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Universal Primary Education-III 16 DEC 1985

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THE majority of the primary schools in Bangladesh are poorly constructed and badly maintained. A study on primary education (1978) revealed that 44.01 per cent school buildings are Kachcha 28.94 per cent are semi-pucca and 28.97 per cent are pucca. The same study found that more than 50 per cent of the schools did not have adequate floor space for the children. The problem is, however, solved by holding the school in two sessions—morning session for classes 1 and 2 and afternoon session for classes III to V.

During the first phase of Universal Primary Education programme (1980-85) the following physical facilities were provided to primary schools:

1) Construction of building 2280; 2) Repairs to school building—8026; 3) Construction of latrine—3415; 4) Construction of DPEOS office—5; 5) Sinking of Tubewell—5542; 6) Supply of furniture—126968; 7) Supply of steel Almirah—649.

A large number of primary schools in India are housed in unsatisfactory structure, such as open space, tents thatched huts and kachcha buildings. At the time of the 'Fourth All India Educational Survey (1978) 49.10 per cent of primary schools in the country were housed in unsatisfactory structure. The condition was more precarious in rural areas. Over 42 per cent of the primary schools in rural areas being run in open spaces tents thatched huts and kachcha buildings. In urban areas 14.38 per cent were housed in unsatisfactory structures including 2.61 per cent in open spaces.

There had been, an acute shortage of classroom in primary schools. 34413 per cent schools had no furniture and only 40.50 per cent schools had drinking water facilities in 1978. At that time latrines and urinals were available in only 14.81 per cent schools.

In Nepal inadequate physical facilities remain the major problem in the primary schools. The local people have constructed primary school buildings throughout the country. But the quality of these buildings has been poor. One of the major constraints in the provision of school buildings is the lack of roofing materials. Some roofing materials were supplied by UNICEF at the request of the panchavats. The

In this part of the paper the authors discuss the state of primary education in the countries of South Asia with reference school structures, classroom facilities, distribution of reading materials and teachers training programmes.

task of providing building that meet suitable standard is immense but the government support in this respect is minimal and the community cannot provide all the resources.

Primary school buildings in Pakistan are generally constructed by the local people. The national idea in this respect is that school building should fit in with local building habits and need not be expensive structure. They can easily be made with local materials and still be neat and clean and kept in good condition. The classrooms are often decorated and flower gardens are raised in the school premises. To accomplish this, teachers pupils and local community work together. The government prepares building plan arranges different types of building materials and makes them available with simple guidance on how to carry on the job. School furniture and teaching materials are also provided by local community.

Sri Lanka: In Sri Lanka construction of school buildings is financed from allocations provided in the estimates of the Ministry of Education and from funds provided in the decentralised budget. Funds in the decentralised budget are used on an electorate basis according to priorities determined by the members of Parliament and regional Directors of Education. Buildings for junior and senior secondary schools are also used to conduct classes in both primary and secondary grades. In addition to infrastructural facilities provided by the Ministry of Education and the decentralised budget school development societies, parent teacher associations and old boys/girls' associations have constructed classrooms blocks assembly halls library buildings and other similar structures to benefit the schools with which they are associated.

TEXT BOOKS TEACHING AIDS
In order to encourage enrolment, the Government policy in Bangladesh is to provide free text-books to all enrolled pri-

mary school children from classes I to V during the year 1985-86. The operation started from the year 1980-81 and at that time free text-books were supplied to the children of class I only. Next year, that is, in 1981-82 all children of classes I and II were provided with free text books and thus the programme is extended to class V. Teaching aids such as chalk, black boards, charts maps etc. were also supplied to the schools during the first phase of UPE programme and it will be continued up to 1990 the end of second phase of the programme. Readiness learning materials for pre-class 1 children and teacher edition of text-books will also be supplied free of cost.

In order to prevent dropouts and increase enrolment at the primary stage in India the scheme to supply free text-books to students from socially and economically disadvantaged section of society was undertaken. In 1973 out of the 530,867 primary schools, 2701 per cent provided free text-books. Over 27 per cent of the primary schools in rural areas and 25.03 per cent in urban areas were covered by the scheme. Between 1973-78 there was a significant increase in the number of primary schools covered by the scheme. The percentage of primary schools supplying free text books in 1978 was 37.56.

In Nepal primary school text books are supplied to the students free of charge and the expenses are borne by the government. UNICEF assistance is also available for the free text book distribution scheme.

Some educational materials are distributed to the schools by the government through the Regional Directorates. It includes science and sports materials. The primary schools receive only a small portion of the total materials. Some educational materials are made available to the primary schools through the integrated Rural Development project. Seven such projects are in operation in various parts of the country.

In Pakistan textbooks are produced by the provincial Text books Boards. In each province there is a Textbook Board which develop books up to grade XII. Students are required to purchase their own textbooks prepared by the Board.

In Sri Lanka a system is now in operation for the provision of free textbooks to all pupils who are in primary and junior secondary grades in both government and private schools. The supply of free textbooks has contributed to increased retention of pupils within the system. The fact that the books are supplied to the children without considering the financial capacity of parents prevented a social stratification of pupils within the school.

TRAINING OF TEACHERS

There are 51 government and one private Primary Training Institutes (PTIs) in Bangladesh. They offer one year Certificate in Education course to serving untrained teachers as well as to outsiders who wants to become teachers. The present curricula include psychology, principles of education and general subjects that are taught in the primary schools. The intake capacity of all the PTIs is around 10,000. Fifty per cent of teacher pupils are serving teachers and the rest are outsiders. Of the outsiders 50 per cent are female.

A massive programme for in-service training of primary school teachers has recently been undertaken. According to which the Assistant Upazila Education Officer (AUEOs) will go to the schools of his cluster and organize regular in-service training there. The teachers will be supplied with training leaflets which are being developed on different topics relevant to teachers' need and interest such as 'How to use black board effectively', 'How to use the school garden for teaching purpose' etc. The materials are carefully written, designed and pre-tested.

There are about 1000 elementary teacher training institutes (TTIs) in India. The annual output from these institutes is adequate to meet the demand for primary school teachers in most of the States. The training course of these institutes is generally of two-year duration except in a few States where the duration is one year. The minimum qualification required for entry in a TTI is matriculation.

To be continued)