

Universal Primary Education-II

—A.K.M. Obaidullah And Rajab Ali Biswas

IN Bangladesh the total enrolment in primary schools was 82.92 lac in 1981 out of a total primary age-group population of 1,22.43 lac. The percentage of enrolment was 67.7. The percentage of boys was 79.2 and that of girls 55.7.

60 per cent of those enrolled in class I drop out before reaching class II, while only 11.3 per cent reach class V. So the country is facing a serious problem of low enrolment and high drop-out rates.

In India 735.63 lac children were admitted into the primary schools in the year 1981-82. The percentage of enrolment in comparison to the total population of the primary age-group is 83.7. Out of the total enrolment 449.76 lac and 285.87 lac are boys and girls respectively. Variation in enrolment ratios of the states and union territories are noticeable. Some of the States achieved 100 per cent enrolment while others only 50 to 60 per cent.

A large number of students admitted at primary stage repeat the same class for one or more years, while others leave school at different stages before completing the primary classes. The rates of drop-out is the highest in classes I and II. 30 per cent of children in the rural schools and 25 per cent in urban schools drop-out in classes I and II. Drop-out occurs most often when the children reaches an age when he or she could be of some help to the family or for productive purpose.

In 1980 the primary school enrolment ratio in Nepal was over 90 per cent. But in 1982 it came down to 68.3 per cent. It was due to inclusion of classes IV and V into primary stage.

There is a gulf of difference between the enrolment ratio of boys and girls. In 1981 it was 95 per cent for boys and only 25 per cent for girls.

The total wastage rate due to drop-outs and repetition is considerably high, specially from grade I to grade II. In 1980 the wastage rate was 53 per cent.

In Pakistan 58.06 lac children attended primary schools in 1980 and at that time the total school going age population was 13.20 million. So the enrolment ratio was 44 per cent. The ratio for boys and girls was 58 and 29 per cent respectively.

The drop-out rate is fairly high and it is nearly 60 per cent in rural areas. The cause for such an excessive drop-out rates are complex and varied. 10 per cent of children repeats grades and this is another factor for high drop-out rate.

In 1981 the total enrolment in primary grade in Sri Lanka was 21.35 lac while the primary age-group population was 23.75 lac, the enrolment ratio being 90 per cent. In Sri Lanka the drop-out rates are generally higher at the upper level than at the lower level of the primary cycle. The number of dropping-out from the primary grades stands at 3.7 per cent of the total primary enrolment. Repetition rates rise from kindergarten to grade III and there after a downward trend is observed.

TEACHING STAFF

In 1981 the total member of primary school teachers in Bangladesh was 178,588. Out of these 128,581 were trained and 50,007 were untrained. At present the basic qualification of a primary school teacher is 12 years of schooling for male and ten

years of schooling for female. According to 1981 census 10,715 university graduates are working as primary school teachers. Number of female teacher is 20,101 and the percentage is only 12.67.

In 1981-82 the total number of primary school teacher in India was 13,65,431. Out of these 8,52,771 were women and the percentage was 31.50. In spite of the substantial increase in the number of teachers at the primary stage there still exist a large number of schools without an adequate number of teachers.

The minimum educational qualification for a primary school teachers is matriculation with a teacher training certificate. In 1978, 6.3 per cent were graduates and 0.84 per cent were post graduates. However, a considerable number of teachers is under qualified (26.24 per cent). In 1981-82 the percentage of trained teacher was 89.2.

In 1981 there were 28134 primary school teachers in the Nepal and only 10,585 of them (36.3 per cent) were trained. In 1982 the number of teachers rose to 32,259. The increase was due to partial transfer of lower secondary teachers to primary school duties.

The majority of primary school teachers have graduated from secondary school with the S.L.C. the minimum qualification required for a primary school teacher. But about one-third of the existing teachers do not have required qualification. In remote areas, most teachers have passed only grade VIII or IX. In those areas qualified teachers are not available and teachers from other districts are not willing to work in remote areas.

In Pakistan total number of primary school teacher in 1982 was 1,68,000. Of these 50,500 were female and 117,500 were male. The percentage of female teacher is approximately 30. The general education standard of primary school teacher is matriculation.

Roughly about 5 per cent of the existing teaching force are not duly qualified. In one province there are untrained but matriculate teachers and their estimated proportion is around 4 per cent. In another province there are nearly 10 per cent untrained and non-matriculate teachers.

Until recently the minimum academic qualification required for a person to be a teacher was the GCE 'O' level in Sri Lanka. It is now upgraded to include passing grades in three subjects at the GCE 'A' level. The new recruits to the service thus have a minimum of 12 years of schooling.

According to school census the number of teachers working in primary school is 61,192. The teacher-pupil ratio is 1:36 though the general teacher-pupil ratio for the country is 1:23. The class size in the primary grade is expected to be 35 to 40. In large number of small schools, there is, however, one teacher only to handle a number of classes. Nearly 80 per cent of the teachers in primary grades are female. The present policy is to employ female trained teachers in the lower primary grades.

SCHOOL SUPERVISION SYSTEM: Until recently the Thana Education Officer (now Upazila Education Officer) in Bangladesh were responsible for

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supervision of primary schools. But as they have under their control 100 primary schools up average, they were not in a position to supervise the schools efficiently. So under the universal primary education programme 1834 posts of Assistant Upazila Education Officers (AUEO) have been created and each of them have been given charge of 20 to 25 primary schools. At present the supervisory functions are being carried out by these AUEOs under the guidance of the UEOs. The District Primary Education Officer (and the Upazila Education Officers (UEO) also supervise primary schools. One AUEO is required to visit all the school of his areas (cluster) at least once in a month.

In India the District Education Officer (DEO) is mainly responsible for inspection and supervision of primary schools. But the DEO is so much engaged with other administrative function that he could hardly afford to spend more than 20 to 30 days a year visiting schools for providing technical guidance to teachers. At the sub-district level, an officer representing the Education Department is responsible for co-ordinating all matters relating to elementary education. The Extension Officer (Education), Sub-Deputy Inspector of schools or Tehsil Education Officer supervises primary school under the guidance of the DEO.

In Nepal, the number of supervisors in each district is determined on the number of schools. Each supervisor in the Kathmandu valley and the Terai is responsible for 40 schools and in the Hills and mountain areas where transportation is more difficult, each supervisor should visit 30 schools. The main function of the supervisors is to introduce new teaching ideas and to oversee the effectiveness of innovative projects. Primary supervisors could be promoted to secondary supervisors and ultimately all primary schools would be supervised by secondary school supervisors.

In Pakistan, the District and Tehsil Education Officers along with their assistants are responsible for supervision of primary schools. Each Assistant of a Tehsil Education Officer is required to look after 80 to 200 schools. In addition to this all these officers have so many other matters to attend so that they are hardly able to devote much of their time to their professional function. As much as 95 per cent of their time is spent in administration or in giving interviews. As a result there are schools which have hardly been visited once in five years.

In order to overcome these difficulties and to create a new system of supervision, major programmes in the form of school education have been undertaken.

In Sri Lanka, the district education department is mainly responsible for supervision of primary education. But the geographical area covered by a district is too large to permit effective school planning and supervision. The inadequacy of transport facilities to the district education department makes the task of effective supervision of schools more difficult. So it is decided to divide the district into several school zones each consisting of 10 to 20 schools and between the zone and the district there is the cluster with 10 to 12 zones. The cluster of schools will function as an administrative entity to meet the educational needs of the entire area it serves. The education officers established on the basis of population, number of schools and enrolment will be in a better position to make effective supervision of primary schools.

To be continued