

ADB study on pry education

Dropout wastes 26 pc allocated resources in Bangladesh

For every 100 children who start grade one, less than 60 complete grade five within the prescribed time in South Asia, says an ADB survey, says UNB.

It, however, reveals that Bangladesh is characterised by the highest learning scores of students. The country has fairly good pedagogical management of the schooling process, says the study on "Combating Primary School Dropout in South Asia."

Dropout wastes 26 per cent of the resources allocated for primary education, amounting to 0.32 per cent of GDP. Large class size, shorter class period, little parental guidance, unqualified and untrained teachers feature the primary education in Bangladesh, the survey said.

Bhutan and Nepal scored lower level of student learning while Pakistan showed a reasonable performance, according to the study that surveyed some 25000 students in Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal and Pakistan in 1994-95.

Supported by local statistical and research institutes, the study looks into ways to reduce dropout and repetition in four South Asian countries.

It shows only 55 per cent of grade one beginners enroll in grade five and only 50 per cent successfully complete the five-year cycle.

In Bangladesh and Nepal, 52 students out of 100 enrolled in grade one complete grade five, followed by 51 in Pakistan and 49 in Bhutan. Dropout and repetition rate in grade one is 34 per cent, the highest in the

four countries surveyed, while Bangladesh has 23 per cent, Pakistan 19 and Bhutan only 7. Dropout also continues in all the grades up to five.

Inadequate capacity for the next grade, low achievement and poor attendance are main causes for repetition.

Dropout often results from parents who withdraw their children from school for work and also repetition in same grades.

The average student requires 5.2 years to complete five-year primary education in Bangladesh, but the period in Nepal is 6.3 years, in Bhutan 5 years and in Pakistan 3.6 years.

Waste of resources because of dropout and repetition amounts to 26.3 per cent and 6.6 per cent in Bangladesh, 30.7 and 15.3 per cent in Bhutan, 26.9 and 8.3 per cent in Pakistan, and 18.2 and 18.4 per cent in Nepal.

Aside from encouraging parents to value education and making schools more interesting for children, there is an urgent need to better understand the dynamics among the family, school, teacher and school administrator, recommends the survey.

The governments of these four south Asian countries, together with the Asian Development Bank and other development partners, will have to work overtime if the South Asian education is to catch up with that of the rest of Asia, it feels.

Literacy and enrollment rates will not rise dramatically until South Asia provides sufficient physical infras-

tructure and teachers to address the large unmet demand of children, it adds.

The central challenge facing the South Asia over the next five years, the survey observes, will be to provide wide coverage and high quality primary education aimed at keeping children in school for five to eight years.