Education Watch 2003/4

Quality with Equity :
The Primary Education Agenda

Campaign for Popular Education Bangladesh

Education Watch Report 2003/4

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Foreword

The fifth annual *Education Watch* report focuses on quality with equity in primary education. It probes into inter-connected factors bearing on performance of schools and children in 10 upazilas. A micro (children, teachers, parents and the school) and meso (role of the upazila education authority and local administration) perspective, complementing a macro and national view, the focus of the previous *Education Watch* studies, is provided in the present report.

The big picture of primary education deprivation is well-known. Despite commendable progress in the last fifteen years in expanding enrolment, the large majority of children, as many as two out of three, mostly poor and disadvantaged in other ways, are growing up without basic skills and preparation for life.

It is not one or another cause, but *a syndrome of poverty and disadvantage,* that causes deprivation in primary education. Contributing significantly to non-enrolment and dropout are child labour, the phenomenon of private tutoring, school and home factors related to low class attendance, and problems of the first generation learners. Almost half of primary school children have mothers who are illiterate and both parents are without literacy for one-third of the children. Without the capacity of school and willingness or ability of teachers to help the child to catch up when needed, any disruption in schooling sets in motion a slippery slope of further lag, more absences, and eventual dropping out.

Ambitious goals have been set for PEDP II, the umbrella development programme of the government in primary education for the period 2003/4 to 2008/9, on which much hope is pinned. But it has been already late by more than a year in getting off the ground. There has to be a much greater sense of urgency, greater determination to cut through inertia and bureaucratic obstacles on both national and external donor fronts. There has to be a stronger will to resist extraneous vested interests than has been seen so far. The slow and halting pace of progress witnessed in the five years since the 2015 EFA goals were adopted must shift to a different cadence.

It is our sincere hope that the findings about the problems and the needs in the classroom and the school will prompt a greater sense of urgency about shaping reform initiatives and implementing them. It will be necessary to look, in the light of the findings, at what have been planned and how these can be implemented effectively and professionally. All organisations and institutions in the country willing and able to contribute to this effort should be involved. We also hope that the seven point agenda for primary education with quality and equity recommended by the *Education Watch* research team will receive the backing of the policy-makers so that these can serve as a guideline.

Fazle Hasan Abed
Chair
Campaign for Popular Education

Dhaka
January 2005

Preface

This is the fifth report of *Education Watch,* covering the period 2003-2004. When the first report was launched in 1999, the foremost thought in our mind was the quantitative aspect of primary education covering such areas as access, attendance, drop-out, gender parity, teacher-student ratio, etc. From the second report onwards, we gradually shifted our focus towards quality aspects of primary education alongside monitoring the quantitative indicators. We probed into achievement, teacher training, private cost, etc.

The fifth report entitled 'Quality with Equity: The Primary Education Agenda' is different from the earlier reports both in scope and content. In this study we went one step further and asked:

a. Why is a large proportion of children deprived of quality primary education?
b. Why don't the schools function better?
c. What can be done to ensure quality primary education?

To answer these questions the researchers had to delve deep into the socio-economic structure of society, the nature and extent of deprivation, the involvement of local people in the management of the schools, involvement of the local government institutions, and of course the management system in general. The answers to the above queries could not be obtained by a simple survey method. More difficult and time consuming Focus Group Discussion (FGD), class room observation, and in-depth interviews of the main actors in the system had to be conducted.

There was some delay over which *Education Watch* had no control. We approached the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education to ask the concerned school authorities to extend the necessary cooperation to our researchers. It took some time to receive a response. The unprecedented flood of July and August also hampered field work to some extent. But our researchers braved the odds and completed the field work quite efficiently.

I wish to congratulate Dr. Manzoor Ahmed, Director, BU-IED for effectively guiding the Research Team. My appreciation also goes to the survey team who worked under the able leadership of Mr. Samir Ranjan Nath, Senior Research Fellow of BRAC.

I also wish to express my gratitude to Mr. Fazle Hasan Abed, Chairperson, BRAC and Chair, Board of Directors, CAMPE and a member of the Advisory Board, *Education Watch* for his constant support since its inception. I take this opportunity to thank Ms. Rasheda K. Choudhury, Director, CAMPE and Member-Secretary, Advisory Board and Working Group of *Education Watch* for providing logistic support and other facilities

of CAMPE. My thanks also go to CAMPE staff who put in a lot of effort in getting this whole thing together.

I wish to thank the team of reviewers specially Mr. Kazi Fazlur Rahman, former Advisor to the President, Government of Bangladesh, Dr. Kazi Saleh Ahmed, former Vice Chancellor, Jahangirnagar University and Ms. Roushan Jahan, former President, Women for Women, for their thoughtful and valuable input which have helped to further enrich this report.

This acknowledgement will remain incomplete if we do not recognize the role and contribution of hundreds and thousands of students, teachers, parents, institutions and community members without whose support this study would not have been possible.

Education Watch and its reports have been possible due to the generous support received from Royal Netherlands Embassy (RNE), Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) and NOVIB, Netherlands. We acknowledge their support and thank them immensely.

We will consider our effort worthwhile if the findings of this report comes of use to anybody in his/her attempt to understand the existing scenario of primary education in Bangladesh.

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Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
ADP	Area Development Programme
AIDS	Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome
ANTRIEP	Asian Network of Training and Research Institutions in Educational Planning
AUEO	Assistant Upazila Education Officer
BANBEIS	Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics
BBS	Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics
BEd	Bachelor of Education
BPS	BRAC Primary School
BRAC	A national NGO (formerly Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee)
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
CHS	Chittagong Hill Tracts
C-in-Ed	Certificate in Education
CPEIMU	Compulsory Primary Education Implementation and Monitoring Unit
DC	Deputy Commissioner
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
ECCE	Early Childhood Care and Education
EDI	Education Development Index
EFA	Education for All
ELC	Essential Learning Continuum
ESTEEM	Effective Schools Through Enhanced Education Management
EW	Education Watch
FFE	Food for Education
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GOB	Government of Bangladesh
GP	Government Primary
GPS	Government Primary School
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
IDEAL	Intensive District Approach to Education for All
IED	Institute of Education and Development
IER	Institute of Education and Research
JBIC	Japan Bank for International Cooperation
LGED	Local Government Engineering Department
LPR	Leave Preparatory to Retirement
MDG	Millennium Development Goal

MEd	Master of Education
MOPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
MP	Member of the Parliament
MWTL	Multiple Ways of Teaching Learning
NAPE	National Academy for Primary Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NEP	National Education Policy
NFE	Non-Formal Education
NFOWD	National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled
NGO	Non-governmental Organization
NPA	National Plan of Action
PEDP II	Second Primary Education Development Programme
PESP	Primary Education Stipend Programme
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
PS	Primary School
PSPMP	Primary School Performance Monitoring Project
PSQL	Primary School Quality Level
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTI	Primary Teachers Training Institute
RED	Research and Evaluation Division
RNGP	Registered Non Government Primary
RNGPS	Registered Non Government Primary School
ROSC	Reaching Out School Children
SD	Standard Deviation
SMC	School Managing Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
TIB	Transparency International Bangladesh
TLP	Teaching Learning Process
UEC	Upazila Education Committee
UEO	Upazila Education Officer
UIS	UNESCO Institute of Statistics
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNO	Upazila Nirbahee Officer
UP	Union Parishad
UPE	Universal Primary Education
URC	Upazila Resource Centre
WFP	World Food Programme

Overview

Overview

I. Introduction

Primary education is the foundation on which the nation's edifice of education has to be built and the ground laid for the individual's pursuit of further learning and fulfillment of life's potentials. Progress in primary education in Bangladesh in the last fifteen years, despite its many deficiencies, is characterised by strengths, which truly can be regarded as points of shining light.

A major achievement of the last decade was to attain gender parity in primary school enrolment. Other accomplishments are improvement in gross and net enrolment in primary education and reduction in dropout and improvement in completion of the cycle, encouraged by provision for free textbooks to all students, food for education and lately stipends for poor children as well as stipends and tuition waiver for rural girls at the secondary level. To improve quality of education, competency-based primary education curriculum has been introduced. NGOs have pioneered and successfully implemented on a large scale programmes to reach out of school children. National budgets have been increased and substantial external assistance has been mobilised for primary education development activities.

Bangladesh is committed to EFA and Dakar Framework and U.N. Millennium Development Goals for 2015. Its national development objectives and plans are guided by a strategy of poverty reduction and human development in which education, especially at the basic level, has a critical role.

The national goals and commitment in respect of primary education are reflected in the Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP II), described as a sub-sectoral programme of the government supported by external development partners. It aims to address the primary education access, participation and quality problems with "a guarantee of essential primary school quality levels (PSQL)" for all children. Establishment of non-formal learning centers to serve two million out of school children through the ROSC project is expected to complement PEDP II, which is confined to formal public sector primary education. The ROSC project signifies the recognition by the government of the need and legitimacy of non-formal approaches, so far supported only by NGOs, as essential complement to formal schools.

Despite the accomplishments, as past *Education Watch* reports and national education data show, primary education remains plagued by serious problems in respect of access and participation. Taking into account the current enrolment and completion rate, it can be said that over 40 percent of the children cross their primary schooling

age without the benefit of a full cycle of primary education. When the findings about learning achievement and competencies are also considered, it becomes obvious that the large majority of children of Bangladesh, as many as two out of three, are growing up into adulthood without basic literacy and numeracy skills and preparation for life.

The 2005 monitoring report on progress towards Dakar goals released by UNESCO in November, 2004 has applied an Education Development Index to countries based on values for net primary education enrolment, adult literacy rate, gender parity indices, and survival of children to grade five in the primary school. Of the 127 countries rated, Bangladesh ranked as number 107, just behind India (106) and ahead of Pakistan (123) and Nepal (110). It is projected that all of these countries will fail to meet the 2015 Dakar Framework targets unless their rate of progress accelerates substantially. It is vitally important that the government strategies and programmes including the umbrella programme PEDP II and the ROSC project , aimed especially at the disadvantaged children, succeed.

The research questions and methodology

Quality of teaching and learning and equitable access are clearly the dominant concerns in primary education in Bangladesh which are reflected in national plans and commitments including EFA Plan, PRSP, PEDP II and ROSC.

Education Watch 2003/4 focuses on quality with equity in primary education. In doing so, it draws on the findings and outcomes of earlier *Watch* reports, attempts to probe deeper into inter-connected effects of factors bearing on schools and children in specific locations in 10 upazilas, and attempts to present a summative perspective with regard to policy and action implications. A micro (children, teachers, parents and the school) and a meso (upazila education authority and local administration at the upazila and the union) perspective, in contrast to a macro and national view, the focus of the previous *Education Watch* studies, is the focus of the present report.

The main research questions in the present study are:

1. Why is a large proportion of the children deprived of quality primary education?
2. Why don't the schools function better?
3. What can be done to ensure quality primary education for all children?

A combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques was used in this research - in-depth interview and focus group discussion; observation of school and classroom; survey of selected school catchment areas and schools; and review of relevant documents. Pertinent findings were drawn upon from previous *Education Watch* reports and other studies. A participatory approach was followed in discussion with children, the dialogue mediated by other children with varied experience.

Twelve upazilas from six administrative divisions in the country were intended to be selected for the study on the basis of the World Food Programme (WFP) classification of upazilas according to food security status. The purpose was to have diversity in socio-economic condition among the selected upazilas. Disruption in communication and school activities due to massive flooding in July and August, 2004, when field work was undertaken, prevented data collection from two upazilas. Field work, in the end, was done in 10 upazilas as shown in Table 1.

A special feature of the study was the household survey that covered every second household in the catchment areas of two GPS and one RNGPS in each upazila - a total of 8,212 households in catchment areas of 30 primary schools. The survey questions covered education of the household members, socio-economic information, currently enrolled students in primary schools, dropout and never enrolled children, use of private tutors, and child labour.

Three survey questionnaires and 22 checklists were prepared and used in the fieldwork. A piloting of the instruments and methodology was undertaken. Field investigators, all with experience in social science field survey, were given training in the use of the instruments. The 36 investigators were divided into 6 research teams, each guided by an experienced researcher.

Table 1
Upazilas selected in the study and their characteristics

Division	District	Upazila	Characteristics
Dhaka	Tangail	Madhupur	Ethnic minority High food deficit area
Rajshahi	Kurigram	Nageshwari	Very high food deficit area High density of ultra poor
	Rajshahi	Tanor	Very high food deficit area
Chittagong	Chittagong	Lohagara	Low food deficit area
	Comilla	Chandina	Municipality Moderate food deficit area
Khulna	Jessore	Jessore Sadar	Urban
	Satkhira	Tala	Low food deficit area Moderate food deficit area WFP Biscuit project area
Barisal	Barguna	Patharghata	High food deficit area
	Barisal	Bakerganj	Low food deficit area
Sylhet	Sylhet	Golapganj	Moderate food deficit area

Various respondent groups at the different levels, research techniques used and number of respondents are shown in Table 2.

Table 2
Respondents and research techniques

Respondent groups	Technique used	Number of respondents
Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)	In-depth interview	9
Upazila Education Officer (UEO)	In-depth interview	10
Assistant Upazila Education Officer (AUEO)	FGD and In-depth interview	41 (8)
Public representative	FGD and In-depth interview	57 (7)
URC instructor	Interview and documentation	7
Head teacher	In-depth interview	10
Assistant teacher	FGD	31 (9)
School Managing Committee member	FGD	55 (8)
Students	FGD	94 (9)
Non-enrolled children	FGD	92 (11)
Good students	Case study	6
Disabled student	Case study	5
Never enrolled children	Case study	5
Dropout students	Case study	6
Parents of students	FGD	101 (10)
Parents of non-enrolled children	FGD	79 (11)

Figures in parentheses indicate the number of FGDs held

II. Key Findings and Conclusions

A. Education provisions

The ten upazilas selected from all six divisions of the country had a total population of 3,200,000 with a primary school age population of 514,000. There were 2,452 primary education institutions in the 10 upazilas, according to data from upazila education offices, which probably underestimated NGO and private provisions. Of the listed numbers, just under 1,000 schools were run by the government (GPS), 600 were registered non-government primary schools (RNGPS), and 400 were ebtedayee madrasas or classes attached to high madrasas.

According to the upazila education office data derived from catchment area child surveys undertaken by schools, 75.3 percent of the children in the eligible age group were enrolled in primary schools. However, based on household survey conducted in school catchment areas under the present study, the net enrolment rate found was 90.4 percent.

UEOs data show 57 percent of students were enrolled in GPS, 24 percent in RNGPS, 9 percent in all types of madrasas, 2.5 percent, in kindergartens and 1.1 percent in NFE schools. Again, non-formal school enrolment appears to have been underestimated.

Key points regarding primary school provisions in the upazilas were:

First, there is a serious insufficiency of provisions, creating a deficit of the order of 50 to 60 percent in terms of schools, classrooms and teachers, if criteria for acceptable quality of provisions, such as a class room with no more than 40 children with a qualified teacher, are applied.

Second, schools, especially GPS and RNGPS, which served over 80 percent of the children, were not distributed according to set criteria and were not related to child population or area of the upazila. Nor was the ratio between GPS and RNGPS based on criteria or a discernible pattern.

Third, there was no effort to develop complementarity between GPS and RNGPS, on the one hand, and the other types of institutions, such as madrasas and non-formal schools, to ensure adequate provisions for all children.

Fourth, The GPSs had on an average one more teacher than the RNGPSs, (average of 4.5 and 3.8 teachers respectively), but both had teaching personnel to run schools only in two shifts; the gender imbalance in teaching positions remained high (39 percent female teachers) in spite of the policy of affirmative action in recruitment.

Fifth, with the number of GPS essentially remaining unchanged, the share of total enrolment in RNGPS has been rising. Generally poorer provisions for teachers, and physical facilities in these schools, compared to GPS, have meant that the overall quality of provisions for primary education has deteriorated.

Sixth, the data for the upazilas suggest an increase in net enrolment and a narrowing of gap between net and gross enrolment, which indicates a maturity of the system with a culture of sending children to school at the designated entry age taking root. Whether this indicates a wider national trend needs to be established with accurate and up-to-date national data.

Finally, a systematic and planned effort is needed to develop understanding and awareness about the criteria and concept of quality in education, performance standards of schools, and how accountability of schools and education personnel to communities and parents can be established and demanded.

There was a lack of common understanding regarding quality of education and how a school's performance should be judged. The concept of accountability of schools and education personnel including teachers, head teachers and supervisors at the upazila level, all of whom received public funds to provide public service, appeared to be

lacking. Absence of models or knowledge about effective schools, and high quality teaching-learning practices also may have led to the acceptance and tolerance of the familiar.

B. Education resources in schools

Data on education resources - physical facilities, human resources, and financial resources disposable at the school level - in the 10 upazilas under study show that:

1. The major categories of schools, GPS, RNGPS and madrasas, did not have sufficient classroom space for all the enrolled children. Applying a modest standard of the upazila education office of just permitting students to sit in rows of benches with little elbow room, it was found that there was no space for a quarter of the enrolled students in GPS and 40 percent of the students in madrasas. By these standards, RNGPSs in the ten upazilas could accommodate 97 percent of their enrolled students.
2. Despite major government investments in primary school facilities since 1990, these remained far from satisfactory, both in number of classrooms and schools and in their quality. Fifteen percent of the schools in the 10 upazilas were rated by the research team as "good" - with safe, sturdy and clean roof, walls and floors. About half were "fair" and 35 percent were rated as "poor," - judged by very basic criteria applied. Hazardous and definitely unsafe conditions were observed in some GPS and madrasas.
3. Insufficiency of teachers was a common problem. Eighty percent of the schools had four or less teachers, 21 percent three or less. On an average, 30 percent schools had more than 60 students per teacher; over two-thirds had more than 40 students per teacher.
4. The average teacher-student ratio in the ten upazilas was 1:53 - somewhat better than the national average of 1:61. There was a substantial variation in this ratio among the upazilas. The range was 37 to 90 students per teacher for GPS and 34 to 95 students per teacher for RNGPS. Approved posts of teachers remained vacant for a year or more in 19 percent of GP schools and 7 percent RNGP schools.
5. Overall, GP and RNGP schools had very little fund available to be used at the school's discretion for essential expenses related to school's activities. Some primary schools raised funds for small repair, purchase of stationery and entertainment of visitors with contribution made by themselves, collected from the community and by charging students "unofficial" fees. Madrasas were more active in raising their own resources and appealed for contribution as a religious obligation. A few formal schools received contribution from NGOs.

C. Nature of deprivation

The large picture of primary education deprivation has been noted. The good news is that a broad-based gender parity has been observed across the board among catchment areas, upazilas, school types, and socio-economic groups. This accomplishment needs to be deepened to improve learning outcome for both girls and boys, and extended to include all who still remain left out. Moreover:

1. The most pronounced differences were among socio economic categories in respect of enrolment, repetition, dropout, and participation in primary education, which delineated the magnitude and nature of the problem of deprivation in primary education. Self-rated food security status of households was taken as the proxy for socio-economic grouping.
   - In the surveyed upazilas, a child from an "always in deficit" family had a 30 percent less chance of being enrolled in a school and five times more chance of dropping out from school compared to a child from a "surplus" family.
   - A quarter of the non-enrolled children cited poverty as the reason for non-enrolment. Over forty percent who dropped out indicated poverty as the reason for dropping out.
   - Refusal of the school authority to admit the child was cited as the second most important reason (21 percent of the respondents) for non-enrolment. This appears to be a new phenomenon arising from increased interest in schooling generated by offer of stipends and parents' preference for certain schools - close to home or with a "good name."
   - Children not "liking school" was an important cause for not enrolling and the most important reason for dropping out. This indicates problems about how the school functions.
   - The interaction between factors related to school and family and society need to be investigated further. Social and economic disadvantage of the child and the child's background and the school's response to this are key elements in this interaction.
2. It was not one or another cause that could be identified and fixed, but *a syndrome of poverty and disadvantage* including child labour, first generation learner, inability to afford private tutors, and causes related to children's absenteeism that need to be addressed.
   - In the 6-14 age group of the poorest economic category, one-third of the children were non students and at work or unemployed, and 30 percent were students and working at the same time. In the "surplus" group, about the same proportion was both students and at work, but only 7.5 percent of the children were non-students, either working or without any work.

- Forty-seven percent of the mothers and 43 percent of the fathers of primary school children in the upazilas were without any schooling. Both parents were without education for a third of the children. These children can be regarded as "first generation learners". Inability of parents to guide and support their children, and the likely economic disadvantage of these families, affect how the first generation learners perform in school.
- Private tutors for primary school children have become a norm. Forty three percent of the children had private tutors; they paid an average of Tk 152 per month for eight months in a year. Children who needed extra help with their studies most, first generation learners, could afford it the least.
- Low average school attendance, about 60 percent, was linked with factors related to both the operation of the school and the family situation of the child. Causes identified were children's need to help at home either regularly or for seasonal farm work, ill health or sickness of child or a parent, acute family economic problems, and falling behind in lessons with no help to catch up from teacher or at home. Any interruption in schooling set in motion for the poor a vicious spiral of further lag, more absences, and eventual dropping out.
- Children with special needs, especially those with disabilities, and children of ethnic minorities whose mother tongue is not Bangla, are special dimensions in the picture of deprivation in primary education.
- Studies of the category labelled as ultra poor, which consists of 20 percent to one-third of the population depending on criteria, showed net enrolment of 65 percent compared to around 80 percent nationally.

3. Three kinds of actions observed could be regarded as elements of the effort to address deprivation. These are free distribution of textbooks, scholarship examinations in primary schools, and stipend for primary school children from poor families; but these have not worked optimally for the poor.

   - GPS, RNGPS and ebtedayee madrasas are supposed to receive free textbooks, while others can buy these. However, students in all categories of schools had to make a payment to receive the books. Survey data showed that 27 percent of the children made a payment to receive books which was, on average, Tk 14 per child in GPS and RNGPS and Tk 32 in madrasas.
   - The extra time and attention given to 20 percent of the class 5 scholarship nominees often meant that 80 percent in class 5 and all in the rest of the schools paid a price in a very common situation of teacher shortage in the school. A measure intended to encourage good performance and benefit students has become counter-productive for those vulnerable to deprivation.

- Stipend recipients were roughly evenly divided between four socio-economic categories (based on food security criteria used in this study). Over two-thirds of the children from the poorest category were not selected to be recipients of stipend; but 27 percent of children from affluent households received the stipend.
- Household survey revealed that forty percent of the recipients were paid Tk 200 or less instead of Tk 300 as a quarterly payment. Students from "rich" households received on average Tk 260 and those from "poor" households were paid Tk 225.
- Targeting the poor, the principal rationale of the stipend programme, does not appear to be working, at least in the upazilas under study. There are also major problems in the management and administration of the programme, one manifestation of which is "cuts" taken from stipend. A basic dilemma of the programme is: Are there ways of spending scarce money to help the disadvantaged children perform better in school and attend school regularly rather than subject them to criteria which they find difficult to meet. Non-formal education programmes run by NGOs have attracted and held poor children in school and helped them to perform well without stipend as an inducement.

D. Quality in the classroom

A look at school level academic management based on information gathered from schools, interviews, discussion with stakeholders, and classroom observation revealed:

1. Schools mostly do not have the academic and management leadership needed to perform effectively. The head teachers' key role in ensuring effective functioning of school is mentioned in government directives. In practice, the head teacher essentially worked as another teacher. The way head teachers were selected, time available to them, their training and degree of freedom granted did not support or encourage a leadership role for the head teacher. When this happened, this was due to exceptional individual initiative.
2. An inflexible and uniform centrally imposed daily school time-table fragmented the school day in very short blocks of time for up to eight separate school subjects every day, with little time for anything other than a mechanical routine in the class, even for children of grades one and two. In two shift schools, over 90 percent of all schools, this meant no more than 20 to 25 minutes of learning time in a class period. Short staffing in schools often made the uniform central time table impractical. Schools made their own adjustments, but this often meant "convenient" arrangements for reducing teacher load by combining sections,

making large classes even larger, but the fragmentation remained intact. There appears to be no awareness of this as a problem among teachers or supervisors and few examples were found, except in non-formal schools, of efforts to apply learner-centred and active teaching-learning with flexibility in the class routine.

3. Competency-based curriculum with the formulation of the essential learning continuum and listing of competencies to be acquired by children through primary education was introduced a decade ago. This was an important government primary education initiative which had the potential of bringing about very significant improvement in learning outcome. After a decade since this initiative began, teachers and head teachers did not have sufficient understanding of the concept and its implications for their work. The teacher's guide book distributed several years ago is rarely consulted by teachers and has not been followed up with sufficient in-service training and orientation of teachers and supervisors.
4. Primary schools (GPS and RNGPS) were graded into four categories applying a ten point checklist related to school facilities and management, but not learning performance except scholarship examination results. Fifteen percent of the schools were found to meet the criteria for grade A and over a quarter had serious deficiencies. Annual school plans for supervision and support from upazila education offices did not indicate any planning to bring the weak schools up to a satisfactory level. This initiative has the potential of making school supervision focus on overall performance of schools and make supervision purposeful.
5. Classroom observations carried out by the research team in 10 schools illustrated the common weaknesses in teaching-learning, especially in GPS, RNGPS and madrasas, which served over 90 percent of the children. There were serious deficiencies in subject knowledge in such subjects as Mathematics, English and Bangla that caused students to be subjected to wrong information, explanation, examples and pronunciation. Teaching was based, with rare exceptions, on one-way communication in often large and crowded classrooms with a class time-table that did not permit carrying out a complete lesson sequence. Few learning aids were used, but a stick as a tool for discipline was seen in many classes. There was little effort or opportunity to help children who lagged behind. Home tasks were assigned but teachers failed to provide sufficient feedback to students. Classes in non-formal schools with smaller classes, strong supervisory support and supply of essential learning aids were a clear contrast to an average class in GPS, RNGPS and madrasas.

E. Management at school and local level

Critical issues regarding the management at school and support to school were identified on the basis of school survey, focus group discussion, interviews, and school and classroom observation.

1. The process of teacher recruitment was seen by stakeholders at the local level as a major impediment to improvement of quality in primary education. SMC members, parents, teachers, AUEOs and UEOs all expressed concern about infractions and manipulation of rules and regulations regarding the recruitment of both GPS and RNGPS teachers leading to recruitment of teachers who were not qualified to be teachers. In the case of GPS the violation of rules was caused at the district level by increasing the weight of oral interviews in selection, thus making the process vulnerable to improper influence. For RNGPS, where SMCs were responsible, the system was seen as dominated by cronyism instead of application of criteria.
2. Most GPS teachers are trained but most RNGPS teachers are not. With an annual capacity of 6,000 in PTIs and at least 100,000 primary school teachers in need of training, the demand cannot be met by current training approaches. Moreover major overhaul is needed in PTI training to make it more effective, since studies have shown no significant impact of this training in student performance.
3. Two main initiatives for in-service training - sub-cluster training and URC subject-based training - are not working well in the 10 upazilas. Lack of professional support in planning and designing the content and method, professional deficiency of AUEOs who are the trainers for this event, and inadequate follow-up of outcomes of training at the school level rendered the sub-cluster training into a monthly social gathering of teachers presided over by the AUEO. URC's are not living up to their potential as resource and training centres for teachers in the upazila. URCs nominally exist in the ten upazilas but four are not functional yet and three had stopped due to lack of fund (since the development project funding ran out). The morale is low in URCs and the short subject training offered is yet to be assessed for their impact in classroom.
4. AUEOs are the frontline supervisors for primary schools with the charge of giving teachers professional support and advice to do their job properly. Most informants in focus groups and interviews thought this promise is far from being fulfilled. Large number of schools, counting only GPS, RNGPS and community schools, in the charge of an AUEO (average of 41 and a range of 16 to 212 in the ten upazilas), no budget for mobility, lack of training for offering professional supervisory support to teachers, and filling out long inspection forms about compliance with rules rather than advising on effective teaching were identified as the problems. In addition, complaints were rampant that extorting payments and favours from teachers on threat of punishment was a common practice.
5. With most schools running in two shifts and total contact hours one of the lowest by international comparison, using the available time of students and teachers in school optimally is important for effective learning. The stakeholders were in favour of the ideal solution of a longer school day in single shift schools. This must be

the aim, but this has major implications for teachers, classrooms and budgets. A strong argument can be made for giving priority to reducing class size to a maximum of 40 children under one teacher who is properly trained and has strong supervisory support in a double shift school, if a single shift means having a larger class under an ill-trained teacher with no supervision.

6. Union Parishad - the only local government tier existing at present, has almost no role in primary education. Chairpersons and members mostly said they did not know of any significant role in primary education that has been assigned to them, although many were willing to be involved. The local education committees at union and ward levels set up after compulsory primary education programme was started a decade ago have become dormant.
7. SMCs have been given a broad and sweeping role in primary school management, but with little real authority. Nonetheless, active and engaged SMCs can make a difference in the school, as it has been demonstrated in some cases. Political control - now institutionalised by giving the local MP a role, and cronyism of head teachers in the case of GPS and of the founding group in the case of RNGPS, have led to formation of SMCs with mostly the wrong people for such a committee. Unclear and vague ideas about the role and duty of the SMC, among the members themselves and among school authorities and parents, and absence of any disposable fund with the managing committee are other reasons for their ineffectiveness. The potential of SMC as the vehicle for accountability and community involvement in school thus cannot be realised.
8. There is miscommunication or confusion about the relative roles of PTAs and SMCs. The apprehension was expressed by some that there would be an overlap and conflicts if both the bodies were active in a school and that with active SMCs no PTA is needed. Non-formal schools have demonstrated that parents, especially mothers, want to be involved and can be partners with teachers and the school in helping children learn and grow.
9. No one has the responsibility and authority to maintain an oversight of primary education in the upazila. There was no common or comprehensive source of information about education in the upazila, nor was there any focal point for promoting or planning for compulsory primary education or EFA goals in the upazila. The madrasas, for example, remained virtually without any supervision although they enrolled 9 percent of the students in the upazila. The proprietary kindergartens are growing in number and are popular with the upcoming middle class even in small towns and some villages, but they remain outside any regulatory framework. In fact, there is no focal point of responsibility to protect and uphold public interest in the sphere of education in the upazila.

10. Most stakeholders at the school and upazila level were in favour of much greater and meaningful decentralisation of education management. They were, at the same time, apprehensive that local pressures of vested interests would increase; and that resources were scarce at the local level, which had to come from the central authorities. On balance, however, they favoured a genuine shift towards devolution of authority and decisions to district, upazila and school levels. This would require, according to them, defining power, authority and control over resources at different levels and trying out ways of making this work. It was not clear to all stakeholders what form decentralisation should take and how it was to be achieved; hence the importance of trying out approaches in selected locations.

III. Policy and Action Implications

The micro and meso view of primary education provided by the information from the upazilas points to major challenges and potentials in primary education. We have a better understanding of how the large picture of deprivation is formed with elements provided by each deprived child in his or her home, school, community and upazila. Despite progress, provisions for schools, classrooms and teachers remain insufficient for equitable access; equally inadequate are the condition and environment in schools and classrooms and the availability of learning resources for ensuring acceptable quality of education. A holistic and multi-pronged approach is needed to address the syndrome of poverty and disadvantage that characterises deprivation. It is shaped by how the school functions and the home and family circumstances of the child and the mutual re-inforcement of each other.

As cautioned by UNESCO's latest EFA Monitoring Report, Bangladesh will not reach its EFA goals for 2015 with a "business as usual" approach. Ambitious goals have been set for PEDP II, the umbrella development programme of the government in primary education for the period 2003/4 to 2008/9, on which much hope is pinned. But it has been already late by more than a year in getting off the ground. There has to be a much greater sense of urgency, greater determination to cut through inertia and bureaucratic obstacles on both national and external donor fronts, and a stronger will to resist extraneous vested interests than has been seen so far. The slow and halting pace of progress witnessed in the five years since the 2015 EFA goals were adopted must shift to a different cadence.

A good number of technical recommendations could be offered based on the information collected, analysed and presented above. The research team has decided instead to recommend seven action priorities aimed at moving from the business-as-usual approach and injecting a renewed sense of urgency about fulfilling the promise of quality primary education for all children.

Quality with equity: Seven action priorities in primary education

1. *Recognition of inequity and deprivation in primary education as a serious problem and a commitment to deal with it.* The first step to effective action has to be an understanding and recognition on the part of policy makers at the political level and in the education establishment that primary education remains unequal with large-scale deprivation of access and participation in the system, as shown in this report. It can be seen even by analysing official data. A genuine commitment to removing deprivation and inequity has to be reflected in:

- Allocation of resources and budgets for education programmes with equity and affirmative action in favour of the disadvantaged as key criteria,
- Subjecting education policy and programme decisions as well as resource allocation and budgets to poverty impact analysis,
- Applying poverty impact and consequences as a component in education programme assessment and evaluation,
- Supporting research, experimentation and analysis of experience about how the poor can be effectively served and the programme outcomes enhanced, and
- Adopting the rights perspective to fulfill the education rights and entitlements of all children.

This commitment at the national level has to be communicated forcefully and with conviction to donors and international partners, policy implementers, local bodies, SMCs, teachers, parents and even students. As key stakeholders, their role and commitment in helping achieve educational goals is paramount.

2. *Addressing at the school level the syndrome of poverty and disadvantage affecting student performance.* As noted in this report, a syndrome consisting of factors at home and in school causes children's deprivation from education, which has to be addressed holistically. The locus of action for this effort has to be the school where the education authorities can reach the child, the parents and the teachers and work out appropriate measures responding to specific circumstances of disadvantage. The elements of this response would be:

- Identifying the disadvantaged children and their particular difficulties,
- Extra help in studies in class or out of class to first generation and "slow" learners,
- Providing learning materials (notebooks, workbooks, pencil, paper etc.) and elimination of all cash costs to children from the poor families.
- Regular communication of school with the parents of the disadvantaged, designating a teacher for a group of these parents for maintaining contact.

- Orientation of managing committee, teachers, and community about the special effort.
- Provision of budget to be managed by school for this purpose - perhaps redirecting stipend funds for this purpose.

3. *Effective implementation of competency-based primary education.* The promise and potential of curricula and teaching-learning based on essential learning continuum and competencies, even after a decade, have not been fulfilled. The concept remains sound and valid. A concerted effort needs to be made to implement competency-based curriculum, classroom work, and learning assessment. The components of this effort will include:

- Critical review of "terminal" and intermediate competencies to separate out beliefs and values, which may be important but are not measurable competencies, and their sequence and gradation.
- Using time and resources optimally to ensure student achievement in basic skills; a case in point is wasting scarce student and teacher time in the attempt to teach English from grade 1, when most teachers cannot speak English.
- Plan and support for continuing technical work on translating competencies into classroom activities, lesson plans, learning aids and continuing assessment methods in classroom, and pre-service and in-service training of teachers.
- Continuing professional work on competency-based curriculum development, textbooks and learning materials,
- Development and introduction of valid grade-wise and end- of- primary -level assessment
- Support for coordinated action research on this subject.

4. *Decentralisation, local planning and management trial.* The absence of any oversight responsibility and planning of primary education involving all service providers at the local level and lack of management authority with accountability at school level have been identified as impediment to quality and equity in primary education. At the same time, there is apprehension about the problems decentralisation may cause and the capacity and resources at the school and local level. The appropriate way to deal with this dilemma is to initiate development and trial of decentralised planning and management including personnel, resources and academic programme in six districts in six divisions. The components of the trial can include:

- Defining tasks, responsibilities, capacities and accountability process at district, upazila and school levels,
- Developing upazila primary education planning and school improvement plans, as anticipated in PEDP II, including technical and professional support for these,

- Working towards a unified approach to ensure core quality standards for all primary education provisions for all children,
- Scope and method for devolving greater authority and responsibility and fund management to school managing committee and head teacher including accountability of school to community and education authorities.
- Managing at school level learning time and calendar, academic programme, and teacher's performance of duties.
- Capacity- building at district, upazila and school level including capacity to manage and use information.

Implementation of PEDP II programme in a decentralised mode in the selected upazilas and districts with trial and demonstration of effective implementation of the programme should be a key objective of the trial.

5. *Supporting development and use of professional capacity*. The management structure and decision-making process at present allow little room for development and effective use of professional capacity in primary education. Career structure in primary education does not encourage professional development and professional staff to rise to management and decision-making level. Personnel recruitment and deployment policy and practice hinder development of centres for professional and technical expertise in the sector in institutions such as NAPE and NCTB and at central and field levels of DPE. Institutions including IER of Dhaka University, IED of BRAC University, NAPE and NCTB should be supported to work together on developing strategy and plan for professionalisation and professional capacity development in primary education. This effort should be linked to and complemented by measures anticipated under PEDP II. The elements of this activity would be:

- Undertaking institutional and organisational analysis of primary education management required in PEDP II.
- Establishment of a primary education cadre - a condition of PEDP II donor support.
- Development of need-based short and longer specialised training and professional development courses,
- Rethinking and redesigning pre-service and in-service teacher training and action research to cope with huge needs in terms of quality and quantity.

6. *A greater voice of stakeholders at all levels*. In the education system, more than in all other social enterprises, the participatory approach, transparency in decision-making and a high degree of accountability should become the norm. Openness and sharing of information and dialogue in public forums should be the norm at

school, union parishad and upazila regarding objectives, plans and progress, and budgetary allocations in the school, and for the upazila. The process of transparency and participation of all stakeholders should include:

- Periodic sharing of information and plans, and monitoring of progress of , e.g., school's annual work plan, upazila primary education plan and use of funds received from government and other sources, performance evaluation of schools in public forums organised for this purpose.
- Parent Teacher Association.
- Transparent and public selection/election of school managing committee and upazila education committee members.

7. *Addressing governance issues*. Political interference and undue involvement of politicians, institutionalised by government regulations about managing committees, have been identified as a major contributor to corruption, mismanagement, waste and obstacle to good management practices in general. Support is needed from the Prime Minister, in her capacity as the Minister in charge of Primary and Mass Education, to develop a consensus and adopt and abide by a policy decision to make education, especially primary education, free from political interference, which will help reduce mismanagement and corruption. Support and encouragement from the highest political level is also essential for implementation of this seven point agenda.

Chapter 1

Introduction

This introductory chapter provides the background of Education Watch 2003/4. *This issue of the Watch report probes aspects of coverage and quality issues of primary education in Bangladesh, including the nature of deprivation, focusing on the interaction of key factors in selected upazilas. As a backdrop to this probe, the points of light in the progress made so far, the highlights of findings from past reports and the plans and commitments for the future are presented in this chapter. The organisation of the present report is also described in this chapter.*

Primary education is the foundation on which the nation's edifice of education is built and the ground is laid for the individual's pursuit of further learning and fulfilment of life's potential. It is of vital importance that this foundation is strong and broad. *Education Watch,* since its inception in 1998, has been concerned with the strength and breadth of primary education in Bangladesh. This report will probe further into aspects of coverage and quality of primary education including the nature of deprivation of children from the right to primary education.

Eighteen million children are enrolled in over 110,000 primary education institutions, counting the NGO-managed primary education services. This represents one-third increase in primary education enrolment since 1991. Progress in primary education in Bangladesh in the last fifteen years, despite its many deficiencies examined in this report, are characterised by strengths which can be truly regarded as points of shining light. The challenge for the future is to expand these spots of light to illuminate the total firmament of education.

A. A perspective of Quality with Equity

An explanation of quality with equity in relation to primary education, the focus of this study, is in order.
Quality in educational programmes is best reflected in the learning achievement of students. It is the outcome of combined effects of a host of factors. These include inherent soundness of programme objectives and programme designs, adequacy of resources consistent with objectives, internal operations and management of programmes, circumstances that affect learners' ability to participate in learning effectively, and how quality indicators are defined and assessed.

A useful analytical approach to look at educational quality is to apply a system approach of input, process and outcome. In an educational system, the major inputs, besides students, include teachers, curricula and learning materials, and the physical facilities. These inputs, brought together in the right manner and the right combination, make the teaching-learning process happen. The outcome of this transaction is the learning achievement - knowledge, skills and attitudes intended to be acquired by learners. Adequacy of inputs is dependent on financial provisions and how effectively financial resources are used to ensure that the human and physical resources are in place. It is linked with governance and management of individual institutions and how these are supported by the management structure.

Characterisation and assessment of "quality" of the educational phenomenon cannot be detached from the question of who the learners are and what their circumstances are. Virtually universal access to primary education for children and literacy courses

for youth and adults is regarded in Bangladesh as a question of citizen's right under the Constitution and under international human rights treaties. It is also a national development imperative. Apart from the right of citizens to benefit equitably from a public good, equity in education is intimately related to the development objectives of education including poverty alleviation and building a democratic society.

Keeping in mind that quality in education is connected in a complex web with elements beyond the usual pedagogical inputs, and is intricately linked with access and equity in education, this study looks at the circumstances and categories of who participate and who do not in primary education. It also attempts to relate these data to the evidence about educational inputs, pedagogic process, school and local-level management, and available information about education output.

B. Points of Shining Light

Bangladesh enthusiastically adopted the Education for All (EFA) agenda of the World Conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, March, 1990). A compulsory primary education law was promulgated and the government proceeded to implement a compulsory primary education programme since 1991 with increased resource allocation and efforts to mobilise public support for this programme. The government efforts have been complemented by vibrant NGO involvement in providing primary education, especially for children left behind by the public sector schools. A model known as non-formal primary education pioneered by BRAC, and a similar approach followed by other NGOs, served up to 1.5 million children in approximately 40,000 non-formal one-room-one-teacher centres in the later half of the last decade.[1]

A major achievement of the last decade was progress in gender parity in primary school enrolment from a boy-girl ratio of 3:2 to full equality. Various government measures, including stipend and free tuition for rural girls in secondary schools, increasing women teachers in primary school with 60 percent quota for new recruitment, and social mobilisation efforts, contributed to this achievement. Bangladesh has been ahead of its South Asian neighbours, such as India, Nepal and Pakistan in this respect and is set to achieve the 2005 gender parity target of the U.N. Millennium Development Goal in primary and secondary education enrolment. The list of accomplishments and measures contributing to them in primary education includes:

a. Improvement in gross and net enrolment in primary education. According to official statistics for 2002, gross enrolment was 97.4 percent and net

[1] Each of these centres took a cohort of 30-33 children who were eight years or older, beyond the entry age for regular primary school, and taught them for three years to bring them up to the level of fourth or fifth grade of primary school, so that they could join and continue in formal education. In fact, over 80 percent of these children joined the formal school. The large majority of these children, 70 percent initially, were girls. Gradually, the model developed into a full primary education programme, offering the equivalent of 5-year formal primary education in four years.

enrolment 86.7 percent. *Education Watch* survey of 2001 indicated a higher gross enrolment rate of 107 percent, probably because it included enrolment in non-formal primary education, but a lower net enrolment rate of 80 percent (BBS 2003, EW 2001);

b. Reduction in dropout and improvement in completion of the cycle. The dropout rate is reported to be around 33 percent and the completion rate, by inference, is around 67 percent, according to DPE estimates for 2001. *Education Watch* survey showed a higher cycle completion rate of around 75 percent, again in part possibly because of inclusion of the non-formal primary education data. These statistics are not up-to-date and perhaps not sufficiently accurate. But they show a trend of distinct improvement over 50 percent dropout and correspondingly low completion rate prior to 1995.
c. Provision for free textbooks for all children at the primary level, which reduced cash costs to parents for their children's primary education;
d. Food for education - distribution of grain to school children, later replaced by monthly cash grant for 40 percent of the children in primary school identified as poor;
e. Monthly stipends and tuition waiver for rural girls at the secondary level, which became an incentive for girls to go to primary school;
f. Competency-based primary education curriculum introduced since 1993 in an effort to enhance relevance and quality of education;
g. Pioneering approaches for reaching out of school children by NGOs and implementing the non-formal primary education programmes on a substantial scale; and
h. Mobilisation of external assistance for major primary education development activities. Since the EFA initiative, the volume of external assistance has increased and more of it has been devoted to primary education (JBIC 2002).

C. The *Education Watch* Reports

The progress listed, which must not be underestimated, is not a reason for complacency. Knowledgeable observers, as well as the primary education authorities, recognise that there is much more to be done before the strong and broad foundation of primary education for national education development can be firmly laid. Quality of education - what children actually learn, and the skills and competencies they acquire from the primary school - remains a major concern. Moreover, the quantity

of education - access to and participation of children in education, numbers and distribution of schools, teachers, and learning materials; and their quality and effectiveness in relation to learning objectives - are also serious problems despite the progress recounted above. Previous *Education Watch* reports have attempted to look at the problems of quantity and quality in primary education.

Education Watch - a civil society initiative aiming to monitor the progress of primary and basic education in the country was launched in 1998. A group of like-minded individuals and organisations concerned about education and development of the country initiated and took the responsibility for the *Watch*. The *Watch* activities include undertaking periodic surveys, research and studies to review the state of basic and primary education in the country and the dissemination of findings. The dissemination of reports and dialogue and debate generated by these are intended to enhance public awareness and involvement in education policy development. The Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE), a forum of about 500 NGOs involved in primary and basic education and literacy programmes, serves as the secretariat of *Education Watch*.

So far four *Watch* reports have been published since 1999. A variety of issues and indicators affecting primary education and literacy have been considered for investigation. These range from in and out of school factors and those related to the society at large. Table 1.1 presents the titles and the issues addressed in the previous reports.

Table 1.1
Issues addressed in various Education Watch reports

Year	Title	Issues
1999	Hope not complacency	■ Internal efficiency in primary education ■ Level of basic competencies
2000	A question of quality	■ Competency based learning achievement in primary education ■ Teacher education
2001	Renewed hope daunting challenges	■ Internal efficiency in primary education ■ Private expenditure in primary education ■ Primary school budgets ■ Literacy
2002	Literacy in Bangladesh - need for a new vision	■ In-depth exploration of literacy levels of the population

The four previous *Watch* reports have largely followed the large-scale sample survey technique, in which structured questionnaires were the main means of investigation. Qualitative techniques like classroom observation and focus group discussions also

have been utilised to a degree in some studies. These reports provided an overall picture of primary and basic education and literacy situation in the country and have helped fill important data and information gap in this sub-sector of education.

Table 1.2
Key features of primary school enrolment, learning achievement and literacy

Items	Net enrolment rate of children aged 6-10 years (%)	Atten-dance rate (%)	Primary cycle comple-tion rate (%)	Mean number of competencies achieved at the end of grade 5 (out of 27)	Literacy rate of population 11 years and above - determined by a test (%)
Sex					
Boys	79.8	60	76.2	16.7	47.6
Girls	79.9	63	73.5	15.3	35.6
Significance	ns	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.001	p<0.001
Area					
Rural	79.6	57	73.8	15.3	37.2
Urban	81.5	65	78.8	19.1	63.6
Significance	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01	p<0.01
Family Food Status					
Always in deficit	65.4			15.4	
Occasional deficit	77.7			15.7	
Break-evem	82.0	na	na	16.4	na
Surplus	89.0			17.7	
Significance	p<0.001			p<0.001	
Pry. School type	(distribution)				
Government	61.10	59	76.1	16.1	52.1
Non-government	18.4	56	73.0	15.2	41.8
Non-formal	7.1	46	63.4	17.2	75.3
Ebted. Madrasa	7.0	88	82.6	na	51.4
Significance	--	p<0.01	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.05

Notes: ns = not significant at p<0.05; na = not available; distribution - percentage of enrolment among types of school.
Sources: Education Watch Reports 2000, 2001, 2002

The four *Watch reports* have provided useful information regarding the state of primary education. Some of the same indicators were examined in 1999 and 2001 reports, which recorded changes in these in an interval of three years. The highlights of the findings, related to provisions, access and participation are presented in Table 1.2.

The *Education Watch* highlights show that still one child out of five eligible for primary school did not enrol in a school. There are distinct variations in enrolment, completion rate, acquiring competencies and literacy achievement that put the rural

child, the girl child, and the child from a lower economic status (measured by family food security) at a clear disadvantage over the urban, male and economically better off child.

A counter-measure to the pattern of disparity is found in non-formal primary education. Non-formal schools where children of the poor enrol have better performance in competencies and literacy achievement, but non-formal provisions are limited, which served no more than 7 percent of the children enrolled in primary education. The cycle completion rate in madrasas was less than in other schools. The completion rate in non-formal schools is lower than the others possibly because most schools under survey carried out in 2001 did not at that time offer a complete cycle of primary education. Most non-formal primary schools now have begun to offer the equivalent of complete primary education.

Attendance in formal school has been found to be a serious problem - around 60 percent on an average day *(Education Watch 2001)*. This is due to various school and family related factors including the uncongenial and learner-unfriendly classroom environment, sheer lack of space in many classrooms, children's need to be engaged in work seasonally or around the year, and classroom practices that do not provide for assistance to students who may fall behind in lessons for any reason.

The most significant *Education Watch* finding is about learning achievement, which is the key measure of educational quality. Table 1.2 shows that on an average less than two-thirds of the competencies prescribed in primary education curriculum (and tested) are acquired by students at the end of the primary cycle. An *Education Watch* national survey (including a test to measure competency levels of students) revealed that only 1.6 percent of the children acquired all the 27 competencies tested, with a higher rate for NGO-run non-formal schools at 6 percent *(Education Watch 2001)*. It was also revealed that, after completing five years of formal primary schooling, one-third of the children remained non-literate or semi-literate; whereas almost all in NGO-run schools acquired basic literacy skills *(Education Watch 2002)*.

In-depth classroom observations carried out as part of *Education Watch 2000* revealed that poor physical facilities, inadequate teaching materials (including textbooks), memory-based teaching style and lack of remedial measures in the classroom are the main reasons for poor performance. Such inadequacies are most prevalent in non-government primary schools and least prevalent in non-formal schools. A particularly disturbing feature of the instruction observed in formal primary schools (government and non-government) is that they tend to focus only on the better students (who usually sit in the front of the classroom), with weaker students neglected or even physically and/or verbally abused. There was also typically little opportunity for writing (for development of language and communication skills) in formal schools.

The state is the main provider of primary education in Bangladesh, with about three quarters of students enrolled in state-run and state-assisted schools. There is, however, a great variety of institutions at the primary level. At least eleven types of primary schools exist in the country, according to DPE, indicating considerable pluralism in education provisions. This is more by happenstance, rather than based on a policy regarding diversity of provisions to meet varying needs. A description of various types of primary schools is provided in Box 3.1 in Chapter 3.

According to the latest statistics published by the Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics (BANBEIS), based on data provided by Directorate of Primary Education, in 2002 there were 78,363 primary schools in the country (BANBEIS 2003) Of these, 37,671 are run directly by the state, 19,428 state-assisted (registered non-government schools), 3,264 community schools, 3,843 ebtedayee madrasas, 3,574 high madrasa attached ebtedayee section, 2,477 kindergartens and others of various types. The non-formal schools, which are estimated to serve 1.5 million children through about 40,000 small, mostly single-teacher schools, are not included in official statistics. These institutions, and the approach they follow, are of particular significance in addressing the problems of educational deprivation and reaching out to hard-to-reach children.

Of the 17.56 million students reported in official statistics for 2002 - which excludes students in non-formal schools - 10.67 million were in government-run schools. Approximately another 4 million were in registered non-government schools and the rest in the various other types of schools. Of 315,055 primary school teachers in 2002, in the formal system, 157,000 were in the government schools (BANBEIS 2003). The teacher-student ratio in the formal schools in 2002 was 1:61.

Overall, it is clear that primary education is still plagued by serious problems with regard to access and participation. Taking into account the current enrolment and completion rate, it can be said that over 40 percent of the children cross their primary schooling age without the benefit of a full cycle of primary education. When the findings about learning achievement and competencies are also considered, it becomes obvious that the large majority of children of Bangladesh, as many as two out of three, are growing up into adulthood without basic literacy and numeracy skills and preparation for life.

D. The Gender Dimension

As noted above, a remarkable achievement in primary education for Bangladesh has been the attainment of equality in enrolment for boys and girls. It must be noted, however, that gender remains an educational and a broader societal concern in a milieu in which traditional values, attitudes and behaviour subject girls and women to pervasive disadvantage and discrimination.

In the education sphere, the adult literacy gap remains wide (14 percentage points according to *Education Watch 2002)*. Girls and women are subjected to educational deprivation that affects large segments of the population who are disadvantaged in different ways. In fact, gender status exacerbates certain disadvantages especially among the poor. It would be appropriate to keep in mind this dimension of deprivation as the overall situation is considered. For instance: (a) In poor families physically or mentally challenged girl children are more neglected and likely to be barred from formal education. Mainstreaming them would require special attention and targeting; (b) In the class room, boys are often privileged; gender-sensitivity needs to be emphasised in teacher training; (c) The high dropout rate of girls at the SSC level limits the prospects for potential women teachers and women PTI students. When primary education is eventually extended to class VIII, the gender-imbalance among teachers is likely to be worse unless steps are taken now. This is particularly important because the existing lowering of qualification for recruitment of women teachers may have to go; and (d) In SMCs, the token women members remain marginalised.

The underlying premise of this study is that an important step in achieving gender equality in education has been taken by overcoming disparity in enrolment; this gain has to be broadened and deepened by extending participation in education to all girls and boys and ensuring acceptable quality in learning for all children.

E. Plans and Commitments

EFA and Dakar goals. Bangladesh, as well as a large part of the developing world, did not reach the goal of universal primary education, the centrepiece of the global EFA by 2000 initiative. The World Education Forum convened in 2000 in Dakar, capital of Senegal, reviewed the progress towards EFA, set a new target date of 2015 for EFA, and established six goals, emphasising quality of education and clarifying the components of EFA (BOX 1.1). Countries have been urged to prepare a National Plan of Action (NPA) with national goals, targets, strategies as well as resource mobilisation and implementation plans for EFA by 2015. The NPA in Bangladesh is yet to be finalised, in part because of debates about the baseline for literacy and basic education achievements against which goals and targets are to be set.

Box 1.1 The six Dakar goals: where the world stands

Goal 1 Early childhood care and education. Progress towards wider access remains slow, with children from disadvantaged backgrounds more likely to be excluded from ECCE. A child in sub-Saharan Africa can expect only 0.3 years of pre-primary schooling, compared to 1.6 years in Latin America and the Caribbean and 2.3 years in North America and Western Europe. In many developing countries, ECCE programmes are staffed by teachers with low qualifications.

Goal 2 Universal primary education. The number of out-of-school children is declining, having fallen from 106.9 million in 1998 to 103.5 million in 2001. While progress has been made globally, over the past decade, in getting more children into school, the pace remains too slow to achieve UPE by 2015. If past trends continue, the world net enrolment ratio will be about 85% in 2005 and 87% in 2015. Completion of primary schooling remains a major concern: delayed enrolment is widespread, survival rates to grade 5 are low (below 75% in thirty of ninety-one countries for which data are available) and grade repetition is frequent.

Goal 3 Youth and adult learning. Efforts to raise the level of skills among youths and adults are marginal in the few developing countries that have conducted evaluations of skills development programmes. Progress remains difficult to assess on a global basis.

Goal 4 Literacy. About 800 million adults were illiterate in 2002;* 70% of them live in nine countries belonging mostly to sub-Saharan Africa and East and South Asia, notably India, China, Bangladesh and Pakistan.

Goal 5 Gender. Although many countries around the world have made significant progress towards gender parity at primary and secondary levels over the past decade, large gaps remain, particularly in the Arab States, sub-Saharan Africa and South and West Asia. Girls accounted for 57% of the out-of-school children of primary school age worldwide in 2001 and for more than 60% in the Arab States and in South and West Asia. Girls' participation remains substantially lower than boys' (a gender parity index below 0.97) in seventy-one out of 175 countries at primary level. Gender disparities become more extreme at secondary level and in higher education. Of eighty-three developing countries with data, half have achieved gender parity at primary level, less than one-fifth at secondary and only four at tertiary. Almost two-thirds of the world's adult illiterates (64%) are women.

Goal 6 Quality. Countries that are farthest from achieving goals 1 to 5 are also farthest from achieving goal 6. Several indicators provide information on dimensions of quality. Public expenditure on education represents a higher proportion of GDP in rich countries, where the EFA goals are already achieved, than in poorer ones, where the coverage of under-resourced systems needs to be both expanded and improved. Spending has increased over the past decade in many developing countries, notably in East Asia and the Pacific and in Latin America and the Caribbean. Pupil/teacher ratios remain higher than is desirable in many countries of sub-Saharan Africa (regional median: 44:1) and South and West Asia (40:1). In many low-income countries, teachers do not meet even the minimum standards for entry into teaching and many have not fully mastered the curriculum. The HIV/AIDS pandemic is severely undermining the provision of good education and contributing significantly to teacher absenteeism. Data from national and international test scores show that low achievement is widespread in most developing regions.

*Unesco Institute of Statistics has re-estimated the number of illiterates, using the latest data revisions. The present estimate is considerably lower than the 862 million for 2000 given in EFA Global Monitoring Report 2003/4. This is a consequence of several factors, notably the release of literacy data from recent censuses and surveys in many countries. For instance, China's 2000 census resulted in the UIS estimate of the number of adult illiterates in the country decreasing by over 50 million.

Source: UNESCO (2004), EFA Monitoring Report 2005

The 2005 monitoring report on progress towards Dakar goals released by UNESCO in November 2004 presents an Education Development Index (EDI) based on values for primary education enrolment, gender parity in primary education enrolment, adult literacy rate and completion of the primary education cycle. Of the 127 countries rated, Bangladesh ranked as number 107, just behind India (106) and ahead of Pakistan (123) and Nepal (110). It is projected that all of these countries will fail to meet the 2015 Dakar Framework targets unless their rate of progress accelerates substantially (Box 1.2).

Box 1.2 Education Development Index

The Education for All Development Index measures the extent to which countries are meeting four of the six EFA goals: UPE, gender parity, literacy and quality. Several countries - including some of the poorest - sharply improved their EFA achievement levels between 1998 and 2001. This indicates that poverty is not an unavoidable barrier to rapid progress towards EFA. On the other hand, massive educational deprivation continues to be concentrated in sub-Saharan Africa, the Arab States and South and West Asia.

Forty-one countries (one-third of those for which the index can be calculated), most of them in North America and Western Europe and Central and Eastern Europe, have achieved the goals or are close to doing so.

Fifty-one countries have EDI values between 0.80 and 0.94*. In about half of these, mostly in Latin America, the quality of education is lagging behind the other goals.

Thirty-five countries are far from meeting the goals, with EDI values below 0.80. Twenty-two of these countries are in sub- Saharan Africa. Three very high-population countries of South Asia - Bangladesh (EDI 0.692), India (0.696) and Pakistan (0.537) - are also in this group.

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* EDI value can range from 0 to 1. The closer the value is to 1, the closer a country is to meeting its goals and the greater is its EFA achievement.
Source: UNESCO (2004), EFA Monitoring Report 2005

Millennium development goals (MDG). Bangladesh is committed to the Millennium Development Goals adopted in 2000 at the Millennium Summit of world leaders held at the United Nations Headquarters.

The overarching aim of MDG is to eradicate extreme poverty and improve the welfare of people by the year 2015. Of the eight MDGs, two have a special education focus. These are as follows -

- Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education
  Target: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling.
- Goal 3. Promote gender equity and empower women
  Target: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and at all levels of education no later than 2015.

As noted above, Bangladesh has done well in respect of the gender parity goal in

primary and secondary education, at least in terms of enrolment. Universal primary education, and gender parity at all levels and in all aspects of participation and quality in education are tougher challenges. So are the tasks regarding development and change in primary and other levels of education to enhance the contribution of education to achieving the overarching MDG of fighting poverty and improving people's lives and livelihood.

Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP II). The national goals and commitments in respect of primary education and the need to overcome the impediments to progress in access and quality have prompted the government, with the support of external development partners, to design the Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP II). It succeeded a collection of not fully co-ordinated primary education projects carried out in recent years. One stated aim of PEDP II is to take full cognisance of the lessons from the past in respect of the fragmented efforts of uncoordinated projects and difficulties in sustained capacity building in the primary education system.

PEDP II, launched by the Prime Minister on International Literacy Day (8 September) in 2004, aims to address the primary education access, participation and quality problems in the country. It is described as a sub-sectoral programme of primary education development for the years 2003/4-2008/9, supported by donors through a common co-ordination and funding mechanism, supplanting past practice of multiple projects financed by various donors. The programme has four major components: (1) Quality improvement through organisational development and capacity building at the central and field levels, (2) Quality improvement in schools and classrooms, (3) Quality improvement through infrastructure development, and (4) Improving and supporting equitable access to quality schooling, paying attention to children with special needs and others chronically neglected or left out by the public system. The PEDP II programme approach emphasises:

- A focus on both quality and access to primary schooling.
- A guarantee of essential primary school quality levels (PSQL) to safeguard the rights of all children to a basic level of inputs in the primary school.
- A child-centred approach, defining key interventions in terms of the requirements for the child to access, persist and achieve in school.
- School-level and school-focused interventions concentrating on improving both the quality and quantity of resources.
- Development of the upazila and the upazila resource centre (URC) as key outreach and support mechanisms.
- Systematic reform, capacity building and organisational reform at all levels to ensure the most effective and efficient delivery of primary education nationwide.

- Integration of the PEDP II programme within the organisational and operational systems of the Ministry and DPE to ensure that policy, procedures, processes and resources are harmonised to support project activities and to ensure institutionalisation and sustainability.
- Coordination and integration of the activities and practices of the activities and projects of development partners within PEDP II, (*PEDP II Final Plan* p. 45, January 2003)

Although labelled as the national programme for primary education sub-sector development, PEDP II leaves out important components of the sub-sector, notably, non-formal and NGO-supported primary education services and the madrasa sub-system. Its scope of activities does extend to over 80 percent of the children in primary education; it aims to address the issues of quality and access as well as equity by improving the performance of the dominant formal part of primary education.

The ROSC project. Establishment of non-formal learning centers to serve two million out of school children through the ROSC project is expected to complement PEDP II, which is confined to formal public sector primary education. The ROSC project signifies the recognition by the government of the need and legitimacy of non- formal approaches, so far supported only by NGOs, as essential complement to formal schools.

As far as the government is concerned, PEDP II is virtually synonymous with primary education development in the country for the next several years. At the end of 2004, almost one and half year past its formal launching date in July 2003, the programme is yet to take off the ground. Progress has been lacking or very slow on meeting key conditions for release of donor resources. These include a comprehensive institutional and organisational analysis of primary education management, as the prelude to organisational reforms in the sub-sector, and measures regarding establishment of a separate primary education cadre to promote professionalisation and capacity building in the sub-sector.

F. The Present Report

Quality of teaching and learning and equitable access are clearly the dominant concerns in primary education in Bangladesh, which are reflected in national plans and commitments including PEDP II, the umbrella programme for primary education.

Education Watch 2003/4 focuses on quality with equity in primary education. In doing so, it draws on the findings and outcomes of earlier *Watch* reports, attempts to probe deeper into inter-connected effects of factors bearing on schools and children in

specific locations in 10 upazilas, and attempts to present a summative perspective, at least in terms of policy and action implications.

This report has eight chapters in addition to the overview. Following the introduction, Chapter 2 briefly describes the methodology adopted for this study including instrument development, selection of study areas, and fieldwork. Chapter 3 presents primary education provisions and gaps identified in the upazilas. The situation of resources in primary education institutions is presented in Chapter 4. The characteristics and circumstances of children deprived from primary education in different forms are presented in Chapter 5. Ensuring better learning outcomes and managing the school with this aim are discussed in Chapter 6. The management process and practices in the school in terms of the institutional aspects and effectiveness of support to school in this respect are addressed in Chapter 7. The findings of each chapter are recapitulated in a summing up at the end of the chapter. The final chapter presents the summary of findings, conclusions and policy implications of the findings.

Chapter **2**

Research Approach and Methodology

The aim of Education Watch 2003/4 *is an in-depth probe of deprivation and disadvantage of children in respect of participation in quality primary education. The methodology demanded by the research questions was a mixture of both quantitative and qualitative techniques. This chapter presents the research questions, approach and methodology and describes the development of the instruments, the pilot study, the samples, the field operations, the report preparation process and the strengths and limitations of the study.*

A. Objectives

The *Education Watch* group, through its own consultation process involving the education research community and others concerned with educational development in Bangladesh, set the agenda for *Education Watch 2003/4*. An in-depth probe into participation in and exclusion from primary education of acceptable quality was agreed to be the focus of this study. The main research questions are:

1. Why is a large proportion of children deprived of quality primary education?
2. Why don't schools function better?
3. What can be done to ensure quality primary education for all children?

The aim of this study thus is to understand how the schools function in a particular local and community context and what can be done to improve school performance by the efforts of the education establishment and the community. Recognising that learning outcomes for the child are affected by circumstances outside the school, how the school takes into account these circumstances is also given attention in the study.

B. Research Approach

With the focus on understanding how deprivation and disadvantage occurred and how these were tackled by various stakeholders, it was agreed that the study would explore the characteristics of deprivation in a number of upazilas (sub-districts). The study, in contrast to previous *Education Watch* studies, moved away from making national statistical estimates on selected indicators based on large-scale national sample surveys. The aim was to complement earlier findings with a deeper knowledge of aspects of quality and equity in primary education. An underlying premise was that deprivation needed to be judged in terms of participation in educational activities with necessary provisions, resources and pedagogic processes that lead to acceptable learning outcomes.

A combination of both qualitative and quantitative techniques was used in this research. The techniques included in-depth interview, focus group discussion, observation, review of documents and records, and survey. For the first time in *Education Watch,* a school catchment area-based household survey was done in the catchment areas of 30 schools in ten upazilas. Structured questionnaires were used for the survey and checklists were used for the other investigative activities.

C. Selecting Upazilas

Upazila selection was based on their characteristics related to economy, infrastructure and education. World Food Programme (WFP) classification of upazilas according to food security status was used as the primary criterion. In addition to this, some educational and non-educational interventions were taken into account including the

presence of ESTEEM project (to improve primary education management) and WFP-assisted fortified biscuit distribution in primary school, density of ethnic minority population, and urbanisation. The aim was to have a geographical spread of upazilas and a diversity of situations which had a bearing on education provisions and performance.

The plan was to conduct the study in 12 upazilas - taking two from each administrative division. However, serious countrywide flood during fieldwork made it difficult to work in two upazilas located in Dhaka and Sylhet divisions. The fieldwork, therefore, could be undertaken in ten upazilas. The ten upazilas and their characteristics are provided in Table 2.1. Map 2.1 shows the location of the upazilas in the map of Bangladesh.

Map 2.1 The ocation of sample upazilas

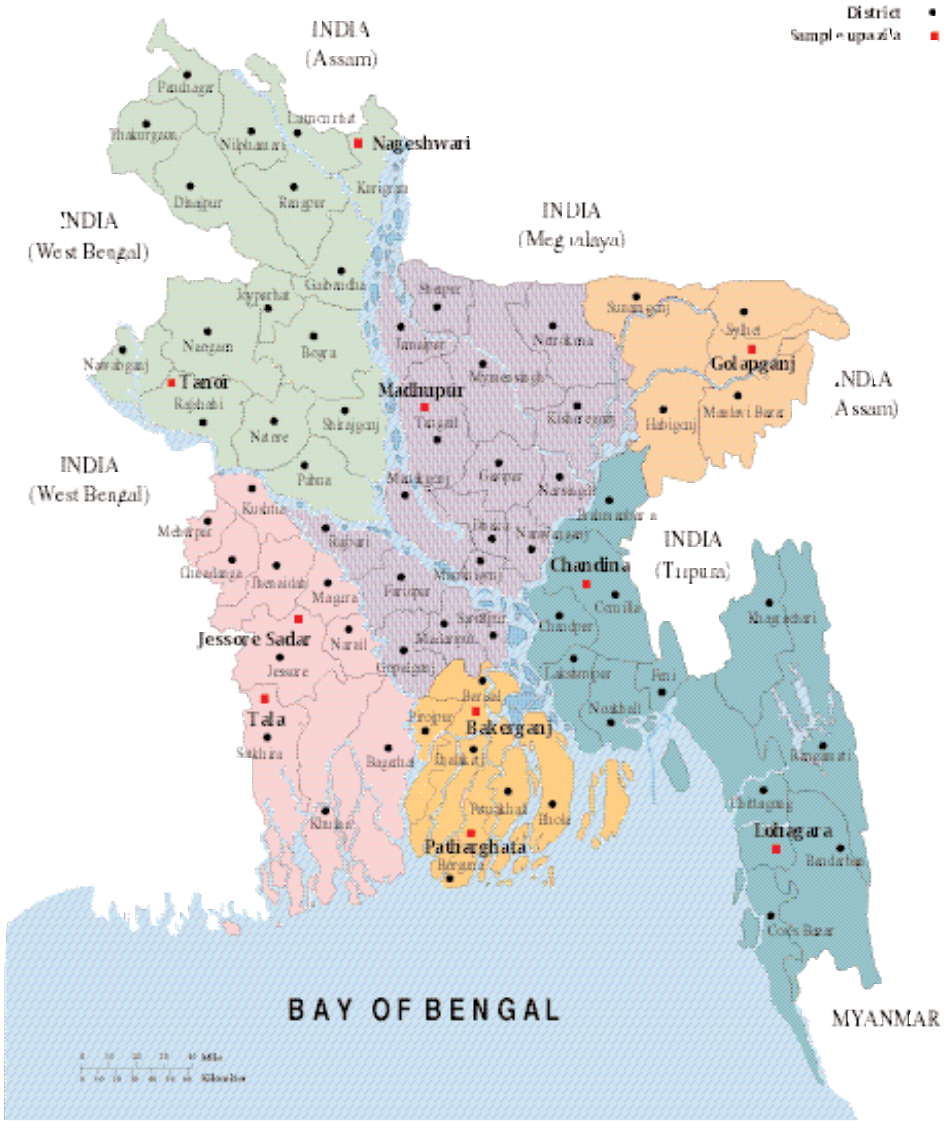

Table 2.1
Study upazilas and their characteristics

Division	District	Upazila	Characteristics
Dhaka	Tangail	Madhupur	Ethnic minority High food deficit area
Rajshahi	Kurigram	Nageshwari	Very high food deficit area High density of ultra poor
	Rajshahi	Tanor	Very high food deficit area
Chittagong	Chittagong	Lohagara	Low food deficit area
	Comilla	Chandina	Municipality Moderate food deficit area ESTEEM operated
Khulna	Jessore	Jessore Sadar	Urban Low food deficit area
	Satkhira	Tala	Moderate food deficit area Biscuit programme operates
Barisal	Barguna	Patharghata	High food deficit area
	Barisal	Bakerganj	Low food deficit area
Sylhet	Sylhet	Golapganj	Moderate food deficit area

D. Data Sources and Respondents

Various sources were considered and different types of respondents were contacted to gather information for the study.

Upazila level information. Collection of upazila level information was carried out with a structured questionnaire. It has several parts: distribution of schools and students by type of school, distribution of students by age, name of schools which had scholarship-winning students during the last five years, information on assistant upazila education officers, and basic information about all schools in the upazila. These were collected mostly by scanning upazila documents, with clarification provided by UEOs and the AUEOs.

In-depth interviews were conducted with the upazila nirbahi officers (UNO) and the upazila education officers (UEO). All ten UEOs and nine UNOs could be interviewed. Views of the assistant upazila education officers (AUEO) were gathered through focus group discussions (FGD) in eight upazilas, where a total of 39 AUEOs participated. In two upazilas, there was only one AUEO each who participated in in-depth interview instead of FGD. The upazila resource centre (URC) was found only in seven upazilas - the instructors of the URCs were interviewed and relevant information about them was recorded.

Public representatives. Public representatives at the union parishad level were interviewed or brought into focus group discussions. Ten representative unions from 10 upazilas were chosen. In seven unions, focus group discussions were possible

where the parishad chairpersons and some members participated. In other unions, FGD was not possible to arrange and only the chairpersons were interviewed. A total of 57 public representatives took part in this exercise.

School level information. In each selected union five schools of four different types were chosen; these were, two government primary schools, one non-government registered primary school, one ebtedayee madrasa, and one non-formal primary school. Information on various issues of the schools was collected through a structured questionnaire. A total of 47 schools were surveyed -20 government and 10 each of non-government and madrasa type, and seven non-formal schools. Of the non-formal schools, four were run by BRAC. The type of information collected from schools was historical background, infrastructure and physical facilities, absenteeism and seating capacity, learning materials and teaching aids, classroom teaching, socio-economic information of the scholarship examinees, teachers' profile, and the profile of SMC members.

In-depth interviews with the head teachers of four government primary schools, three non-government primary schools and the programme organisers of three non-formal schools were conducted to get information about problems they faced in running the schools and improving quality of education. Views of other teachers were ascertained through conducting nine focus group discussions in nine educational institutions - three each from government schools, non-government schools and madrasas. A total of 31 teachers participated in the FGDs. Focus group discussions were also held with the school managing committee members of eight schools - one government, three non-government, two madrasas and two non-formal schools. Their roles and responsibilities, and problems they faced were discussed. A total of 55 SMC members participated in these FGDs.

In the case of students, general views about their schools, the teaching learning culture, home environment and other relevant issues were brought up in the FGD. A total of nine groups of students of class IV or V from nine different educational institutions joined in the FGDs. Total number of participants were 94. Parents of the students of primary schools were also consulted on the issues of quality education, schools' roles and responsibilities and their duties regarding education. Ten groups of parents from ten schools participated in the focus group discussions - a total of 101 parents. Both mothers and fathers were present in the FGDs.

Dropout and never-enrolled children. The reasons of dropout and non-enrolment and the circumstances causing these were captured through focus group discussions with the children and their parents. The dropout children and their parents talked about their schooling experience and current involvement in out of school activities. A total of 22 FGDs was conducted with the participation of 92 children and 79 parents.

Case studies: A total of 22 case studies was prepared on children with various characteristics - six each on "good" students and dropout children and five each on students with disabilities and never-enrolled children. In preparing the case studies the respective children, their parents/guardians, relatives and the head teachers of the respective schools were consulted. Equal numbers of boys and girls were included.

Table 2.2
Various respondent groups, research techniques used and number of respondents

Respondent groups	Technique used	Number of respondents
Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO)	In-depth interview	9
Upazila Education Officer (UEO)	In-depth interview	10
Assistant Upazila Education Officer (AUEO)	FGD	39 (8)
	In-depth interview	2
Public representative	FGD	54 (7)
	In-depth interview	3
URC instructor	Interview and documentation	7
Head teacher	In-depth interview	10
Assistant teacher	FGD	31 (9)
School Managing Committee member	FGD	55 (8)
Students	FGD	94 (9)
Non enrolled children	FGD	92 (11)
Good student	Case study	6
Disabled student	Case study	5
Never enrolled children	Case study	5
Dropout children	Case study	6
Parents of students	FGD	101 (10)
Parents of non-enrolled children	FGD	79 (11)

Figures in the parentheses indicate the number of FGDs

Household survey. A school catchment area based household survey was carried out in all the 10 upazilas. (See Chapter 3, footnote on page -- for an explanation of the catchment area.) In each upazila three schools were chosen for this purpose - two government and one registered non-government school. Only these two types of schools have designated school catchment areas determined by the upazila education offices. The non-formal schools and the madrasas do not have such a fixed area. The household survey was done through a structured questionnaire. The questionnaire had six parts - education of the household members, socio-economic information, currently enrolled students in primary schools, dropout and never-enrolled children, use of private tutors, and child labour.

Half of the households from each catchment area were brought under the survey - by including every second houeshold in the survey. A total of 8,212 households were surveyed around 30 schools (20 government and 10 registered non-government).

Hearing the voices of children through focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with the children at various stages (school going, non-enrolled, disabled, and dropout), whom primary education must serve, was an important feature of the study. The plan was to limit the size of each of the FGD to eight children to allow good participation and interaction; however, it was difficult to restrict the numbers and a larger group joined in each session.

A total of three survey questionnaires and 22 checklists were prepared and used in the fieldwork of this *Education Watch*. The surveys, apart from the households (8,212 households), as noted, included upazila information (10 upazilas) and school information (47 schools).

E. Preparatory Work and Pilot Study

Preparation of this study was started in October 2003. With the leadership of the convenor of *Education Watch,* five education researchers from BRAC Research and Evaluation Division and two from Institute of Education and Development (IED) of BRAC University comprised the research team. The team prepared the draft instruments, i.e., the questionnaires and the checklists. Two consultants, one of whom was a former Director of DPE, worked with the research team in developing the instruments. A pilot study was conducted in November 2003. Analysis of pilot study data led to modification of the instruments. The pilot study in general helped in sharpening and defining the scope of the instruments. In the pilot phase, the voices of the children were recorded through a cadre of trained child facilitators. It was found logistically difficult and time consuming to use a cadre of child facilitators for the purpose. Instead, case studies on a number of children with various characteristics were added after the pilot study. The pilot study also helped researchers gain better understanding of the research questions and methods.

F. Field Operations

A total of 36 investigators conducted the fieldwork. Six research teams were formed - each team comprising six persons headed by a team member who was an experienced researcher and staff member of either IED or RED. Three of the members in each team were particularly responsible for the household survey. All research assistants had previous experience in fieldwork of this kind.

A five-day training workshop was held for the research assistants responsible for the qualitative aspects and a three-day course for the survey assistants. The research team

leaders supported by RED and IED staff members conducted the training sessions. Classroom lecture, group discussion, role-play, and trial fieldwork were the techniques used in the training.

Of the six field research teams, four worked in two upazilas each, and two in one upazila each. In each team, the team leader and the two qualitative research assistants did the school and upazila surveys, focus group discussions, in-depth interviews, case studies, and the classroom observations. The team leader was responsible for overall supervision of the activities of all the members. The team spent over two weeks in each upazila. The members of the *Education Watch* groups visited the field stations to supervise fieldwork. A former director of DPE visited all the upazilas under study.

All the interviews were held at the premises of the respondents. For focus group discussion, a convenient place of the participants was selected. The non-enrolled children and their parents met for group discussion at the home of one of the participants.

Interview for the school catchment area household survey was held at the doorstep of the household under survey. The survey started from a home nearest to the school and homes around the school were systematically covered including every second household in the survey, thus covering half of the total households in the catchment area. The head of the household was the principal respondent in the survey. In absence of the head, his/her spouse was the respondent. Any adult (aged 18 and above) in the household was the third choice if the spouse was also absent.

It was necessary to visit some households more than once to find an appropriate respondent.

Information gathered through interviews, focus group discussions and observations were recorded in notebooks. Sometimes, if the respondents permitted, a tape recorder was also used in addition to the notebook. The tape-recorded materials were transcribed soon after the events. The fieldwork was done from June 20 to August 6, 2004.

The respondents at all levels in the upazilas, schools and communities cooperated with the research teams. The upazila education officers and assistant education officers were particularly helpful in facilitating visits to schools and making available records and data for each upazila to the research teams.

G. Report Preparation

On completion of the fieldwork in the upazila, the material related to each upazila was put together in the form of "case studies" following a common structure and outline constructed to answer the research questions and paralleling the outline of the

final research report. The respective team leaders prepared the upazila cases. The chapters of the final report were drafted drawing on the relevant materials from each upazila case study. All members of the core research team including the team leaders read and commented on all the chapters. They also suggested inclusion of relevant findings from other studies and previous *Education Watch* reports.

A draft of the overview of the report was shared and discussed with the *Education Watch* community including people who have been involved in various capacities in *Education Watch* studies, members of education research institutions, NGOs concerned with education, government education officials and development partners' representatives. The draft of the full report was reviewed by a group of three prominent persons with deep interest in education. Feedback from the sharing session and comments of reviewers were incorporated in the final report.

H. Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability of the research methods and tools are concerns at every step of any research, even a qualitative study, from concept development to report writing. The validation of the theme arose from the expressed need for the study by the *Education Watch* group and others concerned with primary education. The validity and reliability of the methodology are derived from the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches reflected in the household and school surveys and focus group discussion and interviews with stakeholders. The instruments were developed by professional researchers, reviewed by a team of experts and then finalised by trying out the instruments in a pilot study.

Data were collected and analysed following appropriate procedures and with due care by experienced researchers from the Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC. Information was collected from multiple sources on the key issues and a process of triangulation was applied in drawing inferences in line with the qualitative focus of the study. The draft report was shared with stakeholders in a formal presentation and a five-member committee of reviewers was asked to provide written comments, which were incorporated in the final report.

I. Strengths and Weaknesses

Both the strengths and the weaknesses of the study lie in the summative and qualitative focus of the study and the methodology followed for this purpose. Following are the strengths and weaknesses of the study.

Quantitative analysis, especially of data derived from a purposeful survey of school catchment area households, provided new information and insights about the operation of primary education unavailable from the usual school-based data with poor reliability. This analysis of statistics combined with qualitative information

collected from different stakeholders made it possible to gain a new perspective on the state of primary education.

The study, by its design, drew on research and findings from previous *Education Watch* studies as well as other relevant research work to develop a summative view of primary education leading to consideration of policy and action implications.

The objective, design and methodology of the study allowed to bring out and highlight the field and grassroots view of the functioning of primary education - from the point of view of children, parents and teachers; the school as an organisational entity; and the union parishad and the upazila as the immediate environment and the source of support to the school. This local view is not given due attention in research and policy discourse, but critical in addressing key issues in the system.

The plan was to undertake the study in 12 upazilas selected from six divisions, representing diverse socio-economic conditions. Heavy and extensive floods prevented field work to be carried out in two upazilas. One had a low-lying topography characterised by shifting river-beds (Char Bhadrashan) and the other was a lowland area with many *haors* which are permanent or seasonal water bodies (Biswambharpur). Elimination of these two ecologically disadvantaged upazilas from the study may have prevented the perspective of deprivation presented in the study from being bleaker than it was.

The quantitative data and the qualitative analysis based on information from ten upazilas do not permit projections or inferences regarding the national situation. The aim was not to draw any statistical inferences from the non-random samples; the analysis was intended to provide an understanding of the multi-dimensional complexity of quality and equity in primary education in the specific locations, and thus sharpen the insight about the problem in general.

In the probe into quality and quantity of primary education, the present study did not attempt to measure learning achievements and outcomes, which are key indicators of quality, and did not provide any new information in this respect. The study was undertaken accepting the underlying premise of poor quality in general in primary education, based on findings of previous studies, and attempted to shed light on the operations of the system causing or reinforcing disadvantages of a large segment of the population.

In summary, the mix of quantitative and qualitative analyses, a micro and meso view of the system, and a summative perspective presented a somewhat complex analytical framework, but provided a unique perspective that led to useful policy inferences which would have been missed otherwise.

Chapter 3

Primary Education Provisions

This chapter describes the distribution and characteristics of primary education provisions in the study upazilas. Total number of schools, teachers and students, the share of enrolment in different types of institutions and the perceptions of stakeholders about the provisions are presented. The rationale, adequacy and equity of primary education provisons in the study upazilas are discussed.

A. About the Study Upazilas

A total of ten upazilas was under study. Representing six divisions and geographical and other diversities of the country, the upazilas are Chandina, Jessore Sadar, Golapganj, Bakerganj, Patharghata, Tala, Madhupur, Tanor, Nageshwari and Lohagara. The area, population, and literacy rate of the upazilas are presented in Table 3.1. Variations among the upazilas in respect of different characteristics are evident from the table. The highest literacy rate for population 7 years and above (Bakerganj with 62 percent) among the upazilas is more than double of the lowest rate (Nageswari with 30 percent). Population in an upazila varied from 162,000 (Patharghata) to 637,000 in an urban upazila (Jessore Sadar). Population was not necessarily related to the area of an upazila. The density of population per square kilometre ranged from 776 (Nageshwari) to 1,515 (Chandina). In respect of area, they varied from 202 square kilometres (Chandina) to 501 square kilometres (Madhupur). One of the upazilas, Jessore Sadar, is the headquarters of a district, whereas the average distance of the upazila town from the district towns for the ten upazilas is 39 km. In at least two upazilas, Bakerganj and Patharghata, the waterways are more widely used for travel and transportation than the roads. The economies are generally agriculture-based except for one (Patharghata) where fishing is the main occupation.

Table 3.1
Area, population, and literacy rate in the study upazilas

Upazila	Area (square km)	Total Population (BBS)	Population per sq. km	Literacy rate (7+)
Chandina	**201.92**	305,820	**1,515**	43.9
Jessore Sadar	432.81	**636,780**	1,471	59.1
Golapganj	278.34	263,220	946	47.0
Bakerganj	401.63	354,260	882	**62.1**
Patharghata	387.36	**162,300**	**419**	60.1
Tala	344.15	291,360	847	45.9
Madhupur	**500.67**	417,100	833	34.2
Tanor	295.39	173,260	587	49.6
Nageshwari	415.80	322,460	776	**30.3**
Lohagara	258.87	266,680	1,030	45.3
Total	3,516.94	3,193,240	908	48.0

Note: The highest and the lowest values are shown in bold face.
Source: Provisional Population Census Report 2001 (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2003)

B. Distribution of Schools

Including the state owned primary schools there are 11 types of primary education institutions in operation in Bangladesh. The list of different types of primary schools and a short description of each are given in Box 3.1.

A distribution of the types of primary schools and pertinent information about them are provided in Table 3.2 on the basis of information collected from the upazila education offices. Ten types of schools (except for the PTI-based experimental schools) were found in the upazilas. A total of 2,452 schools are listed by upazila education offices in the study upazilas.

Box 3.1 Eleven types of primary schools

1. *Government primary school (GPS):* This is by far the dominant category and these are run fully by the government. The government appoints and pays salaries of teachers. It also pays for school buildings, textbooks and teaching materials for the school. A total of 37,700 GPS with 157,000 teachers enrolled 10.7 million children in 2002.
2. *Registered non-government primary school (RNGPS):* These schools are established privately under community auspices. On being registered by the government after some minimum years of wait and fulfillment of criteria, the teachers become eligible for 90 percent salary subvention from the government and allocations for building and facilities. About 19,000 RNGPS enrolled 4 million children in 2002.
3. *Non-registered primary school.* These are schools set up privately or under community auspices, usually waiting to meet the criteria for government registration and financial support.
4. *Primary classes attached to high school.* These schools are in the same premises as high schools and are managed by the high school authorities. They follow the national primary education curriculum. These schools are not supervised by the primary education authorities and do not receive any support from the government.
5. *Experimental school.* These are attached to the primary teachers training institutes (PTIs) and used by PTIs for practice teaching by teacher trainees. The school budget is part of the government PTI budget.
6. *Satellite school.* These are feeder schools with one or two classrooms taught by one or two teachers - established under community auspices to have schooling facilities close to children's home at grade level 1 and 2. Government support to these schools has been discontinued; as a result few satellite schools exist any more.
7. *Community school.* These are community-sponsored schools taught by a locally appointed teacher in communities where regular school provisions are insufficient. The government provides an allowance to the teacher.
8. *Non-formal primary school.* These are NGO-run schools meant to serve children who have crossed the school entry age or have dropped out of the primary school. Typically, these are one-room-one teacher schools in which a cohort of around 30 students are taught for three or four years to bring them to the level of grade 4 or 5 in the formal school or to give them a full equivalent of primary education. These receive no assistance from the government and are not included in the official primary education statistics.
9. *Ebtedayee madrasa.* These are primary level institutions where the curriculum combines general education and religious education. They are nominally under the supervision of the Ministry of Education,

but they receive textbooks from the primary education authorities and a proportion of them are beneficiary of the stipend scheme at the primary level.

10. *Primary classes attached to high madrasas.* These are under the management of the secondary level madrasas and their situation is analogous to the primary classes attached to secondary schools, Curriculum-wise they are similar to the ebtedayee mdrasas. The primary education authorities do no have responsibility for these institutions.

11. *Kindergarten.* These are generally proprietary institutions run by individuals as commercial enterprises. They follow their own curriculum and teaching of English is emphasized. These are expected to be registered with the government either as a business or a non-profit organisation, though often they are not registered.

The state owned primary schools (GPS) are on top in numbers (997) followed by registered non-government primary schools (600), ebtedayee madrasas (213), ebtedayee level classes attached to high madrasas (175), and non-formal schools (157). It should be noted that upazila education data about schools other than GPS and RNGPS might not be complete or accurate, since the upazila office has no supervisory responsibility for these schools. It has been found that the number provided for non-formal schools underestimated the actual number of institutions run by BRAC and other NGOS.

Table 3.2
Distribution of schools by types in 10 upazilas

Upazila	Types of schools										Total
	GPS	RNGPS	NGPS	Comm unity	H. att. PS	Eb. Mad.	H. att. Eb.	NFE	KG	Others	
Chandina	86	30	-	12	-	15	12	-	39	-	194
Jessore Sadar	140	74	13	32	20	9	20	12	12	8	340
Golapganj	140	11	6	12	1	2	9	-	11	-	192
Bakerganj	156	94	4	13	12	17	28	-	1	-	325
Patharghata	61	69	2	11	0	29	13	-	4	-	189
Tala	109	93	4	1	5	7	17	-	4	-	240
Madhupur	99	57	13	7	2	91	18	28	8	3	326
Tanor	49	73	8	-	-	4	20	1	3		158
Nageshwari	95	77	5	4	1	39	38	-	6	-	265
Lohagara	62	22	-	13	-	-	-	116	10	-	223
Total	997	600	55	105	41	213	175	157	98	11	2,452

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

An attempt was made to compare the 6-10 year age group population and provisions for schooling in the upazilas. In order to assess the validity of the age-group estimate

used by upazila education office, the demographic proportion for the age group from the 2001 census data was collected and compared with the upazila data. They matched in respect of five upazilas out of ten (Annex 3.1). This raises questions about the data regarding children eligible for primary education in upazilas and gross and net enrolment data reported by upazilas and primary education authorities.

In comparing children enrolled, schools and catchment area[1] of schools (Table 3.3 and Annex 3.2), it can be seen that there is great variation in actual provisions for services. Primary education authorities define catchment areas only for GPS and RNGPS, which covered over 80 percent of the children. The distribution of GPS and RNGPS and their catchment areas were not consistent with the number of eligible children. One upazila (Lohagara) has a large average catchment area per school of 3.1 square kilometres and average enrolment per catchment area of 534 students - an indication of insufficient provision for schooling. On the other hand, Bakerganj had an average catchment area of 1.6 square kilometre and enrolment per catchment area of 196 students - relatively generous provisions for primary schooling. The main point here is that there appears to be no rationale or application of criteria in detemining the distribution and provisions for schools, which are directly under the supervision of the primary education authorities and are largely financed by the government.

Table 3.3
Distribution of 6-10 year aged children and students currently enrolled in GPS and RNGPS catchment areas

Upazila	Number of GPS and RNGPS	6-10 year aged children	Enrolled students (All schools)	Net enrolment rate (%)	Students per catchment area
Chandina	116	50,895	40,342	79.36	439
Jessore Sadar	214	102,465	53,946	52.6	479
Golapganj	151	49,606	37,522	75.6	329
Bakerganj	250	48,985	44,114	90.1	196
Patharghata	130	21,836	18,262	83.6	168
Tala	202	36,470	32,096	88.0	181
Madhupur	156	61,430	45,982	74.9	394
Tanor	122	22,271	18,739	84.1	183
Nageshwari	172	75,071	51,026	68.0	436
Lohagara	84	44,915	44,917	100.0	535
Total	1,597	5,13,944	3,86,946	75.3	322

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

[1] Catchment area refers to an area from which the children are supposed to enrol in a particular school. This is applicable only for the GPS and RNGPS. The AUEOs delineate the catchment areas along with the head teachers for the schools in a sub-cluster under their supervision. They send these to the UEO for approval. Children are free to enrol in any school within or outside the catchment area. The catchment areas were first determined in 1995 and revised in 2003.

C. Enrolment in the Survey Upazilas

Primary education enrolment situation in the ten upazilas are discussed in this section. For a comparative perspective, we look at the national trend presented in Table 3.4, based on different sources. It shows a trend of increasing gross and net enrolment. The numbers are substantially higher, at least for the gross rate than those reported by DPE (97.35 percent in 2002). The rates found in the ten upazilas based on household surveys show even higher rates, perhaps because they captured more accurately non-formal and madrasa enrolment (including *quomi* madrasas, which are run totally independently of the government). However, these 2004 upazila information cannot be used for national projection because they do not represent an adequate sample for such purpose.

Table 3.4
National gross and net enrolment by sex in years 1998, 2000, 2002 and 2004

Year	Gross enrolment ratio (%)			Net enrolment rate (%)		
	Girls	Boys	Both	Girls	Boys	Both
1998	109	104	107	78.6	75.5	77.5
2000	107	108	108	79.9	79.8	79.8
2002	107	105	106	86.1	84.1	85.1
2004	na	na	105	92.3	88.6	90.4

Note: 2004 data are for only 10 upazilas and cannot be regarded as valid for national estimates. 2002 data are from a survey conducted by the Compulsory Primary Education Implementation and Monitoring Unit of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. 1998 and 2000 data are from national sampling survey conducted by Education Watch.
Source: Education Watch 1998 and 2001, 2003/4; Child education and literacy survey 2002,CPEIMU.

The data collected from the upazila education offices, presented in Table 3.3, show a net enrolment rate of just over 75 percent - substantially lower than the rate found by the household survey in the school catchment areas in the same upazilas, shown in Table 3.4 above. Table 3.5 provides net and gross enrolment rates for each of the ten upazilas found in the household survey.

Table 3.5
Gross and net enrolment by upazila

Upazila	Number of children aged 6-10	Net enrolment rate (%)	Gross enrolment ratio (%)
Chandina	927	90	99
Jessore Sadar	669	88	96
Golapganj	373	87	113
Bakerganj	263	90	121
Patharghata	237	98	111
Tala	479	97	98
Madhupur	541	82	104
Tanor	246	92	111
Nageshwari	560	88	116
Lohagara	923	95	105
Total	5218	90	105

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

The cause for the discrepancy, as noted, most likely is incomplete data at UEO for schools other than GPS and RNGPS. While the overall enrolment rates in the upazilas based on the household surveys are relatively high - at a net rate of 90.4 percent, the data also show important variations among upazilas. The school catchment area-based household survey shows a range of 72.9 percent to 100 percent enrolment in schools of eligible children (Annex 3.2). Factors contributing to such a variation are discussed in later chapters.

Share of enrolment by school types. Children are enrolled in GPS and RNGPS in overwhelming numbers. Those who are for various reasons left out or behind by these schools are the ones served by the other types of provisions. The distribution of enrolment among different types of schools and the trends in this respect is important to understand for considering appropriate policy measures. Table 3.6 shows this distribution in the upazilas as well as a comparison with national data from *Education Watch 2001*.

Table 3.6
Comparison of distribution of enrolment in 10 upazilas and national data

Type of school	Primary school Enrolment (%)	
	2001 (National)	2004 (10 upazilas)
GPS	61.0	57.4
RNGPS	16.6	24.4
NGPS	1.8	1.7
Community	2.7	3.1
Ebtedayee madrasa	2.6	5.3
High attached ebtedayee madrasa	4.4	3.9
NFE	7.1	1.1
Kindergarten	2.1	2.5

Source: Education Watch, 2001 and UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

In the ten upazilas, the share of RNGPS appears to have increased and that of GPS has decreased compared to national estimates three yeas ago. The two types of state-supported schools served 82 percent of the enrolled children in the ten upazilas. Proportion of enrolment in the madrasas is 9 percent, higher by 2 percentage points compared to the national estimate of 2001. The percentage of enrolment in non-formal schools appeared to be significantly lower than what was observed nationally. However, the upazila education office data regarding non-formal school enrolment cannot be regarded as reliable. Again it should be noted that, the two sets of numbers are not strictly comparable; no conclusion can be drawn regarding a trend; they only provide a snapshot of the situation in the upazilas.

D. Teachers

Number and distribution of teachers in schools and teacher-student ratio affect the quality of the educational provision. While the one-teacher school is an acceptable norm in the non-formal primary schools, in the traditional schools adequate number of teachers and an acceptable teacher-student ratio have been an important issue. The analysis of teaching personnel in GPS and RNGPS in the survey upazilas showed that the average number in GPS is 4.5 teachers per school and 3.8 teachers per school in RNGPS (Table 3.7). The number of teaching personnel in these schools is meant to run schools in two shifts.

The gender ratio of the teachers indicate that the female recruitment quota of 60 percent is yet to improve sufficiently the gender balance in teaching positions. In the study upazilas, the percentage of female teachers is 41 in GPS and 30 in RNGPS.

Table 3.7
Distribution of teachers by school type and gender in survey upazilas

School type	Number of schools	Number of teachers			% of female teachers
		Males	Females	Average per school	
GPS	1,022	2,659	1,876	4.5	41.4
RNGPS	583	1,602	693	3.8	30.2
Community	108	108	173	2.6	61.6
Total	1,693	4,374	2,750	4.2	38.6

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

Distribution of the teachers in GPS and RNGPS by upazilas is presented in Table 3.8. The table indicates a large variation among the numbers of teachers per school in different upazilas. On an average the schools had 4.3 teachers, and the number ranged from one to 16. The highest mean number of teachers per school in an upazila was 5.5 (Chandina) and the least was 3.7 (Golapganj). The percentage of female teachers also varied among the upazilas ranging from 26.3 percent in Nageshwari to 53.9 percent in Golapganj (Annex 3.3).

Table 3.8
Distribution of teachers by upazilas

Upazila	Number of schools	Number of teachers			
		Total	Mean per school	Minimum	Maximum
Chandina	116	635	5.5	3	12
Jessore Sadar	213	949	4.5	2	14
Golapganj	151	566	3.7	2	10
Bakerganj	244	1,067	4.4	2	16
Patharghata	130	509	3.9	2	8
Tala	220	857	3.9	1	10
Madhupur	154	624	4.1	1	9
Tanor	122	471	3.9	2	9
Nageshwari	171	741	4.3	2	11
Lohagara	84	411	4.9	3	10
Total	1,605	6,830	4.3	1	16

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

Based on the upazila data about teachers and students, a projection can be made of requirements regarding teachers and schools to serve all children with acceptable education provisions. If all children aged 6-10 years were to enrol in GPS or RNGPS, and a teacher-student ratio in the survey upazilas is to be improved from 1:60 to 1:40, total number of teachers in the 10 upazilas should be 12,849 - 80 percent more than the present number. If it is assumed that 80 percent of the students will be enrolled in GPS and RNGPS, the requirements will still be 60 percent more than the current numbers, if conditions regarding manageable class size is to be met. Similarly, to ensure adequate distribution of school facilities, if one school is foreseen for an average of 200 students, then a total of 2,569 schools will be needed, i.e., 972 new schools.

E. Perceptions about Primary Education

Perceptions and opinions of stakeholders about education provisions were one of the questions explored in the present study through focus group discussion. Focus groups consisted of parents, teachers, students, managing committee members, union parishad members, and assistant upazila education officers. Separate Interviews were conducted with UNOs and UEOs.

On the question about the type of schools, among the many that existed, which performed adequately in providing primary education to children, there were some "champions" or protagonists for most of the categories. It appears that there is an absence of common criteria and understanding regarding quality of education and

how a school's performance should be judged. The concept of accountability of schools and education personnel including teachers, head teachers and supervisors at the upazila level, all of whom received public funds to provide public service, appeared to be lacking. Absence of models or knowledge about effective schools, and high quality teaching-learning practices also may have led to the acceptance and tolerance of the familiar.

Questions about school's performance and quality of instruction evoked positive responses from some of the stakeholders about all of the main types of institutions. The AUEOs and UEOs generally claimed that GPS were doing fine and were of acceptable quality. Some parents joined them because, as they reasoned, "most of the scholarships went to the students of this type of school." Some parents, on the other hand, were critical of these schools, because they questioned the commitment of both the teachers and education officers to their duty.

"Kindergarten is the best quality schools" was a commonly expressed view. All who could afford it, the well-off and the educated people, sent their children to kindergartens; therefore, these must be good, some parents argued. One UNO had enrolled his son in a GPS, but he thought "the quality was low," and moved the child to a kindergarten. He did not seem to see the irony in this episode. Local influentials such as Union Parishad members and chairpersons followed the same course, instead of working to improve the performance of the public school.

NFE schools also had their champions. One view echoed by many was that in non-formal schools, "the teachers taught the students with due care, the supervisors supervised the schools regularly, and the classrooms were not so crowded." The fact that "this type of schools did not charge money for educational expenditures from the parents; rather, some schools provided learning material and other support to the students" impressed most parents.

Religious considerations prompted some stakeholders to support the provisions for ebtedayee madrasas; since ''the madrasas taught children about their religious duties." There was, however, a discernible majority critical of ebtedayee madrasas and RNGPS as "of poor quality compared to GPS, kindergarten and non-formal schools."

While a clearly articulated view regarding adequacy in quantity and quality for primary education provisions was lacking, in most upazilas, a number of institutions were pointed out by many of the focus group participants and informants as "good quality institutions." These could be a GPS, kindergarten, community school or NFE school. These, of course, could serve only a small proportion of the children, usually not those from poorer families, except the non-formal schools. The so-called good schools were not promoting equality of opportunity for all children. And these ''good

schools" were generally accepted as a "special case", rather than a model to be emulated by other schools in the upazila. Nor were ideas expressed about how pro-actively these good examples could be turned into models to be replicated.

F. Summing Up: Primary Education Provisions

This chapter has described the characteristics and distribution of primary education in the ten study upazilas. The ten upazials selected from all six divisions of the country had a total population of 3,200,000 with a primary school age population of 514,000. There were 2,452 primary education institutions in the 10 upazilas, according to respective education office data, which probably underestimated NGO and private provisions. Of the listed numbers, just under 1,000 schools were run by the government (GPS), 600 were registered non-government primary schools (RNGPS), and 400 were ebtedayee madrasas or classes attached to high madrasas. Key features of these provisions are given below.

1. According to the upazila education office data derived from their own child education survey, 75.3 percent of the children in the eligible age group were enrolled in primary school. However, the household survey conducted in school catchment areas in the upazilas conducted under the present study showed an enrolment rate of 90.4 percent. There appears to be an underestimation of enrolment in institutions other than GPS and RNGPS in the upazila education office data.

2. UEO data show 57 percent of students are in GPS, 24 percent in RNGPS, 9 percent in all types of madrasas, 2.5 percent in kindergartens and 1.1 percent in NFE schools.

3. National enrolment data in recent years since 1998 indicate a steady rise from year to year from 77.5 percent in 1998 to 85 percent in 2002. From the present upazila data collected from a non-random sample, no national estimate can be derived, but the status and trend at the national level merit proper study.

4. There were 6,830 teachers in 1,605 GPS and RNGPS. Ratio of female teachers was 39 percent. There was no reliable source of data for teachers of other types of institutions.

5. Focus group discussion and interviews with local stakeholders in primary education revealed:
   - There is a lack of common criteria and understanding regarding quality of education and how a school's performance should be judged. The concept of accountability of schools and education personnel including teachers, head teachers and supervisors at the upazila level, all of whom received public funds

to provide public service, appeared to be lacking. Absence of models or knowledge about effective schools, and high quality teaching-learning practices also may have led to the acceptance and tolerance of the familiar.

- In every upazila, a number of institutions were pointed out by many of the focus group participants and informants as "good quality institutions." These could be a GPS, kindergarten, community school or NFE school. These, of course, could serve only a small proportion of the children, usually not those from poorer families. The so-called good schools were not promoting equality of opportunity for all children. And these ''good schools" were generally accepted as a "special cases", rather than a model to be emulated by other schools in the upazila. Nor were ideas expressed about how pro-actively these good examples could be turned into models to be replicated.

- Religious considerations prompted some stakeholders to support the provisions for ebtedayee madrasas; since ''the madrasas taught children about their religious duties." There was, however, a discernible majority critical of ebtedayee madrasas and RNGPS as "of poor quality compared to GPS, kindergarten and non-formal schools."

To recapitulate the situation regarding primary school provisions, the key points are: *First,* schools, especially GPS and RNGPS, which serve over 80 percent of the children, are not distributed according to set criteria and are not related to child population or area of the upazila. Nor is the ratio between GPS and RNGPS based on criteria or a discernible pattern. *Second,* there is no effort to develop a complementarity between GPS and RNGPS, on the one hand, and the other types of institutions, such as madrasas and non-formal schools, to ensure adequate provisions for all children. No one is responsible to maintain an overview of primary education or plan for adequate provisions in the upazila. *Third,* The GPS has on an average one more teacher than the RNGPS (4.5 and 3.8), but both have teaching personnel to run school only with two shifts; the gender imbalance in teaching positions in the public system remains high in spite of the policy of affirmative action in recruitment. *Fourth,* with the number of GPS essentially remaining unchanged, the share of total enrolment in RNGPS has been rising. Generally poorer provisions for teachers, and physical facilities in these schools, compared to GPS, have meant that the overall quality of provisions for primary education has deteriorated. *Fifth,* the data for the upazilas suggest an increase in net enrolment and a narrowing of gap between net and gross enrolment, which indicates a maturity of the system with a culture of sending children to school at the designated entry age taking root. Whether this indicates a wider national trend needs to be established with accurate and up-to-date national data. *Sixth,* there is a serious insufficiency of provisions, creating a deficit of

the order of 50 to 60 percent in terms of schools, classrooms and teachers, if criteria for acceptable quality for provisions are applied. *Seventh,* the present situation strongly indicates the need for a process and mechanism for upazila-based comprehensive and participatory planning, with local analysis of needs and circumstances, for rational and adequate provisions to ensure quality primary education for all children. *Finally,* a systematic and planned effort is needed to develop understanding and awareness about the criteria and concept of quality in education, performance standards of schools, and how accountability of schools and education personnel to communities and parents can be established and demanded.

Chapter 4

Resources in the Primary School

This chapter presents the situation of education resources in the primary school in 10 upazilas under study - the state of school buildings and grounds, classrooms, human resources, learning materials, and financial resources at the disposal of the school. Adequacy of resources, their variation among schools, and how these affect participation of children in primary education are discussed.

It is known that teaching-learning environment in primary schools and classrooms are generally unsatisfactory. Inadequate classroom facilities, absence of basic provisions in many schools such as toilets and drinking water, little or no learning aids and non-availability of textbooks at least for a part of the school-year, and insufficient numbers of teachers and classrooms to maintain reasonable class sizes are common characteristics of primary education in Bangladesh (Chowdhury *et al* 2000). The present study attempts to look closely at the situation in selected upazilas to shed further light on the nature of the inadequacies.

A. Physical Facilities

Essential provisions in terms of physical facilities of the school are the necessary, although not sufficient, condition for quality education. Building and grounds, existence of water supply and toilets, and the overall environment of the school for carrying out teaching-learning activities are discussed in this section.

School buildings. Over the years, there has been a substantial investment in improving the physical facilities in primary schools, but it has been observed that they are yet far from satisfactory (Chowdhury *et al* 2001). In many cases the school buildings became shabby and damp, and plasters came off from the walls inside the classroom sometimes soon after new construction or repair. In some instances, teachers and head teachers complained that the school buildings were at risk of collapsing and posed definite safety hazards. Dismal physical environment in most schools is a problem because there is usually little recurrent budget allocation for routine maintenance (JBIC 2002). These general observations about primary education facilities applied to the upazilas under study. A national picture of the quality of school buildings is presented in Annex 4.1.

The type of construction of school buildings and their features varied mostly on the basis of the type of institution and their management responsibility as presented in Table 4.1. Partially brick-built buildings complemented by structures with tin roof and wall are the most prevalent type of construction for schools. Floors are mostly made of cement. On the whole, RNGPS, in which there is a higher level of community involvement, have a better overall rating for buildings than the government primary schools. Ninety percent of RNGPS had all brick buildings compared to 30 percent in the case of GPS.

An overall rating was made as a part of the study of the physical facilities of 47 schools visited by the field investigators. Only 15 percent of the schools (7 out of 47) merited a "good" rating. This meant that these schools had safe, sturdy and clean roof, walls and floors for the whole school building and had adequate toilets and water

supply. Over thirty-five percent of the schools did not meet a majority of these criteria and were rated as "poor" in respect of overall physical facilities. Half of the schools failed substantially by some of these criteria and were rated as "fair." Extremely unsafe and hazardous conditions were observed in the case of some madrasas and even some GPS, for which the government has formal responsibility. Buildings or parts of them, in these instances, were damaged and in partial collapse, yet classes were being conducted in them due to shortage of classrooms. Whether effective teaching could take place in these conditions is questionable, but children were certainly being subjected to unacceptable hazards.

In focus groups and interviews, most of the teachers and some parents complained that buildings newly built or repaired with government assistance in GPS and RNGPS were poorly constructed and developed problems in a short time after construction or repair was completed. The AUEOs and the UEO corroborated these statements.

Box 4.1 The desperate state of madrasas

Madrasas were found to be in a particularly desperate state in respect of school facilities. Nine percent or 37 thousand children of primary school age in the ten upazilas were enrolled in madrasas. Three madrasas visited in the Bakerganj, Nageshwari and Jessore Sadar upazilas illustrate the problem. In Bakerganj, the madrasa had only a 60 square feet shed with a very low tin roof and tin-made half-wall with openings on upper and lower parts of the walls. The shed was divided into three classes with half-partitions, which were open at top and bottom. The teachers somehow placed three benches, a table and a chair in each classroom. Any meaningful teaching learning was impossible to conduct in that situation.

In Nageshwari, the madrasa had a tiny tin-made long room with no partitions, and only holes cut out on the walls for doors and windows. The teachers were taking three classes in the same room. Students heard a cacophony of simultaneous lessons from all three classes.

In Jessore, the ebtedayee section was a part of a bigger Alia madrasa. Five classes were held in the same room with a tin roof and brick walls. Big holes cut out on walls served as doorways and windows. There were no partitions among classes. Teachers complained that the classrooms were totally exposed and unsecured and people from the adjacent slum sometimes defecated in the classrooms after school hours.

— Education Watch Research Team

Table 4.1
Physical facilities in schools surveyed

Item		GPS (n=20)	RNGPS (n=10)	Madrasa (n=10)	NFE (n=7)	All schools (n=47)
Construction material	All bricks	6	9	0	1	16
	Brick and tin	13	1	5	2	21
	All tin	0	0	3	3	6
	Other	1	0	2	1	4
Floor	Earthen	2	0	7	4	13
	Concrete	16	10	1	3	30
	Both	2	0	2	0	4
Toilets	Adequate	8	4	2	2	16
	Inadequate	10	6	5	2	23
	Non-existent	2	0	3	3	8
Clean water	Adequate	12	6	4	4	26
	Inadequate	4	2	2	2	10
	Non-existent	4	2	4	1	11
Overall physical facilities	Good	5	2	0	0	7
	Fair	10	4	4	5	23
	Poor	5	4	6	2	17

Notes: Toilets - "adequate" means separate functioning toilets for males and females in appropriate numbers. Clean water- "adequate" means a regular supply of clean drinking and toilet water in appropriate quantity. Overall physical facility - "Good" means safe, sturdy and clean roof, walls and floor for the whole school; "Fair" means not "good" in a major part of the school; "poor" means mostly not "good."

Source: Education Watch School Survey, 2004

Water and sanitation facilities. When a primary school operates without clean drinking water and separate toilets for boys and girls, this is a telltale sign of weak commitment to children's education on the part of the school authorities. Unfortunately, many primary schools, including some managed by the government, are in this condition.

The first *Education Watch* report in 1999 showed that nearly half of the schools had their own drinking water facilities and in over 90 percent of schools, water was available in the school or in "a nearby place" (Chowdhury *et al* 1999). The present study on selected upazilas also showed that "adequate" clean water was available in half the schools and it was "fair" to "adequate" in 80 percent of the schools. In expressing their views in focus groups, some teachers remarked that inadequate water and sanitation caused students to be infected with water-borne diseases. The research team found that, in many instances, the areas adjacent to the tube wells were muddy and slippery and sometimes the tube well was placed just beside the toilet, resulting in the possibility of contamination of water. At least in one GPS, an arsenic contaminated tube well was not sealed even though arsenic was detected in water four years ago.

The present survey revealed half of the schools to have the same sanitation facility for both sexes (rated "fair"). There were no toilet facilities in 15 percent of the schools ("poor"). One third had "adequate" facilities with functioning toilets for boys and girls. In a few cases, the toilet remained locked during the school hour for exclusive use by teachers. Maintaining cleanliness of toilets was found to be a major problem in most cases, since schools had no budget for "cleaners". Inculcating habits of cleanliness and hygienic practices in school generally did not include the participation of teachers and students in keeping the school's sanitary facilities clean.

Classroom accommodation. A previous *Education Watch* study had revealed that primary schools, on the whole, had a capacity to accommodate only about 60 percent of enrolled students (Chowdhury *et al* 2001). In the course of the present study, inadequate sitting capacity in comparison with the total number of students was reported by all stakeholders in the upazilas and was also observed by the research team in the schools (Table 4.2). Students had to sit in a crowded condition in the classroom making it an uncongenial place for teaching and learning. Some parents complained that their children returned home from the school as they could not find a seat in the classroom. The lower grade classes were particularly crowded. The table also shows that except the NFE schools no other schools had the capacity to accommodate all the enrolled students in the classroom. The situation in the madrasa was worst in this respect.

Table 4.2
Sitting capacity in different types of schools

School type	Average class size	Average sitting capacity per class	Percentage of students who can seat with ease
GPS	53	40	76
RNGPS	43	41	97
Madrasa	41	25	60
Non-formal	28	31	109

Source: Education Watch School Survey, 2004

It was observed that closely packed seating and the typical large class size became a serious obstacle to effective teaching-learning. Only in the NFE schools, with more space than the others in the classroom and a strictly regulated class size of 30 to 33, flexible seating for active learner-centred methods of teaching-learning could be practised. In these schools, students usually sat on jute mats, instead of benches, in a 'U' shaped arrangement and, often changed the sitting pattern for particular activities or to communicate with each other better.

Physical environment of the classroom. Table 4.3 presents the situation of classroom as a learning environment in the surveyed schools. Two-thirds of the schools had sufficient light and visibility in classrooms, but one-third did not - which must be regarded as a serious deficiency in a primary school classroom. Less than half of the schools had electricity, but actual use of electricity in classrooms was observed to be even less, often because the school did not have a budget to pay for the electricity bill. Ventilation and flow of air in classrooms, often built of tin roof and walls, is a major concern. Almost sixty percent of the schools were judged as unsatisfactory in this regard. It was observed that students suffered from great heat and a suffocating environment in the classroom. In general, the NFE schools had adequate windows, light and ventilation in classrooms. The earth floor in some NFE schools, on the other hand, according to some parents and teachers, was found to become wet and unstable, and difficult to keep clean in the rainy season.

Most schools were found to have a problem with keeping the building and premises clean and tidy. The head teachers and the teachers of GPS and RNGPS complained that they had to clean the schools by themselves, as the schools did not have a budget for peons and cleaners. Some schools put the students to work before or after school to keep the classrooms and the school compound clean. It was sometimes made a part of learning good habits and inculcating a sense of civic responsibility. In some instances, the girl students were made to do most of the work - which reflected a reversal to gender stereotyping of social roles on the part of the teachers.

Table 4.3
Classroom environment in surveyed schools

Item	Rating	GPS (n=20)	RNGPS (n=10)	Madrasa (n=10)	NFE (n=7)	All (n=47)
Electricity	Yes	09	01	03	01	14
in school	No	11	09	07	06	33
Light and	Adequate	14	08	04	04	30
visibility	Unsatisfactory	06	02	06	03	17
Ventilation	Adequate	13	08	05	03	29
	Unsatisfactory	07	02	05	04	18
Overall	Good	02	1	00	03	06
classroom	Fair	11	06	02	02	21
environment	Poor	07	03	08	02	20

Source: Education Watch School Survey, 2004

Environment of the school surrounding. Noise pollution, absence of a school wall and an unsafe environment for children are clearly not conducive to effective or joyful teaching-learning in the school. Table 4.4 presents the situation of school environment

in the upazilas based on observations in selected schools. Noise pollution in the school, existence of a playground, a school wall to protect the sanctity of the school compound and to keep intruding people and animals out, safety of children in the school (to minimize possibilities of accidents and health hazards), and presence of trees and plants on the school ground (in terms of their aesthetic and environmental value), were looked at. A composite rating of the schools was also done taking into account all these factors.

Half of the schools observed were rated as "fair" in terms of overall school environment. This meant that the schools had at least a "satisfactory" or "adequate" score in all the five categories considered. Less than 10 percent (4 out of 47 schools) were judged as "good" in terms of overall school environment.

Noise pollution was a serious problem in almost 20 percent of the schools. Three quarters of the schools surveyed had some kind of playground, but more than half of these were "unsatisfactory." Just over fifty percent of the schools were regarded as having a "safe" or "adequate" environment for children in the school. Trees and plants did not exist in 20 percent of the schools. Absence of a school wall was a problem for most schools; less than 10 percent had a complete compound wall.

Table 4.4
School environment in surveyed schools

Item	Rating	GPS (n=20)	RNGPS (n=10)	Madrasa (n=10)	NFE (n=7)	All (n=47)
Noise pollution	Good	6	6	4	4	20
	Satisfactory	8	3	2	2	15
	Poor	6	1	4	1	12
Play ground	Adequate	6	3	4	2	15
	Unsatisfactory	9	5	4	1	19
	Does not exist	5	2	2	4	13
School wall	Yes	3	0	1	1	5
	Partial	7	1	2	2	12
	No	10	9	7	4	30
Safe environment for children	Adequate	9	7	6	3	25
	Unsatisfactory	7	2	2	4	15
	Poor	4	1	2	0	7
Trees and plants in the school ground	Adequate	9	2	4	2	17
	Unsatisfactory	7	4	4	5	20
	Does not exist	4	4	2	0	10
Overall school environment	Good	2	0	1	1	4
	Fair	11	7	2	4	24
	Poor	7	3	7	2	19

Source: Education Watch School Survey, 2004

B. Human Resources

This section continues the discussion of the adequacy of teaching personnel, elaborating on the overall situation presented in Chapter 3.

Number and adequacy of teachers. As noted in Chapter 3, average number of teachers per school in the upazilas was found to be 4.5 for GPS and 3.8 for RNGPS. This matched closely with the national estimates made in *Education Watch* 1999 (Chowdhury *et al* 1999). The information collected from various upazila education offices showed that almost 80 percent of the primary schools had 4 teachers or less (Table 4.5). Mean number of teachers per school varied in different upazilas as well - from 3.7 (Golapganj) to 5.5 (Chandina).

Table 4.5
Distribution of schools by number of teachers

Number of teachers	Number of schools	Percentage of schools
1	6	1
2	60	4
3	292	17
4	971	57
5	173	10
6	87	5
7	52	3
7+	52	3
Total	1,693	100

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

All stakeholders in the study areas agreed that there were scarcities of teachers in the schools compared to the number of studets, but this was a more serious problem in GPS, compared to other types of schools.

There is a growing consensus that the quality of teaching-learning cannot be improved without a manageable class-size. Non-formal schools have strictly followed the policy of restricting the class-size to 33 children, which has paid off in better performance by them compared to formal schools. One of the primary school quality standards proposed by PEDP II and expected to be implemented over time is not to have more than forty students in the charge of one teacher; i.e., to have a maximum teacher-student ratio of 1:40. The National Education Policy (NEP) 2000 as well as Education Commission Report 2003 proposed that a teacher-student ratio of 1:40 should be the aim to ensure quality primary education. The implications in terms of new teacher requirements in the upazilas under study have been discussed in Chapter 3.

There is considerable variation in the teacher-student ratio among the upazilas, which implies the need for greater local planning and management of teaching personnel. As Table 4.6 shows, less than a third of the schools had less than 40 students per teacher; whereas about 30 percent of the schools had 60 or more students per teacher. RNGPS generally had substantially less students per teacher than GPS, because of the perception of parents that GPS are better schools.

Table 4.6
Distribution of schools by number of students per teacher

Number of students per teacher	Government (n=1,022)		Non-government (n=578)		Community (n=80)		Total (n=1,680)	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Below 30	87	9	61	11	15	18	163	10
31-40	170	17	199	34	30	37	399	24
41-50	174	17	136	24	11	14	321	19
51-60	209	20	83	14	07	9	299	18
61-70	119	12	47	8	06	8	172	10
70+	263	25	52	9	11	14	326	19
Total	1,022	100	578	100	80	100	1,680	100
Mean	58		46		46		53	

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

There are also variations among upazilas in the deployment of teachers in relation to the student population. As Annexes 4.3 and 4.4 show, the number of students per teacher varied from a high of 90 and 95 students per teacher for GPS and RNGPS in Lohagora to 37 and 34 respectively in Patharghata.

One problem raised by government officials, head teachers and teachers was the long-standing vacancies in teaching positions not filled in government schools. On the other hand, in some cases, more teachers are placed than the number of approved posts, because of lobbying and pressures. Table 4.7 shows vacant posts in every upazila against the actual number of approved posts, as well as deployment in excess of approved posts. In Golapganj and Lohagara upazila, for instance, 29 percent of the schools had fewer teachers than the approved posts.

Table 4.7
Deviation between approved posts and appointed posts of teachers in GPS, RNGPS and Community schools in 10 upazilas

Upazila	Total Number of schools	Number of schools			Percentage of schools		
		More teachers than approved	As approved	Less teachers than approved	More teachers than approved	As approved	Less teachers than approved
Chandina	127	0	111	16	0	87	13
Jessore Sadar	245	1	207	37	0	85	15
Golapganj	163	2	113	48	1	70	29
Bakerganj	256	3	212	41	1	83	16
Patharghata	140	0	114	26	0	81	19
Tala	221	4	190	27	2	86	12
Madhupur	155	3	140	12	2	90	08
Tanor	122	2	104	16	2	85	13
Nageshwari	171	24	141	6	14	82	4
Lohagara	93	1	65	27	1	70	29
Total	1,693	40	1,397	256	2	83	15

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

On the whole, 19 percent of government schools had inconsistency between the total number of appointed teachers and the approved number of teachers' posts. Deviations between approval and appointment can been seen also in the case of RNGPS and community schools.

Table 4.8
Deviation between appointed and approved teachers' posts

School type	Total Number of schools	Number of schools		Percentage of schools			
		More teacher	As approved	Less teacher	More teacher	As approved	Less teacher
Government	1022	35	793	194	3	78	19
Non-government	583	3	539	41	1	92	7
Community	85	2	62	21	2	73	25

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

Teachers informed the *Education Watch* researchers that they were bearing the brunt of teacher shortage in their schools. They never had any off period and had to take classes on a continuous basis. There was no capacity in schools to deal with absence

of teachers on leave or for other legitimate reasons, except that in exceptional cases initiatives were taken by school managing committee and the head teacher (See box 4.2). Education officials, especially UEO and AUEO, suggested that, "Recruitment of teachers against the approved posts should be a continuous process and no posts should remain vacant for long."

Box 4.2 School-based initiatives to solve teacher shortage

Initiatives were found to be taken in some schools of four upazilas to meet the problems of teacher shortage by appointing volunteer teachers. In Tala upazila, a GPS had appointed two SSC degree holders as volunteer teachers from the community who were paid Tk.1000.00 per month from the income earned by the school from its own sources of income, e.g., several fruit trees, fishpond, rented shops, etc. The need for volunteer teachers rose in that particular school as the school was on a single shift and had to conduct 11 classes at a time with only 10 teachers. The volunteer teachers were assigned to take the classes of grades I to III.

One GPS and one RNGPS of the Golapganj upazila of Sylhet district also had one and two volunteer teachers respectively to substitute for absent teachers. The regular teachers and the SMC members convinced some SSC and HSC degree holders to take classes in case of long-term absenteeism of the regular teachers.

In Nageshwari upazila a madrasa committee had to appoint four volunteer teachers as the madrasa had five grades with only one government-affiliated teacher and 200 enrolled students. These teachers did not receive any payment for their work. The volunteer teachers expected eventually to be employed as full-time teachers.

— Education Watch Research Team

Teachers' background and development. This section presents information about teachers' educational background and professional training in the upazilas. The government requirements regarding education background for primary school teachers are HSC for men and SSC for women. There is no requirement for pre-service professional training. Teachers are sent for training to PTIs once they are appointed in schools. In reality, as Table 4.9 shows, almost half of the primary school teachers in the upazilas had Bachelors or Masters degree. Interestingly, the madrasas have the highest proportion of Masters and Bachelors degree holders (40 and 25 percent). GPS had 46 percent of the teachers with these higher educational qualifications, whereas this proportion for the RNGPS was 20 percent.

The present survey also revealed that among all teachers of all types of schools, 24 percent of the teachers had third division in SSC, 32.7 percent in HSC, 40.2 percent in Bachelors examination, and 17.8 percent in Masters examination. None had first division in Bachelors or Masters examinations.

Table 4.9
Educational qualifications of teachers by school type

School type	Number of teachers	Highest educational qualifications				
		Below SSC (%)	SSC (%)	HSC (%)	Bachelor (%)	Masters (%)
Government	110	1	28	26	32	13
Non-government	39	0	47	33	15	5
Madrasa	60	0	10	25	25	40
Non-formal	17	18	28	12	18	24 *
Total	226	2	26	26	26	20

* The percentage has increased because of the case of Shishu Sharga Primary school of Jessore Sadar upazila, which had four Masters degree holders as teachers.

Source: Education Watch School Survey, 2004

It was found, as shown in Table 4.10, that 65 percent of GPS teachers and more than 75 percent RNGPS teachers had 11 or more years of experience in teaching. These findings resemble earlier *Education Watch* findings from a national survey in 2000 (Chowdhury *et al* 2001).

Table 4.10
Years of experience of teachers by different school types

School type	Number of teachers	Years of experience (%)			
		<5	6-10	11-20	21+
Government	110	20	15	25	40
Non-government	39	8	15	48	29
Madrasa	60	51	27	15	7
Non-formal	17	53	29	12	6
Total	226	28	20	25	27

Source: Education Watch School Survey, 2004

Table 4.11 shows that over three quarters of GPS teachers and more than half of RNGPS teachers had C-in-Ed training. Very few madrasa teachers had any pedagogic training. It should be noted that NFE teachers are provided a distinct training programme that combines a short and intensive pre-service training, which is followed by regular refresher training and close supervision throughout the period of their employment. *Education Watch 2000,* which examined teacher training in primary education, and other studies have raised questions about the effectiveness of teacher training provided in primary education. Learning achievement measures do not reflect any significant impact of the teacher training programme in the public system (Alam and Haq 2001).

Table 4.11
Training of teachers by school type

School type	Number of teachers	Type of training (%)			
		C-in-Ed	BEd	Others	None
Government	110	84	9	1	6
Non-government	39	59	0	8	33
Madrasa	60	2	2	2	94
Non-formal	17	12	18	29	41
Total	226	53	6	4	37

Source: Education Watch School Survey, 2004

The Upazila Resource Centres (URC) are designed to provide subject based training to the GPS and RNGPS teachers. The URC had not started its activities in full swing in all upazilas. Of the 10 URCs four had started training activities and offered altogether 11 short courses on Bangla, 53 on English and 54 on Mathematics.

C. Learning Resources

This section discusses the availability and use of learning resources in classrooms for effective teaching learning. Learning aids are intended also to make the classroom experience joyful and inspiring for the learner. The present study provided confirmation of the prevalent opinion that the use of learning aids, other than the textbook, in classrooms was very limited or non-existent.

It was found on several occasions that the teachers did not know the proper use of some teaching-learning aids. In most of the cases the learning aids were left untouched and covered with dust. Teachers had to search and unpack the aids when they were asked to show these. Some materials became frayed and the metal tools became tarnished or rusted for being kept unused for a long time. In all schools, teachers kept those in the teachers' common room.

The GPS and RNGPS teachers gave contradictory statement regarding training they received related to use of teaching aids. Some teachers recalled receiving training, while others denied participation in any such training. However, in reality, most did not make use of teaching aids and did not seem to appreciate the value of these.

A rare exception was a GPS where teachers were using several charts in the classroom to make the lesson easy and interesting to the students and it seemed to be their regular practice. They made the charts by themselves and were painting some more when the research team visited them. The head teacher was the inspiration to his teachers in the effort to make lessons creative and motivating to students.

In general, it appeared that the head teacher and other teachers did not see the need for learning aids, as they did not use what they had or were given to them. Ten GPS and five RNGPS among the survey schools were included in the IDEAL *(Intensive District Approach to Education for All)* project and got packages of teaching-learning aids for the schools. The other schools got some teaching-learning aids from the government. But in both cases the aids were left unused, except for blackboard and chalk provided by the government.

The teaching-learning aids provided by the government in the non-IDEAL schools were blackboard, duster, chalk, charts, abacus, compass, thermometer, bar magnet, weighing scale, globe, clay models, geometry box, maps, alphabet cards, clocks and pictures of renowned personalities. In addition, teachers were encouraged to make simple teaching aids such as clay models, posters and illustrative drawings and to collect "real aids" such as stones, seeds, sticks, etc.

The IDEAL project had provisions for painting a classroom in each GPS and RNGPS with portraits of noble personalities, pictures of different animals, paintings on historical or social themes, drawings of fruits and plants, and illustration of arithmetic rules, etc. The teachers and the AUEOs said that the topics were selected from the textbooks of grades 1 to 5. The students said that in most of the cases the teachers never explained the ''decorations'' to the students. In some cases, the quality of paintings and drawings was very poor. There were many spelling mistakes in the captions and other errors. For instance, in one RNGPS in Madhupur, five-eighths of a rectangle was painted in colour, but the caption indicated the proportion in colour to be 5/3. Only one GP school was an exception where students could explain the purpose of the decoration and something about their content. The madrasas had no painting or classroom decorations inside the classrooms.

The NFE school had different kinds of decoration in the classroom and these seemed to have clear and specific use in the lessons conducted by the teacher. Students and teachers participated in preparing many of the aids. The students and teachers made some paper flowers and hung those with strings from the roof. Besides, the students made wall magazines and hung those on the walls. They also hung the chart of their group names on the walls by drawing them colourfully. They made some posters by drawing flowers and other things and hung those as well.

The NFE schools in general had and made effective use of the blackboard, duster, chalk, alphabet cards, maps, pictures of various objects and scenes, posters, geometry box, hand made models, colored pencil box, flash cards, globe, scales and weights. The research team saw in an NFE school that the teachers were applying various teaching-learning techniques by using the aids. The BRAC NFE schools had fewer aids (chalks, blackboards, dusters, maps, charts), but appeared to make good use of these in most cases.

Teachers of madrasas informed the researchers that they did not have any teaching-learning aids except chalks, dusters and blackboards. A madrasa was found even without these basic paraphernalia. Teachers were only reading the lessons in the classrooms and the students seemed to be uninterested in and inattentive to what the teachers were doing. In some madrasas Arabic sentence plates, charts, globes and maps were found, but these remained unused. Some madrasa teachers expressed the need for learning aids and the desire to take part in training in this field.

From classroom observation in various schools, it was obvious that teaching-learning aids were needed, and could make classrooms more rewarding and productive for both students and teachers. The experience of NFE classes clearly shows the potentials. However, the expectations regarding the performance of most GPS and RNGPS teachers, the role model they perceive for themselves, and the teacher training they receive do not prepare them for effective use of learning aids.

D. Financial Resources

Full salaries of teachers in GPS, 90 percent of the teachers' salary in RNGPS and an honorarium of Taka 500 per month for teachers of community schools are paid directly by the government to the teachers and are disbursed through the upazila education office. In addition, funds for repair and maintenance of GPS and RNGPS, and a small monthly amount for stationery and chalk (Tk 300 per month for GPS and Tk 250 for RNGPS) are also paid by the government.

The amount for repair and maintenance varied in the schools surveyed from Tk 5,000 to Tk 17,000 and depended, in principle, on recommendation to DPE by the upazila education committee, which is chaired by the UNO (the administrative head of the upazila). In practice, all agreed, it was an erratic and non-transparent process. The decision lay far away at the national capital, probably in the Directorate of Primary Education, or more likely, in the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. How much fund for what purpose and for which school would eventually be available remained unpredictable. And if an amount was allocated, the job would be handled by the Engineer of the Local Government Engineering Department (LGED), who with the UNO would appoint a contractor to carry out the job. The chair of the SMC of the concerned school would be asked to give a signature to certify the completion of the job. The SMC, the head teacher or the concerned upazila education personnel had little say or involvement in the work.

SMC members, head teachers, parents and upazila education officials all agreed that it was an unsatisfactory process, and it did not necessarily respond to real needs or provide funds according to genuine priorities. They said the decision-making and execution of construction and repair were riddled with corruption and

mismanagement resulting in shoddy and poor quality work. Every school could readily show examples of rainwater oozing through newly constructed roof, falling plasters, cracks in the walls, and damp classrooms after LGED and their contractor have done their job.

A clear solution to the problem was not offered by the stakeholders at the local level, but they indicated a number of principles: that it should be a transparent and predictable process with a basic amount for maintenance and small repair available every year for every school; the total resources for this purpose can be allocated for an upazila and decision-making regarding the use of the available resources can be at the upazila level; the people most concerned with the school, e.g., the managing committee and the head teacher, should have a say in the process; and much of the work, especially of routine nature, can be handled by the managing committee itself.

With unpredictable funding for routine maintenance, and quite a meager budget for stationery and consumable items, some schools have found creative ways of mobilising their own resources.

Mobilisation of resources in the schools. The majority of the GPS and RNGPS had no disposable financial resources of their own. In a few schools (4 GPS and 1 RNGPS among 30 surveyed), funds were raised by collecting money from the teachers, SMC members, local elites, local political leaders, community people and through earnings from small entrepreneurial activities of the school. Some schools maintained a permanent fund; others raised money as needs arose. One GPS, for instance, leased a fishpond of the school, constructed some shops on school land and rented those to the community people, and had many types of fruit trees within the school boundary. In another GPS, teachers contributed a fixed amount of money per month (Tk. 200 by the head teacher and Tk. 100 by each assistant teacher) to maintain a fund to meet "urgent needs" of the school, including offering hospitality to important visitors. Other items of expenditure were payment of electricity bill, providing salary to volunteer teachers, arranging annual milad (religious ritual), sports or cultural events of the school, etc. Although the teachers did not admit it, many parents complained that the schools charged money from them in many ways to arrange cultural or religious events of the school or to meet various school-related needs.

Madrasas were more active than primary schools in mobilising resources. Most madrasas had a fund of their own with a bank account. As *Education Watch 2001* reported, 81.6% madrasas collected non-government donations, 10.5% madrasas rented out something, 61.1% sold products and 33.4% madrasas collected money for their own funds from other sources. They also appealed to people's sense of religious obligation to raise contribution. Some pious people donated money on a regular basis to the madrasas.

NGOs and charity organisations are sources of funds for some schools. The Area Development Programme (ADP) of World Vision, e.g., gave grants to some GPSs, RNGPSs and madrasas for renovation and other development work. In Madhupur, an RNGP school received a grant of Tk 310,000 from ADP for extending the school building and buying furniture. Another GPS received a grant from ADP for construction and repair work, as did all schools in one union and an ebtedayee madrasa in Madhupur, and a school in Chandina.

Two NGO led schools were found to have their own funds. The funds were raised from contribution by the teachers themselves and from charities. BRAC schools received support from their parent organisation and did not have funds of their own.

E. Summing up: Resources in Schools

This chapter presented the situation of education resources - physical facilities, human resources, and financial resources disposable at the school level - in the 10 upazilas under study.

1. Major investments have been made by the government in primary school facilities since 1990. Facilities in the system still remain far from satisfactory, both in number of classrooms and schools and in their quality. Fifteen percent of the selected schools in the 10 upazilas were rated by the research team as "good" - with safe, sturdy and clean roof, walls and floor. About half were "fair" and 30 percent were rated as "poor," - judged by the very basic criteria applied. Hazardous and unsafe conditions were observed in some GPS and madrasas.

2. Annual budgets and plans for maintenance and repair of buildings did not exist in GPS, RNGPS and madrasas. *Ad hoc* grants from government were made available periodically to some schools through a process regarded as non-transparent, unpredictable, arbitrary, and not based on analysis and prioritisation of needs in the upazila, according to local stakeholders.

3. Construction and repair jobs done with the periodic government grants were handled by LGED without much say of school and upazila education office and was regarded almost unanimously as highly unsatisfactory, characterised by "shoddy work, waste and corruption."

4. Toilet facilities did not exist in 15 percent of GPS and RNGPS, based on the research team data from sample schools. One-third of the schools had separate functioning toilets for males and females and half had the same facility for both sexes. Clean water availability was "fair" to "adequate" in 80 percent of the schools.

5. GPS, RNGPS and madrasas did not have sufficient classroom space for all the enrolled children. Applying a modest standard of the upazila education office of just permitting students sit in rows of benches with little elbow room, it was found that there was no space for a quarter of the enrolled students in GPS and 40 percent of the students in madrasas. By these standards, RNGPSs in the ten upazilas could accommodate 97 percent of their students.

6. Two-thirds of the schools, as rated by the research team, had sufficient light and visibility in classrooms - but one third did not meet this very basic condition. Two-thirds had an electric connection, but not necessarily electricity in all classrooms.

7. Ventilation and flow of air - since many classrooms are constructed with tin roof and walls - is a major concern. Sixty percent of the schools were judged as "unsatisfactory" in this regard.

8. In terms of overall environment of the school and its surroundings (noise pollution, safety of children, trees and plants on the ground, and playground), half of the schools were rated as "fair" or better, which meant half had an unsatisfactory basic environment for children. Noise pollution was a problem in 20 percent of the schools. Three quarters had some kind of playground, but over half of these were "unsatisfactory " in size or condition of the ground. Only ten percent of the schools had complete compound walls.

9. Insufficiency of teachers was a common problem. Eighty percent of the schools had four or less teachers, 21 percent three or less. On an average, 30 percent schools had more than 60 students per teacher; over two-thirds had more than 40 students per teacher.

10. The average teacher student ratio in the ten upazilas was 1:53 - somewhat better than the national average of 1:61. There was a substantial variation in this ratio among the upazilas. The range was 37 to 90 students per teacher for GPS and 34 to 95 students per teacher for RNGPS. Approved posts of teachers remained vacant for a year or more - in 19 percent of GPS and 7 percent of RNGPS.

11. About half of the teachers (47 percent) had bachelors or masters degree. Interestingly, in madrasas, this proportion was 65 percent, presumably with higher degrees from the madrasa system.

12. Learning aids, other than blackboards and textbooks, were generally scarce, except in non-formal schools, and were not used in class, even when some were available from development projects. There were a few exceptions to the rule where these were used and even teachers developed their own.

13. Few financial resources, disposable at the school, were available in GPS and RNGPS as a budgetary provision. Schools had very little fund available to be used at the discretion of a school for essential expenses related to its activities. Some primary schools raised funds for small repair, purchase of stationery and entertainment of visitors with contribution made by teachers, collected from community and by charging students "unofficial" fees. Madrasas were more active in raising their own resources and appealed for contribution as a religious obligation. A few formal schools received contribution from NGOs.

Chapter 5

An Anatomy of Depriviation in Primary Education

This chapter presents information from ten upazilas about the nature and characteristics of deprivation in primary education. Variations for upazilas, school catchment areas, school types and socio-economic groups are provided and perceptions and understanding about the causes are discussed. Some intervention measures are also examined.

The large picture about primary education deprivation can be drawn from overall primary education statistics and the findings from the previous *Education Watch* reports. Based on a national sample survey, *Education Watch 2001* reported net primary school enrolment rate as 79.8 percent. A more recent reliable estimate does not exist. Although DPE has mentioned higher net enrolment rates for 2001 and 2002, around 80 percent is considered a reasonable estimate. PEDP II documents, for example, have cited net enrolment rate as "about 81 percent" (ADB, "Recommendation of the President to the Board of Directors… Second Primary Education Development Programme", October 2003).

There is a similar unreliability about dropout rate and rate of completion of primary education by those who are enrolled. Commonly cited estimates are about one-third dropout during the primary cycle and, by inference, a completion rate of around 67 percent. BANBEIS in its publication "Bangladesh Education Statistics 2003" did not report a dropout or completion rate. According to "Child Education and Literacy Survey 2002" of Compulsory Primary Education Implementation Monitoring Unit in MOPME, survival of first graders to grade five was 64 percent. *Education Watch 2001* reported a higher overall completion rate estimate of 76 percent, based on its national sample survey.

Assuming eighty percent as net enrolment and 67 percent as the rate of completion of five years of primary education by those who enter primary school, it can be concluded that over 40 percent (47 percent, to be more precise) of the children eligible for primary education do not participate in a full cycle of primary education. Enrolment and "participation" say nothing about what children learn. As noted in Chapter 1, *Education Watch* surveys for 2000 and 2002 have shown that majority of children in primary schools do not acquire the basic competencies prescribed in primary education curriculum; in fact, one-third of the children remained non-literate or semi-literate after going to school for five years.

Box 5.1 Primary education deprivation at a glance

- One out of five children does not enrol in primary school.
- One out of three of those enrolled drops out before completing primary education.
- One out of three who complete five years of primary schooling still remains non-literate or semi-literate.
- Therefore, the large majority of children, mostly poor and disadvantaged in other ways, grow up without basic skills and preparation for life.

A. Out-of-school Children

The school catchment area based household survey (CHS) carried out under the present study provided a picture of out-of-school children in the upazilas included in the survey (Annexes 3.2 and 5.1).

Enrolled and non-enrolled children. The first interesting finding is that the net school enrolment rate of children in the 6-10 age group derived from the survey in the 30 school catchment areas in ten upazilas is substantially higher (90.4 percent) than the national estimates mentioned above. The information collected from households referred to enrolment in any type of educational programme at the primary level including madrasas and non-formal schools. It should be noted that the survey was designed only to understand better the situation in the upazilas; not to provide a national estimate. No conclusion can be drawn about national statistics from the non-random sample. However, whether these recent data from diverse locations in the country indicate a change in the situation of primary school enrolment will merit further investigation.

The relevant findings for the purposes of the present study are the variations among catchment areas, upazilas, socio-economic groups, and between genders. Indeed a large variation has been found among catchment areas. The range was between 100 percent enrolment in two catchment areas to 73 and 79 percent in two others at the low end (see Annex 3.2).

The variation in enrolment by upazilas among the ten under survey showed a range from 82 percent to 97 percent. There appears to be no relationship with the WFP-defined food insecurity status of the upazilas (which was regarded as a proxy for general poverty situation of the upazilas) with the enrolment rates for the upazilas (Table 5.1).

Table 5.1
Enrolment of children aged 6-10 years by food insecurity status of upazilas

Food insecurity status	Upazila	Number of children	Percentage of children by enrolment status		
			Currently enrolled	Dropout	Never enrolled
Low	Lohagara	923	95.0	0.9	4.1
	Bakerganj	263	90.1	1.5	8.4
	Jessore Sadar	669	88.0	6.7	5.2
Moderate	Tala	479	96.7	1.0	2.3
	Chandina	927	90.3	3.2	6.5
	Golapganj	373	87.1	2.7	10.2
High	Patharghata	237	97.9	0.0	2.1
	Tanor	246	91.5	1.2	7.3
	Nageshwari	560	87.5	0.9	11.6
	Madhupur	541	81.7	4.6	13.7
	Total	5,218	90.4	2.6	7.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

However, when a similar criterion is applied to households, a clear pattern can be observed (Table 5.2). Children from families with an "always in deficit" food security status had a substantially lower enrolment and higher dropout rates than children from households with a "surplus" food status. A child from an "always in deficit" family had a 30 percent less chance of being enrolled in a school and five times more chance of dropping out from school compared to a child from a "surplus" family. (Table 5.2 and Boxes 5.2 and 5.3)

Table 5.2
Children currently non-enrolled and dropout by economic status

Enrolment status	Percentage of children by socio-economic status (Total numbers in parentheses)			
	Always in deficit	Sometimes in deficit	Break-even	Surplus
Enrolled	67.6 (142)	87.4 (1,030)	90.8 (2,087)	95.3 (1,435)
Dropout	7.1 (15)	3.1 (37)	2.8 (68)	1.3 (19)
Never enrolled	25.2 (53)	9.4 (111)	6.4 (148)	3.5 (52)
Total	100 (210)	100 (1,178)	100 (2,299)	100 (1,506)

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Box 5.2 Kamal never went to school

Mohammed Kamal Hossain is a 13-year-old child who lived in a village named Boro Tangra in Patharghata upazila of Barguna district, a coastal area of Bangladesh. Like several others of his age in the neighbourhood, he had lost the opportunity to be enrolled in school. He has three sisters, two younger to him, and one younger brother. Including his parents and his grand mother, there are eight people in his family. Through generations, his family has been engaged in fishing. His fisherman father is the only adult earning person in the family and he also never went to school. They owned no land except the tiny homestead. Kamal helps his father in the dinghy boat used for fishing. They go to the sea together to catch fish. His father needs his help and sees him as a regular income-earning member of the family. Years back, once Kamal wanted to go to school with his friends, but his father did not permit him to do so.

Kamal's family is poor like all others in the fishermen community in the area. Their earning depended on the number of fish they caught everyday, which often was meagre and varied seasonally. Kamal's father said he wanted to send his son to school but he had no money. And what he could earn by himself was not sufficient for "maintaining the family even for a single day," as he put it. So he cannot but engage his son in fishing. Kamal looked sad when he said he wanted to become a teacher, if he had been to school.

— Education Watch Research Team

Box 5.3 Char Fasson: Primary education in a coastal upazila

Char Fasson , the coastal upazila in the southern island district of Bhola, shares many common features of the coastal areas on the Bay of Bengal. Of 342,000 people in the upazila, 15 percent are in the primary education age of 6-10 years. Farming and sea fishing are the main occupations of the people in this low-lying and coastal area. Natural disasters caused by heavy monsoon rains and cyclones of varying severity are hazards faced by the people in Char Fasson every year.

There are 275 primary education institutions in the upazila which include 71 GPS, 104 RNGPS, 59 madrasas of different types, and 10 NGO-run schools. There is a shortage of teachers in the upazila; the ratio is one teacher for every 104 students. And having a substitute (a *badla* or *begar*) teacher teaching the classes instead of the one appointed by the authorities appeared to have developed into a system.

Children are often called to help in their families' livelihood activities. During the season for *Bagda* fishing or harvesting the crops, a period of two to three months every year, many children stay out of school. During high rains, for about three months, roads and culverts are broken and many areas are flooded, which cut off the road to school for many children. Local planning and pragmatic responses to cope with these special circumstances are needed - including adjustments in school calendar and working with communities about managing the schools with better accountability.

An analysis of primary education problems in Char Fasson undertaken with the participation of the local people by COAST, an NGO engaged in education, led to various recommendations including the following:

- School calendar should be locally adjusted to reduce dropout and exclusion of children.
- Teachers should not be employed on the basis of political recommendations and influence.
- SMC's should be made more active by including educated people who are interested in education.
- The system of *badla* teachers should not be permitted.
- Educational materials should include content on coastal livelihood, environment and coping with disasters.
- Mobile classes should be considered for vulnerable children.

— Power and Participation Research Centre, Orientation Workshop Report, (September 2004)

The findings about enrolment disparity related to economic status of households (judged by self-rated food security status of families as explained in Box 5.4), and absence of a significant relationship with WFP-rated "food insecurity status" of upazilas are not necessarily contradictory. These data indicate that the aggregate

upazila enrolment rate averages did not capture the disparities among household categories. The explanation probably is that the differences among upazilas in respect of overall food security status, on the one hand, and the proportions of "food-deficit" households out of the total households of the upazilas, on the other, were not large enough to show a difference in aggregate enrolment status among upazilas. Actually, the differences in enrolment status among household groups and school provisions among catchment areas within each upazila far outweighed differences between upazilas. (See Annex 5.3)

Box 5.4 Household food security as a proxy for socio-economic status

A households' food security status was taken as a proxy of overall economic status of the household. In order to assess overall food security status of a household, the respondents in the school catchment area-based household survey were asked to make an assessment by considering income and expenditure by all the members of the household during the previous one year. Each respondent was given 4 to 5 minutes to recall the necessary information in this regard and do a finger tip calculation before responding. The respondents were asked to place themselves in one of the four categories with regard to availability of staple food grain in the household: always in deficit, sometimes in deficit, break-even, and surplus. The main challenge was to make the respondents understand the point of the exercise and have them prepare their answer carefully. The school catchment area based survey of 8,212 households in ten upazilas showed the following distribution of the households in terms of household food security.

	Percentage	Number of households
Always in deficit	3.2	263
Sometimes in deficit	19.9	1634
Break-even	45.0	3,695
Surplus	31.9	2,620

The combined proportion of 23 percent of the households in the *always in deficit* and *sometimes in deficit* categories is comparable to estimates of 20 to 34 percent of the population in "extreme poverty" reported by recent national survey. The upazila wise food security status of households was as follows:

Upazila	Number of households	socio-economic status			
		Always in deficit	Sometimes in deficit	Break-even	Surplus
Chandina	1347	0.4	8.0	49.4	42.2
Jessore Sadar	1276	0.9	16.2	52.7	30.1
Golapganj	383	8.1	33.2	40.5	18.3
Bakerganj	354	9.9	28.8	37.6	23.7
Patharghata	383	4.2	24.8	39.7	31.3
Tala	28.0	39.7	38.6	31.3	30.2
Madhupur	966	7.5	29.4	34.1	29.1
Tanor	469	2.8	21.5	43.1	32.6
Nageshwari	922	3.4	16.5	49.2	30.9
Lohagara	1096	1.5	16.3	48.6	33.6
Total	8180	3.2	19.9	45.0	31.9

— Education Watch Research Team

Analyses based on gender (Annexes 5.1 and 5.2) clearly indicate that gender-based disadvantage in school enrolment has been overcome in the surveyed upazilas. This is consistent with available national data. Girls, in fact, surpassed boys in enrolment and reduction in drop out. Even in upazilas with an overall low rate of enrolment, the girls had an edge over boys.

Dropout. The issue of dropout has been examined further in terms of the pattern as the child progresses through grades and the stated causes of dropout. Household survey data have been used to make the calculations. The status of school attendance or dropout from school was looked at for children in the 6-14 age range. A child was considered dropout if s/he was enrolled in a school (primary or others) and had discontinued going to school for at least three months at the time of survey.

Table 5.3
Distribution of dropout children of age 6-14 by grade and sex

Grade	Boys (n=438)	Girls (n=261)	Both (n=699)
Pre-primary	0.9	1.9	1.3
Grade I	17.8	13.8	16.3
Grade II	13.9	10.0	12.4
Grade III	18.5	12.3	16.2
Grade IV	11.9	10.7	11.4
Grade V	20.8	29.9	24.2
Grades VI-VIII	13.7	18.4	15.5
Grades IX-X	1.1	3.1	1.9
Non-graded religious	1.4	0.0	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Table 5.3 shows that children dropped out from all grades in the school, but there was a peaking at grade 5, the last grade of primary school. This suggests an effort by children and their families to continue in school, and not to give up, until the obstacles to continuing in school, from their perspective, became overwhelming. A larger proportion of girls dropped out from grade 5, despite incentives such as free tuition and stipends in secondary schools for girls from rural areas. Social and economic barriers to a girl's continuation in secondary education including distance from home to a secondary school are yet to be fully overcome.

B. Factors in Participation

Data regarding reasons for not enrolling in or dropping out from schools collected from the school catchment area household survey are presented in Table 5.4. About a quarter of the never-enrolled children did not enrol due to "scarcity of money" or

poverty of the household. Over forty percent of who dropped out indicated poverty as the reason for dropping out. This cause for not enrolling or not continuing in school was strongly endorsed in focus group discussions and interviews.

Table 5.4
Percentage distribution by causes of never enrolling and droping out (children 6-14)

Causes	Never enrolled (n=465)	Dropout (n=686)
School is far from home	3.0	1.5
Scarcity of money	24.5	41.3
School authority refused admission	20.6	2.2
No use of education	0.6	0.1
Has to work at home or outside	1.5	6.7
The child does not like school	16.3	37.5
Too young to go to school	14.2	na
Unsafe road transportation	6.4	1.0
Marriage	na	2.5
Disability	9.0	1.5
Other causes	3.7	5.8
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Refusal of the school authority to admit the child was cited as the second most important reason for never-enrolment. Probing this question further in focus groups, it was found that there were more children seeking admission in schools which had earned a name as a "good' school or were located in a densely inhabited locality than the school could accommodate. The availability of stipends in primary schools also increased demand for admission. Some schools required a birth certificate to be presented in order to verify the child's age and eligibility for stipend, which became an obstacle (since birth registration is not customary and a universal system of registration is still not operational). Whenever there is greater demand than supply for a service, the poor and the less influential in society are at a disadvantage, which was the case here also.

Children's not "liking school" was an important cause for not enrolling and the most important reason for dropping out. If a child did not like school even before he or she set foot in a school, this suggests a perception about school and its value, which is fostered in the family, and is related to the socio-economic status of the family and the education level of parents. When the child "tastes" school and dislikes it enough to discontinue, the reasons mostly lie with the school and how it functions. There is also an interaction between factors related to school and family and society, which are

discussed below. Social and economic disadvantage of the child and the school's response to this is a key element in this interaction.

Focus group discussion and interviews revealed that poorer parents who sent their children to school often fell into seasonal economic difficulties. They then could not meet different school expense like examination fees and cost of school dress or copybooks. (Box 5.5) According to teachers, losing interest in school was more prevalent among the first generation learners. Children in this category did not get help at home and could not "go with the flow of the school." These children, it was conceded by some teachers, were likely to be verbally and physically abused in school for lagging behind and "not behaving properly."

Box 5.5 Rahan dropped out

Mohammed Rahan Ali is a boy of 12, who lived in a village named Malshira, in Tanor upazila under Rajshahi district, regarded as food deficit area. He is the only son of Mohammed Khalil Ali and Shaheda Begum. When he left school because of his father's illness and financial crisis in the family, he was a student of class 4 in a GPS. Although he was never a bright student, he never failed in any school subject.

Rahan lived in a family with parents, two sisters and a grand mother. His father was a farmer and the only earning member of the family. He farmed five bighas of land, of which he owned only two bighas and the rest belonged to his mother. He had his own cows for ploughing. He earned some extra income as an operator of a shallow irrigation pump and selling rice in the *haat.* The family, Rahan's father said, had never encountered *obhab* (deficit) in daily living before he fell into serious illness. Although both the parents were illiterate, they said they wanted to have their children educated. Only one year ago, Rahan used to go to school with his two sisters, which is becoming a faded memory now.

Khalil, Rahan's father, had been suffering from a gastric problem, as he described it, for ten years. It became worse in the last two years. Khalil was hospitalised for treatment several times. To meet the expenses, they had to sell a bigha of land. Rahan was then a student of class 3. When his father became seriously ill, Rahan had to do all household work besides going to school. He began to miss classes. Moreover, it began to be more difficult to pay the exam fees and other expenses. So, one day he had to leave school when it was time for the second terminal examination in class 4 and Rahan could not pay the exam fees.

Now Rahan looks after the family. He works on their own land and sells labour in the fields of others. They had to sell the cows also to pay for Khalil's medical treatment. Rahan now works like a grown up man. He looks thin and tired. When asked if he would like to go to school again, Rahan replied, "No…I cannot. I have to work for my family."

— Education Watch Research Team

Both parents and teachers in focus groups noted that the relationship and rapport between teachers and students as an important factor in children's learning and continuation in school. Verbal and physical abuse of students in class was mentioned as a common occurrence. Many teachers and parents saw nothing unusual or

unacceptable about it. But others spoke about cases when students left school permanently after being beaten by teachers. An irate mother said, "the teacher hurt the arm of my daughter with such pressure that she could not move it for three months."

Discouragement and undermining the self-esteem of children were seen as a common problem. When a student's handwriting was not satisfactory, the teacher told him, *"Tor dara pora-lekha hobena."* (You are not fit to study.) Some parents said that teachers advised them that their children did not have "the brain" to continue in school and it was better that they discontinued study. The parents felt that some teachers had a bias in favour of children of the well-off. Teachers, it appeared, are often unaware of their own attitudes and behaviour and how these affected children. The question of teacher-student relationship and the social distance between teachers and students merit systematic research.

The gender dimension of causes of non-enrolment and dropout are shown in Annex 5.4. No significant difference was found in this respect except on one item. The household survey respondents indicated that dislike of school as a cause for not going to or dropping out from school did not apply to girls as often as to boys. Common sense and pragmatism appear to have had a greater influence on girls than on boys. There is an apparent contradiction between the absence of a gender difference regarding perceived causes and the actual higher dropout of girls in class five shown in Table 5.3.

Absenteeism and repetition. The present survey roughly matched the national estimate of about 60 percent average attendance in class - with a higher rate for GPS and non-formal school, and lower attendance rate in RNGPS and madrasas (Annex 5.5). Teachers recognised absenteeism as a problem and saw this as a precursor to dropout. Focus groups identified the following causes behind absenteeism:

a) Children, especially those from poor families needed to help parents at home. This became a more acute problem seasonally in relation to farm work. Natural disasters such as floods and heavy rain caused disruption in school and kept children from classes, which affected the poor families more severely.

b) Lagging behind in lessons, not able to do home work and the fear of being punished or abused for this reason were seen important reasons for staying away from school. Once this happened, this became the beginning of a slippery slope.

c) Lack of parental care and support. Teachers were of the view that the absence of parents' concern, support and guidance, when the child faced any problem at school or in school work, was a major factor that led to

absence, repetition of years, and dropping out. The lack of parental concern often actually was lack of ability to help children and understand how the child could be helped - again often a problem related to family socio-economic and education status.

d) Visiting relatives and social obligations. Social and family obligations, visiting relatives and attending to family duties, were seen as a cause for absenteeism. This again related to parents' lack of concern or understanding about the child's educational needs.

e) Ill health and sickness. When these causes kept children from school, normally there was no opportunity to make up and catch up in school unless special arrangement was made with the help of private tutors.

Child labour. Child labour and the ability and opportunity to participate in education are closely linked. The status of child labour in the upazilas and how it related to children's participation in education was examined in the household survey. Child labour was defined as "participation in any type of work for at least three hours during three successive days prior to the interview."

Table 5. 5 shows that 43 percent of the children of age 6-14 years engaged in child labour as defined in the survey. Thirty percent of the children were both students and workers simultaneously. However among the very poor, ("household always in food deficit"), over 40 percent were students who did not work, and one-third were in child labour or without employment, but not in school. A quarter of the children in this category was both students and engaged in work. By contrast, in the "surplus" households, 62 percent were only students, 31 percent were both students and workers, and only 7.5 percent were non-students. The data did not specifically establish if and how child labour affected children's education.

Table 5.5
Child labour by economic status among children aged 6-14 years

Socio-economic status	Number of students	Only student (%)	Both student & worker (%)	Only worker (%)	Neither (%)
Always in deficit	353	41.4	25.2	17.8	15.6
Sometimes in deficit	2,010	51.3	31.2	11.4	6.0
Break-even	3,836	56.8	30.3	7.4	5.4
Surplus	2,590	61.8	30.7	5.3	2.2
Total	8,789	56.5	30.4	8.1	5.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Focus groups, however, linked child labour and education more directly and pointed to child labour, when it became a necessity for the family's economic survival, as a serious impediment to education. The general view was that children who did not or could not enrol in a school or dropped out were mostly from economically vulnerable groups who had to send their children to work. A municipality chairperson said, "Enrolled children are the children of people who have *tawfiq* (economic capacity) to send their children to school." Parents in Modhupur upazila were of the view that, "Given the scarcity of food at home, parents are more eager to engage their children in work than to send them to school."

The research team was informed that in high food insecure areas and areas vulnerable to seasonal food shortage (such as, annual *monga* season in North Bengal) many school-aged children never enrolled in school or dropped out and went in search of work. In hilly areas, unsuitable for farming, children went to the forest to collect firewood and sell it in local markets to provide vital supplement to family subsistence. In coastal and water body areas, where fishing is the main economic activity, children were needed to help in the family trade. Children's work did not fit the school routine and calendar, and children and their families had to make a difficult choice.

Table 5.6

Percentage of primary school students (6-14 years) participating in labour force by grade and sex

Grade	Boys	Girls	Both
I	15.0	27.3	20.9
II	28.8	42.2	35.4
III	34.3	45.7	40.2
IV	42.3	58.0	50.3
V	47.1	70.6	59.9

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Another view of child labour is given in Table 5.6. About 60 percent of the students in grade 5 engaged in work and, as expected, the proportion of children engaged in work increased in the higher grades. More girls were engaged in work than boys at all grade levels. One factor in this finding may be the definition of child labour used in the survey, which included all household chores performed by girls regularly at home.

First generation learners. The present survey indicated that mothers of 47 percent of the children in primary school had no education. For 43 percent of the children, the father was without literacy (derived from Annexes 5.6 and 5.7). In the case of almost one third of the children, both parents were without schooling. First generation learners, therefore, constituted a large proportion of primary school children. (Box 5.6)

Box 5.6 First generation learners

The school catchment area-based household survey revealed the education status of parents of currently enrolled children in primary schools as follows:

Both parents are without schooling: 31.8 percent
Any one parent is with schooling: 26.4 percent
Both parents are with schooling: 41.8 percent

Source : Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey

As Annexes 5.6 and 5.7 show, dropout rate for children of mothers without education was 3.3 percent, which was 0.9 percent among those of mothers with some secondary education. These figures are 3.4 percent and 1.2 percent in the case of fathers with similar characteristics.

Previous *Education Watch Report* (2000) recorded how first generation learners lagged in achieving required competencies from their primary education experience. Given the large proportion of first generation learners in primary schools, schools need to find ways to become responsive to the needs and circumstances of these children in order to improve the overall performance of primary education. Present practices and style of operation, as noted in this and other chapters, are not designed to give the needed care and attention to children who are first generation learners.

School choice. It has been observed that parents (father or mother) who had education at secondary level or above or whose source of income is business, or whose economic status was "surplus" tend to send their children to out of the catchment area (See Annex 5.8). Often the institution of choice is a private kindergarten or a GPS which, as a directly government managed school is supposed to be better staffed and equipped. This indicates that these groups have managed to enlarge their choice regarding their children's schooling. This is not the case with the poorer families or parents with limited or no formal education. They have to rely on their catchment area facility, which sometimes may even turn them down, as noted earlier in this chapter.

Private tutoring. Private tutoring in primary schools, often by the same teacher as in the school, on payment made privately by students, has become a common practice. Parents who can afford are willing to pay the extra cost for the sake of their children's future. For those who cannot afford the payment, it is another source of discrimination and disadvantage.

Table 5.7 presents the proportion of students having private tutors by grade and sex .It shows that 43 percent of the students in the study areas employed private tutors. More boys than girls went to private tutors. The proportions increased with the grade level.

Table 5.7
Proportion of students having private tutor by grade and sex

Grade	Boys	Girls	Both
I	35.5	32.1	33.9
II	43.3	38.3	40.9
III	47.5	44.1	45.8
IV	53.4	44.4	48.8
V	60.3	50.0	54.7
All	45.6	40.7	43.2

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

On average, students paid Tk. 152 per month for a duration of 8 months in a year (Annex 5.9). Again the economically well off groups took more time of tutor than the poor and the children with higher parental educational background used more time and spent more on tutor than those with a lower educational background. (Annexes 5.10- 5.12). It is evident that children who could have benefited more or needed extra tutoring, such as first generation learners or those from poorer socio-economic background, did not or could not employ private tutors.

Discussion in focus groups indicated that private tutoring on extra payment has become a well-accepted norm. A mother said, "Private tutoring is necessary to do well in education." Many stakeholders including madrasa teachers thought that private tutoring could increase quality of education. As another parent put it, "What children cannot understand in the classroom can understand with help from the private tutor. If a school functions well, private tutoring is unnecessary, but schools do not function well." An AUEO remarked, echoing the views of others, "Considering the existing socio-economic situation, private tutoring is inevitable and can be supported." Consideration for the disadvantaged and norms of equity are apparently not high priority in the existing socio-economic situation.

Disability. Principles of inclusive education are increasingly the topic for discussion, but very limited education opportunities for children with special needs remain a major source of inequity and deprivation in education (Khan 2002).

In the present survey, it was found that 9 percent of the children who never enrolled in school mentioned disability as the cause and two percent of who dropped out noted it as a cause (Table 5.4). In a survey Khan (2002) found that 44 percent of the disabled children were in the age group in 6-10 years and mere 11 per cent of children with disabilities had gained access to education. In 72 percent cases, parents faced problems while enrolling their children with disabilities in school. (Boxes 5.7 and 5.8)

Box 5.7 Children with disabilities

The few government supported integrated schools are residential, where the scope of enrollment is limited. The situation of girls is worse than for boys. In regular schools, no classroom adaptation was made in the case of 83% of the pupils with disabilities.

Braille books are not available in sufficient numbers, even though the government has a Braille press and the policy is to provide free textbooks in Braille to children with visual impairments. No common sign language is in use in Bangla; so communication is difficult for children with hearing and speech impairments.

The primary school teachers in general do not have the minimum required knowledge and skills in handling pupils with disabilities. The curriculum of the Primary Teachers Training Institutes (PTIs) did not cover issues concerning disability. In fact, a chapter of the PTI curriculum expresses negative notions towards learners with disabilities.

Education of children with disabilities has remained with the Ministry of Social Welfare. Without shifting it to MOPME and the Ministry of Education, mainstreaming of education of children with disabilities will not be possible. Inter-ministerial action is needed to ensure systematic inclusion of children with disabilities into mainstream education.

Source: Khan AHMN et al (2002). Educating Children in Difficult circumstances: children with disabilities. ESTEEM research series, Study 2. Dhaka: Directorate of Primary Education.

Box 5.8 Education opportunities for disabled children

Access of children with disabilities to education is extremely limited. An unequal educational system, a rigid and unfriendly education curriculum, a lack of awareness of parents, compounded by the inadequate knowledge of teachers and the unfriendly environment existing in most of the institutions, have done very little to promote education of children with disabilities in Bangladesh.

With regard to special education, the government is operating 13 primary schools for people with disabilities -- seven schools for those with hearing impairment, five for visually impaired people, and one school for those with intellectual disabilities. Private voluntary organisations are also involved in institution-based educational rehabilitation through five schools for children with hearing impairment, one for those with visual impairment, and three schools for those with intellectual disabilities, along with their branches in different districts.

At the high school level, the government is running 64 integrated programs attached to regular schools, while private voluntary development organisations are operating a number of schools each for those with visual and hearing impairments.

The total number of children enrolled in special and integrated education programmes is estimated to be far below 5,000. In terms of manpower in special education, 15 postgraduate teachers are trained each year through the Department of Special Education, under Dhaka University. Several other teachers' training programmes are also being offered by other private voluntary NGOs. The government has also developed a

National Centre for Special Education, and it is likely that there will be a significant increase in the numbers of teachers trained in special education.

With all these efforts combined, only 4 percent of children with disabilities within the primary school-going age have so far been enrolled in education.

Bangladesh has two independent ministries catering to education -- the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education -- which are striving to meet the goal of "Education for all by 2015". Yet education of children with disabilities is under the purview of the Ministry of Social Welfare, which plays no part to achieve the universal goal. Among the staggering 96 per cent of the with disablities children who are still out of education, a major portion (70%) could have been enrolled in the regular national education program with very little effort. This could be brought under a planned Inclusive Education Program. The remaining 30 per cent could be enrolled under Integrated and Special Education Programs. Yet this has not happened. The second phase of the national Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II) has just included the issue upon insistence of NFOWD and under the pressure from its donors. But how effectively this will come about remains to be seen.

— Dr. Nafeesur Rahman, Director, National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD), "Country Profile on Disability," Daily Star, 3 December 2004.

The research team's school observations revealed increased acceptance of children with disabilities in all kinds of primary level institutions. But it was evident that lack of training of teachers, absence of appropriate learning aids, large classes and insufficient awareness of inclusive education issues did not generally create a supportive environment for children with special needs. (Box 5.9)

Box 5.9 Shukhi: A child with special needs

Farida Yasmin Shukhi is a 12-year-old girl in class five of Ballya Shakha GPS in Golapganj upazila of Sylhet district. She was born deaf and mute and cannot speak or hear. Gentle and calm in behaviour, Shukhi can copy accurately from books, blackboard or fellow student's practice books. The teachers treat her with affection and kindness. But they do not know how to help her in her development. They think she should be taught in a special school.

Shukhi lives in a family of eight members. Her father is a grocer who has a stall in Purakayastho Bazar. He married a second time after his first wife's death. Shukhi is the daughter of the second wife. He does not own any farm land. He maintains his family of eight members with hardship. Although he loves and cares for Shukhi very much, he cannot afford to send her to a special school.

Shukhi cannot fully understand the lessons at school. She is not able to do well in her examinations. But every year she would sit with her friends who are promoted to the next grade. Teachers are indulgent about it. They treat her as a member of the class in which the other promoted students belong. The teachers think that they should have some training for teaching children with special needs so that they could help Shukhi.

— Education Watch Research Team

Ethnicity. Ethnic minorities who contribute some two percent of this country's population, are socially and economically marginalised groups. In five major ethnic groups in CHT, (Nath, 2001) overall net enrolment was 57 percent, but even lower for certain ethnic groups. The lowest was 8 percent for Mros; 53 percent for Chakmas, 45 percent for Marmas and 32 percent for Tripuras. (Box 5.10)

Box 5.10 School enrolment and literacy in CHT

The Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) is a backward place with respect to many development indicators including education. The first problem is that schools are not easily accessible to children. For instance, the primary schools, on average, are 2.5 miles away from homes. Some communities live far away from the schools. It can be seen below that the population in CHT is lagging behind rest of the country in all educational indicators. Gender inequality is also high to the disadvantage of girls and women. Although the Chakmas were regarded as an advanced community in the past, at present they have fallen behind the Bangalis. The following table shows the educational situation of five major ethnic groups in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

Ethnic groups	Average distance between schoo and locality (in mile)	Enrolment at primary level		Literacy rate (7 years and above)	Adult literacy rate (15 years and above)	% of households without a literate person
		Gross (%)	Net (%)			
Bangali	0.71	97	66	30	34	41
Chakma	0.74	65	53	38	36	36
Marma	0.91	83	45	30	27	37
Mro	7.46	16	8	3	3	88
Tripura	2.04	60	32	22	19	56
All	2.46	64	57	31	32	41

Source: Nath SR (2001). Enrolment and literacy. In M Rafi and AMR Chowdhury (eds.) Counting the hills - assessing development in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Dhaka: University Press Limited.

Although gross enrolment has increased for some ethnic groups, their deprivation in respect of schools has not ceased. One important obstacle, which has not received sufficient attention of education authorities until recently, is the fact that the language spoken at their home and community is different from Bangla. This meant that the principles and methodology of bilingual instruction need to be introduced in the schools for these groups.

C. How Some Interventions Worked

Survey data, discussion and observations brought out information about three kinds of interventions which were expected to be elements of the effort to address deprivation. These are free distribution of textbooks, scholarship examinations in primary schools, and stipends for primary school children from poor families.

Textbook distribution. The government is committed to providing free textbooks to primary school students. It is a commitment that reflects the government's desire to fulfil its obligation to promote compulsory and universal primary education.

Table 5.8
Payment for textbooks by school type

School Type	Percentage of students who paid to receive textbooks	Average amount of payment (in Tk.)
GPS	24	14
RNGPS	40	14
NFE	17	46
Madrasa	23	32
Kindergarten	60	166
High school attached primary	9	83
Total	27	29

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Household Survey, 2004

The household survey in the upazilas have revealed that the textbooks were not truly free for students in any of the various categories of primary schools including those officially listed as eligible to receive the books free of charge. These are GPS, RNGPS, community schools and the ebtedayee madrasas. It was found that other types of schools also received the books, but a proportion of students in all categories of schools had to pay various amounts as shown in Table 5.8. In GPS, a quarter of the students, and in RNGPS, 40 percent of the students each paid an average amount of Tk 14. Kindergarten students had to pay the highest amount.

Preference to scholarship students. Primary schools, essentially GPS and RNGPS, select 20 percent of their class 5 students to be sent for scholarship examination held by primary education authorities. The scholarship examination serves several purposes. It is a means of identifying talented students and rewarding them with a scholarship; it is a means of evaluating the performance of primary schools; and it is a way of encouraging schools to improve performance and, in turn, help and encourage their students to excel in learning. In practice the scholarship examination appears to have become a means of discrimination and disadvantage to the majority of the students, especially the weaker learners who come from the poorer families.

Although, the selection of nominees is supposed to be on merit, it was found that the student's economic status became an important consideration, because the selected students are expected to pay for the extra attention they would receive from teachers. The extra time and attention given to the scholarship nominees, only 20 percent of class 5 students, often meant that all the other students, in class V and in the rest of the schools paid a price, especially in the very common situation of teacher shortage

in the school. A measure which is supposed to encourage good performance and benefit students, thus has become counter-productive in many schools. (Box. 5.11)

Box 5.11 The scholarship students

Students of class 5 selected for the scholarship examination have to undergo special coaching, separately arranged by the school, and participate in model tests. The following measures are commonly taken by schools for the potential scholarship examinees.

a) The class is divided into sections A and B with the scholarship examinees placed in section A.
b) 2-3 hours of extra instruction (known as coaching class) is given to scholarship candidates beyond normal class time.
c) Teachers take the class of group A regularly and pay more attention to it.
d) Teachers spend more time on group A than on B. Sometimes they give more time to group A sacrificing the time for group B.
e) Course of group A is completed within 6-7 months of the year.
f) Class tests are taken weekly and fortnightly in Group A. Many feedbacks are given on the basis of the tests.
g) Model test is taken by group A.
h) The head teacher and all others give special attention to the scholarship students.

— Education Watch Research Team

Stipend. The government began Primary Education Stipend Programme (PESP), popularly known as *Upabritti,* in July 2002 substituting the former Food for Education Programme (FFE). With the aim of attracting and keeping more children, especially of the poor, in school, PESP targeted the children in the poor families throughout rural Bangladesh (excluding metropolitan cities, district towns and other municipal towns). Forty percent of the students in rural GPS, RNGPS and some madarasas were eligible to receive Tk 100 stipend per month. Identification of 40 percent of pupil enrolled in grades 1-5 from the poorest households is to be conducted at school level by the SMC with the assistance of head teachers. To remain eligible for the monthly stipend, a student has to attain 40 percent marks in term examinations and have 85 per cent monthly class attendance. The stipend, the largest item of development expenditure from the government budget, is seen by the government as an equity-promoting intervention.

Data from the household survey in the ten upazilas shed light on the operation of PESP (Tables 5.9 and 5.10). Although the stipend is to be targeted at the poorest 40 percent children in each school, it was found that the stipend recipients were more or less evenly divided between four socio economic categories (based on food security criteria used in this study). Over two-thirds of the children from the poorest category were not selected to be recipients of stipend; but 27 percent of children from affluent households received the stipend.

Table 5.9
Percentage of students receiving stipend and the average amount received by socio-economic status

Socio-economic status	Number of students	Percentage receiving stipend	Average quarterly payment received by student (Tk.)
Always in deficit	132	38	225
Sometimes in deficit	676	36	224
Break-even	1210	33	251
Surplus	633	27	260
Total	2452	32	250

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Table 5.10
Percentage distribution of students by amount of stipend money

Quarterly stipend payment	Percentage of recipients
Below Tk. 200	15
Tk. 200	24
Tk. 201-299	7
Tk. 300	54
Total	100

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Our survey also revealed that 46 percent of the stipend holders did not receive the full amount of stipend (Table 5.10). Almost forty percent of the recipients received Tk 200 or less instead of Tk 300. Average payment received by the group surveyed was TK 250. Students of GPS, on average, got more money than in RNGPS and boys got more than girls. And students from the poorer family background received less than others - on average, Tk 260 for students from "surplus" families and Tk 225 paid to students from "always in deficit" families (Table 5.9).

Data from the ten upazilas indicate the following problems with the stipend programme:

1. Targeting the poor, the principal rationale of the stipend programme, does not appear to be working, at least in the upazilas under study.
2. There are major problems in the management and administration of the programme, one manifestation of which is "cuts" taken from stipend.
3. Focus group discussions revealed pressure on SMCs and teachers to influence selection of students, inducement to alter school records to meet eligibility

criteria, additional burden on teachers and head teachers to prepare and maintain records, and the difficulty in meeting the eligibility criteria by children from poor families, for whom the programme is intended.

D. Summing Up: Deprivation in Primary Education

1. The large picture of primary education deprivation is well known.
   - ❑ One out of five children does not enrol in primary schools.
   - ❑ One out of three of those enrolled drops out before completing primary education.
   - ❑ One out of three who complete five years of primary schooling still remains non-literate or semi-literate.
   - ❑ Therefore, the large majority of children, mostly poor and disadvantaged in other ways, grows up without basic skills and preparation for life.
2. The survey in ten upazilas revealed that the net school enrolment rate of children in the 6-10 age group was substantially higher (90 percent) than the current national estimates. No conclusion can be drawn for the national situation from this non-random sample, but whether this indicates a change in the national situation of primary school enrolment merits further investigation.
3. A broad-based gender parity has been observed across the board among catchment areas, upazilas, school types, and socio-economic groups.
4. Variation among the categories - catchment areas, upazilas and school types, and socio-economic groups - is important to understand the nature of deprivation. Variations were found among catchment areas, upazilas and school types, which will be important in considering policy measures.
5. The most pronounced differences were among socio-economic categories in respect of enrolment, repetition, dropout, repetition and participation in primary education, which delineated the magnitude and nature of the problem of deprivation in primary education. Self-rated food security status of households was taken as the proxy for socio-economic grouping.
   - In the surveyed upazilas, a child from an "always in deficit" family had a 30 percent less chance of being enrolled in a school and five times more chance of dropping out from school compared to a child from a "surplus" family.
   - A quarter of the never-enrolled children cited poverty as the reason for never enrolling in a school. Over forty percent of the dropout indicated poverty as the reason for dropping out.
   - Refusal of the school authority to admit the child was cited as the second

most important reason (21 percent of the cases) for non-enrolment. This appears to be a new phenomenon arising from increased interest in schooling generated by offer of stipends and parents' preference for certain schools - close to home or with a "good name."

- Children not "liking school" was an important cause for not enrolling and the most important reason for dropping out. This indicates problems about how the school functions.

6. Contributing in significant ways to non-enrolment and dropout are child labour, the phenomenon of private tutoring, various factors related to low class attendance, and problems of the first generation learners. It was not one or another cause that could be identified and fixed, but *a syndrome of poverty and disadvantage* that caused deprivation.
   - In the 6-14 age group of the poorest economic category, one-third of the children were non-students and at work or unemployed, and 30 percent were students and working at the same time. In the "surplus" group, about the same proportion was both students and at work, but only 7.5 percent of the children were non-students, either working or without any work.
   - Forty-seven percent of the mothers and 43 percent of the fathers of primary school children in the upazilas were without any schooling. Both parents were without education for a third of the children. Almost half of the children can be regarded as "first generation learners" if the criterion regarding both parents' education is applied. Inability of parents to guide and help their children, and the likely economic disadvantage of these families, affect how the first generation learners perform in school.
   - Private tutors for primary school children have become a norm. Forty three percent of the children had private tutors; they paid an average of Tk 152 per month for eight months in a year. Eighteen percent of the children from "deficit" families and 57 percent from "surplus" families had private tutors. Children who needed extra help with their studies received the least help from private tutoring.
   - Low average school attendance, about 60 percent, encapsulated many factors related to both the operation of the school and the family situation of the child. Causes identified were children's need to help at home either regularly or for seasonal farm work, ill health or sickness of the child or a parent, acute family economic problems, and falling behind in lessons with no help to catch up from teacher or at home. Without the capacity of school and willingness or ability of teachers to help the child to catch up, any

disruption set in motion a vicious spiral of further lag, more absences, and eventual dropping out.

- Children with special needs, especially those with disabilities, and children of ethnic minorities whose mother tongue is not Bangla, form a special dimension in the picture of deprivation in primary education.

7. Survey data, discussion and observations brought out information about three kinds of interventions which are elements of the effort to address deprivation. These are free distribution of textbooks, scholarship examinations in primary schools, and stipend for primary school children from poor families.

- Most schools and students received textbooks, although, officially only GPS, RNGPS and ebtedayee madrasas are supposed to receive free textbooks. Students in all categories had to make a payment to receive the books. Survey data showed that 27 percent of the children made a payment to receive books, which varied on average, from Tk 14 per child in GPS and RNGPS, Tk 32 in madrasas and Tk 166 in kindergartens.
- The extra time and attention given to 20 percent of the class 5 scholarship nominees often meant that 80 percent in class 5 and all in the rest of the schools paid a price in a very common situation of teacher shortage in the school. A measure intended to encourage good performance and benefit students has become counter-productive for those vulnerable to deprivation.
- Stipend recipients were roughly evenly divided between four socio-economic categories (based on food security criteria used in this study.) Over two-thirds of the children from the poorest category were not selected to be recipients of stipend; but 27 percent of children from affluent households received the stipend.
- The household survey revealed that 40 percent of the recipients were paid Tk 200 or less instead of Tk 300 as a quarterly stipend payment. Students from "rich" households received on average Tk 260 and those from "poor" households were paid Tk 225.
- Targeting the poor, the principal rationale of the stipend programme, does not appear to be working, at least in the upazilas under study. There are also major problems in the management and administration of the programme, one manifestation of which is "cuts" taken from stipend. A basic dilemma of the programme is: Are there ways of spending scarce money to help the disadvantaged children perform better in school and attend school regularly rather than subject them to criteria which they find difficult to meet. Non-formal education programmes run by NGOs have attracted and held poor children in school and helped them to perform well without stipends as an inducement.

Chapter 6

Ensuring Better Learning: Supervision and Classroom Practices

A school's performance depends on overall management of the school as well as its academic management - of teaching-learning, supervision of teachers, classroom practices and assessment of children's and teachers' performance in school. All of the principal actors including the head teacher, other supervisors, teachers and the managing committee have to play their role and contribute to academic management to bring about the intended learning outcomes. This chapter looks at school level academic management in primary schools in the selected upazilas, based on information gathered from schools, interviews and discussion with stakeholders.

A. The Head Teacher's Key Role

"What the main spring is to the watch, the flywheel to the machine or the engine to the steamship, the head teacher is to the school." -- Rayburn

The head teachers of GPS and RNGPS have been assigned by the government three kinds of roles: administrative and organizational roles, academic management roles, and financial responsibilities (Annex 6.1).

Discussion and interviews with head teachers, in general, provided an idealised picture of what they are supposed to do and are doing. They tended to repeat the list of duties prescribed by the authorities: teaching classes for which they are responsible, overseeing teaching learning of all the classes, giving feedback to teachers, maintaining various registers of the school, maintaining the school routine, ensuring teachers' presence and their preparation before taking the classes, assigning different subjects to the teachers to teach, motivating teachers to use teaching learning aids, and keeping good relations with parents and community. Some of the AUEOs added that the head teacher would execute the implementation of the curriculum, arrange co-curricular activities, make the parents aware by visiting their houses or arranging parent-teacher meeting like *uthan baithak* (courtyard session), and *maa shomabesh* (mothers' gathering), etc.

Taking an idealised view again, head teachers and AUEOs said that teachers would prepare and follow the lesson plans, use teaching learning aids while teaching with diligence, visit the learners' homes, pay special attention to weak learners in the class, work according to the feedback and suggestions of the head teacher, and help the head teacher in academic and managerial activities of the schools.

The reality differed from this ideal picture. Focus group discussions at school and upazila levels and school visits indicated that, in general, effective and systematic supervision of teaching learning in school by the head teacher was not the norm. This was as much a problem of the capability and motivation of the head teacher as the circumstances and working condition in the average primary school. With an average of 4 teachers in GPS and less than that in RNGPS, and with normal absence of teachers from school due to leave and other reasons, the head teacher conducted classes, rather than supervise other teachers.

There were exceptions to the rules when a head teacher did not have to teach as many classes as other teachers and he or she had the skills and interest to assist and advise other teachers in the school (Boxes 6.1 and 6.2).

Box 6.1 The initiative of a GPS head teacher in Tala

Each year the head teacher of Mirzapur Government Primary School in Tala upazila of Satkhira district gave an award to each student who came to school regularly and timely on every working day of the school. Along with the learners, the mothers of these learners also were recognised and given an award annually. He designed a monthly progress report for students. The monthly progress of each learner was recorded, and the report cards were handed to the mothers in the monthly meeting in the school premise, which was also a practice introduced by the head teacher. In that meeting the parents came to know about the educational status of their children. In this way parents were made aware of their children's progress in school. The parents were thus encouraged to give attention to their children's study, take appropriate care of their children at home, and send their children to school regularly.

— Education Watch Research Team

A head teacher, rewarded for best performance in the district, thought that better training and sufficient freedom were needed both for head teacher and teachers to nurture and promote effective performance in school. (Box 6.2 presents the story of an effective head teacher)

Box 6.2 A successful head teacher in a government school in Narail

The head teacher started teaching in primary school after completing higher secondary school education. He had 30 years of teaching experience. During this period, he did the C-in-Ed course and received over 25 short training courses including those on educational administration and management. He was strongly involved with the teachers' association and was its vice president for a long time. The head teacher joined at his present school eight years ago. He was granted the best teacher award twice.

The head teacher took various initiatives to improve the school since he became its head in 1995. He met all the household heads in the catchment area, the local elite and the business community. He had a number of motivational meetings with the teachers and also discussed his ideas with the upazila education officials. He was able to convince everyone that it was possible to develop the school if collective efforts were made. The community responded positively and the stakeholders worked together under the leadership of the head teacher. When he came to the school, it had 250 students, now it increased to 431. There was no out-of-school child in the catchment area and children from outside the catchment area also enrolled in this school.

The head teacher was always willing to demonstrate good teaching practices to other teachers. He was friendly, responsive, honest and liked by the students, parents and his colleagues. The head teacher valued hearing from others, especially other teachers and parents. He regularly observed classes of other teachers and provided feedback. As one of his colleagues put it, "I was in a nearby school, but took a transfer to this school particularly to learn from this head teacher."

The head teacher taught 3-4 classes a day - spending about 30 percent of his time at teaching. Overseeing other teachers' classes took 20 percent of the time, 20 percent was spent on managerial work, and 30 percent for various activities outside school. "I do not feel good without seeing myself the start and the end of the school day in my school," said the head teacher. Weekly staff meetings played a very important role in teacher management in this school. According to the head teacher, " A school is a special community, it's a team - teamwork is important for its improvement. I praise the teachers for their good work and try to provide remedies for their mistakes."

Source: Nath SR and Shahjamal M.M. (2004). Management of a successful primary school in Bangladesh. ANTRIEP Newsletter, 9(1): 11-14.

One of the expected tasks of the head teacher, working with the SMC and with the support of the concerned assistant upazia education officer (AUEO), is to prepare an annual plan for the school. Some AUEOs encouraged schools to prepare the annual plan through a meeting of the teachers, SMC members and presence sometimes of the AUEOs of the respective schools. This was done in January each year, after getting the vacation list from the government and the respective head teacher. SMC members and AUEOs were responsible for supervising its implementation.

Visits to school and focus group discussions revealed that most of the educational institutions carried out their work without developing and implementing an annual plan. When it was done, it concerned routine and ceremonial activities. It was not based usually on analysis of problems and strength of the school, setting objectives and priorities and working towards goals. There was also confusion and mixing up of annual plan and lesson plan by some teachers.

B. The School Routine

The government has specified a uniform daily class timetable or "routine" to be followed in all GPS and RNGPS, which have ample physical facilities to conduct a single shift school. The double-shift schools, over 90 percent of all formal primary schools, also have a specified daily routine, which is more complex, but is still supposed to be uniform throughout the country. The complexity in the latter is because there are not enough teachers to teach subjects like English and Mathematics who have to rotate among classes in these schools. The argument for specifying a uniform class timetable for the whole country presumably is that supervisors can drop in any school any time and check if the schools and teachers are doing what they are supposed to do. This represents an approach to supervision and quality assurance in classroom based entirely on instruction and inspection from above rather than commitment and responsibility of the teachers and head teachers. This Napoleonic approach (under which at a particular time of the day every child in every classroom in France was supposed to have been turning the same page of the same book!) does not attach a high value to leadership and sense of responsibility of the head teacher. The government also specified the beginning and ending time of the school day and duration and hours of every class period. For example, in the single shift schools, there are four class periods of 50 minutes each before mid-day break for half hour and another four periods of 35 to 40 minutes each in the afternoon.

In reality, it was observed, the specified routine was largely not followed. In part, because common sense prevailed and head teachers and teachers made their own adjustments taking into account the teachers' background, subject knowledge and experience as well as shortages and absences of teachers in a school. Another reason, as it emerged in focus group discussions, not a positive one, was the lack of

professionalism, commitment and accountability that led to an indifferent and lax approach to school hours and effective use of time. The two-shift school day became a convenient excuse in many cases to combine sections by mutual arrangement so that a teacher actually taught only half a day in one shift. Sometimes a teacher took two classes of two grades jointly at a time, out of necessity, to make up an absent teacher's classes, which was quite a common situation.

The upazila officials, it was found, permitted and accepted some deviations from the centrally prescribed routine as necessary in the local circumstances. However, this approach of looking the other way when impractical central directives were breached did not promote responsibility and accountability of the school itself - of the head teacher, teachers, and the managing committee - regarding performance of the school.

The other serious problem that the imposition of a rigid class timetable posed was that it broke down the school day in very small blocks of time, denying teachers any flexibility and sufficient time to plan and engage children in a meaningful learning experience especially in large classes (see Table 6.4 on classroom observation). The same rigid formula was applied even in classes one and two where more integrated learning activities rather than a subject-based approach would be more appropriate.

The madrasa also followed the example of the primary schools and followed a centralised routine with even greater fragmentation of teaching learning. The subjects of Mathematics, Bangla, Holy Quran and Arabic normally took place in the first four periods respectively with duration of 25 to 30 minutes. The other subjects like English, *Aakaid* and *Fikah,* and Tajbeed, etc. were taken after the tiffin (mid-day snack) with a duration of 20 to 25 minutes for each class period.

Students and parents informed the research team that very often the last two or three periods in GPS, RNGPS and the madrasa were not taken as the classes of the last periods "were not so important for the learners." Children also were found unwilling to stay on in the afternoon classes, because the "classes were not very interesting" and "both the teachers and students were tired." As a result the school day shrank by one to one and half hours from the prescribed school hours. This was not the case with "A" graded GPS (see Box 6.3 for school grading criteria) and the NFE schools.

A system of "proxy teachers" was mentioned in the focus groups and interviews as a problem found to some extent in primary schools and madrasas. This meant that the teacher duly appointed by the authorities contracted another person to substitute as a teacher on payment of a part of the salary, because the original appointee chose to do something else also see Box 5.3. This gross violation of rules was apparently tolerated because the teaching appointments were made under political influence and the offending teacher could not be disciplined. This practice appears to be more

common in madrasas. The ebtedayee section of a Dakhil madrasa was observed to make it a practice to formally announce what the topic of the next day's class would be, not as a good pedagogic device, but to ensure that a proxy teacher would know where to begin. In this madrasa, whenever a teacher did not come to school, his relatives, such as a brother or a nephew, would take classes. This convenient arrangement was a frequent practice in this madrasa. The madrasas seemed to be particularly relaxed about the educational background and competence of the proxy teachers.

C. Competency-Based Education

The government introduced "competency-based" curriculum and teaching in primary education since 1993. (Unicef and NCTB 1998) Competency-based education is meant to focus on the learners' acquisition of specific competencies. It specified the competencies to be demonstrated by the learners, made explicit the criteria to be applied in assessing the learners' competencies, and held the learner accountable for meeting those criteria. The curriculum, learning materials and classroom activities led by the teacher are expected to help learners achieve the goal. (Anderson *et al* 1983)

Competency-based curriculum and teaching is the culmination of a process begun more than a decade ago. The National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) initiated qualitative reform of primary education through the curriculum renewal programme in 1986. This effort led to designing a competency-based curriculum and defining the Essential Learning Continuum (ELC) in primary education. The new curriculum was gradually implemented in an incremental way during the years 1992-1996 in grades one to five.

The ELC included 53 competencies that students should acquire by the time they completed the primary stage. These were based on 19 aims of primary level of education. These "terminal" competencies were then broken down into subject-wise and grade-wise competencies related to the age, physical ability and mental maturity of children, as well as the socio-economic condition of the country, resources and facilities in schools, and the capabilities and skills of teachers. A review of competencies by NCTB led in 2003 to adoption of a revised list of 50 competencies to be achieved by learners in primary education (NCTB 2003). Of the competencies 29 have cognitive, 19 have affective and 31 have psychomotor components (*Education Watch 2000)*.

Implementing competency-based teaching learning. The concept of competency-based teaching-learning and the attempt to reflect it in curriculum, learning materials and teaching practices were an important development and offered the potential of bringing about significant qualitative change in primary education of Bangladesh. Realising this potential depended on how all the concerned actors, especially at the

school level, and their supervisors in the upazila, understood the concept and prepared themselves to put the concept to use in practice.

The UEOs, AUEOs and the head teachers were generally found to be acquainted with the 53 terminal competencies. Some of them were able to mention about the recent revision of and the new list of 50 competencies. Some UEOs demonstrated their knowledge of the concept and its breakdown into subject-wise and grade-wise competencies, which added up to as many as 179 specific competencies (by the account of one UEO).

Some of the head teachers of "A" graded schools could explain the concept of competency and its value in teaching-learning; whereas others and many teachers could only mention the total number of competencies without much understanding of what these were and their purpose. In madrasas and NFE schools, the teachers were not familiar with the idea of competencies.

The UEOs and the AUEOs were of the view that most teachers did not care to study or make use of the teachers' guide that was distributed to schools following the introduction of the new competency-based curriculum. It was observed that there were, at the same time, deficiencies in following up with teachers about the use of the guidebook and practising competency-based teaching. Many teachers had ceased to pay attention to the guide, distributed several years ago, and had forgotten about it. UNOs, who were the chairs of upazila education committees, and the upazila education committees themselves, with a general responsibility to promote and guide education development in the upazila, were quite in the dark about competency-based education. It was noted in discussion that PTI training of primary teachers had only recently begun to incorporate the concept of competencies and the results are yet to be seen in classrooms. The sub-cluster in-service refreshers have not addressed the subject, it was pointed out. (See discussion on teacher upgrading in Chapter 7) A concerted, systematic and continuing effort to help all concerned actors to internalise the concept of competencies and its implication in their work, either in classroom or in supervising teachers and schools or in assessing students's learning, was clearly lacking.

D. Supervision from the Upazila

The upazila education office, headed by the upazila education officer (UEO) and staffed by several assistant upazila education officers (AUEOs) has the responsibility for overall supervision of the public sector primary education activities in an upazila. In principle, each AUEO has the charge of 15-20 GPS and RNGPS, which he/she visits regularly to supervise and support the work of the schools. They also evaluate the schools biannually on their overall performance.

In order to assist supervision and evaluation of schools and to help improve the performance of all schools, a system of grading schools by a number of criteria have been introduced. Schools thus have been divided into four grades, from A to D, with A-graded schools being regarded as meeting acceptable standards, which all schools should aspire to reach. AUEOs use a ten-point list of criteria, with each item assigned a maximum score of ten, to grade schools. Box 6.3 provides the criteria of school grading.

Box 6.3 Criteria of four-fold grading of GPS and RNGPS

- Enrolment. (Teachers of GPS and RNGPS conduct child survey in the catchment area of the respective school to determine the number of primary school aged children. In evaluating a school, the percentage of children admitted in the school is considered.)
- Attendance rate
- Rate of dropout
- Effectiveness of SMC
- Success rate in the scholarship examination
- Attendance, punctuality and dutifulness of teachers
- Attractiveness and cleanliness of the school premises
- Number of PTA meetings
- Cub scouting and co-curricular activities
- Record keeping

Source: DPE Circular

Of the 1,626 GPS and RNGPS in the 10 upazilas, 16 percent were graded A, 60 percent fell in category B, 22 percent were in C, and under 2 percent were under D (Table 6.1). No D grade school was found in 7 of the 10 upazilas. In three upazilas, less than 10 percent of the schools were in the A category. Nearly one percent of the schools were not included in the grading because of the respective AUEOs did not have information about these schools.

Table 6.1

Distribution of schools (GPS and RNGPS) by grades (Percentage distribution shown in parentheses)

Name of Upazila	Grade				Total
	A	B	C	D	
Chandina	10 (8.6)	82 (70.7)	24 (20.7)	0 (-)	116 (100)
Jessore Sadar	44 (19.1)	164 (71.3)	22 (9.6)	0 (-)	230 (100)
Gopalganj	11 (7.4)	61 (40.9)	73 (49.0)	4 (2.7)	149 (100)
Bakerganj	27 (11.0)	90 (36.6)	110 (44.7)	19 (7.7)	246 (100)
Patharghata	17 (12.7)	79 (59.0)	38 (28.4)	0 (-)	134 (100)
Tala	51 (23.3)	131 (59.8)	37 (16.9)	0 (-)	219 (100)
Madhupur	22 (14.3)	129 (83.8)	3 (1.9)	0 (-)	154 (100)
Tanor	38 (31.1)	79 (64.8)	5 (4.1)	0 (-)	122 (100)
Nageshwari	29 (16.9)	120 (69.8)	22 (12.8)	1 (0.6)	172 (100)
Lohagara	7 (8.3)	46 (54.8)	31 (36.9)	0 (-)	84 (100)
Total	256 (15.7)	981 (60.3)	365 (22.4)	24 (1.5)	1,626 (100)

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

Supervisors and their background. The capacity in terms of number of staff and their distribution varied widely in the upazilas. In the study upazilas, women headed three out of ten upazila offices. In two upazilas, Nageshwari and Lohagara, the post of UEO was vacant, and an AUEO was in charge of the office, and in both cases they were the only AUEO in the upazila. Nageswari had 212 primary schools and Lohagara 93 to be supervised by the lone AUEO.

Of a total of 43 AUEOs in the study upazilas, 7 were women. The educational qualifications varied from SSC (1), Bachelors (33) and Masters (9). Twenty-nine AUEOs have previous teaching experience. One-third of the AUEOs have been in the present job for over 20 years, although not necessarily in the same upazila. Half of the AUEOs have had professional education training such as C-in-Ed, BEd, MEd and 31 had subject-based training. The background of the AUEOs is presented in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2
Characteristics of AUEOs in 10 upazilas

Sex	**Number of AUEOs**
Male	36
Female	7
Educational qualification	
SSC	1
Bachelors	33
Masters	9
Teaching experience	
Have teaching experience	29
Do not have teaching experience	7
Training received	
C-in-Ed	23
BEd	24
MEd	6
Subject based Training	31
Others	29
Only C-in-Ed	12
Only BEd	10
Only MEd	1
C-in-Ed and BEd	2
B. Ed and MEd	3
C-in-Ed, B. Ed and MEd	2
No training	6

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

On an average, in the 10 upazilas, each AUEO had responsibility for 41 GPS and RNGPS, but the range varied between 16 and 212 (Table 6.3). The distribution of schools for supervision is clearly not designed for effective support to schools, even if only the government-supported primary schools are considered. AUEOs have no possibility, nor it is their mandate, to supervise madrasas and other types of schools. NFE schools usually have their own supervisory and support system. The madrasas are left essentially without any supervision or professional support.

Table 6.3
Upazila-wise distribution of AUEOs and schools

Upazila	Number of AUEOs	Number of schools	Mean number of schools per AUEO	Range (Per AUEO)
Chandina	5	127	25	19-32
Jessore Sadar	8	246	31	22-46
Golapganj	6	163	18	16-53
Bakerganj	9	263	29	21-59
Patharghata	3	140	47	42-52
Tala	5	221	44	27-82
Madhupur	3	160	53	29-71
Tanor	2	122	61	57-65
Nageshwari	1	212	212	-
Lohagara	1	93	93	-
Total	43	1,747	41	16-212

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

E. Classroom Teaching-Learning Practices

The competency-based curriculum, supervision and support form the upazila level and the head teacher's and the teachers' efforts are of no consequence if they do not make a difference in the classroom. To have an understanding of the classroom practices, the present study included observation of classes in selected schools in the ten upazilas. Two GPS, three RNGPS, two NFE schools (one run by a Missionary organisation and another by BRAC), and three madrasas were visited. A team of at least two (sometimes three) members of the research team spent a whole school day in each of the ten schools. Except for the NFE schools, all were operating in two shifts. In these schools and madrasas, two grades were observed in two successive shifts. Classes in Bangla, English, Mathematics, Science, religious education and co-curricular activities (*bichitranusthan*) were observed. The researchers collected information following a non-participant classroom observation strategy by using a checklist regarding different aspects of conducting sound and smooth classroom teaching-learning activities. The information was analysed with a nine point analytical

framework that included content and pedagogical knowledge of the teacher, teachers' preparation, lesson presentation, use of teaching aids, classroom management, slow learners' management, homework management, assessment and feedback, and co-curricular activities. A summary of the analysis is presented in Table 6.4.

Subject and pedagogical knowledge of the teachers. It was found that except in NFE and some of the A graded schools, the teachers had serious deficiency in their knowledge of the teaching content and basic pedagogic techniques. For instance, in teaching a class, most teachers failed to follow a logical sequence in presenting the content and placing it in a context of what children knew or had learned. Even the better-trained GPS teachers were "mechanical" and failed to inject enthusiasm and energy in what they were doing. (See Box 6.4)

Box 6.4 Teachers need to be better prepared for class.

The teachers are the facilitators in learning in the classroom. Pupils look up to teachers for help and see them as role models. A study under the Primary School Performance Monitoring Project (PSPMP) of DPE assisted by the Asian Development Bank identified some common characteristics of teachers in the primary schools, which were not conducive to effective teaching-learning. These indicated that the teachers were not rightly motivated or well prepared for the facilitator's role in the calssroom.

- More than two thirds of the teachers of GPS and four-fifths of RNGPS came to class without preparation. Many teachers were not certain about the lessons to be taught and did not know what they would accomplish in the class.
- Over a half of the teachers started their classes late.
- Some teachers remained inattentive to their students for almost the whole of the class period (11 percent in GPS and 26 percent in RNGPS); some ignored what the students were doing while they wrote long texts on the blackboard to be copied by students.
- A wide gap existed between curriculum documents and curriculum practice. A great majority of the teachers did not follow specified competencies in presenting lessons.
- Sixty percent of the teachers of GP schools and three-fourths of RNGP schools did not use any teaching aids in their classrooms.
- Mispronunciation was common for the majority of the teachers. A substantial number (23 percent) misspelled words while teaching. Some teachers provided wrong information or taught concepts wrongly, and gave wrong explanation and interpretation.
- The teachers often used question and answer method in assessing pupils. Vague and trivial questions ("What is a woman" or "How does a clock give us time") are sometimes asked.

Source: Rahman S and Rahman AFMA (2002). Primary Education in Bangladesh: Findings of the PSPMP Study 2000, An Overview. Dhaka: PSPMP.

English lessons were particularly problematic in the case of RNGPS as well as one of the non-formal schools. Wrong pronunciation, wrong grammar and misspelling were observed. Teachers with recent PTI training were relatively more effective and held students' attention better. Classroom transaction in the Missionary non-formal school was by far the best although the teachers did not know about the theory of learning competencies. Classes in the madrasas were particularly weak in all aspects, especially in English and Mathematics.

Teachers' preparation. Except in the non-formal school, any of the teachers, even the GPS teachers who were taught about and supported with a lesson plan manual, did not have lesson plans. None of the teachers were found to bring the teachers' copy of textbook while teaching in the classes; they borrowed a student's book, placing the student at a disadvantage. Teachers of GPS, and RNGPS generally had a casual approach and did not have an "opening" or introduction to begin the lesson.

Lesson presentation. One-way communication - lecturing and reading out from the textbook with occasional explanation of the text - was the dominant method in GPS, RNGPS and madrasas. Another activity was to let students engage themselves in exercises assigned by the teacher or copy questions and answers written by the teacher on the blackboard. But the teachers failed to check the answers of the students. In some instances, a few of the students' notebooks were checked and on verifying the notebooks, it was found that teachers had not detected wrong answers or marked wrong answers as correct. Large class sizes, exceeding 60 students in some of the schools and the short class period for a subject did not create a conducive environment. (see Box 6.5) A- grade primary schools and NFE schools were generally the exception in this respect. In an RNGPS, the teacher frequently used mispronunciation of Bangla words like *"matribhasha"* and *"prokrito bhagnangsho"* which indicate a general educational deficiency of teachers.

Use of teaching learning aids. Most teachers used chalk, duster, black boards, and textbooks while conducting the class. Some of the schools, especially the madrasas, used a not so unconventional "teaching aid" – sticks to beat students with in order to handle the class. Some teachers reported in focus group discussions that they used teaching aids like maps, charts, and posters in the classes, but actually these were not found in the RNGP schools observed. Black boards in several of the classes were not in a useable shape.

Box 6.5 Pupils are ignored in their own classrooms

Pupils must be at the centre in any teaching learning process. Classroom observation done under the Primary School Performance Monitoring Project (PSPMP) study identified a number of lackings in this regard.

- A third of GPS teachers and a half of RNGPS teachers did not offer any opportunity to pupils to participate actively in the classroom.
- Most teachers did not ask for or paid attention to pupils' views on topics or issues in class.
- Over three-fourths of the teachers of GPS and 92 percent of RNGPS did not try to diagnose pupils' difficulties or explain lessons carefully if pupils did not understand an item.
- Pupils were seldom given feedback on their performance. Some teachers put their signature on exercise books without checking answers.

Source: Rahman S and Rahman AFMA (2002). Primary education in Bangladesh: Findings of PSPMP Study 2000, An Overview. Dhaka: PSPMP.

Classroom management. Except in the NFE schools, all other teachers were found to be late from 10 to 20 minutes in attending the classes. Teachers used sticks to bring order and manage the chaos in the large and crowded classes in several of the schools (GPS, RNGPS and madrasas). Beating students with sticks was particularly common in madrasas.

Teachers did not seem to be conscious of the total time available for the class. They did not follow a sequence to complete various steps of classroom activities and bring the lesson to a conclusion. When the bell rang, the lesson ended abruptly. Except the NFE schools, the male and female learners sat in separate columns of benches. The learners in some of the RNGPS classes were found sitting congested in benches, hardly able to move. They were gossiping, making noise, pinching each other, and generally not engaged in a purposeful activity. Some did not have pencils, or notebooks to write with. On checking notebooks, it was found that most had scrawls and inscriptions without much order, margins or simple rules of writing a meaningful content.

Slow learners' management. The device observed in a GPS to help those who lagged behind was to ask the more advanced learners in the class to work with the former in completing some exercises. The slow learners were called by the teacher *oparog* (non-performer) and the others *parog* (performer). The greatest impediment to paying attention to the slow students was the large class size and the short class periods. Basically the slow learners were the learners from the poorer families and many teachers saw them as inherently incapable of performing (non-performers). In a smaller class and operating with a different attitude, the NFE teachers found a way to handle the slow learner. For instance, the student was brought to the front of the class,

was paired with a stronger student as a source of help, and the teacher spent a little extra time with the slow student asking questions or explaining a point. The student was treated with understanding instead of being rebuked for not performing.

Homework management. The teachers assigned home tasks, as it was the rule for teaching learning activities, said the teachers of GPS and RNGPS. The teachers assigned tasks such as working out sums, memorising poems, writing essays and short answers to questions in different subjects. However, generally they did not or could not check the home tasks. In the NFE schools, home tasks were not as frequent; the exercises were mostly completed in the class; and when home tasks were assigned, teachers checked these and provided feedback to students. The smaller number of students in the class and a generally more systematic and professional approach to their job seemed to make the difference.

Assessment and feedback. Oral and written techniques such as asking questions and giving written exercises, the common approaches for continuous assessment of student's learning, are attempted to be used in GPS and RNGPS. As noted, the class size, short periods and the general environment in the class make it often an unproductive exercise. (see Box 6.6)

Box 6.6 Bad practices in good schools

A study on six schools identified by DPE as good quality schools showed serious malpractice regarding learning assessment of the pupils during annual examination. On an average, about 10% of the students of these schools keep themselves absent from annual examinations. The schools follow a flexible assessment system for the students of grades 1 and 2. For grades 3 to 5 written examinations are held, but the quality of examinations are not maintained properly. In five of the six schools, the teachers almost indicate answers to the pupils in the name of explaining the questions. In some cases, the students are given chances to copy from one another. In some schools, the parents come to examination centres to help their children in writing in the answer papers. Some students, who are unable to answer a single question, just copy the questions in the answer papers.

Answer papers are loosely assessed. The students who copy only the questions in the answer papers are given some scores. Students getting scores much below the pass marks are also given additional "grace" scores to allow them to move to the next grade. Such unfair assessment increases the promotion rates in these schools. According to the teachers, they are supposed to do this because of social pressure and to uphold the name and fame of the schools. The upazila officials are fully aware of all these, but they are not willing or able to take any action against the schools.

Source: Nath SR et al (2004). Case studies of quality primary education in Bangladesh. ESTEEM research series, Study 5. Dhaka: Directorate of Primary Education

In NFE schools, teachers were found to motivate learners by thanking, clapping or praising a students' answer or performance in front of the class. They made small groups among the learners, and assessed student work and provided feedback to the learners within the groups so that the learners could have a deeper understanding of the specific topic and learn to work in a group. The madrasa teachers were found to use punishment as a means of feedback for student's performance. Joyful learning appears to be an alien idea in this situation.

Co-curricular activities. The GPS and RNGPS received various sports and music equipment under development projects for undertaking co-curricular activities. Basically the GPS and RNGPS did not arrange co-curricular activities in the class though there was a period in the weekly class routine for this purpose. The NFE teachers attempted to integrate the co-curricular activities into the daily teaching-learning activities. Singing, role-playing, reciting poems and games were made part of learning exercises in the NFE class. There were generally no co-curricular activities in the madrasas. An example of a co-curricular event in an RNGPS is given in Box 6.7.

Box 6.7 Co-curricular and cultural activities in an RNGPS in Madhupur

A co-curricular event was held in the school every Thursday after the official class hours were over with all the students of classes 3-5 together taking part. Students were highly enthusiastic in taking part in it, which was popularly known as *bichitranusthan* (variety show). The duration of this "class" was about one hour. One teacher served as the facilitator who divided the students into two groups of participants by sex. The class started with recitation of suras from the holy Quran. Participants then sang songs, acted out dramatic roles, and recited poems. Most of the songs were taken from recent popular Bangla cinemas, some of which reflected anti-feminist values and crude romantic sentiments expressed in "love songs." Some of the lyrics were as follows:

- *shabdhane thakio nari pardaro aarale;* (Woman, stay inside the purdah.)
- *shukhe aamar buk bheshe jay bhalobashar kannay;* (I am overhelmed by tears of love.)
- *shara jibon bhashbo aami e shukherii bonnay;* (I will float in the flood of happiness.)
- *aamar ek shathi chhilo, bujhlona more;* (My companion did not understand me.)

It was surprising to see that the teachers just laughed without offering any guidance about the content of the co-curricular event or engaging students in a discussion about the values the songs reflected. The students, however, had a good time.

— Education Watch Research Team

The summary of observations of teaching learning activities in ten schools is provided in Table 6.4.

Table 6.4
Teaching learning activities in the classrooms

Teaching learning activities		A graded GPS (2)	B graded RNGPS (2)	D graded RNGPS (1)	Madrasa (3)	NFE (2)	
						BPS (1)	Missionary (1)
Teachers'	Lesson plan [a]	None	None	None	None	Yes	None
	Exchange of greetings	One third teachers exchanged greetings	Half of the teachers exchanged greetings	None	None	Exchanged in beginning of the class	Exchanged in every class
	Relevant discussions to announce lesson	None	Found only in one class (mathematics)	None	None	None	Conducted in three fourth classes
Lesson presentation	Teaching method	Lecture method, with a little participation of the students'	Except one class (mathematics), all were conducted in lecture method	Lecture method only	Lecture method only	Lecture method, demonstration, group discussion, question-answer	Heuristic, demonstration, group discussion, question-answer
	Teacher-student interaction [b]	One way interaction	One way interaction except one class (mathematics)	Mostly lecturing	Mostly lecturing	Two way interaction	Two way interaction
	Teacher making error in presentation	Verb missing in English sentences	Misspelling and wrong pronunciation of both English and Bangla words	Misspeaking, misspelling and wrong pronunciation of English words	Misspeaking, misspelling and wrong pronunciation of English words	Wrong English and Bangla sentences were used	None
	Use of relevant examples, stories, illustrations	None	None Except one class (mathematics)	None	None	Used in one third classes	Used in all classes
	Use of teaching learning aids [c]	Textbook, chalk, black board (BB), duster, stick, map	Textbook, chalk, duster, BB, chart (in mathematics class only)	Textbook, chalk, duster, BB	Textbook, chalk, duster, BB, stick	Textbook, chalk, BB, stick, slate, duster, poster, small bamboo sticks for counting	Textbook, chalk, BB, duster
	On-going evaluation & feedback [d]	Asking of questions No feedbac	One third of the classes conducted on-going evaluation	None	One third of the classes conducted on-going evaluation	Always on-going assessment by question-answering	Always on-going assessment by question-answering

Teaching learning activities		A graded GPS (2)	B graded RNGPS (2)	D graded RNGPS (1)	Madrasa (3)	NFE (2)	
						BPS (1)	Missionary (1)
Assigning home tasks & its asstssments		Home tasks were given in most subjects just signed and ticked on the khatas without assessment	Home tasks were given in most subjects just signed and ticked on the khatas without assessment	Home tasks were given in most subjects just signed and ticked on the khatas without assessment	Home tasks were given in most subjects ust signed and ticked on the khatas without assessment	Home tasks were given in most subjects ust signed and ticked on the khatas on wrong answer	Home tasks were given in most subjects signed in all khatas with proper assessment
Classroom management	Sitting arrangement	Boys and girls sat in separate columns	Boys and girls sat in separate columns	Boys and girls sat in separate columns	Boys and girls sat in separate columns	Mixed sitting in a 'U' shape	Mixed sitting in two columns
	Teachers' attitued	Teachers were not attentive in teaching	Teachers were reluctant to each except a mathematics class	teachers were reluctant to teach	teachers were reluctant and unaware to teach	Cordial to teach properly	Cordial to teach properly
	Use of verbal or physical abuse by the teachers	Half of the teachers' used stick in the classes, rebuked the learners, shouted, duster/stick banged on table frequently	Half of the teachers' used stick in the classes, rebuked the learners, shouted, duster/stick banged on table frequently	All of the teachers used stick in the classes, rebuked and shouted in the class	All teachers used stick in the classes, rebuked the learners shouted, stick whipped on table and banches frequently	None	None
	Slow/weak learners' management	None	Except mathematics class, they were neglected and rarely minded by the teachers	None	None	She repeated items in lesson for weak students calling them close to her and asked stronger peers to help the weak ones	Made stronger students help the weak ones, gave extra attention to them and moved them to the front of the class
	Time management	Both teachers and students were late in class, were not able to complete all steps of teaching learning process (TLP) within class duration	Both teachers and students were late in class; except in one class, teachers did not complete all steps of teaching learning process (TLP) within class duration	Both teachers and students were late in class; did not complete all steps of teaching learning process (TLP) within class duration	Most of the teachers were late in class; did not complete all steps of teaching learning process (TLP) within class duration	Completed all steps of TLP within class duration	Completed all steps of TLP within class duration

Teaching learning activities	A graded GPS (2)	B graded RNGPS (2)	D graded RNGPS (1)	Madrasa (3)	NFE (2)	
					BPS (1)	Missionary (1)
Classroom discipline	Noise, chaos, gossiping in classes	Noise, chaos, pinching, gossiping in classes	Noise, chaos, pinching, gossiping, laughing, in classes	Noise, chaos, gossiping in classes	Well disciplined classroom	Well disciplined classroom
Reward & punishment	No reward half of the classes were beaten up	No reward; one third of the students in class were beaten; rebuking students common in the class	No reward; most of the students were beaten in class; rebuking students common	No reward; most students beaten in class severely for any mistake	No punishment; students reward by clapping, praising, touching of head in appreciation	No punishment; students rewarded by clapping, praising, touching of head, teacher sitting beside the learners
Lesson-end assessment [e]	Had in only two classes	None	None	None	None	Had in all clsses

[a] Lesson plan was prepared by a teacher according to the objective, training methods, and evaluation process of a lesson to achieve intended learning outcome.

[b] To conduct a purposive teaching learning process with two way communication, i.e., the participation of both teachers and students in the class were necessary.

[c] Teaching learning tools to initiate and foster learning as students became interested and willing to learn by using their five senses, which is possible if the teacher used aids while teaching.

[d] Continuous assessment of lessons to help students and encourage them make further progress.

[e] Evaluation at end of lesson ensured a successful teaching learning process and helping achieve learning outcomes.

F. Summing Up: Classroom Practices

This chapter looked at school level academic management in primary schools in the selected upazilas, based on information gathered from schools, interviews, discussion with stakeholders, and classroom observation.

1. The head teachers' key role in ensuring effective functioning of school is recognised in government directives. However, in practice, the head teacher essentially worked as another teacher. Normal staff provision in school allowed little time for the head teacher for supervision of other teachers; nor his/her training and the degree of freedom granted to the head teacher supported or encouraged a leadership role. When this happened, this was due to exceptional individual initiative.

2. An annual school work plan - required by authorities in GPS and RNGPS as an instrument for assessing school performance - consisted of a calendar of events and ceremonial days to be observed, rather than a plan with analysis of problems and strengths, goals and objectives for the year and what was to be done to achieve the goals.

3. An inflexible and uniform centrally imposed daily school time-table fragmented the school day in very short blocks of time for up to eight separate school subjects every day, with little time for anything other than a mechanical routine in the class, even for children of grades one and two. In two shift schools, over 90 percent of all schools, this meant no more than 20 to 25 minute learning time in a class period. Short staffing in schools often made the uniform central timetable impractical. Schools made their own adjustments, but this often meant "convenient" arrangements for reducing teacher load by combining sections, making large classes even larger, but the fragmentation remained intact. There appears to be no awareness of this as a problem among teachers or supervisors and no example was found, except in non-formal schools, of an effort to apply learner-centred and active teaching-learning with flexibility in class routine.

4. A system of "proxy teachers" - the appointed teacher employing someone to serve as a substitute - was mentioned in focus group discussions and interviews. This was tolerated and no action taken because the perpetrators had "connections" with influential people.

5. Competency-based curriculum with the formulation of the essential learning continuum and listing of competencies to be acquired by children through primary education was introduced a decade ago. This is an important government primary education initiative, which has the potential of bringing about significant

improvement in learning outcome. However, after a decade since this initiative began, teachers and head teachers do not have sufficient understanding of the concept and its implications for their work. The teacher's guidebook distributed several years ago are rarely consulted by teachers and has not been followed up with sufficient in-service training and orientation of teachers and supervisors.

6. AUEOs, the frontline supervisors of schools and teachers, with an average of 41 GPS and RNGPS to supervise (93 and 212 schools under one AUEO in two upazilas) did little more than fill out inspection forms unrelated to teacher's classroom work. Training and preparation of the AUEO did not equip him/her (only 7 out of 43 in ten upazilas were women) to become a professional guide to teachers - with some rare notable exceptions.

7. Primary schools (GPS and RNGPS) were graded into four categories applying a ten-point checklist related to school facilities and management, but not learning performance except scholarship examination results. Fifteen percent of the schools were found to meet the criteria and over a quarter had serious deficiencies. Annual school plans or supervision and support from upazila education offices did not indicate any planning to bring the weak schools up to a satisfactory level. This initiative has the potential of making school supervision focus on overall performance of schools and make supervision purposeful.

8. Classroom observations carried out by the research team in ten schools illustrated the common weaknesses in teaching learning, especially in GPS, RNGPS and madrasas, which served over 90 percent of the children. There were serious deficiencies in subject knowledge in such subjects as Mathematics, English and Bangla that caused students to be subjected to wrong information, explanation, examples and pronunciation. Teaching was based, with rare exceptions, on one-way communication in often large and crowded classrooms with a class timetable that did not permit carrying out a complete lesson sequence. Few learning aids were used, but a stick as a tool for discipline was seen in many classes. There was little effort or opportunity to help children who lagged behind. Home tasks were assigned but teachers failed to provide sufficient feedback to students. Classes in non-formal schools with smaller classes, strong supervisory support and supply of essential learning aids were a clear contrast to an average class in GPS, RNGPS and madrasa.

Chapter 7

Managing Primary Schools for Quality with Equity

This chapter discusses the issue of managing primary schools to create the environment for effective teaching and learning - education with quality and equity for all children. Based on the survey of households in school catchment areas and other sources of information form ten upazilas, the questions of managing the human resources in the school and those in close contact with it are discussed. Managing learning time, participation of the community in management of schools, the supportive role of the local authorities, and local planning for education with quality and equity for all children are considered.

The present study focuses on the reality and the perspectives at the grassroots - the school and its surroundings. It attempts to shed light on primary education management at the micro level, rather than present the macro or national view of it. One is not less important than the other. However, ultimately what matters is what happens in every school and every classroom. The management measures and decisions at the macro level must be aimed at supporting and empowering the school and teachers to deliver better learning for children. Yet, the attention often, including that of past *Education Watch* studies, has been at the macro level. Having looked at issues of managing and supervising teaching and learning and classroom practices in the previous chapter, this chapter examines issues of school level management related to creating the conditions and the environment in school for effective teaching and learning. We look at recruitment and deployment of teaching and supervisory personnel, teacher upgrading, managing learning time, role of SMCs and the community, involvement of local authorities, managing information, and comprehensive local planning of primary education.

A. Recruitment, Deployment and Development of Teachers

Teacher recruitment. Focus group discussions and interviews with stakeholders pointed to problems of teacher recruitment as a major impediment to improvement of quality in primary education. SMC members, parents, teachers, AUEOs and UEOs all recalled or expressed concern about violation and manipulation of rules and regulations regarding the recruitment of primary school teachers.

These violations, in their view, were taking place both for GPS and RNGPS. For the former, a committee at the district level was assigned to take oral interviews of candidates who had passed a nationwide written test. It was said that at the point of oral examination at the district level, bribery, nepotism, political linkage and other influences determined who was selected, rather than merit.

The RNGPS teachers were recruited by the SMCs. In most cases, according to parents, AUEOs, UP members and UEOs, some educated unemployed persons of the locality together established a school in order to find employment for themselves or for their relatives as teachers of these schools. As a result these schools in most cases employed teachers who did not qualify to be teachers. At least in one upazila, it was reported, a new selection process was introduced to recruit teachers in RNGPS. A committee consisting of SMC members, UEO and AUEOs would now review the recommendations from respective SMCs to make it a fairer process.

Deployment of teachers. Analysis in Chapters 3 and 4 indicated the inequity in teacher deployment in relation to student numbers and the vacancies that continued against approved posts. In respect of distribution and deployment of teachers, UEOs

and AUEOs could only make requirements known, but the power to authorise posts and employ lay with the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE). For example, one upazila education authority mentioned that they applied for 34 teachers for GPSs in the upazila, but only two posts were approved. Table 7.1 presents the summary of problems related to posting and distribution of teachers as voiced by stakeholders. Qualified and effective teachers were in demand and they could stay at schools located in towns. Most teachers did not want to be placed in distant rural schools. It was often noted that women teachers would prefer to be posted in schools at the upazila headquarters and/or at schools with good highway access.

Table 7.1
Observations/comments related to the problem of posting and distribution of teachers

Observations/comments	Sources of comments
Distant village schools are deprived of qualified and efficient teachers, because these teachers are in demand and they can have their posting of choice.	AUEOs in FGDs, UEOs in in-depth interviews
Influential persons take good teachers to their schools using their influence and connection with authorities.	AUEOs in FGDs, UEOs and some head teachers in in-depth interviews
Teachers, especially female teachers, manage their transfer to schools of their choice, i.e., schools at or near upazila headquarters or schools with good highway access.	AUEOs and teachers in FGDs, UEOs and some head teachers in in-depth interviews
Upazila Education Authority (UEOs and AUEOs) cannot transfer teachers from over-staffed schools to those under-staffed.	AUEOs and teachers in FGDs, UEOs in in-depth interviews

Source: Education Watch 2003/4 Field Survey

Selection and quality of leadership. The key leadership role of the head teacher in making a primary school perform effectively has been underscored. The selection and professional development of this leadership is, therefore, crucial.

Sixty-five percent of the head teachers were promoted from the ranks of teachers on the basis of seniority; the remaining 35 percent were recruited directly. Seniority in order to be promoted as head teacher was determined on the basis of service length in teaching; the incumbent should also have at least seven years of experience, must have HSC for male and SSC for female, and with C-in-Ed. According to UEOs and AUEOs, this policy led people to become head teachers who did not necessarily have the leadership quality. Moreover, many schools did not even have a head teacher due to bureaucratic delays. In one of the ten upazilas, it was found, 14 GPS (6 percent) did not have a head teacher. This proportion nationally was reported to be 8 percent in 2002 (CPEIMU 2002).

UEOs and AUEOs informed the researchers that they did not have much direct role in developing the head teachers' leadership. None of the upazila education officers and head teachers were found to be aware about the training manual on school management for head teachers prepared by DPE. All head teachers were to receive this training in which the PTI Superintendent or Instructor was to be the facilitator. It is a six daylong workshop, but apparently it is not offered frequently enough to train all head teachers.

Some of the UEOs and AUEOs in interviews and FGDs complained that the head teachers who were promoted to the post on the basis of seniority were not very active and energetic. Faced with pressure to be more active, they preferred to go on LPR (leave preparatory to retirement), since they had accumulated long years of service and could take early retirement.

Teacher development. Teacher development in GPS and RNGPS took place through training at PTIs, sub-cluster training conducted by AUEOs, subject based training provided by the Upazila Resource Centres (URC) and ad hoc training provided through different development projects such as IDEAL and ESTEEM.

In the case of NFE schools run by NGOs, an approach quite different from the formal system is followed. Pre-service foundation training is offered by different NGOs, the duration of which usually is 15 days. This is followed by monthly one to two-day refresher training and annual short courses. Intensive supervision is seen as an essential compensatory measure for the relatively short professional training.

For GPS and RNGPS the standard training is the 10-month Certificate-in-Education (C-in-Ed) course offered by Primary Teacher Training Institutes (PTI). A previous study found that an overwhelming majority of the teachers in the government schools and the non-formal schools, but not in RNGPS, received basic professional training (Chowdhury *et al* 1999). There were 54 PTIs in the country and training capacity of these were increasing and produced roughly 6,000 trained teachers every year. However, it was noted that there were over a 100,000 untrained teachers in the mainstream primary education, mostly in RNGPS. Learning outcomes defined in the PTI curricula varied by subjects. The outcomes were largely descriptive and theoretical; and the scope for activity-based learning was limited. The lecture method was predominant in PTI classrooms and practical skills were not emphasised. Majority of the instructors in PTI had professional training like MEd, and BEd but they rarely had any practical experience of primary school teaching or even received training on primary education (Alam and Haq 2000). *Education Watch* (2000) assessment of learning competencies showed that teacher training from PTI did not appear to make any significant difference in students' learning outcome.

One form of in-service training is the sub-cluster training, so called because it is organised for a sub-cluster of primary schools under the supervision of one AUEO. All the teachers of GPS, RNGPS, community schools, satellite schools and experimental schools are expected to participate in the day-long training once in a month, conducted by the concerned AUEO. A leaflet containing the topic is distributed in advance. Some 82 leaflets were prepared in ten years since this activity started (DPE 2000) and discussions were held on these questions in the training sessions.

According to SMC members and some teachers, while the activity began as an innovative idea, the enthusiasm has waned in recent years. It was even discontinued for a while. The research team was told that AUEOs and teachers met in a particular school, discussed about administrative matters, had lunch at that particular school's cost. "It was more like a social gathering than a training event," according to a teacher participant. Some UEOs and AUEOs agreed that the activity was not particularly effective, in part because of lack of professional support in planning and designing the content and method, professional deficiency of AUEOs who are the trainers for this event, and insufficient follow-up of the outcomes of training at the school level.

The AUEOs were expected to promote better teaching learning in the schools by academic supervision and in-service training sessions in sub-clusters of nearby schools. However, the AUEOs are being recruited directly from university graduates nowadays who have little knowledge or understanding of primary education. The training given to AUEOs by the National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) is considered "insufficient to equip them for all their duties and to compensate for their lack of practical knowledge of primary education" (JBIC 2002).

Teachers in upazilas under the IDEAL project had received training on Multiple Ways of Teaching Learning (MWTL) provided by the project in two phases of five days' training and three days' follow-up training; however, it was noted in the focus group discussions that only teachers of grade "A" schools got the opportunity to receive this training. Head teachers of targeted schools in project areas were provided training by the ESTEEM project on school management. They also arranged some professional development meetings in one of the 10 survey upazilas for all GPS teachers where discussion took place on "teacher competencies" for effective teaching.

URCs are intended as another vehicle for upgrading teacher competency by providing subject-based training. There is one instructor, one AUEO, one computer operator and one messenger cum night guard in each URC. The instructor is responsible for management of the URC and the AUEO is responsible for the academic aspects of the centre.

Of the ten upazilas under study, eight nominally had URCs; four are not functional yet. One of the four that had started functioning stopped its activities due to lack of fund (since the development project supporting it ceased operation, and the government did not yet include it in the regular budget). One other so far had not offered any course. The remaining two arranged several rounds of training on English for five days and on Mathematics for six days. For example in one of these, 289 teachers had been trained in English teaching in 12 batches while 323 teachers had been trained in Mathematics teaching in 13 batches. The effectiveness of this training and its impact on classroom are yet to be assessed. The uncertainty of the status and budget of URCs have dampened the morale of the staff.

B. AUEOs - The Frontline Supervisors

AUEOs are at the upazila tier of the primary education system management who are directly involved in school supervision, monitoring and administration. They have a key role in ensuring quality of education and proper functioning of the school. AUEOs roles and responsibilities, their distribution, schools under an AUEO, school supervision and monitoring by them, and its effectiveness are presented in this section.

The roles and responsibilities of AUEOs are largely divided into three broad categories of administrative, supervisory and training and other functions. (GOB 1986). Box 7.1 illustrates details of these roles and responsibilities.

Box 7.1 Roles and responsibilities of AUEOs

Roles and responsibilities of AUEOs included:

- helping UEO regarding the administration of schools under their respective clusters;
- visiting and supervising each school at least once in a month staying 2- 3 hours in a school;
- submitting report on head teachers' activities, head teachers' and other teachers' annual confidential report, teachers' salary bill, leave and teachers' transfer applications to UEO office with comments and recommendations;
- regular submission of reports on information of the schools under their clusters to UEO office;
- maintaining diary on their travel and visit to schools and preserving these for producing to higher authority when required.

The roles and responsibilities related to supervision included:

- observing teachers' classroom teaching and giving suggestion and feedback to them in order to improve the quality of teaching;
- examining progress of teaching at classroom according to the annual lesson plan and giving suggestions and direction to teachers to improve situation of low achievers;

- arranging cluster training for teachers regularly and reporting on it using selected format;
- examining the records of schools and suggesting proper maintenace of these;
- suggesting improvement of the library;
- suggesting, helping and cooperating with head teachers regarding teaching and co-curricular activities of schools;
- ensuring cleanliness of schools and infrastructure;
- other responsibilities assigned by the higher authority and upazila parishad etc.

The roles and responsibilities related to training and other issues included:

- maintaining regular contact, discussion with SMCs, PTAs and their members on teachers' attendance, school timing and teachers' attention to students;
- ensuring regular meeting of SMCs and attending at least five SMC meetings a month;
- maintaining good contact with parents and suggesting and directing for ensuring attendance of irregular students;
- organising child survey every year; examining monthly return of the schools under their cluster before submitting these to UEO office etc.

Source: DPE

It was found from the school survey that GPSs, on an average, were visited six times last year by the AUEOs; RNGPSs were visited on an average five times; and madrasas were visited on an average only once.

The summary of observations/comments about AUEOs' supervision role from FGDs and interviews are presented in Table 7.2. All the stakeholders perceived that the role of AUEOs was to visit and supervise the schools and ensure quality teaching learning in the schools; examining monthly evaluation; giving suggestions to teachers; and also trying to make parents aware about education by attending different meetings/functions etc. A few head teachers mentioned that AUEOs visited schools once a month, observed classes, gave necessary suggestions to teachers, trying to make parents aware about education and schooling. However, others did not agree with this claim. They said that AUEOs did not perform their roles and responsibilities properly and did not visit schools regularly (each school once a month or at least ten schools a month). Even if they came to school they only checked the records and discussed about administrative issues sitting in the teachers' room having refreshment, did no classroom teaching supervision and did not check students' learning and progress. Instead of giving suggestions to teachers they were harsh to teachers for any minor administrative lapses (in terms of attendance, duration of staying at school etc.).

Table 7.2
Summary of observations/comments about AUEOs' supervision role from FGDs and in-depth interviews

Observations/comments	Sources of comments
AUEOs have to visit and supervise the schools, ensure quality teaching learning in the schools, give suggestions to teachers for improvement and try to make parents aware about education and schooling.	Teachers, SMC members, UP members and parents in FGDs, head teachers, UEOs and UNOs in in-depth interviews
AUEOs should visit each school once a month, observe classes, give necessary suggestions to teacher, try to make parents aware about education and schooling.	A few head teachers in in-depth interviews, AUEOs in FGDs
AUEOs do not perform their roles and responsibilities properly and regularly.	Teachers, SMC members, UP members and parents in FGDs, few head teachers and UNOs in in-depth interviews
While visiting schools AUEOs only check records and discuss about administrative issues sitting and having refreshment in the teachers' room.	Teachers, SMC members, UP members and parents in FGDs, a few head teachers in in-depth interviews
During the visit instead of giving suggestions AUEOs show anger to teachers for any minor administrative lapses.	Teachers, SMC members, UP members and parents in FGDs, a few head teachers in in-depth interviews
Sometimes teachers have to placate AUEOs, who found fault with minor mistakes, by offering them illegal payment.	Teachers, SMC members, UP members and parents in FGDs, a few head teachers in in-depth interviews

Teachers of some GPSs, SMC members, UP members and parents complained that AUEOs visited five to six schools a day, which were situated alongside a particular single way and took money from each of the schools as transport cost, had lunch at one school, and extracted payments from teachers finding small infractions on their part. That schools by the roadside with easy access were favoured in many ways can be seen from scholarship results of schools shown in Table 7.3.

Table 7.3
Proportion of schools with scholarship winners by distance between school and upazila

Distance between school and upazila (km)	Number of schools	Schools with scholarship-winners (%)
0- 5	190	42.1
6- 10	398	25.4
11- 20	815	17.8
20+	298	13.8
Total	1701	21.6

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

SMC and UP members also said that the AUEOs did not have contacts with them or parents and did not attend any SMC meeting. AUEOs did not help the SMC and UP members in matters related to school improvement, and was often a source of interference and harassment, demanding favours from them.

As noted already, many upazilas lack sufficient AUEOs, and due to the abridged visit caused by shortage of manpower the AUEOs were unable to assess the quality of the schools properly which resulted in inadequate supervision. Whenever the AUEOs visited the schools they had to fill in a prescribed form, which included a lot of non-academic issues. The form was too long and the AUEOs had to spend almost the whole day to fill it in together with teachers. After filling in the form it was not possible for them to conduct or observe classroom teaching. Even the teachers could not conduct classes on the day of supervision, as they had to provide the detailed information to AUEOs in filling in the form. Alam and Haq (2000) observed, "The prevailing system of academic supervision was flawed in items of its very concept. It was more mechanical than educational. It encouraged the identification of teachers' faults/ mistakes and their corrections. In the existing system, the education officers performed more as administrators and inspectors rather than supervisors". ESTEEM suggested that ideally academic supervision should be a process, which would provide opportunities to identify the weaknesses of the teachers' performance in the teaching-learning transactions in a class. The supervision system should help the teachers with necessary support and suggestions to overcome the existing deficiencies. Supervision should enhance and ensure the quality of teaching and learning in and outside the classroom (DPE 2001). Prevailing supervision practices were far from this ideal.

C. Role of UEO

The upazila education officers (UEO) are responsible for providing leadership to primary education at the grassroots level. According to the government circular (GOB 2004), UEO's role and responsibilities include leadership; improving the quality of schools; group management; professional development; educational planning, monitoring and evaluation; communication and organisation; administrative duties; and miscellaneous duties.

UEOs themselves thought that they had little or no scope to be informed directly about the activities, and problems of the teachers, and hence the actual situation in schools. UEOs mentioned that they sat with their AUEOs periodically, sometimes weekly, to be updated about their school supervision, giving suggestions and directions to them on their roles and responsibilities. However, they said, they could not take any action against AUEOs' irregularities as some of them had protection of political patrons.

As the member secretary, the UEO called the meeting of upazila education committee (UEC) at the beginning of the year for overall planning and development of primary education in the upazila. The meeting was attended by UP chairman, SMC members and other representatives. The annual meeting of UEC discussed different problems related to primary education in the upazila including quality of overall education, demand for teachers and infrastructure of schools etc. However, according to UNOs and other stakeholders the committee existed only on paper having almost no role in primary education. UEOs also complained that the UEC was not accountable to anybody and would do things which served individual interest. The UEOs saw this situation as an obstacle to performing their duties. SMC members commented that they had never been called to UEC meetings at the upazila level.

It was also found that in some upazilas (at least four out of ten), UEOs did not stay at the upazila they worked in. They commuted for 2-3 hours to come to the office. They did not come to office regularly and timely.

D. Managing Learning Time

A very negligible proportion of the schools having adequate teachers and classrooms (under 10 percent nationally) operate in single shift; these are schools of grade A. Double shift schools naturally have reduced contact hours: about three hours for grade 3 through 5 and about two and a half hours for grade 1 and 2. According to official directives regarding school hours, the gap in contact hour between the two was large (DPE 2001). The annual difference is shown in Table 7.4.

Table 7.4
Standard contact hour by shift, grades, month and year

Shift	Grades	Contact hour in a month (Hours)	Contact hour in a year (Hours)
Single	1 - 2	72	861
	3 - 5	128	1470
Double	1 - 2	50	595
	3 - 5	73	865

Source: DPE unpublished document

Another aspect of time available for teaching and learning is the issue of primary school teachers being engaged in various activities not related to teaching or even primary education. These included education-related tasks such as collecting and providing information to higher education authorities (including periodic child education and literacy survey) and determination of eligible child population for primary education in the school catchment area, and record-keeping and administrative work related to the stipend programme. The duties of teachers also

included unrelated activities such as preparation of voter lists for national elections, testing salt for iodisation, assisting in national child immunisation campaign, participation in census, and providing relief to victims of natural disasters. Teachers are also called upon to investigate and arbitrate disputes in communities by local authorities.

There appears to be a mixed view about how extensive these demands are on teachers' time and to whether these are a significant factor in teacher's staying away from class. The head teachers and teachers of GPS generally thought these were a substantial burden and affected adversely their performance in school. On the other hand, personnel from RNGPS were not too concerned and thought that these extra activities did not happen too often. The upazila officials including the UNO, UEO and AUEO were of the view that the additional activities were not frequent, but they could be planned more carefully so that more of these could be undertaken during school holidays. They also thought that these activities offered an opportunity for teachers to be aware of and be involved in national development and enhance teacher's profile in the community. It appears that GPS teachers, being direct government employees, were called upon for extra-school duties more frequently than teachers in other schools. In a general state of short staffing of schools, the extra work can take time away from classrooms, unless the activities are planned carefully and in consultation with the upazila education office and head teachers.

The FGD participants and others generally indicated a preference for the single shift with a standard school day running from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. This undoubtedly would be desirable; except for the fact the implications for teachers, classrooms, and government budgets are huge. A strong argument can be made for giving priority to reducing class size to a maximum of 40 children under one teacher who is properly trained and has strong supervisory support in a double shift school than having a larger class under an ill-trained teacher with no supervision in a single shift school - if a choice has to be made. The strategy that would serve the interest of the child best would be to have children in manageable classes with effective learning contact with a qualified teacher rather than just single shift schools.

E. Union Parishad (UP) Role

Compulsory Primary Education Act 1990 had vested responsibilities to Union Parishad (UP) in respect of the goal of compulsory primary education (GOB 1990). Union and ward education committees were formed to mobilise local support for compulsory education. UP chairpersons are also members of the upazila education committee, which has a general oversight responsibility and the job of recommending government development grants in the education sector in the upazila.

Discussion in the upazilas revealed that many members of the UP were not aware of their roles and responsibilities in educational improvement activities at the primary level in their own union. Many knew nothing about the compulsory primary education act. A few people recalled that there used to be, almost a decade ago, education committees which looked after their respective union and ward education activities. At that time they used to get yearly financial allocation for the purpose. But this allocation from the central level had ceased and no one asked any longer about the education committees in the union.

Some upazila officials expressed the view that UP members and chair still could play a role in their primary schools if they took interest. They could support and help the SMCs and head teachers in their task of running an effective school by helping mobilise community support, and in general, being a promoter of education in their own communities.

F. School Managing Committee

The school managing committees (SMC) of primary schools are expected to ensure the effective management and functioning of the school and serve as the main vehicle for ensuring accountability of the school to parents and community.

The eleven member SMC consists of the head teacher of the school, one male and one female patron of education, one donor of land to the school (if any), a male/female teacher of a nearby high school (selected by UEO), a teacher representative from the school, one of the parents of a student of good academic standing, and four selected parents of the school "under the aegis of the local Member of the Parliament (MP), and approved by the DC in consultation with the responsible minister of the district." One of the local ward commissioners of the UP, municipality or city corporation is also co-opted as an advisor of the SMC. A president and a vice president is selected/elected from other than the head teacher and teacher representative of the school. The head teacher is the member-secretary of the committee. The tenure of the SMC is two years[1]. Madrasas have an 11-13 members' managing committee in which the head teacher is the member secretary and the UNO the chair.

Widespread dissatisfaction was expressed about how SMCs functioned. The problem most frequently noted was undue influence of head teachers and local political people (because of the role assigned to the MP and the "Minister-in-charge of the district" in the selection process. This influence, it was said, resulted in people with no interest in education, totally uneducated people and people who could not contribute in any

[1] Circular of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education regarding formation of SMC and Upazila Education Committee, 17/11/2001.

way to school management or improvement in education being selected as members of the managing committee. Either the head teacher arranged to have his friends and relatives in the committee or the politicians saw the membership as a reward for their supporters. The committees either rubber-stamped the head teacher's decisions or exercised undue influence in granting favours and tolerating negligence of duty at the detriment of education. Meetings were not held regularly, or if held, perfunctorily, although minutes could be produced which were all written up by the head teacher. A woman member of a committee, it was found by the research team, had never been asked to a meeting and did not even know that she was a member.

The problems generally were worse for RNGPS, because these schools were established by people who were friends or related to each other and arranged to form SMCs with members from within a closed circle.

The government has assigned a broad and general role to the SMC, which can be listed under five heads:

1. School development work including schoolhouse and road construction/repair, keeping school environment conducive to children's learning,
2. Ensuring that all children (6-12 years) enrol and attend,
3. Monitoring and supervising school activities and performance,
4. Helping manage sub-cluster training, PTA, stipends, and co-curricular activities,
5. Coordinating and resolving different school-related problems by involving community people and upazila education office.

It can be seen that substantial, even sweeping, responsibilities have been given to SMCs without actual authority in respect of managing financial and human resources in the school. Nonetheless, active and engaged SMCs can make a difference in the school, as it has been demonstrated in some cases. The reasons for this inadequacy were identified in discussion groups and interviews. Apart from the faulty selection noted earlier, there were unclear and vague ideas about the role and duty of the SMC, among the members themselves and among school authorities and parents. SMCs had no disposable fund; there was no budget at the school level provided by the government for any discretionary spending and the committee had no control over any fund unless it raised fund itself for the school. Upazila authorities and head teachers also did not have sufficient appreciation and understanding of the potential and significance of the SMC in making the school a more responsive, accountable and effective entity. They have often not done all they could to have the right kind of people in the committees and help the committee members understand, take on and discharge their responsibilities effectively.

G. Parent Teacher Association

To support successful implementation of compulsory primary education and to create each primary school as a strong social institution, active participation of parents in the affairs of the school was foreseen by the government. In fact, the first directives regarding formation of parent teacher associations (PTA) was issued in 1984. Amendments to these were made in 2000 with a circular, which encouraged parents/guardians of 3-12 year old children of school catchments area to form a 'parent-teacher society'. The society would elect an executive committee comprising a president and a vice president from among the parent members, have the head teacher as the member secretary, and include a teacher and three male and three female parents/guardians as members. The objectives of the parent-teacher association were stated as:

- Creating good relation among teachers and parents
- Improving quality of education by joint efforts
- Involving parents in all school activities
- Establishing accountability at the grassroots level
- Evaluating roles and responsibilities of the parent-teacher society
- Encouraging problem solving at the local level
- Forming a welfare trust in the school.

Thus PTA was seen as a forum in addition to the SMC to create an effective school-community partnership in education.

The research team's observation is that there was no really effective and active PTA in the schools visited or surveyed. Participants in discussion and interviews found it difficult to cite examples of a strong PTA in GPS and RNGPS.

Some parents as well as teachers, who attended a parent-teacher association meeting, perceived the forum as a means of passing more responsibilities to parents for things like keeping the textbooks tidy, ensuring that children did their homework, and sending them to the school regularly and timely. In spite of being the chair of the upazila education committee, most of the UNOs were uninformed of the existence of the PTA. The teachers and head teachers of a few GPS claimed to have PTAs in their school but admitted that these had little influence. In the school affairs "Now that most of the children come to school regularly due to the biscuit programme of WFP [in one of the districts], the parent- teacher society has lost its appeal", said the head teacher of a GPS. Other teachers spoke of a committee on paper only to follow government directives. They reasoned that the society had been superseded by the SMC and none wanted to be a member of the PTA but wished to serve on SMC. AUEOs agreed that the PTA was non-functional and one of them described it as "clinically dead."

There is clearly a mis-communication or confusion about the relative roles of PTAs and SMCs. The apprehension was expressed by some that there would be an overlap and conflicts if both the bodies were active in a school. The 2000 circular that reduced the number of executive committee members from 27 to 10 and gave PTA a more formal structure, changing its character as a loosely organised forum of parents and teachers, may have added to the confusion. In any event, apart from the circular, no serious effort has been made by the authorities to communicate the purpose and potential of PTAs or to popularise the idea.

Non-formal schools have made it a practice to have mothers' assembly every month to discuss common concerns and how the child can be supported both by school and the family. They have demonstrated how a genuine and effective involvement of parents, especially of mothers, can be promoted through a less structured forum for dialogue and sharing between parents, teachers and school authorities with the common objective of helping children learn better.

H. Governance Issues

Various governance issues have surfaced from the focus group discussions, interviews and the surveys. Governance problems affected adversely how the schools functioned and the support provided to the school from higher levels. The problems identified in different chapters of this report included:

- Waste and corruption in school construction and major repair work (Ch. 4)
- Lack of transparency, predictability and improper application of criteria in allocation of funds for construction and repair (Ch. 4)
- In the absence of an operating budget for schools, collection of various fees without a system of maintaining records and accounts (Ch. 4)
- Unofficial fees causing children to leave school (Ch. 5)
- Teachers "renting out" his/her job to substitutes (Ch. 5 and 6)
- Widespread practice and acceptance of private tutoring (Ch. 5)
- Payments required from students to receive "free" textbooks (Ch. 5)
- Selection of stipend recipients who were not the poorest and exclusion of the poorest (Ch. 5)
- Taking "cuts" from the stipend payments (Ch. 5)
- Tolerance of or even assisting cheating in examinations and falsifying scores (Ch. 6)
- Violation and manipulation of rules in teacher recruitment through political influence causing recruitment of unqualified people as teachers (Ch. 7)
- Membership of inappropriate people, not interested in or informed about education, as members of school managing committees through a politicised selection process (Ch. 7)
- Lack of transparent criteria and consistent application of rules in posting and

transfers of teachers, often influenced by extraneous factors not relevant to education management (Ch. 7)
- Illegal payments and favours demanded from teachers by supervisors (Ch. 7)

The present study was not designed to assess the extent and degree of prevalence of the problems and to quantify their consequences. (See Box 7.2 for a Transparency International survey of primary school governance in one group of upazilas.) Some of these problems no doubt are more widespread than others and their effects vary. It can be said with certainty that whenever improper influence, lack of transparency, absence of criteria and rules, or violation and non-application of rules characterise decision-making, it almost invariably works against the poor and the disadvantaged.

Box 7.2 A report card on primary education governance

A "report card" on primary education governance in eight upazilas of greater Mymensingh was issued by Transparency International Bangladesh based on its survey conducted in the last quarter of 2000. Information was collected, focus group and larger meetings were held and interviews were conducted involving 2,103 teachers, parents, students and officials concerned with 171 primary schools. The schools were located in the upazilas of Mymensingh Sadar, Muktagachha, Gouripur, Jamalpur Sadar, Sharishabari, Kishoreganj Sadar, Madhupur and Nalitabari. The survey covered 105 government, 40 non-government, 14 satellite and 12 community primary schools.

The aim of the survey was to identify the gaps and flaws in primary education management and to locate and investigate corruption in the system.

The survey unearthed major irregularities in the system. It revealed that various actors in primary education - government employees, the school management and teachers - had a role in incidences of corruption. It also showed that lack of accountability was the principal facilitator for corruption. Lack of transparency, low salary of employees, improper use of discretionary power, monopoly of power, the presence of powerful interest groups, and bureaucratic procedures contributed to corruption and mismanagement. Principal findings were;

- Students were required to make unauthorized payments for admission into the school, obtaining textbooks, promotion to higher classes, sitting in examinations and organizing school sporting events, Students also had to make contribution for entertainment of officers from the UEOs, for holding of religious events and for various other purposes.
- A total of over Tk 19,800,000 was collected in a year in the 171 primary schools as payments under all these heads. Of this, Tk 18,200,000 was raised as examination fees and the rest for other purposes. There existed neither specific guidelines nor any accounting system for this money.
- There were irregularities in the Food for Education Programme. Beneficiaries were selected on payment of bribes and by intervention of influential persons. In the actual distribution of food-grain, on average,

a student received 2.47 kilograms less than the allotted amount. The annual shortfall of 30 kilograms per student added up to 1,241 tons of "missing" food grain in a year in the eight Upazilas. The cash value of the missing food-grain - at Tk 10 per kg - amounted to Tk 12,420,000.

- The Primary Education Offices in the Upazilas were fraught with problems. There were instances of bribery, delays in service delivery and hostility towards teachers during school inspections.

The survey findings were put in the public domain for discussion and debate among all stakeholders with the aim of initiating a process of civil society dialogue and advocacy to improve primary education governance in the upazilas.

In fact, advocacy activities involved concerned citizens of the locality from the very outset of the process. TIB strove to involve representatives of the local communities intimately with the survey in order to develop ownership and sustainability of future advocacy activities. A high level of tact and understanding proved essential in order not to give offense or to display what might be interpreted as insensitivity. TIB found a non-partisan approach, from a political point of view, was critical. TIB also found that advocacy campaigns could be jump-started if service delivery institutions could be persuaded that data collection was handled in a responsible way and that it would contribute to improvement of the system. However, the most important element was the spontaneous involvement of local citizens. Without such involvement the project might have been undermined by the resistance of the local bureaucracy and politicians.

The concerned District Administrations gave assurances to assist with the advocacy activities and to take the necessary steps to implement the recommendations of the report. The Primary Teachers' Associations of the concerned Upazilas appreciated the TIB initiative and shared their experiences about corruption and mis-governance. The leaders of the Associations agreed with most of the TIB findings and promised to support follow-up actions. Whether significant changes have taken place in the behavior of officials and improvements have occurred in the quality of services in the upazilas as a result of the TIB initiative cannot be affirmed, since TIB was not in a position to remain engaged in a prolonged follow-up process in the upazilas. TIB believes that the 'questioning' by an enlightened group of concerned citizens begun by the advocacy initiative, if sustained over a period of time, will raise the level of accountability of public servants.

— Shahnaz Karim, Transparency International Bangladesh

I. Coordination and Decentralisation

The UNO office has the function of coordinating various government departments in the upazila. There was no duality of functions in the views of UNOs. Some other UNOs said that they were in charge of the total upazila and they could not let all education provisions be supervised by the UEO office, as the primary education was not a 'package programme' under the UEO, who had authority mainly over GPS and RNGPS. However, some UEOs said that UNOs exercised excessive authority in education when it suited them by utilizing the UEC, of which the UNO is the chair. Such power was exercised in spending the development grants for education received from the government, sometimes excluding the UEO from decision-making.

It was evident that the UEO has not been given by the government the responsibility and authority to maintain an oversight of primary education for the upazila. There was no common or comprehensive source of information about education in the upazila, nor was there any focal point for promoting or planning for compulsory primary education or EFA goals in the upazila. The madrasas, for example, remained virtually without any supervision although they served a sizeable proportion of children. The proprietary kindergartens are growing in number and are popular with the upcoming middle class even in small towns and some villages, but they remain outside any regulatory framework. In fact, there is focal point of responsibility to protect and uphold public interest in the sphere of education in the upazila.

When asked about links, contact and coordination among different types of schools in the area, UEOs said that coordination was done only among GPS and RNGPS through monthly meeting attended by head teachers. There was no system for coordination among any other type of schools except when some issues came up at the infrequent UEC meeting. There was also no coordination with NGO schools though some NGO schools had contact with nearby formal schools. UEOs mentioned that there were so many NGO, running schools in the upazilas, including hundreds run only by BRAC education programme and they did not know anything about them. They suggested that there should be coordination and partnership among all providers; that there should be a process of getting information from all the providers, because all were playing a vital role in primary education of the country.

J. Decentralisation versus Centralised Decision Making

Support for decentralisation as mentioned in a previous study (JBIC 2002) had been expressed in National Education Policy (NEP) 2000, National Education Commission 2003 as well as in other official statements, especially in respect of primary education. Responding to the issue of advantages and disadvantages of decentralisation of the management of primary education to the upazila level, UEOs pointed out the advantage that one could make decisions rapidly in response to necessity. Besides, they added, they knew very well the problems in the upazila and could take steps rapidly in such matters as a rational distribution of teachers among schools, planning and implementing development activities and responding promptly to administrative issues. On the other hand, local pressures of vested interests would increase; and resources were scarce at the local level, which had to come from the central authorities. Most stakeholders, on balance, favoured a genuine shift towards decentralisation to district, upazila and school levels. This would require, according to them, defining power, authority and control over resources at different levels and trying out ways of making this work. As noted in a previous study, it was not clear to all stakeholders what form decentralisation should take and how it was to be achieved (JBIC 2002).

K. Summing Up: Managing Quality with Equity

Several critical issues regarding the management and functioning of the school were identified on the basis of household and school surveys, focus group discussions, interviews and school and classroom observation in ten upazilas.

1. Teacher recruitment was seen by stakeholders at the local level as a major impediment to improvement of quality in primary education. SMC members, parents, teachers, AUEOs and UEOs all expressed concern about infractions and manipulation of rules and regulations regarding the recruitment of both GPS and RNGPS teachers leading to recruitment of teachers who were not qualified to be teachers. In the case of GPS the violation of rules was caused at the district level by increasing the weight of oral interviews in selection, thus making the process vulnerable to improper influence. For RNGPS, where SMCs were responsible, the system was seen as dominated by cronyism rather than application of criteria.

2. Transparent criteria for posting and deployment of teachers, based on actual and projected numbers of students in school, were not evident; actual posting, decided centrally, bore no relationship to shortage of teachers reported by UEO.

3. Two-thirds of head teachers were selected purely on seniority, not by applying criteria of leadership or performance record. Little preparation or orientation were available to head teachers for their duties. Most of the head teachers in the survey locations have not heard of the head teacher orientation offered at PTIs.

4. Primary teachers are not required to have any professional preparation to teach in a primary school. Once employed, they can join the 10-month C-in-Ed course. Most GPS teachers are trained but most RNGPS teachers are not. With an annual capacity of 6000 in PTIs and at least 100,000 RNGPS teachers in need of training, the demand cannot be met by current training approaches. Moreover major overhaul is needed in PTI training to make it more effective, since a significant impact of this training in student performance is not evident.

5. Two main initiatives for in-service training - sub-cluster training and URC subject-based training - are not working well in the 10 upazilas. Lack of professional support in planning and designing the content and method, professional deficiency of AUEOs who are the trainers and insufficient follow-up of the outcomes of training at the school level rendered the sub-cluster training into a monthly social gathering of teachers presided over by the AUEO. URC's are not living up to their promise of a resource and training centre for teachers in the upazila. Of the nominally established eight URCs in the ten upazilas, four are yet to become functional; one that had started functioning stopped due to lack of fund (since the development project funding ran out) and one had not offered a

course yet. Morale is low in URCs and the outcome of training offered so far is yet to be assessed for their impact in classroom.

6. AUEOs are the frontline supervisors for primary schools with the charge of giving teachers professional support and advice to do their job properly. Most informants in focus groups and interviews thought this promise is far from being fulfilled. A large number of schools, counting only GPS and RNGPS, in the charge of an AUEO (average of 41 and a range of 16 to 212 in the ten upazilas), no budget for mobility, lack of training for offering professional supervisory support to teachers and checking out long inspection forms about compliance with rules were identified as the problems. In addition, complaints were rampant that extorting payments and favours from teachers on threat of punishment was a common practice.

7. UEOs did not have an overall responsibility for primary education oversight in the upazila and had a difficult task of leading a team of AUEOs who apparently had an impossible mission. The upazila education committee, of which the UEO is the secretary and the UNO is the chair, met infrequently mostly to decide on how to spend annual development funds received from the central government and consider posting of teachers rather than address overall educational problems of the upazila. The UEC, in the view of some UEOs, was an impediment to performing their duty rather than help.

8. Using the available time of students and teachers in school optimally is important for effective learning, especially with most schools running on two shifts and total contact hour one of the lowest by international comparison. The stakeholders were for the ideal solution of a longer school day in single shift schools. The implications for teachers, classrooms and budgets are huge. The strategy that would serve the interest of the child best would be to have children in manageable classes with effective learning contact with a qualified teacher and to move towards the single shift slowly. A strong argument can be made for giving priority to reducing class size to a maximum of 40 children under one teacher who is properly trained and has strong supervisory support in a double shift school over having a larger class under an ill-trained teacher with no supervision in a single shift school.

9. Union Parishad - the only local government tier functioning at present, has almost no role in primary education. Chairmen and members mostly said they did not know of any significant role in primary education that has been assigned to them, although many were willing to be involved. The local education committees at union and ward levels set up after the compulsory primary education programme was started a decade ago have become dormant.

10. SMCs have been given a broad and sweeping role in primary school management, but with little real authority. Nonetheless, active and engaged SMCs can make a difference in the school, as it has been demonstrated in some cases. But this is not so generally. Political control - now institutionalised by giving the local MP a role, and cronyism of head teachers in the case of GPS and of the founding group in the case of RNGPS, has led to formation of SMCS with mostly the wrong people for such a committee. Unclear and vague ideas about the role and duty of the SMC, among the members themselves and among school authorities and parents and absence of any disposable fund with the managing committee are other reasons for their ineffectiveness. The potential of SMC as the vehicle for accountability and community involvement in school thus cannot be realised.

11. There is a miscommunication or confusion about the relative roles of PTAs and SMCs. The apprehension was expressed by some that there would be an overlap and conflicts if both the bodies were active in a school and that with active SMCs no PTA is needed. Non-formal schools have demonstrated that parents, especially mothers, want to be involved and can be partners with teachers and the school in helping children learn and grow.

12. Governance problems including corruption and mismanagement related to all aspects of education management seriously undermined management of primary education for quality and equity. The problems concerned recruitment and posting of teachers, construction and repair of school buildings, charging unofficial fees and the common practice of private tutoring, "renting out" teaching jobs, administration of stipends, distribution of textbooks, and cheating in examinations.

13. No one has a responsibility and authority to maintain an oversight of primary education in the upazila. There was no common or comprehensive source of information about education in the upazila, nor was there any focal point for promoting or planning for compulsory primary education or EFA goals in the upazila. The madrasas, for example, remained virtually without any supervision although they served a sizeable proportion of children. The proprietary kindergartens are growing in number and are popular with the upcoming middle class even in small towns and some villages, but they remain outside any regulatory framework. In fact, there is no focal point of responsibility to protect and uphold public interest in the sphere of education in the upazila.

14. Most stakeholders at the school and upazila level were in favour of much greater and meaningful decentralisation of education management. They were apprehensive that local pressures of vested interests would increase; and that

resources were scarce at the local level, which had to come from the central authorities. On balance, however, they favoured a genuine shift towards devolution of authority and decisions to district, upazila and school levels. This would require, according to them, defining power, authority and control over resources at different levels and trying out ways of making this work. It was not clear to all stakeholders what form it should take and how it was to be achieved; hence the importance of trying out approaches in selected locations.

Chapter 8

Conclusions and Policy Implications

This final chapter recapitulates the findings of Education Watch 2003/4, *based on field work in ten upazilas, in respect of primary education provisions, resources at the school level, characteristics of deprivation in primary education, quality factors in the classroom, and management at the school and local level. The policy and action implications of the findings are presented as seven-point action agenda in primary education.*

Education Watch 2003/4 focuses on quality with equity in primary education. In doing so, it attempts to probe deeper into inter-connected effects of factors bearing on schools and children in specific locations in 10 upazilas, and attempts to present a summative perspective with regard to policy and action implications. It also draws on the findings and outcomes of earlier *Watch* reports. A micro (children, teachers, parents and the school) and a meso (upazila education authority and local administration at the upazila and the union) perspective, complementing a macro and national view, the focus of the previous *Education Watch* studies, is provided in the present report.

A. Key Findings and Conclusions

In drawing the conclusions of the study, the key findings presented in the summing-up sections of chapters three to seven are recapitulated in the following sections.

a. Primary education provisions

1. According to the upazila education office data derived from their own child education survey, 75.3 percent of the children in the eligible age group were enrolled in primary school. However, the household survey conducted in school catchment areas in the upazilas conducted under the present study showed an enrolment rate of 90.4 percent. There appears to be an underestimation of enrolment in institutions other than GPS and RNGPS in the upazila education office data.

2. UEO data show 57 percent of students are in GPS, 24 percent in RNGPS, 9 percent in all types of madrasas, 2.5 percent in kindergartens and 1.1 percent in NFE schools.

3. National net enrolment data in recent years since 1998 indicate a steady rise from year to year from 77.5 percent in 1998 to 85 percent in 2002. From the present upazila data collected from a non-random sample, no national estimate canbe derived. The status and trend at the national level merit proper study.

4. There were 6,830 teachers in 1,605 GPS and RNGPS. Ratio of female teachers was 39 percent. There was no reliable source of data for teachers of other types of institutions.

5. Focus group discussion and interviews with local stakeholders in primary education revealed:

   - There is a lack of common criteria and understanding regarding quality of education and how a school's performance should be judged. The concept of accountability of schools and education personnel including teachers, head teachers and supervisors at the upazila level, all of whom received

- public funds to provide public service, appeared to be lacking. Absence of models or knowledge about effective schools, and high quality teaching-learning practices also may have led to the acceptance and tolerance of the familiar.

- In every upazila, a number of institutions were pointed out by many of the focus group participants and informants as "good quality institutions." These could be a GPS, kindergarten, community school or NFE school. These, of course, could serve only a small proportion of the children, usually not those from poorer families. The so-called good schools were not promoting equality of opportunity for all children. And these ''good schools" were generally accepted as "special cases", rather than a model to be emulated by other schools in the upazila. Nor were ideas expressed about how pro-actively these good examples could be turned into models to be replicated.

- Religious considerations prompted some stakeholders to support the provisions for ebtedayee madrasas; since ''the madrasas taught children about their religious duties." There was, however, a discernible majority critical of ebtedayee madrasas and RNGPS as "of poor quality compared to GPS, kindergarten and non-formal schools."

The key points that need to be emphasised regarding primary school provisions are as follows:

First, schools, especially GPS and RNGPS, which serve over 80 percent of the children, are not distributed according to set criteria and are not related to child population or area of the upazila. Nor is the ratio between GPS and RNGPS based on criteria or a discernible pattern.

Second, there is no effort to develop a complementarity between GPS and RNGPS, on the one hand, and the other types of institutions, such as madrasas and non-formal schools, to ensure adequate provisions for all children. No one is responsible to maintain an overview of primary education or plan for adequate provisions in the upazila.

Third, The GPS has on an average one more teacher than the RNGPS (4.5 and 3.8), but neither could serve the enrolled students except in two shifts; the gender imbalance in teaching positions in the public system remains high in spite of the policy of affirmative action in recruitment.

Fourth, with the number of GPS essentially remaining unchanged, the share of total enrolment in RNGPS has been rising. Generally poorer provisions for teachers, and physical facilities in these schools, compared to GPS, have meant that the overall quality of provisions for primary education has deteriorated.

Fifth, the data for the upazilas suggest an increase in net enrolment and a narrowing of gap between net and gross enrolment, which indicates a maturity of the system with a culture of sending children to school at the designated entry age taking root. Whether this indicates a wider national trend needs to be established with accurate and up-to-date national data.

Sixth, there is a serious insufficiency of provisions, creating a deficit of the order of 50 to 60 percent in terms of schools, classrooms and teachers, if criteria for acceptable quality for provisions are applied.

Seventh, the present situation strongly indicates the need for a process and mechanism for upazila-based comprehensive and participatory planning, with local analysis of needs and circumstances, for rational and adequate provisions to ensure quality primary education for all children.

Finally, a systematic and planned effort is needed to develop understanding and awareness about the criteria and concept of quality in education, performance standards of schools, and how accountability of schools and education personnel to communities and parents can be established and demanded.

b. Resources in schools

1. Major investments have been made by the government in primary school facilities since 1990. Facilities in the system still remain far from satisfactory, both in number of classrooms and schools and in their quality. Fifteen percent of the surveyed schools in the 10 upazilas were rated by the research team as "good" - with safe, sturdy and clean roof, walls and floor. About half were "fair" and 30 percent were rated as "poor," - judged by the very basic criteria applied. Hazardous and unsafe conditions were observed in some GPS and madrasas.

2. Annual budgets and plans for maintenance and repair of buildings did not exist in GPS, RNGPS and madrasas. *Ad hoc* grants from the government were made available periodically to some schools through a process regarded as non-transparent, unpredictable, arbitrary, and not based on analysis and prioritisation of needs in the upazilla, according to local stakeholders.

3. Construction and repair jobs done with the periodic government grants were handled by LGED without much say of school and upazila education office and was regarded almost unanimously as highly unsatisfactory, characterised by "shoddy work, waste and corruption."

4. Toilet facilities did not exist in 15 percent of GPS and RNGPS, based on the research team data from sample schools. One-third of the schools had

separate functioning toilets for males and females and half had the same facility for both sexes. Clean water availability was "fair" to "adequate" in 80 percent of the schools.

5. GPS, RNGPS and madrasas did not have sufficient classroom space for all the enrolled children. Applying a modest standard of the upazila education office of just permitting students sit in rows of benches with little elbow room, it was found that there was no space for a quarter of the enrolled students in GPS and 40 percent of the students in madrasas. By these standards, RNGPSs in the ten upazilas could accommodate 97 percent of their students.

6. Two-thirds of the schools, as rated by the research team, had sufficient light and visibility in classrooms - but one third did not meet this very basic condition. Two-thirds had an electric connection, but not necessarily electricity in all classrooms.

7. Ventilation and flow of air - since many classrooms are constructed with tin roof and walls - is a major concern. Sixty percent of the schools were judged as "unsatisfactory" in this regard.

8. In terms of overall environment of the school and its surroundings (noise pollution, safety of children, trees and plants on the ground, and playground), half of the schools were rated as "fair" or better, which meant half had an unsatisfactory basic environment for children. Noise pollution was a problem in 20 percent of the schools. Three quarters had some kind of playground, but over half of these were "unsatisfactory " in size or condition of the ground. Only ten percent of the schools had complete compound walls.

9. Insufficiency of teachers was a common problem. Eighty percent of the schools had four or less teachers, 21 percent three or less. On an average, 30 percent schools had more than 60 students per teacher; over two-thirds had more than 40 students per teacher.

10. The average teacher student ratio in the ten upazilas was 1:53 - somewhat better than the national average of 1:61. There was a substantial variation in this ratio among the upazilas. The range was 37 to 90 students per teacher for GPS and 34 to 95 students per teacher for RNGPS. Approved posts of teachers remained vacant for a year or more - in 19 percent of GPS and 7 percent of RNGPS.

11. About half of teachers (47 percent) had bachelors or masters degree. Interestingly, in madrasas, this proportion was 65 percent, presumably with higher degrees from the madrasa system.

12. Learning aids, other than blackboards and textbooks, were generally scarce, except in non-formal schools, and were not used in class, even when some were available from development projects. There were a few exception to the rule where these were used and even teachers developed their own.

Few financial resources, disposable at the school, were available in GPS and RNGPS as a budgetary provision. Overall, schools had very little fund available to be used at the school's discretion for essential expenses related to school's activities. Some primary schools raised funds for small repair, purchase of stationery and entertainment of visitors with contribution made by them, collected from community and by charging students "unofficial" fees. Madrasas were more active in raising their own resources and appealed for contribution as a religious obligation. A few formal schools received contribution from NGOs and charities.

c. Deprivation in primary education

1. The large picture of primary education deprivation is well known.
   - One out of five children does not enrol in a primary school.
   - One out of three of those enrolled drops out before completing primary education.
   - One out of three who complete five years of primary schooling still remains non-literate or semi-literate.
   - Therefore, the large majority of children, mostly poor and disadvantaged in other ways, grow up without basic skills and preparation for life.
2. The survey in ten upazilas revealed that the net school enrolment rate of children in the 6-10 age group was substantially higher (90 percent) than the current national estimates. No conclusion can be drawn for the national situation from this non-random sample, but whether this indicates a change in the national situation of primary school enrolment merits further investigation.
3. A broad-based gender parity has been observed across the board among catchment areas, upazila, school types, and socio-economic groups.
4. Variation within the categories - catchment areas, upazilas and school types, and socio-economic groups - is important to understand the nature of deprivation. Variations were found among catchment areas, upazilas and school types, which will be important in considering policy measures.
5. The most pronounced differences were among socio-economic categories in respect of enrolment, repetition, dropout, and participation which delineated the magnitude and nature of the problem of deprivation in primary education.

Self-rated food security status of households was taken as the proxy for socio-economic grouping.

- In the surveyed upazilas, a child from an "always in deficit" family had a 30 percent less chance of being enrolled in a school and five times more chance of dropping out from school compared to a child from a "surplus" family.
- A quarter of the never-enrolled children cited poverty as the reason for non-enrolment. Over forty percent who dropped out indicated poverty as the reason for dropping out.
- Refusal of the school authority to admit the child was cited as the second most important reason (21 percent of the cases) for non-enrolment. This appears to be a new phenomenon arising from increased interest in schooling generated by offer of stipends and parent's preference for certain schools - close to home or with a "good name."
- Children not "liking school" was an important cause for not enrolling and the most important reason for dropping out. This indicates problems about how the school functions.
- There is also an interaction between factors related to school and family and society, which are discussed below. Social and economic disadvantage of the child and the child's background and the school's response to this is a key element in this interaction.

6. Contributing in significant ways to non-enrolment and dropout are child labour, the phenomenon of private tutoring, various factors related to low class attendance, and problems of the first generation learners. It was not one or another cause that could be identified and fixed, but a *syndrome of poverty and disadvantage* that caused deprivation.

    - In the 6-14 age group of the poorest economic category, one-third of the children were non-students and at work or unemployed, and 30 percent were students and working at the same time. In the "surplus" group, about the same proportion was both students and at work, but only 7.5 percent of the children were non-students, either working or without any work.
    - Forty-seven percent of the mothers and 43 percent of the fathers of primary school children in the upazilas were without any schooling. Both parents were without education for a third of the children. Almost half of the children can be regarded as "first generation learners" if the criterion regarding both parents' education is applied. Inability of parents to guide and support their children, and the likely economic disadvantage of these families, affect how the first generation learners perform in school.

- Private tutors for primary school children have become a norm. Forty three percent of the children had private tutors; they paid an average of Tk 152 per month for eight months in a year. 18 percent of the children form "deficit" families and 57 percent from "surplus" families had private tutors. Children who needed extra help with their studies received the least help from private tutoring.
- Low average school attendance, about 60 percent, encapsulated many factors related to both the operation of the school and the family situation of the child. Causes identified were children's need to help at home either regularly or for seasonal farm work, ill health or sickness of child or a parent, acute family economic problems, and falling behind in lessons with no help to catch up from teacher or at home. Without the capacity of school and willingness or ability of teachers to help the child to catch up, any disruption set in motion a vicious spiral of further lag, more absences, and eventually dropping out.
- Children with special needs, especially those with disabilities, and children of ethnic minorities whose mother tongue is not Bangla, are a special dimension in the picture of deprivation in primary education.

7. Survey data, discussion and observations brought out information about three kinds of interventions which could be seen as elements of the effort to address deprivation. These were free distribution of textbooks, scholarship examinations in primary schools, and stipend for primary school children from poor families.
    - Most schools and students received textbooks, although, officially only GPS, RNGPS and ebtedayee madrasas are supposed to receive free textbooks. Students in all categories had to make a payment to receive the books. Survey data showed that 27 percent of the children made a payment to receive books, which varied on average, from Tk 14 per child in GPS and RNGPS, Tk 32 in madrasa and Tk 166 in kindergartens.
    - The extra time and attention given to 20 percent of the class 5 scholarship nominees often meant that 80 percent in class 5 and all in the rest of the schools paid a price in a very common situation of teacher shortage in the school. A measure intended to encourage good performance and benefit students has become counter-productive for those vulnerable to deprivation.
    - Stipend recipients were roughly evenly divided between four socio-economic categories (based on food security criteria used in this study.) Over two-thirds of the children from the poorest category were not

selected to be recipients of the stipend; but 27 percent of children from affluent households received the stipend.

- Household survey revealed that forty percent of the recipients were paid Tk 200 or less instead of Tk 300 as a quarterly payment. Students from "rich" households received on average Tk 260 and those from "poor" households were paid Tk 225.
- Targeting the poor, the principal rationale of the stipend programme, does not appear to be working, at least in the upazilas under study. There are also major problems in the management and administration of the programme, one manifestation of which is "cuts" taken from stipend. A basic dilemma of the programme is: Are there ways of spending scarce money to help the disadvantaged children perform better in school and attend school regularly rather than subject them to criteria which they find difficult to meet. Non-formal education programmes run by NGOs have attracted and held poor children in school and helped them to perform well without stipend as an inducement.

d. Promoting quality in classroom

1. The head teachers' key role in ensuring effective functioning of school is recognised in government directives. However, in practice, the head teacher essentially worked as another teacher. Normal staff provision in school allowed little time for the head teacher for supervision of other teachers. Nor his/her training and degree of freedom granted to the head teacher supported or encouraged a leadership role. When this happened, this was due to exceptional individual initiative.

2. An annual school work plan - required by authorities in GPS and RNGPS as an instrument for assessing school performance - consisted of a calendar of events and ceremonial days to be observed, rather than a plan with analyses of problems and strengths, goals and objectives for the year and what was to be done to achieve the goals.

3. An inflexible and uniform centrally imposed daily school time-table fragmented the school day in very short blocks of time for up to eight separate school subjects every day, with little time for anything other than a mechanical routine in the class, even for children of grades one and two. In two shift schools, over 90 percent of all schools, this meant no more than 20 to 25 minute learning time in a class period. Short staffing in schools often made the uniform central timetable impractical. Schools made their own adjustments, but this often meant "convenient" arrangements for reducing teacher load by combining sections, making large

classes even larger, but the fragmentation left intact. There appears to be no awareness of this as a problem among teachers or supervisors and no example was found, except in non-formal schools, of effort to apply learner-centred and active teaching-learning with flexibility in class routine.

4. A system of "proxy teachers" - the appointed teacher employing someone to serve as a substitute - was mentioned in focus group discussions and interviews. This was tolerated and no action taken because the perpetrators had "connections" with influential people.

5. Competency-based curriculum with the formulation of the essential learning continuum and listing of competencies to be acquired by children through primary education was introduced a decade ago. This is an important government primary education initiative, which has the potential of bringing about significant improvement in learning outcome. However, after a decade since this initiative began, teachers and head teachers do not have sufficient understanding of the concept and its implications for their work. The teacher's guidebook distributed several years ago are rarely consulted by teachers and has not been followed up with sufficient in-service training and orientation of teachers and supervisors.

6. AUEOs, the frontline supervisors of schools and teachers, with an average of 41 GPS and RNGPS to supervise (95 and 212 schools under one AUEO in two upazilas) did little more than fill out inspection forms unrelated to teacher's classroom work. Training and preparation of the AUEO did not equip him/her (actually only 7 out of 43 in ten upazilas were women) to become a professional guide to teachers - with some rare notable exceptions.

7. Primary schools (GPS and RNGPS) were graded into four categories applying a ten-point checklist related to school facilities and management, but not learning performance except scholarship examination results. Fifteen percent of the schools were found to meet the criteria and over a quarter had serious deficiencies. Annual school plans or supervision and support from upazila education offices did not indicate any planning to bring the weak schools up to a satisfactory level. This initiative has the potential of making school supervision focus on overall performance of schools and make supervision purposeful.

8. Classroom observations carried out by the research team in ten schools illustrated the common weaknesses in teaching learning, especially in GPS, RNGPS and madrasas, which served over 90 percent of the children. There were serious deficiencies in subject knowledge in such subjects as Mathematics, English and Bangla that caused students to be subjected to wrong information, explanation, examples and pronunciation. Teaching was based, with rare exceptions, on one-

way communication in often large and crowded classrooms with a class timetable that did not permit carrying out a complete lesson sequence. Few learning aids were used, but a stick as a tool for discipline was seen in many classes. There was little effort or opportunity to help children who lagged behind. Home tasks were assigned but teachers failed to provide sufficient feedback to students. Classes in non-formal schools with smaller classes, strong supervisory support and supply of essential learning aids were a clear contrast to an average class in GPS, RNGPS and madrasa.

e. Managing school for quality and equity

1. Teacher recruitment was seen by stakeholders at the local level as a major impediment to improvement of quality in primary education. SMC members, parents, teachers, AUEOs and UEOs all expressed concern about infractions and manipulation of rules and regulations regarding the recruitment of both GPS and RNGPS teachers leading to recruitment of teachers who were not qualified to be teachers. In the case of GPS the violation of rules was caused at the district level by increasing the weight of oral interviews in selection, thus making the process vulnerable to improper influence. For RNGPS, where SMCs were responsible, the system was seen as dominated by cronyism rather than application of criteria.
2. Transparent criteria for posting and deployment of teachers, based on actual and projected numbers of students in school, were not evident; actual posting, decided centrally, bore no relationship to shortage of teachers reported by UEO.
3. Two-thirds of head teachers were selected purely on seniority, not by applying criteria of leadership or performance record. Little preparation or orientation were available to head teachers for their job. Most of the head teachers in the survey locations have not heard of the head teacher orientation offered at PTIs.
4. Primary teachers are not required to have any professional preparation to teach in a primary school. Once employed, they can join the 10-month C-in-Ed course. Most GPS teachers are trained but most RNGPS teachers are not. With an annua capacity of 6000 in PTIs and at least 100,000 RNGPS teachers in need of training, the demand cannot be met by current training approaches. Moreover major overhaul is needed in PTI training to make it more effective, since a significant impact of this training in student performance is not evident.
5. Two main initiatives for in-service training - sub-cluster training and URC subject-based training - are not working well in the 10 upazilas. Lack of professional support in planning and designing the content and method, professional deficiency of AUEOs who are the trainers for this event, and insufficient follow-up of the outcomes of training at the school level rendered the sub-cluster training into a monthly social gathering of teachers presided over by the AUEO. URCs are not

living up to their potential of a resource and training centre for teachers in the upazila. Of the nominally established eight URCs in the ten upazilas, four are yet to become functional; one that had started functioning stopped due to lack of fund (since the development project funding ran out) and one had not offered a course yet. Morale is low in URCs and the outcome of training offered so far is yet to be assessed for their impact in classroom.

6. AUEOs are the frontline supervisors for primary schools with the charge of giving teachers professional support and advice to do their job properly. Most informants in focus groups and interviews thought this promise is far from being fulfilled. Large number of schools, counting only GPS and RNGPS, in the charge of an AUEO (average of 41 and a range of 16 to 212 in the ten upazilas), no budget for mobility, lack of training for offering professional supervisory support to teachers, and checking out long inspection forms about compliance with rules were identified as problems. In addition, complaints were rampant that extorting payments and favours from teachers on threat of punishment was a common practice.

7. UEOs did not have an overall responsibility for primary education oversight in the upazila and had a difficult task of leading a team of AUEOs who apparently had an impossible mission. The upazila education committee, of which UEO is the secretary and UNO is the chair, met infrequently mostly to decide on how to spend annual development funds received from central government and consider posting of teachers rather than address overall educational problems of the upazila. UEC, in the view of some UEOs, was an impediment to performing their duty rather than help.

8. Using the available time of students and teachers in school optimally is important for effective learning, especially with most schools running on two shifts and total contact hour one of the lowest by international comparison. The stakeholders were for the ideal solution of a longer school day in single shift schools. The implications for teachers, classrooms and budgets are huge. The strategy that would serve the interest of the child best would be to have children in manageable classes with effective learning contact with a qualified teacher and to move towards the single shift slowly. A strong argument can be made for giving priority to reducing class size to a maximum of 40 children under one teacher who is properly trained and has strong supervisory support in a double shift school over having a larger class under an ill-trained teacher with no supervision in a single shift school.

9. Union Parishad - the only local government tier functioning at present, has almost no role in primary education. Chairmen and members mostly said they did no know of any significant role in primary education that has been assigned to them, although many were willing to be involved. The local education committees at union and ward levels set up after compulsory primary education programme started a decade ago have become dormant.

10. SMCs have been given a broad and sweeping role in primary school management, but with little real authority. Nonetheless, active and engaged SMCs can make a difference in the school, as it has been demonstrated in some cases. But this is not so generally. Political control - now institutionalised by giving the local MP a role, and cronyism of head teachers in the case of GPS and of the founding group in the case of RNGPS, has led to formation of SMCS with mostly the wrong people for such a committee. Unclear and vague ideas about the role and duty of the SMC, among the members themselves and among school authorities and parents and absence of any disposable fund with the managing committee are other reasons for their ineffectiveness. The potential of SMC as the vehicle for accountability and community involvement in school thus cannot be realised.

11. There is a miscommunication or confusion about the relative roles of PTAs and SMCs. The apprehension was expressed by some that there would be an overlap and conflicts if both the bodies were active in a school and that with active SMCs no PTA is needed. Non-formal schools have demonstrated that parents, especially mothers, want to be involved and can be partners with teachers and the school in helping children learn and grow.

12. Governance problems including corruption and mismanagement related to all aspects of education management seriously undermined management of primary education for quality and equity. The problems concerned recruitment and posting of teachers, construction and repair of school buildings, charging unofficial fees and the common practice of private tutoring, "renting out" teaching jobs, administration of stipends, distribution of textbooks, and cheating in examinations.

13. No one has a responsibility and authority to maintain an oversight of primary education in the upazila. There was no common or comprehensive source of information about education in the upazila, nor was there any focal point for promoting or planning for compulsory primary education or EFA goals in the upazila. The madrasas, for example, remained virtually without any supervision although they served a sizable proportion of children. The proprietary kindergartens are growing in number and are popular with the upcoming middle class even in small towns and some villages, but they remain outside any

regulatory framework. In fact, there is no focal point of responsibility to protect and uphold public interest in the sphere of education in the upazila.

14. Most stakeholders at the school and upazila level were in favour of much greater and meaningful decentralisation of education management. They were apprehensive that local pressures of vested interests would increase; and that resources were scarce at the local level, which had to come from the central authorities. On balance, however, they favoured a genuine shift towards devolution of authority and decisions to district, upazila and school levels. This would require, according to them, defining power, authority and control over resources at different levels and trying out ways of making this work. As noted in a previous study, it was not clear to all stakeholders what form it should take and how it was to be achieved; hence the importance of trying out approaches in selected locations.

B. Policy and Action Implications

The micro and meso view of primary education provided by the information from the upazilas points to major challenges and potentials in primary education. We have a better understanding of how the large picture of deprivation is formed with elements provided by each deprived child in his or her home, school, community and upazila.

Despite progress, provisions for schools, classrooms and teachers remain insufficient for equitable access; equally inadequate are the condition and environment in schools and classrooms and the availability of learning resources for ensuring acceptable quality of education. A holistic and multi-pronged approach is needed to address the syndrome of poverty and disadvantage that characterises deprivation. This syndrome is created by the way the school functions and the home and family circumstances of the child and the mutual re-inforcement of each other.

As cautioned by UNESCO's latest EFA Monitoring Report, Bangladesh will not reach its EFA goals for 2015 with a "business as usual" approach. Ambitious goals have been set for PEDP II, the umbrella development programme of the government in primary education for the period 2003/4 to 2008/9, on which much hope is pinned. But it has been already late by more than a year in getting off the ground. There has to be a much greater sense of urgency, greater determination to cut through inertia and bureaucratic obstacles on both national and external donor fronts, and a stronger will to resist extraneous vested interests than has been seen so far. The slow and halting pace of progress witnessed in the five years since the 2015 EFA goals were adopted must shift to a different cadence.

A good number of technical recommendations could be offered based on the information collected, analysed and presented above. The research team has decided instead to recommend seven action priorities aimed at moving from the business-as-

usual approach and injecting a renewed sense of urgency about fulfilling the promise of quality primary education for all children.

Quality with equity: Seven action priorities in primary education

1. *Recognition of inequity and deprivation in primary education as a serious problem and a commitment to deal with it.* The first step to effective action has to be an understanding and recognition on the part of policy makers at the political level and in the education establishment that primary education remains unequal with large-scale deprivation of access and participation in the system, as shown in this report. It can be seen even by analysing official data. A genuine commitment to removing deprivation and inequity has to be reflected in:

- Allocation of resources and budgets for education programmes with equity and affirmative action in favour of the disadvantaged as key criteria,
- Subjecting education policy and programme decisions as well as resource allocation and budgets to poverty impact analysis,
- Applying poverty impact and consequences as a component in education programme assessment and evaluation,
- Supporting research, experimentation and analysis of experience about how the poor can be effectively served and the programme outcomes enhanced, and
- Adopting the rights perspective to fulfill the education rights and entitlements of all children.

This commitment at the national level has to be communicated forcefully and with conviction to donors and international partners, policy implementers, local bodies, SMCs, teachers, parents and even students. As key stakeholders, their role and commitment in helping achieve educational goals is paramount.

2. *Addressing at the school level the syndrome of poverty and disadvantage affecting student performance.* As noted in this report, a syndrome consisting of factors at home and in school causes children's deprivation from education, which has to be addressed holistically. The locus of action for this effort has to be the school where the education authorities can reach the child, the parents and the teachers and work out appropriate measures responding to specific circumstances of disadvantage. The elements of this response would be:

- Identifying the disadvantaged children and their particular difficulties,
- Extra help in studies in class or out of class to first generation and "slow" learners,
- Providing learning materials (notebooks, workbooks, pencil, paper etc.) and

elimination of all cash costs to children from the poor families.

- Regular communication of school with the parents of the disadvantaged, designating a teacher for a group of these parents for maintaining contact.
- Orientation of managing committee, teachers, and community about the special effort.
- Provision of budget to be managed by school for this purpose - perhaps redirecting stipend funds for this purpose.

3. *Effective implementation of competency-based primary education.* The promise and potential of curricula and teaching-learning based on essential learning continuum and competencies, even after a decade, have not been fulfilled. The concept remains sound and valid. A concerted effort needs to be made to implement competency-based curriculum, classroom work, and learning assessment. The components of this effort will include:

- Critical review of "terminal" and intermediate competencies to separate out beliefs and values, which are important but are not measurable competencies, and their sequence and gradation.
- Using time and resources optimally to ensure student achievement in basic skills; a case in point is wasting scarce student and teacher time in the attempt to teach English from grade 1, when most teachers cannot speak English.
- Plan and support for continuing technical work on translating competencies into classroom activities, lesson plans, learning aids and continuing assessment methods in classroom, and pre-service and in-service training of teachers.
- Continuing professional work on competency-based curriculum development, textbooks and learning materials,
- Development and introduction of valid grade-wise and end- of- primary -level assessment
- Support for coordinated action research on competency-based learning

4. *Decentralisation, local planning and management trial.* The absence of any oversight responsibility and planning of primary education involving all service providers at the local level and lack of management authority with accountability at school level have been identified as impediment to quality and equity in primary education. At the same time, there is apprehension about the problems decentralisation may cause and the capacity and resources at the school and local level. The appropriate way to deal with this dilemma is to initiate development and trial of decentralised planning and management including decisions about personnel, resources and academic programmes in six districts in six divisions. The components of the trial can include:

- Defining tasks, responsibilities, capacities and accountability process at district, upazila and school levels,
- Developing upazila primary education planning and school improvement plans, as anticipated in PEDP II, including technical and professional support for these,
- Working towards a unified approach to ensure core quality standards for all primary education provisions for all children,
- Scope and method for devolving greater authority and responsibility and fund management to school managing committee and head teacher including accountability of school to community and education authorities.
- Managing at school level learning time and calendar, academic programme, and teacher's performance of duties.
- Capacity- building at district, upazila and school level including capacity to manage and use information.

Implementation of PEDP II programme in a decentralised mode in the selected upazilas and districts with trial and demonstration of effective implementation of the programme should be a key objective of the trial.

5. *Supporting development and use of professional capacity*. The management structure and decision-making process at present allow little room for development and effective use of professional capacity in primary education. Career structure in primary education does not encourage professional development and professional staff to rise to management and decision-making level. Personnel recruitment and deployment policy and practice hinder development of centres for professional and technical expertise in the sector in institutions such as NAPE and NCTB and at central and field levels of DPE. Institutions including IER of Dhaka University, IED of BRAC University, NAPE and NCTB should be supported to work together on developing strategy and plan for professionalisation and professional capacity development in primary education. This effort should be linked to and complemented by measures anticipated under PEDP II. The elements of this activity would be:

- Undertaking institutional and organisational analysis of primary education management required in PEDP II.
- Establishment of a primary education cadre - a condition of PEDP II donor support.
- Development of need-based short and longer specialised training and professional development courses,
- Rethinking and redesigning pre-service and in-service teacher training and action research to cope with huge needs in terms of quality and quantity.

6. *A greater voice of stakeholders at all levels*. In the education system, more than in all other social enterprises, the participatory approach, transparency in decision-making and a high degree of accountability should become the norm. Openness and sharing of information and dialogue in public forums should be the norm at school, union parishad and upazila regarding objectives, plans and progress, and budgetary allocations in the school, and for the upazila. The process of transparency and participation of all stakeholders should include:

- Periodic sharing of information and plans, and monitoring of progress of , e.g., school's annual work plan, upazila primary education plan and use of funds received from government and other sources and performance evaluation of schools in public forums organised for this purpose.
- Parent Teacher Association.
- Transparent and public selection/election of school managing committee and upazila education committee members.

7. *Addressing governance issues*. Political interference and undue involvement of politicians, institutionalised by government regulations about managing committees, have been identified as a major contributor to corruption, mismanagement, waste and obstacle to good management practices in general. Support is needed from the Prime Minister, in her capacity as the Minister in charge of Primary and Mass Education, to develop a consensus and adopt and abide by a policy decision to make education, especially primary education, free from political interference, which will help reduce mismanagement and corruption. High level political support and encouragement is also essential for implementation of this seven point agenda.

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Annexes

Annex 3.1 Distribution of GPS and RNGPS by upazilas, areas of upazilas, number of 6-10 year aged children and students currently enrolled in GPS and RNGPS

Upazila	Area[1]	No. of GPS and RNGPS[2]	6-10 year aged children[2]	6-10 year aged children[1]	Enrolled students[2]	Students per school[2]	Catchment Area per school (Sq. km)
Chandina	201.92	116	50,895	42,325	40,342	438.75	1.74
Jessore Sadar	432.81	214	102,465	88,130	53,946	478.80	2.02
Golapganj	278.34	151	49,606	36,429	37,522	328.51	1.84
Bakerganj	401.63	250	48,985	49,029	44,114	195.94	1.60
Patharghata	387.36	130	21,836	22,462	18,262	167.96	2.97
Tala	344.15	202	36,470	40,324	32,096	180.54	1.70
Madhupur	500.67	156	61,430	57,726	45,982	393.78	3.20
Tanor	295.39	122	22,271	23,997	18,739	182.54	2.42
Nageshwari	415.80	172	75,071	44,628	51,026	436.45	2.41
Lohagara	258.87	84	44,915	36,908	44,917	534.70	3.08
Total	3507.94	1,597	513,944	441,958	3,86,946	321.81	2.19

Note 1= information source is BBS, 2 = information source is UEO

Annex 3.2 Catchment area wise number of 6-10 year old, currently enrolled, dropped out and never enrolled children

Upazila	School name	Number of children	Enrolment status		
			Currently enrolled	Dropped out	Never enrolled
Chandina	Chandina Adarsha GPS	382	93.2	1.8	5.0
	Uttar Harang GPS	270	85.2	4.1	10.7
	Maharang RNGPS	275	91.3	4.4	4.4
Jessore Sadar	Golap Hosain Patel RNGPS	254	88.6	6.7	4.7
	Ramakrishna Asram GPS	252	87.3	6.7	6.0
	Rail Road GPS	163	88.3	6.7	4.9
Golapganj	Kazipara RNGPS	57	96.5	1.8	1.8
	Chowdhury Bazaar GPS	207	79.2	3.4	17.4
	Ballyasakha GPS	109	97.2	1.8	0.9
Bakerganj	Hasemiya GPS	127	85.8	1.6	12.6
	Shibpur Public RNGPS	81	95.1	1.2	3.7
	Dakshin Par Shibpur GPS	55	92.7	1.8	5.5
Patharghata	Gaharpur Chaidia GPS	88	96.6	0.0	3.4
	Hazirkhal RNGPS	109	98.2	0.0	1.8
	Haritana GPS	40	100.0	0.0	0.0
Tala	Gouripur RNGPS	43	95.3	0.0	4.7
	Mahmudpur GPS	144	97.2	0.7	2.1
	Mirzapur GPS	292	96.6	1.4	2.1
Madhupur	Amlitala RNGPS	146	82.9	6.2	11.0
	Bhutiya GPS	207	88.9	3.4	7.7
	Kakraid GPS	188	72.9	4.8	22.3
Tanor	Dhanora GPS	80	93.8	1.3	5.0
	Chackprabhuram RNGPS	32	100.0	0.0	0.0
	Malshira GPS	134	88.1	1.5	10.4
Nageshwari	Rayganj GPS	313	89.8	1.0	9.3
	Barabari GPS	152	83.6	0.0	16.4
	Purba Rangalir Boss RNGPS	95	86.3	2.1	3.1
Lohagara	Chunti GPS	524	96.6	0.4	2.3
	Chunti Hakimia GPS	266	96.2	1.5	12.0
	Shahsufi RNGPS	133	86.5	1.5	7.0
		5218	90.4	2.6	7.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 3.3 Distribution of teachers by sex

Upazila	Number of schools	Number of teachers		Percentage of females
		Males	Females	
Chandina	127	457	220	32.5
Jessore Sadar	245	551	518	48.5
Golapganj	163	279	326	53.9
Bakerganj	256	628	473	43.0
Patharghata	140	337	197	36.9
Tala	221	592	267	31.1
Madhupur	155	396	232	36.9
Tanor	122	339	132	28.0
Nageshwari	171	546	195	26.3
Lohagara	93	249	190	43.3
Total	1,693	4,374	2,750	38.6

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

Annex 4.1 Percentage of different types of schools by construction type

Type of schools	Everything made of bricks	Floor made of bricks and others made of tin	No use of bricks	No walls, roof or floor
GPS	45	44	11	1
RNGPS	48	13	27	12
Madrasa	24	8	59	10
Non formal primary	6	6	86	3

Source: Education Watch 1999 report

Annex 4.2 Distribution of teachers by upazila (GPS and RNGPS only)

Upazila	Number of schools	Number of teachers					
		Total	Mean	Median	Sd	Minimum	Maximum
Chandina	116	635	5.5	5.0	1.8	3	12
Jessore Sadar	213	949	4.5	4.0	1.7	2	14
Golapganj	151	566	3.7	3.0	1.3	2	10
Bakerganj	244	1067	4.4	4.0	1.5	2	16
Patharghata	130	509	3.9	4.0	0.9	2	8
Tala	220	857	3.9	4.0	1.0	1	10
Madhupur	154	624	4.1	4.0	0.9	1	9
Tanor	122	471	3.9	4.0	0.8	2	9
Nageshwari	171	741	4.3	4.0	1.1	2	11
Lohagara	84	411	4.9	4.0	1.5	3	10
Total	1,605	6,830	4.3	4.0	1.4	1	16

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

Annex 4.3 Upazila-wise distribution of students per teacher in GPS

Upazila	Number of schools	Number of teachers	Number of students	Teachers per per school	Students per school	Students per teacher
Chandina	86	514	29602	6	344	58
Jessore Sadar	139	652	42210	5	304	65
Golapganj	143	533	35061	4	245	66
Bakerganj	156	724	32044	5	205	44
Patharghata	61	234	8726	4	143	37
Tala	127	495	21735	4	171	44
Madhupur	104	426	26067	4	251	61
Tanor	49	189	7975	4	163	42
Nageshwari	95	442	31936	5	336	72
Lohagara	62	326	29199	5	471	90

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

Annex 4.4 Upazila-wise distribution of students per teacher in RNGPS

Upazila	Number of schools	Number of teachers	Number of students	Teachers per per school	Students per school	Students per teacher
Chandina	30	121	6043	4	201	50
Jessore Sadar	74	297	15763	4	213	53
Golapganj	8	33	1636	4	205	50
Bakerganj	87	339	12721	4	146	38
Patharghata	69	275	9454	4	137	34
Tala	92	359	14215	4	155	40
Madhupur	50	198	9744	4	195	49
Tanor	71	274	10533	4	148	38
Nageshwari	75	295	17455	4	233	59
Lohagara	22	85	8062	4	366	95

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

Annex 4.5 Upazila-wise distribution of students per teacher in Community schools

Upazila	Number of schools	Number of teachers	Number of students	Teachers per per school	Students per school	Students per teacher
Chandina	11	42	2,062	4	187	49
Jessore Sadar	26	101	3,795	4	146	38
Golapganj	12	39	1,785	3	149	46
Bakerganj	10	25	960	3	96	38
Patharghata	10	25	888	3	89	36
Tala	1	2	97	2	97	49
Madhupur	1	4	149	4	149	37
Tanor	0	0	0	0	0	0
Nageshwari	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lohagara	9	28	2,463	3	274	88

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

Annex 4.6 Upazila-wise distribution of students per teacher in all primary schools

Upazila	Total number of teachers	Total number of students	Students per teacher
Chandina	677	37,707	56
Jessore Sadar	1,065	61,937	58
Golapganj	605	38,482	64
Bakerganj	1,092	45,835	42
Patharghata	534	19,068	36
Tala	859	36,047	42
Madhupur	628	35,960	57
Tanor	471	18,508	39
Nageshwari	741	49,391	67
Lohagara	439	39,724	90

Source: UEO data for Ten Upazilas, 2004

Annex 5.1 Children aged 6-10 years by enrolment status, school and sex

School	Boys				Girls			
	Number of children	Currently enrolled	Dropped out	Never enrolled	Number of children	Currently enrolled	Dropped out	Never enrolled
Chandina Adarsha GPS	203	93.1	1.0	5.9	179	93.3	2.8	3.9
Uttar Harang GPS	143	81.1	6.3	12.6	127	89.8	1.6	8.7
Maharang RNGPS	144	89.6	7.6	2.8	131	93.1	0.8	6.1
Golap Hosain Patel RNGPS	118	84.7	9.3	5.9	136	91.9	4.4	3.7
Ramakrishna Asram GPS	105	83.8	7.6	8.6	147	89.8	6.1	4.1
Rail Road GPS	90	87.8	8.9	3.3	73	89.0	4.1	6.8
Kazipara RNGPS	38	97.4	2.6	0.0	19	94.7	0.0	5.3
Chowdhury Bazaar GPS	107	74.8	3.7	21.5	100	84.0	3.0	13.0
Ballyasakha GPS	57	98.2	1.8	0.0	52	96.2	1.9	1.9
Hasemiya GPS	78	85.9	2.6	11.5	49	85.7	0.0	14.3
Shibpur Public RNGPS	41	92.7	2.4	4.9	40	97.5	0.0	2.5
Dakshin Par Shibpur GPS	28	92.9	3.6	3.6	27	92.6	0.0	7.4
Gaharpur Chaidia GPS	46	97.8	0.0	2.2	42	95.2	0.0	4.8
Hazirkhal RNGPS	50	96.0	0.0	4.0	59	100.0	0.0	0.0
Haritana GPS	17	100.0	0.0	0.0	23	100.0	0.0	0.0
Gouripur RNGPS	24	95.8	0.0	4.2	19	94.7	0.0	5.3
Mahmudpur GPS	70	97.1	1.4	1.4	74	97.3	0.0	2.7
Mirzapur GPS	155	94.2	2.6	3.2	137	99.3	0.0	0.7
Amlitala RNGPS	76	81.6	6.6	11.8	70	84.3	5.7	10.0
Bhutiya GPS	121	85.1	5.0	9.9	86	94.2	1.2	4.7
Kakraid GPS	103	70.9	5.8	23.3	85	75.3	3.5	21.2
Dhanora GPS	41	92.7	2.4	4.9	39	94.9	0.0	5.1
Chackprabhuram RNGPS	18	100.0	0.0	0.0	14	100.0	0.0	0.0
Malshira GPS	75	89.3	2.7	8.0	59	86.4	0.0	13.6
Rayganj GPS	159	88.1	0.6	11.3	154	91.6	1.3	7.1
Barabari GPS	81	79.0	0.0	21.0	71	88.7	0.0	11.3
Purba Rangalir Boss RNGPS	41	85.4	4.9	9.8	54	87.0	0.0	13.0
Chunti GPS	244	94.7	0.8	4.5	280	98.2	0.0	1.8
Chunti Hakimia GPS	148	95.3	1.4	3.4	118	97.5	1.7	0.8
Shahsufi RNGPS	62	83.9	1.6	14.5	71	88.7	1.4	9.9
	2,683	88.6	3.4	8.0	2,535	92.3	1.7	6.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 5.2 Children aged 6-10 years by enrolment status, upazila and sex

Food insecurity status	Upazila	Boys				Girls			
		Number of children	Currently enrolled	Dropped out	Never enrolled	Number of children	Currently enrolled	Dropped out	Never enrolled
High	Nageshwari	281	85.1	1.1	13.9	279	90.0	0.7	9.3
	Tanor	134	91.8	2.2	6.0	112	91.1	0.0	8.9
	Madhupur	300	79.3	5.7	15.0	241	84.6	3.3	12.0
	Patharghata	113	97.3	0.0	2.7	124	98.4	0.0	1.6
Moderate	Tala	249	95.2	2.0	2.8	230	98.3	0.0	1.7
	Golapganj	202	85.6	3.0	11.4	171	88.9	2.3	8.8
	Chandina	490	88.6	4.5	6.9	437	92.2	1.8	5.9
Low	Bakerganj	147	89.1	2.7	8.2	116	91.4	0.0	8.6
	Jessore Sadar	313	85.3	8.6	6.1	356	90.4	5.1	4.5
	Lohagara	454	93.4	1.1	5.5	469	96.6	0.6	2.8
Total		2683	88.6	3.4	8.0	2535	92.3	1.7	6.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 5.3 Intra-upazila variation among government primary schools by selected indicators

Upazila	No. of School	No. of teachers per school		No. of students per school		No. of students per teachers		% of female teachers	
		Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.	Min.	Max.
Chandina	86	4	12	112	846	21	109	0	85
Jessore Sadar	139	2	4	63	1336	26	133	0	100
Golapganj	143	2	10	74	614	25	200	0	100
Bakerganj	156	2	16	53	580	18	127	0	100
Patharghata	61	2	8	49	297	19	67	0	100
Tala	127	1	10	57	473	11	215	0	100
Madhupur	104	1	9	117	571	27	189	0	100
Tanor	49	3	9	76	329	24	81	0	100
Nageshwari	95	2	11	131	688	33	143	0	100
Lohagara	62	3	10	105	1268	19	187	0	100
Total	1022	1	16	49	1336	11	215	0	100

Source: UEO data for ten upazilas, 2004

Annex 5.4 Percentage distribution of never enrolled and dropout children of age 6-14 by reasons and sex (Total numbers in parentheses)

Reason	Never enrolled			Dropout		
	Boys (272)	Girls (193)	Both (465)	Boys (433)	Girls (253)	Both (686)
School is away from home	1.5	5.2	3.0	1.2	2.0	1.5
Scarcity of money	21.0	29.5	24.5	39.9	43.7	41.3
School authority refused	19.9	21.8	20.6	1.6	3.1	2.2
No use of education	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.0	0.4	0.1
Has to work at home or outside	0.7	2.6	1.5	5.8	8.3	6.7
The child does not like	21.7	8.8	16.3	45.9	23.2	37.5
Too young to go to school	14.3	14.0	14.2	na	na	na
Insecure road transportation	7.4	5.2	6.4	0.5	2.0	1.0
Marriage	na	na	na	0.0	6.7	2.5
Disability	9.9	7.8	9.0	1.2	2.0	1.5
Others	2.9	4.7	3.7	4.1	8.7	5.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 5.5 School Attendance rate by school type and sex

School type	Boys	Girls	Both
Government	64.7	67.2	66.0
RNGPS	58.0	59.4	58.7
Madrassa	54.3	58.9	56.5
Non-formal	65.9	64.1	64.9

Source: Education Watch School Survey, 2004

Annex 5.6 Fathers' education and promotion, repetition and dropout

Fathers' education	Number of students	% promoted	% remain in the same class	% dropped out
No education	1965	94.6	2.1	3.4
Grades I-V	1365	95.0	3.0	2.0
Grades VI-X	1066	96.1	2.7	1.2
Grades X and above	460	97.8	1.7	0.4

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 5.7 Mothers' education and promotion, repetition and dropout

Mothers' education	Number of students	% promoted	% remain in the same class	% dropped out
No education	2295	94.4	2.3	3.3
Grades I-V	1544	95.7	2.8	1.6
Grades VI-X	921	96.6	2.5	0.9
Grades X and above	140	99.3	0.7	0.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 5.8 Percentage of students with locations of their schools by different characteristics

Characteristics	Number of students	Location of school		
		Own village	Other village area in the catchment	Outside the catchmnet area
Fathers' education	2355	64.9	18.3	16.8
No education	1508	63.4	17.4	19.2
Grades I-V	1143	61.2	13.0	25.7
Grades VI-X	483	69.6	9.1	21.3
Grade XI and above				
Motehrs' education				
No education	2587	64.5	17.9	17.6
Grades I-V	1740	63.6	17.0	19.4
Grades VI-X	1014	64.1	11.8	24.1
Grade XI and above	148	63.5	6.8	29.7
Economic status				
Always in deficit	187	53.5	31.6	15.0
Sometimes in deficit	1241	67.2	18.5	14.3
Break even	2458	64.4	14.6	21.0
Surplus	1577	62.7	14.8	22.5
Income source				
Service	831	66.2	14.3	19.5
Business	1616	60.8	12.5	26.7
Agriculture	1175	66.6	18.1	15.2
Labour sale	1730	65.2	18.0	16.8
Others	119	52.9	32.8	14.3
Religion				
Muslim	5024	63.8	16.1	20.1
Non-Muslim	465	67.5	17.2	15.3
Ethnicity				
Adibashi	136	72.8	7.4	19.9
Bangali	5353	63.9	16.4	19.7

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 5.9 Distribution of students by private tutor time and amount of money spend

Grade	Percentage of students having private tutor	Mean months of having private tutor	Mean amount of money paid per month (Tk)
I	33.9	8.4	120.0
II	40.9	7.8	137.0
III	45.8	7.9	149.0
IV	48.8	7.9	166.0
V	54.7	7.9	201.0
All	43.2	7.8	152.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 5.10 Economic status of families and private tutoring

Economic Status	Percentage of students having private tutor	Mean months of having private tutor	Mean amount of money paid per month (Tk)
Always in deficit	18.5	5.2	88.0
Sometimes in deficit	28.0	7.0	110.0
Break even	43.3	7.7	136.0
Surplus	57.0	8.9	188.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 5.11 Fathers' education and private tutoring

Fathers education	Percentage of students having private tutor	Mean months of having private tutor	Mean amount of money paid per month (Tk)
No schooling	34.6	7.2	114.0
Grades I-V	41.7	7.6	134.0
Grades VI-X	55.3	8.5	173.0
Grade X and above	55.0	9.5	253.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 5.12 Mothers' education and private tutoring

Mothers education	Percentage of students having private tutor	Mean months of having private tutor	Mean amount of money paid per
No schooling	35.2	7.4	122.0
Grades I-V	44.4	7.7	131.0
Grades VI-X	59.9	9.1	206.0
Grade X and above	52.9	9.0	294.0

Source: Education Watch School Catchment Area Household Survey, 2004

Annex 6.1 Roles and responsibilities of head teachers

The Directorate of Primary Education has defined the following roles and responsibilities for the primary school HT through an office order (DPE, June 1986):

A. Administrative and organizational roles and responsibilities

The HT will:

1. Preserve all records, registers and files of the school.
2. Conduct the annual child survey of school-age children of the school catchment area with the help of other teachers, SMC members of the school and will maintain a permanent register of it.
3. Motivate parents to send their children to school.
4. Ensure regular and timely attendance of students in school with the cooperation teachers, parents, and SMC members.
5. Implement the annual lesson plan and develop weekly routine according to lesson plans.
6. a) Divide the classes/sections of the grades among the total teachers of the school, where each class-teacher would be responsible for the progress of the learners in his/her class/section. The HT would ensure that the asst. teachers are prepared before the beginning of each class with the lesson plan and related teaching learning aids.

   b) Make arrangement for the annual prize giving ceremony, sports, and parents' day celebration.
7. Able to sanction at best three days casual leave consecutively for the assistant teachers.
8. Inform all related to school about the government's orders.
9. Take initiatives to preserve and protect the school's building, furniture and other assets with the help of the SMC members.
10. Prepare various reports and return-statements, and send these timely to all concerned.
11. Issue the certificates for student transfer
12. Ensue arrangements for students to participate in the junior scholarship examination.
13. Take initiative timely to form SMC, and perform his/her duties as member secretary.
14. Form the PTA and ensure its effectiveness.

15. Distribute the books and learning aids from the government to learners with the clearance of the SMC members.
16. Ensure cleanliness of the school compound, classroom environment and toilets in the school.
17. Arrange per month two sessions with the asst. teachers' to analyze progress in lessons and keep records about decisions taken.
18. Send the papers regarding the teachers' leaves and transfer to the higher authority.
19. Arrange at least a meeting per month with the SMC members and implement the decisions taken in the meeting.
20. Take initiatives to organize and maintain a library in the school.
21. Make arrangement to celebrate the religious functions in the school.

B. Managerial roles and responsibilities

The HT will:

22. Ensure regular attendance of the asst. teachers in the school.
23. Observe the classroom activities and help the asst. teachers to carry out effective teaching learning activities in the classes.
24. Ensure that the asst. teachers carry out their duties properly.

C. Financial and other responsibilities

The HT will:

25. Keep registers of books, furniture, teaching learning aids and other assets collected from the government and the locality to ensure proper management and use of these.
26. Prepare the monthly pay bill of the teachers and other personnel of the school and present these to the AUEO timely and regularly.
27. Carry out the duties assigned by the government/directorate/upazila council.
28. a) Inform the teachers about the date, subject and place of the cluster training and make necessary preparations when this is held in the school, viz., sitting arrangement and teaching learning aids for the cluster training.

    b) Attend cluster training and ensure other teachers' presence in the training.

    c) Discourage casual leave by teachers.

Source: DPE

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Education Watch is a civil society initiative to monitor the primary and basic education status in the country, disseminate the findings and promote dialogue in this respect. This is the fifth report of this initiative. The previous reports addressed different aspects of primary education and the state of literacy in Bangladesh. These included internal efficiency, learning achievement of students, literacy level of the population and socio-economic correlates of primary education and literacy.

The fifth annual *Education Watch* report focuses on quality with equity in primary education. It probes into inter-connected factors bearing on performance of schools and children in 10 upazilas. A micro (children, teachers, parents and the school) and meso (role of the upazila education authority and local administration) perspective, complementing a macro and national view, the focus of the previous *Education Watch* studies, is provided in the present report.

A seven point agenda for primary education with quality and equity has been recommended by the *Education Watch* research team. It is hoped that this agenda will receive the backing of the policy-makers in the country and will serve as a guide to action.

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