

# Education For All By The Year 2000 : Prospects And Hindrances-II

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★ Plan and manage the Universal Primary Education programme in a way that will respond to the characteristics of the population groups concerned and

★ Obtain the full involvement and participation of the communities.

Recognizing that conventional Primary schooling may not be able to meet the needs of all out-of-school children several countries are experimenting with or have developed, literary centres, community learning centres, slack farming school; moving schools to complement the conventional primary school. Distances learning is emerging as a major means to reach those groups who find it difficult to enrol in schools. Because of its flexibility, distances learning is able to cater to educational needs of diverse groups including the in-service training of teachers.

**Strategies For Adult Literacy:** The single most important factor in literacy is the depth and consistency of political commitment, such political commitment should be highly visible and widely shared at all political levels. A closely related factor is the broad involvement of various social groups, institutions, public and voluntary agencies, local communities and commercial enterprises.

A Strategy which attracts wide-spread support and involvement is much more likely to stimulate popular participation. Such a strategy will necessarily have to provide for flexible structures for planning and implementing at all levels. Nationwide literacy drives can be launched in order to create the most favourable climate of enthusiasm and wide base of participation. Again, the one-area-after-another approach can be preferred to concentrate the maximum intensity of co-ordinated effort in one area. Again age-group target can be combined with area-by-area approach, planning and implementation.

Appropriate planning and implementation structures are needed at the national and local levels, sharing responsibility for the design and implementation of the literacy programme, the training and orientation of literacy personnel, the preparation

of literacy materials, the organization of post-literacy activities and for field research and evaluation.

**Resources:** Usually the literacy work is funded by the government within the budget of the Ministry of Education. But this official funding should be supplemented by funds provided by local authorities, private agencies, business, and contribution from communities and literary workers should provide their labour on a voluntary basis.

Much actual literacy instruction is to be carried out by students, school teachers and other volunteers. They should receive supervision and technical support from full-time literacy personnel with special training to adult learning. The poor results of some literacy programmes are attributed to inappropriate instructional methods and materials. Training centres should be set up for literacy personnel which should be coupled with the preparation of literacy materials.

The immediate objective of a literacy programme is to provide the participants with the basic tools of literacy and numeracy. It is well established that without organized follow-up activities, most adult neoliterates will soon fall back into illiteracy. Post-literacy activities are therefore an essential extension of literacy programmes and should be planned as an integral part of a sustained, long term effort, leading to and articulated with adult education. The essential ingredients of post-literacy activities are simple printed materials which enable neoliterates to exercise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills.

**Role of NGOs:** The most recognized role NGOs has been the provision of educational services. It has been carried out in remote, inaccessible and poverty stricken areas. If the democratic thrust in the new vision of education, and if the question of equity and quality of basic education is to be given primacy in 'Education For All', then the advocacy function of NGOs has to be recognized and strengthened.

Over-enthusiasm for using NGOs to provide educational services can support the trend towards privatisation of education which has become rampant in recent years. It also tends to absolve the state and its agencies from their moral and constitutional responsibility of providing equitable and high quality education for all sections of society.

The second implication in recent years has been to look at NGOs as more efficient and cost-effective substitutes for the government service delivery mechanisms. Many international donor agencies and officials at high levels of decision-making have begun to openly compare NGOs with local official delivery mechanisms in terms of cost-effectiveness, more sensitive service provision at the local level and reduced corruption.

Many variables account for the low completion rate among children of poor family. One of the most crucial being that their labour is needed. Children carry out many small but time consuming routine tasks such as grazing the animals, collecting firewood and fodder, working in petty business or in the case of girls, engaging in household chores.

The BRAC started a Primary Education Programme aimed in the "unreachable," those children whom research has shown have been deprived of access to education because of poverty and gender. The programme features two models. The first

Non-Formal Primary Education started in 1984, as a three year programme for children 8-10 years old who have never been enrolled in school or who have dropped out. The second model was started as an experiment in 1988 with a two-year programme called primary education for older children, for children 11-14 years old who had never been to school. There are now a total of 2230 schools of both types with an enrolment of 66900 students.

BRAC encourages the enrolment of girls, who now constitute 70% of the pupils. The BRAC schools are tailored to suit the needs of the children and their families. The attendance rate is 90% and the drop-out rate is under 2 per cent.

**Conclusion:** The importance of human element in the development of a country can hardly be over-emphasised. The key to development is now believed to be in the making of man productive by developing his skills, capability and motivation. Man is taking centre-stage in the production process and his own development through education and training is a new perspective. Bangladesh NPA is based on a realistic perception of the limited financial and management resources available and it reflects the nation's belief that education is an investment in human resources.

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