised project, the government is determined to continue its effort to achieve UPE. This will receive top priority in the TFYP.

The main objectives of the revised project are: (a) to increase primary school enrolment from the present 58 per cent to about 70 per cent of the 6-10 age group; (b) to ensure that a great majority of those who enroll in 1985 complete 5 years of primary schooling; and (c) to improve internal efficiency of primary school system through better management, supervision, training and improvement of classroom instruction.

The revised project has been organized with the following major components: (1) construction of new classrooms and repair of old schools; (2) provision of school furniture; (3) provision of textbooks and other learning materials; (4) training of Teachers and field level personnel; (5) orientation of community leaders and parents; (6) curriculum development; (7) provision of equipment, transport and vehicles; (8) technical assistance and consultancy services; (9) appointment of incremental staff; and (10) replication of IMPACT experiment.

During the TFYP, there would be one national UPE project. After June 1986 the UPE (IDA) project areas would be completely merged with the national UPE project for their maintenance, supplies and in-service training activi-

ties. To implement the UPE project, Integrated School Development (ISD) Approach would be applied. This approach differs from the previous practice as the focus of development is the individual school with micro-level planning with full community participation in decision making. Project inputs will be brought together in a harmonious way to maximize project outputs. Intensive training and orientation would be required in this context. In all, about 14000 schools would be developed in all the upazilas in the country over the five year period. This will be in addition to about 7000 schools which would have been constructed and repaired during the SFYP.

CO-FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS

For financing the project the Government has recently concluded a credit negotiation with the World Bank.

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