

Full Length Research Paper

Literacy programs and non-formal education of Bangladesh and India

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In both Bangladesh and India expand non-formal education (NFE) programs for unenrolled and drop-out children and adults (8 - 45 year cohort) for ensure comparable standard with the primary curriculum, establish equivalency of NFE with primary education and overall competency, raise qualification and training level of teachers for effective delivery of lessons, make arrangements to carry the children and adults through the equivalent of formal grades III - VIII or more and few time including skill based technical/vocational trade courses training, develop a system of easy transferability of children and adolescents to regular primary schools and give employment support. These programs providing learning opportunities while earning for survival and development. Literacy and non-formal education programs of Bangladesh and India make on national social mobilization plan with components on formal, non-formal, continuing education to be implemented in a co-ordinated manner, to create awareness about education and to make the school a resource center for the community. The purpose of this comparative study aims to enhance international cooperation for non-formal education programs in this region. Through experiences sharing and by providing the needed opportunities they can assist their target population to develop their golden qualities.

Key words: Literacy, non-formal education.

INTRODUCTION

Bangladesh and India are the neighbouring country within the South Asia. Both the countries have got ample scope to expand its literacy and non-formal educational programs in order to transform the population into human resources through providing livelihood skill training which may be helpful to the countries to reach at the expected level of development. Non-formal and adult education

consider as a human resource development and productive investment. The education of adults contributes to their self-reliance and personal autonomy, to the exercise of basic rights and to increased productivity and labour efficiency. In recent years, however, remarkable progress has been achieved in many areas; literacy being one of those. This success has been made possible due to the nationwide campaign for removing illiteracy through initiative taken by the Government and Non Government Organizations (NGOs). In order to improve the socio-economic conditions of both the countries, Bangladesh and India need an education and skilled human resource.

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Both the countries that participated in the 'World Conferences on Education for All' held in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand. Over the last decade, many international conferences summits on education including the 'Adult Education Conference' in 1996, the 'Dakar (Senegal) Conference' in 2000 and 'Education for All Summit Conference of Nine High Population Countries' in New Delhi in 1993 were also held Annual Report (2002). One common message that came out of all these conferences was the imperative to ensure basic education for all.

LITERACY SITUATION IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh has an area of 147570 square kilometers, and is inhabited by a population of 130.03 million (Bangladesh Population Census Report, 2001, Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, BBS). There were about 78600 primary schools in the country up to the year of 2000. This number is increased about 80401 to the year of 2007 (Bangladesh Economic Review, 2008). At the same time about two third of the students were enrolled in government primary schools. Non-government institutions are particularly active in the delivery of primary education to the economically most disadvantaged children in Bangladesh. One of the largest non-government institutions involved in primary education in Bangladesh is BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee). Up to the year of 2000 in total, BRAC schools enroll 1.3 million children. Promotion in BRAC schools is close to 95% for the three grades offered. Between 1980 and 1997, enrollments doubled from 8 - 16 million and from 65 - 85% of the age group Bangladesh, Education Sector Review (2000). If schools run by non-government institutions are included, enrollments are increased by further 2 million.

The government of Bangladesh, assisted by external donors, has embarked upon a major 'Primary Education Development Program (PEDP)-I, and PEDP-II', which is a comprehensive development program for 1998 - 2005 and 2006 - 2012, respectively. These investments are aimed at increasing enrollment in under-served areas, expanding the provision of textbooks, developing and applying better methods of measuring learning, training teachers, and reorganizing central and local management. In Bangladesh, up to 2003, a total of 18.0 million individuals have been provided with literacy services and national literacy rate has been up to 62% in 2004. The net enrolment rates are 81% for boys and 84% for girls Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) (2003). The gross primary school enrolment ratios are 94% for boys and 98% for girls in 2004. In 2004, a total 90.47 lakh (50.4%) boys and 89.06 lakh (49.6%) girls were enrolled in primary school Bangladesh Economic Review (2008). However, at least one third of those who enter primary education do not complete it. The net secondary school

enrolment ratios are 42% for male and 47% for female. The gross secondary school enrolment ratios are 45% for male and 50% for female in 2004 (The state of the world's children (2006)). In 1997 in Bangladesh, 44% of the age group 11 - 13 was enrolled in lower secondary education, 27% of the age group 14 - 15 was enrolled in secondary and 16% of the age group 16 - 17 was enrolled in higher secondary level of education.

According to the government estimates in the year of 2000, there are about 40 million illiterates between 8 and 35 years old. About 6.3 million of these are working children between the age of 5 and 14, many of whom are involved in hazardous child labour Bangladesh, Education Sector Review (2000). While there are more working children in rural areas, there are also 1.1 million boys and 0.4 million working girls live in urban areas. There is also an incentive program for primary education in Bangladesh financed by Government of Bangladesh, Primary Education Stipend Project, under which children who came from poor families are given up to Taka 100 for one child and Taka 125 for two child of a family per month if enrolled in government primary school. A large disparity exists between male and female literacy rates. Male adult literacy rate (15+) is 56%, whereas female adult literacy rate is merely 43%. Working children remain one of the main groups excluded from formal education. In urban slums, the net enrolment rate is significantly lower than rural areas, that is, around 60%, and more than 30% of school-aged children in urban slums have never enrolled in any schools.

LITERACY SITUATION IN INDIA

India is inhabited by a population of 1087.12 million (The state of the world's children (2006)). The net primary school enrolment ratios are 90% for boys and 85% for girls. The gross primary school enrolment ratios are 111% for boys and 104% for girls in 2004. The gross secondary school enrolment ratios are 58% for male and 47% for female in 2004 Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) (2003). The total literacy rate, which was only 16.67% in 1951 rose to 52.21% in 1991. The 2001 Census indicates that the literacy rate has gone up to 65.37%. Enrolment at the primary level (grades I - V) increased from 19.16 million in 1950 - 51 to 113.61 million in 1999 - 2000. In comparison, the growth in enrolment at the upper primary level (grades VI - VIII) has been much more impressive. From 3.12 million in 1950 - 51, enrolment at the upper primary level increased to 42.06 million in 1999 - 2000, indicating a 13.5 times increase as against six times at the primary level. The gross enrolment ratio at the primary and upper primary levels improved significantly between 1950 - 51 and 1999 - 2000, from 42.6 - 94.9 in the case of primary levels and from 12.7 - 58.79 for upper primary levels. The overall net enrolment ratios at the primary level was 71%, which

suggest that at least 29% of children in the 6 - 10 age groups continued to remain out of school in 1997 - 98. Educationally, backward states and within them backward districts have lower net enrolment ratio than all the India average.

Existing norms stipulated that a habitation (cluster of households) is entitled to have a primary school if it has a population of 300 and more has no school within a distance of one kilometer. Upper primary schools are to be located at a distance of three kilometer from inhibition with a population of 500 and more. These norms are often relaxed in case of hilly and tribal areas, difficult terrains and border districts. About 83.4% habitations had a primary school within a one kilometer distance. Presently, about 100000 habitations remain unserved as per prescribed norms. The alternative and innovative program envisages opening of non-formal education centers in habitations where opening of a full-fledged school is not economically feasible or academically viable. According to the Sixth All-India Education Survey (1993), 94% of rural population living in 8.84 lakh habitations has a school within a walking distance of one kilometer and 85% have an upper primary school within a walking distance of three kilometer (The state of the world's children (2006)). The situation has improved significantly thereafter. During the first three years of the Ninth Plan (1997 - 2000), over 43000 new schools were opened and 130000 new teachers recruited at the primary level, while more than 21000 new schools and 102000 teachers added in the upper primary schools. The gross enrolment ratio at the primary level increased from 90.6% in 1996 - 97 to 94.9% in 1999 - 2000.

HISTORY OF THE LITERACY MOVEMENT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

The history of literacy movement in Bangladesh dates back as early as the beginning of the 20th century. The first ever adult literacy was launched in 1918 AD through establishing night school. In 1926, some 150 night schools were formed in 12 selected Thanas. Gradually, the program gained wider popularity. Adult literacy was revived in 1954 with assistance from the United States Government, as part of the latter's V-AID programs. In 1963, Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) introduced adult literacy program in the surrounding areas of comilla. But the program could not achieve the desired success Annual Report (2002-03). Since independence, mass education program continued with sporadic efforts. Adult literacy movement regained its momentum in early 1990s and was further strengthened with global concern and support. In line with the global commitment on education for all campaign, the Government adopted the 'National Plan of Action' in 1991. For its implementation, the 'Integrated Non Formal Education Program' (INFEP) was undertaken in 1991. Successes that INFEP managed to achieve were as

follows:

- i) Necessary skills and experience have been achieved to undertake and implement Non Formal Education (NFE) at a wider scale,
- ii) Areas have been developed to extend cooperation between Government and Non-Governmental Organisations.
- iii) Experience and skills have been achieved in implementing post literacy programs and material development.

During mid nineties a total of four projects titled "Non Formal Education Project -1, 2, 3 and 4" were launched to achieve the national target of literacy in 1990s. It took an organized shape with official launching of the Integrated Non-Formal Education Program (INFEP) in 1991. The main objective of this program was to build an organized nationwide infrastructure. Activities of the program started in 1991 and ended in 1997. Under this program a record number of 2.47 million peoples were provided with literacy services against 1.67 million as targeted in the program. In pursuance to the unprecedented of the project the Government in September 3, 1995 established the "Directorate of Non-Formal Education (DNFE)" as a permanent infrastructure of non formal education. Several non-governmental organizations evaluated the program. Success of such undertakings brought wide international acclamation, which found expression when the prestigious "UNESCO Literacy Award 1998" was accorded to Bangladesh. For expanding primary and mass education programs in a well organized manner, the Government constituted the Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) in 1992 and the same was transformed into a full-fledged ministry titled "Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME)" in 2003.

HISTORY OF THE LITERACY MOVEMENT AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION IN INDIA

In the mid eighties, it revealed through a survey that out of the total non-literate people of 884 million of the world about 328.88 million lived in India Annual Administrative Report (2001-2002; 2002-2003). Therefore, the Central Government of India took a decision to adopt the campaign-based literacy program to remove illiteracy. The National Literacy Mission which was constituted in 1988 was put in charge of these programs, which started the Total Literacy Campaign. The district was taken as the unit area of operation of the scheme. The National Policy on Education (NPE), 1986 recognized that the school could not reach all children and a large and systematic program of non-formal education would be required for school dropouts, for children from habitations without schools, working children and girls who could not attend whole day schools. Thus, Non-formal Education

became an important component of the overall strategy for achievement of Universalisation of Elementary Education. The centrally sponsored scheme of non-formal education was introduced in 1979 - 80 on a pilot basis with a view to support the formal system in providing education to all children up to the age of 14 years as enunciated in the directive principles of the constitution. In subsequent years the Non-formal Education Scheme was expanded to cover 10 educationally backward states of Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The Non-formal Education Scheme was revised in 1987 - 88. While the focus continued to be on 10 educationally backward states, but it also included urban slums, hilly, tribal and desert areas and projects for working children in other states and Union Territories as well.

A major portion of the Non-formal Education (NFE) scheme is run by the state governments which set up non-formal centers. One component of this scheme provides grants to Voluntary Agencies (Vas) directly from the central government for running of non-formal education centers and a third is for projects of experimental innovative nature by the Voluntary Agencies. The current status (in 2004) of non-formal education scheme Annual Administrative Report (2001-2002; 2002-2003):

- (i) Being implemented in 25 States/ Union Territories by the state governments and by 826 Voluntary Associations.
- (ii) About 2.3 lakh primary and 6800 upper primary centers are presently sanctioned in the state sector.
- (iii) 58000 primary and 1000 upper primary centers are run by Voluntary Associations.
- (iv) About 41 experimental and innovative education projects are being implemented by Voluntary Associations.
- (v) Total coverage of children under NFE scheme is about 74 lakh.

Several evaluations and assessments by States Government Institutions, Program Evaluation Organization of the Planning Commission have indicated that the implementation of the Non-formal Education Scheme has not been satisfactory. The Program Evaluation Organization's findings indicated that insufficient involvement of the community, the Village Education Committees (VECs) and the Panchayati Raj Institutions. The notion that the alternative system is inferior, second rate and second grade, both qualitative and quantitatively, insufficient decentralization of administrative and financial power and insufficient flexibility. Non-formal education needs to recognize that different children's group have different educational needs and modify itself accordingly. It covers less than

10% of the out of school children. Delay in release of funds at all levels. Poor completion rates for the primary level by children studying non-formal centers. The Non-formal Education Centers function for two hours daily at a time suitable for learners. But in many states the centers have functioned in the evening and night to accommodate children who are working during the day. In its present form, the Non-formal Education Scheme could not ensure quality primary education for out of school children and the objectives and measures outlined in the National Policy on Education and the Program of Action, 1992 could not be adequately met.

With the launching of the National Policy on Education of India in 1986, the Government of India initiated a move to start a number of missions. The National Literacy Mission started in 1988 was one such mission. The central government, in partnership with state governments has initiated following programs to fulfill the constitutional obligation and national aspirations:

- (i) Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE).
- (ii) Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan.
- (iii) Rajiv Gandhi Swarna Jayanti Pathshalas in Rajasthan.
- (iv) Shishu Shiksha karmasuchi in West Bengal.
- (v) Community/Maabadi Schools in Andhra Pradesh.

The Education Guarantee Scheme (EGS) and Alternative and Innovative Education (AIE) implemented by NGOs has evolved out of the following major concerns and learning experiences:

- (a) The shortcomings of the existing Non-formal Scheme in terms of very low investments; poor community involvement; problems in release of funds; several quality issues including training of instructors; number of hours of teaching per day etc. had to be address.

The non-formal education scheme till now has functioned largely as a separate intervention for 'out of school' children resulting in poor linkages with the formal system. The effort to provide access to 'out of school' children and ensure their regular participation and completion of primary/elementary level of education with satisfactory levels of learning has to form a part of the overall effort for achievement of Universalisation of Elementary Education. The ideological debate for alternative school systems (including the NFE scheme) have always been questioned on several grounds.

Most non-formal systems stress low-cost solutions and advocate low investments that provide the receipted for poor quality. To maintain the quality of any educational program certain, basic essential needs to be ensured minimum infrastructure, equipment, reasonable honorarium of the Education Volunteers and regular academic support etc. However, there are still less than the per-

-pupil investment in the formal system, largely on account of the considerably lower honorarium to the Education Volunteers compared to salaries of regular government teachers. By emphasizing part-time education at convenient timings, non-formal programs accommodate and even support child labour. It is difficult to make a clear, ideological statement on the issue of child labour in the context of Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education. However, by stressing time-bound achievement of Universalisation of Elementary Education, that enrolment and completion of elementary education by all children, the scheme of Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) does imply that all children should be in school and not at work.

The centrally sponsored scheme 'Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan' has set time-bound targets for achievements of Universalisation of Elementary Education. The duration of part-time alternative schools under Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education will now be a minimum of four hours a day in the day time (except in rare cases where evening/night centers may be allowed). This would also address the quality issue of inadequate instruction time and also help in ensuring that children are away from work for a significant part of the day. Currently, there are about 5.6 crore children in the age group 6 - 14 years who are out of school Bangladesh Economic Review (2008). For the rest of the children, the focus would be on their enrolment into formal school. The experience has been that certain children who are in extremely difficult circumstances e.g. street children, children who migrate with their families, wage earning child labourer, adolescent girls cannot be easily enrolled into formal schools directly. Some of these groups of children would require specific, flexible strategies based on their situation to ensure that they complete primary/elementary education. A significant portion of the children who are out of school including the dropouts are push-outs from the formal system. The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education actually provide flexible strategies for specific group of children. For children in the age group of 6 - 8 years, the thrust almost in all states is on ensuring their enrolment in regular schools. If necessary, a motivational, school readiness, bridging summer camp could be provided under Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education to ensure all eligible children in a habitation actually enroll in the regular schools.

In 1993, the sixth All India Educational Survey had indicated that there were 1.8 lakh habitations without primary schools in the country The sixth All India Educational Survey, (1993). Over the past 6 years, a large number of these habitations have been provided an educational facility through setting up of new primary schools, alternative schools under District Elementary Education Plans (DEEP) and state specific initiative like the Education Guarantee Scheme in Madhya Pradesh,

The Rajiv Gandhi Swarna Jayanti Pathshalas in Rajasthan, Shishu Shiksha karmasuchi in West Bengal, Community/Maabadi Schools in Andhra Pradesh etc. With this basic thrust, the Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education would not detract from strengthening and improvement of regular schools. Mainstreaming, which is stressed under Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education would not be possible unless regular schools are strengthened and made accountable to the community to ensure that the most disadvantaged children are able to continue and 'learn'. The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education provides for induction training of 30 days duration for the Education Volunteers of the primary level and 40 days for those of the upper primary level. There is a provision for 30 days training in every subsequent year also.

The cost of individual center would depend on the number of learners enrolled. However, over all cost for district as a whole would have to be maintained within Rs. 845/- per child per annum for primary level centers and Rs. 1200/- per child for upper primary level centers Annual Administrative Report (2001-2002; 2002-2003). Certain strategies e.g. residential 'back to school' camps, Balika Shikshan Shivirs for adolescent girls etc. require higher unit costs. Certain items of expenditure like food for learners and staff, provision for basic health care, etc. Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education would cover children in the age group of 6 - 14 years, however for children with disabilities, it would cover children in the age of 18 years complying with the provisions of persons with Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection or Rights and full Participation) Act, 1995. It will continue to have 3 components as in the earlier NFE scheme:

- (i) State run centers (a variety of alternative schools run by the state government).
- (ii) Education Guarantee Scheme learning centers or alternative schools run by Voluntary Agencies (VAs), and
- (iii) Innovative and Experimental projects run by Voluntary Agencies (VAs).

In most states, the planning for NFE for 'out of school' children have followed a 'parallel track' approaches to the formal system. The underlying assumption being that for 'out of school' children the only option is part-time, non-formal education. The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education clearly states that every district should initially target enrolment of all children in the 6 - 8 years age in formal schools only with some motivational camps or bridge courses, if necessary. For elder children (9 - 11 years of age) also, the effort should be towards mainstreaming (admitting children to formal schools) through appropriate interventions like bridge courses, residential camps etc. It is recognized that children in the 12 - 14 years age group who have

never been enrolled or have dropped out early and certain difficult groups like street children, children who migrate, bonded child labour etc. cannot be admitted into formal schools and would require alternative interventions for some time. Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative, and Innovative Education support flexible strategies including schools in unserved habitations, seasonal hostels or condensed courses for migrating children, bridge course, residential camps, drop-in centers for street and slum children, remedial coaching for children enrolled in formal schools, short duration summer camps etc. The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education would support the following 3 broad kinds of strategies:

- (a) Setting-up of schools in school-less habitations,
- (b) Interventions for mainstreaming of 'out of school' children who cannot be mainstreamed, and
- (c) Strategies for very specific, difficult groups of children viz. bridge courses, back to school camps etc.

Children in remote, school-less habitations

The Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education would accord a priority to setting up of Education Guarantee Scheme centers (primary level) in unserved habitations where no school exists within a radius of 1 kilometer and at least 15 children in the age group of 6 - 14 years who are not going to schools are available. These would be a single teacher schools with an education volunteer from the same habitation. In exceptional cases e.g. remote habitations in hilly areas of Jammu and Kashmir and parts of North-East India, Education Guarantee Scheme schools could be supported even for 10 children within the overall cost norms of the scheme and Voluntary Associations could also apply for setting up of Education Guarantee Scheme schools. Maabadi in Andhra Pradesh, Education Guarantee Scheme in Madhya Pradesh, Multi-grade learning centers in Kerala, Shishu Shiksha Karamsuchi Kendras in West Bengal, Contract schools in Maharashtra, Rajiv Gandhi Swarna Jayanti Pathshalas in Rajasthan are some of the important strategies being implemented in various states to provide universal physical access for primary schooling. In some states, such schools have grade-I and II only and are envisaged as feeder schools for formal primary schools.

Education of children who migrate

Seasonal community hostels with arrangement for boarding, lodging, coaching and care of children who stay back and continue in schools when the parents migrate.

Bridge courses/back to school camp

A second category of interventions that would be

centers or camps that aim at mainstreaming of 'out of school' children into formal schools. The duration of the bridge course would depend on the age of the children and their prior education. The bridge courses could be residential or non-residential, could be organized in the community or as part of the regular school itself. Bridge course would continue for varying duration depending on the requirement of children of different age groups. It is possible that a particular bridge course continues through out the year and different children take 3 (three) months to 1 (one) year to reach the educational level of the grade to which they are to be admitted. Seasonal community hostels with arrangement of boarding, lodging, coaching and care of children who stay back and continue in schools when the parents migrate. For education of children who migrate- setting-up of school at the site of migration (Brick kiln schools in Maharashtra, Salt farms schools in Gujarat).

MV Foundation, Andhra Pradesh has done pioneering work in this area. Several other Voluntary Associations like Pratham (Mumbai and other cities), is also implementing bridge courses with very flexible strategies for certain groups of children e.g. street children, children of sex workers, children living in slums and working children. Long duration residential camps for elderly out of school children could be of 12-24 months duration that help children of age 12 - 14 years to complete primary/upper primary education at the camp itself. Balika Shikshan Shivir of Lok Jumbish, Mahila shikshan Kendras under Mahila Samakhya and several other Voluntary Association initiatives have implemented this approach. Funds from Government of India for state and Voluntary Association run projects would be transferred to a state level society identified for implementation of the scheme Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) (2003). The state society for Education Guarantee Scheme and Alternative and Innovative Education would necessarily have to be the same as that identified for Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA). The state society would be responsible for coordination and monitoring of the implementation of Voluntary Association run programs also.

LITERACY AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS/SCHEMES IN BANGLADESH

Literacy program delivery in Bangladesh Annual Report (2002-03)

Non Formal Education programs are delivered following three mode of delivery which are:

Center based approach (CBA)

Under this approach, the area and number of learning centers to be opened are predetermined. On behalf of Directorate of Non-formal Education (DNFE), selected NGOs are responsible for implementing Non-formal

Education (NFE). Partner NGOs are selected for subvention on a set criteria mutually agreed upon by the government and the development partner's. As per project Pro-forma and annual Plan of Operation, experienced NGOs are invited to submit proposals.

The proposal are initially scrutinized by the scrutiny committee on the basis of set eligibility criteria that is, registration, capacity, experience of NFE management, vicinity, infrastructure in the proposed project area, annual audit report and fund management etc. for selecting NGOs. Since the distance between NGO infrastructures the program area is a crucial factor in meaningful implementation of the program, it undergoes a physical verification by DNFE officials. The finding of the scrutiny committee are reviewed by the Evaluation Committee, eligible proposals are evaluated on the basis of set evaluation criteria. The evaluation report is then reviewed by the Subvention Sub-Committee handed by the DG, DNFE. The recommendations of the Subvention Sub-Committee are placed to the inter-ministerial Subvention committee headed by the Secretary, MoPME for finalization of selection of NGOs and get the list approved by the Honourable Minister. Selected NGOs are allocated a certain amount of fund and necessary technical assistance to run their activities for implementation of NFE programs.

Total literacy movement (TLM)

TLM is implemented through district administration. Headed by the Deputy Commissioner of the respective District, the TLM program ensures participation of mass people in the literacy movement. As implementation strategy, discussions, rallies, processions, miking etc. were organized to disseminate the message to all. Besides posters, leaflets, banners, festoons etc. were also distributed among people to raise mass awareness on literacy movement and to ensure people's participation through voluntarism, as well as, partnership. Deputy Commissioner (DC) of the District plays the most important role in the implementation of the TLM. In each District, the DC forms a District Literacy Samity (Association) which is comprised of representatives from all section of the people. The committee chooses an inspiring, attractive and very often innovative name for its program. Local leaders were also brought within the scheme. Effective participation of masses is the most important criterion for success of the TLM. District administrations are entrusted with specific mandates to implement TLM. Able leadership of the Deputy Commissioners creates a positive image of the TLM program and plays a vital role in achieving the end goal.

Primer distribution approach (PDA)

Many voluntary and philanthropic associations are keen to include non-formal education to their own programs. DNFE allocates NFE materials free of cost to these

organizations under the "Philanthropic Quota". As a result, these organizations help to implement DNFE programs within framework of their own activities in local communities.

The DNFE undertook the following four projects during mid nineties

Non formal education project-1 (NFE-1)

NFE-1 was undertaken with a view to build a permanent NFE infrastructure in the country and to provide literacy services to 2.96 million people aged 15 - 24 years. The project was implemented covering 32 districts of Bangladesh. It began in January 1996 and completed in June 2001. Of the estimated cost of Taka 2208.90 million GOB contributions was Taka 422.81 million and project aid Tk.1786.09 million. World Bank, ADB and SDC were the development partners of this project. A total of 2.96 million learners were covered.

Non formal education project-2 (NFE-2)

Non Formal Education Project-2 was undertaken aiming at providing literacy services to 8.18 million illiterate people aged between 11 and 45 years. It also intended to formulate a Post-Literacy and Continuing Education Model for NFE. The project covered 190 Upazilas/Thanas from 31 districts. The estimated cost of the project was Taka 2800.00 million. It was implemented through the financial assistance from GOB, SIDA and NORAD. It started in July 1995 and was completed in June 2002. Though various modes of deliveries adopted by this project, a total of 3.62 million people aged 11 - 45 have been made literate and the district Rajshahi has been declared as "Illiteracy Free". Other successes achieved by this project are:

- (i) Post-Literacy and Continuing Education (PLCE) was piloted through 23 NGOs on pilot basis and a model of PLCE program has been formulated.
- (ii) Research and experimentation on NFE have been conducted.
- (iii) Gaining experience on NFE program designing, planning, implementation etc. through national and international experts.

Non formal education project-3 (NFE-3)

'Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Children (NFE-3) Project' was undertaken to provide literacy services to 0.35 million urban working children aged between 8 and 14 in six divisional cities of the country. It has benefited about 346500 children by providing non-formal basic education equivalent to class three (grade III) of formal education. The project was initiated in 1997 and was due for completion June 2004. It was implemented by the Directorate of Non-formal Education (renamed as Bureau

of Non-formal Education) through about 151 partner NGOs. The project was financed by the Government of Bangladesh, SIDA, DFID and UNICEF. The total amount budgeted for the project was Taka 805.51 million (GOB contribution was Tk. 27.207 million and the donor's contribution was Tk. 778 million). Out of this budgeted amount the total expenditure so far has been Tk. 778 million. Course duration is two years. The project covers basic elements of the grades I - III curriculum and included additional materials of history and culture, health, nutrition, hygiene, environment, numeric etc. Supplementary reading materials are available to learners. The project functioned through 11550 centers and each center had 30 learners. The time schedule of the course was 24 months in three phases of eight months each. This program introduced modular, multi-grade flexible teaching learning strategies. The second phase of this project initiates in July 2004 and is due for completion June 2009. The main specific objective of the project is to provide quality non-formal; life-skills based basic education to 200000 urban working children and adolescent ages 10 to 14 years of which at least 60% will be girls. The other specific objective of the project is to provide 20000 (out of 200000) urban working children and adolescents (13+ age group) with livelihood skills training. The total budget provision for the second phase of "Basic Education for Hard to Reach Urban Children Project" is about Taka 2060.00 million for five year period.

Non formal education project-4 (NFE-4)

Non Formal Education Project-4 was undertaken with the GOB's own fund to cover the illiterate peoples who could not be covered through other NFE projects. The main objectives of the project were to provide literacy to 22.89 million peoples of aged group of 11 - 45 years and to create employment opportunity temporarily for educated and unemployed young male and female. The project areas were 448 Upazilas from 62 Districts. Its estimated cost was Tk. 6829.96 million. The project has been implemented through Total Literacy Movement (TLM) mode. Four districts have been declared "Illiteracy Free" and a total of 9.23 million individuals have been provided with literacy services under the project. Additionally, as many as 0.328 million educated youths (both male and female) have got employment opportunity through this project. The project was ended on June 30, 2003.

Setting up a goal to provide to all newly literate people, the DNFE undertook the following four projects during mid nineties

Post literacy and continuing education (PLCE) program

As many as 18.48 million illiterate persons have been

provided with literacy services under different projects. As a result of the successful implementation of the NFE programs, literacy rate has been reached at about 62% in 2004 as against 35.3% in 1991. Previous experience shows that due to lack of proper literacy practice the neo literate who have been made literate under different projects do forget and soon become illiterate again.

Post Literacy and Continuing Education is therefore necessary to check to relapse back into illiteracy. Although, there was a built in mechanism for some 3 - 4 months post literacy course with every literacy course, it seems insufficient. There is 735 Gram Shikkha Milon Kendra (Continuing Education Center) in the country as a part of continuing education under INFEP. After completing of the INFEP, a total of 935 village education centers were being administered (including the earlier established 735 centers) with financial assistance from UNESCO until March 1999, after which, the centers were being maintained by NFE-2. It was revealed by the finding from different discussion meetings, seminars, workshops and reached that PLCE courses in such arrangement were insufficient, ineffective and below the desired status to suit the needs of the present time. In most cases, the courses lack market orientation and fail to meet the demand of the learners. Therefore, they can not succeed to link the learners with the market and employment problem remains unresolved. This means that NFE or post literacy interventions just cannot achieve desired goals to uplift living standard of the learners. Considering these realities, the DNFE has undertaken the following three projects under the title "Post Literacy and Continuing Education for Human Development".

Post literacy and continuing education for human development (PLCEHD) project-1

The main objectives of this project are:

- (1) To include 1.656 million neo literate in post literacy programs to consolidate, maintain and upgrade the literacy skills they have acquired previously.
- (2) To include an equal number of learners, who have completed the post literacy course in continuing education program for increasing their incomes through skill training in order to foster a better life style and to develop them as enlightened and productive citizens.
- (3) To involve the target population in a life long educational process.
- (4) To strengthen the national framework of non-formal education and develop functional definitions of literacy, post literacy and continuing education in Bangladesh.

For the initial establishment of the PLCE centers and the actual delivery of the nine months PLCE program a good number of implementing and monitoring NGOs were selected to assist in the project activities. A total of 6900 PLCE Centers have been established in some 230

(revised 205) Upazilas, 32 districts and 6 divisions. The centers will be continuing to function during the project duration. Each center is comprised of 30 female and 30 male in two separate shifts. The PLCE course goes on for a period of 3 months for Post Literacy course and 6 months for Continuing Education course. In the post literacy course, the neo-literate consolidates and upgrades their literacy skill they have acquired previously. While in the continuing education course they are provided with each of the following 11(eleven) life-skill trade based training and will be linked up with market to pursue business and be assisted to apply their learnt skills in whatever productive area they like:

- 1) Dairy
- 2) Cow Fattening and Goat Rearing
- 3) Bee Cultivation
- 4) Food Processing
- 5) Tailoring
- 6) Chalk, Candle and Soap Manufacturing
- 7) Poultry Farm
- 8) Bamboo and Cane Product
- 9) Fish Cultivation
- 10) Nurtures, Vegetable, Fruits and Flower Cultivation
- 11) By-cycle, Riksha, Van, Key and Lock Repairing

The total estimated cost of the project is Taka 3651.60 million (revised Tk. 3411.20 lakh) Of which Bangladesh Government will finance Taka 547.74 million, while IDA will provide Tk. 2738.70 million as loan and SDC Tk 365.16 million as grand. The project has been launched in January 2001 and was due for completion December 2005 (revised 2007). The project could not cover 1.656 (revised 1.37) million targeted learners due to on going of the project activities. It has benefited approximately 414000 (6900 x 30 x 2) learners (up to June, 2005). The project has covered 972900 learners within phases 1 to 5 up to December 31, 2007 (71.4% of total target) by the project activities.

PLCE for human development project-2 (PLCEHD-2)

Under the project, a total of 85000 Continuing Education Centers will be formed in some 210 Upazilas, 29 districts across the country which will be continuing to function during the project tenure. Each of the centers will be comprised of 30 women and 30 men in two separate shifts. The Continuing Education Course will go on for nine-month time. The centers will be functioning in six days a week of which two days will be allocated for Post Literacy course while the rest four days for Continuing Education activities. During the course, the neo-literate will be provided with their post literacy education in one hand, and, on the other, be provided with life-skill training courses and be linked up with market to pursue business and be assisted to apply their learnt skills in whatever productive area they like. The estimated cost of the

project stands at Taka 5671.50 million, of which Taka 1128.60 million will be provided by Bangladesh Government, Taka 3705.00 million by ADB loans, Tk. 684.00 million by DFID grant and Tk. 153.90 million by the community. The first phase of the field level activities of project already started on 2008-09.

PLCE for human development project-3 (PLCEHD-3)

The project initiated from two Upazilas where literacy rate was the lowest during the pre-TLM phases. A total of 6300 neo literate will be included in this project for which 75 centers were established in the project areas. The Islamic Development Bank (IDB) provided financial assistance worth Taka 15.30 million for the project.

Family life education project (technical assistance project)

A technical Assistance Project titled "Family Life Education" has been implemented during January 1999-December 2002 period under the United Nations Fund for Population Activities (UNFPA). Main objectives of the project were:

- (a) To incorporate family life education issues in the curriculum of adolescent and adult learners of the ongoing NFE, and
- (b) To develop supplementary reading materials and co-curricula to existing education materials of NFE.

Estimated cost of the project was fixed at Taka 57.00 million, of which Taka 3.23 million have been provided by Bangladesh Government and Taka 53.83 million by UNFPA as grand. Upon completing of the Family Life Education Project in December 2002 being encouraged by its success, the Government, in collaboration with the UNFPA, has further undertaken the Second phase of Family Life Education Project with a view to upgrading manuals, provide more materials and ensure training for the master trainers, center facilitators and supervisors. Duration of this project was January 2003 - December 2005 with an estimated cost of Taka 19.95 million.

UNFPA bear the total cost of the project as grant Tenth Five Year Plan (2002-07). At present, non formal education program are running in full swing throughout the country. In recognition of the success of these programs, Bangladesh has been awarded the prestigious UNESCO Literacy Award in the Asia Pacific region. This is a great honour for Bangladesh in the international community.

LITERACY AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS/SCHEMES IN INDIA

Literacy program delivery in India

Implementation of various literacy schemes are carried

on in 3 distinct phases. These are

- a) Total Literacy Campaign (TLC),
- b) The Post Literacy Campaign (PLC), and
- c) The Continuing Education Program (CEP).

These three literacy schemes are centrally sponsored by the Ministry of Human Resource Development and executed through the National Literacy Mission Authority. Duration of the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) and Post Literacy Campaign (PLC) are 2 years and 11/2 years, respectively. The funds are provided by the Central Government and the State Government in the ratio of 2:1. In the case of the Continuing Education Program (CEP), the scheme is a continuing one. The entire fund required in the first 3 years is provided by the Central Government. In the 4 and 5th year, the fund is shared between the Central government and the State on 50:50. After the 5th year, according to the scheme only the State Government has to provide the funds for continuing the program Annual Report (2002).

Total literacy campaign (TLC)

The National Literacy Mission which was constituted in 1988 was put in charge of these programs, which started the Total Literacy Campaign. The district was taken as the unit area of operation of the scheme.

The post literacy campaign (PLC)

Sustainability of literacy through the Total literacy Campaign (TLC) depended on successful completion of a Post Literacy Campaign (PLC) without which neo-literates may relapse into illiteracy. In other words, steps had to be taken to enable the neo-literates retain their literacy skills acquired through the Total Literacy Campaign. Keeping this need in view Central Government of India modified the Post Literacy Campaign for one year which at the initial stage was for one and a half year.

The continuing education program (CEP)

The third literacy program that the Government of India formulated after the Total Literacy Campaign (TLC) and Post Literacy Campaign (PLC) is the Continuing Education Program (CEP). This program aims at sustaining the learning process for the neo-literates after the above two programs. This scheme provides a comprehensive range of appropriate and effective opportunities for the life-long learning for all the neo-literate adults and other interested to improve their own conditions. The program also aims at implementation of diverse kinds of continuing education programs and imparting training on various crafts according to the

locally felt needs of the neo-literates and others. The targeted people for the Continuing Education Program (CEP) are the neo-literates who have completed functional literacy and post-literacy stages as well as the school pass-outs and drop-outs of the primary school, pass-outs of the non-formal education programs and other general members of the community who may be willing to join this program for promotion of their interest and creation of a learning society.

The Continuing Education Program (CEP) has provisions for the providing training on various trades that has local demands for which financial support is provided by the Central Government of India. Such training like imparting education both theoretical and practical on various trades like black smithy, woodcrafts, repairing of cycles, motor-cycles, TV, fridge, electrical wiring, repairing of tube-wells, rearing of livestock as profession, imparting training on agriculture for increased production, training on fishery, training on construction and maintenance of sanitary latrines, gobar-gas plants, training on bee-keeping, food preservation etc. are being imparted through the Continuing Education Centers (CECs) in India.

In addition to the above programs, the Continuing Education Program (CEP) has four specific programs which every Continuing education Program (CEP) district has to implement

These are the following:

- a. Equivalency program (EP): This program is designed as an alternative education program equivalent in quality and content to the existing formal, general and vocational education.
- b. Income-Generating Program (IGP): This program aims at creating an interest with the targeted group to know something economically beneficial to them. It is to help the participants acquire or upgrade vocational skills that may enable them to take up income generating activities.
- c. Quality of Life-Improvement program (QLIP): This program aims at equipping the learner with essential knowledge, attitude, values and skills both as individual and as members of the community.
- d. Individuals Interest Promotion Program (IIPP): This program is to afford opportunities to the learners to participate in and learn matters on spiritual, health, physical and artistic interest to be a useful and enlightened member of the community.

The government of India undertook the following literacy projects

Operation blackboard

The Operation Blackboard scheme started in 1987 – 88 which aimed at improving the classroom environment by

providing infrastructural facilities, additional teachers and teaching-learning materials to primary schools and by provision of a third teacher to schools where enrolment exceeded 100, has been extended to upper primary schools. A total of 523000 primary schools and 127000 upper primary schools have been provided funds for the development of academic infrastructure such as teaching-learning materials. Besides 150000 posts of additional teachers for single teacher primary schools, 76000 posts of additional teachers at the upper primary stage and 83000 posts of third teachers have been sanctioned so far.

Restructuring and reorganization of teacher education

The scheme of Restructuring and Reorganization of Teacher education started in 1987. Under this scheme 471 District Institutes of Education and Training (to provide academic and resource support to elementary school teachers and non formal and adult education instructors), 86 College of Teacher Education (for pre-service and in-service training for secondary school teachers) and 38 Institute of Advanced Studies in Education have been sanctioned so far. More than 1.9 million teachers have been trained under the special orientation program of school teachers in the use of Operation Blackboard material and implementation of the Minimum Level of Learning strategy Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection or Rights and full Participation) Act (1995).

District primary education program

The District Primary Education Program launched in 1994 is assisted by the World Bank, European Commission, and Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom, the Netherlands and the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF). Eighty five percent of the funds of the project come from external agencies through the central budget and the remaining 15% is given by the concerned state governments. The program components include construction of classrooms and new schools, opening of the non-formal/alternative schooling centers, appointment of new teachers and setting up of early childhood education centers, and setting up of block resource centers. It also comprises teacher training, interventions, development of teaching-learning materials etc. Under District Primary Education Program, 21000 new formal schools and over 67000 new alternative schools have been opened, covering 2.5 million children, and 20000 bridge courses conducted. This program has provided training to over three million community members and about one million teachers. The program covers about 50% of the children in the primary stage in over 271 districts in 18 states up to June 2005 Disabilities (Equal

opportunities, Protection or Rights and full Participation) Act (1995).

Shiksha Karmi project and Lok Jumbish project in Rajasthan

Two externally-aided projects for basic education are the Shiksha Karmi Project and Lok Jumbish Project in Rajasthan. Both are innovative projects aimed at the elementary education together with a qualitative improvement in remote and socially backward villages. The projects address high dropout rate, working children, teaching methods, lack of contextual learning materials, low motivation and competence of teachers, a centralized and inflexible approach etc. There is special emphasis on community participation in these projects. The Village Education Committees (VECs) have contributed a great deal to the improvement of the school environment, augmentation of the infrastructure and facilities, larger enrolment of children through school mapping and micro-planning of the shiksha Karmi schools. The Shiksha Karmi Project covers 2708 villages in 147 blocks spread over 31 districts and have been responsible for a seven-fold increase in the enrolment of children in schools taken over by the project.

The Lok Jumbish Project has also made a positive contribution to quality improvement through the development of improved minimum levels of learning based textbooks for classes' I - IV, which are also being used in all schools in Rajasthan. It has conducted school mapping in 8921 villages, opened 2560 Sahaj Shiksha Centers covering 47000 children and started 529 new primary schools and 268 upper primary schools Disabilities (Equal opportunities, Protection or Rights and full Participation) Act (1995).

Mahila Samakhya

Mahila Samakhya is another externally assisted program with specific focus on gender started in 1989 in five states of India. It aims to promote women's education and empowerment of women in rural areas particularly women in socially and economically marginalized groups. It has reached the poor women who have been able to overcome social barriers and are addressing issues such as child marriage, child labour and violence against women. A pool of aware women has been created through the Mahila Shikshan Kendras and there is an ever increasing demand for literacy and education for their daughters and grand daughters. This has had a beneficial social impact like delaying the age of marriage of girls. The program is implemented in over 9000 villages in 53 districts spread over 10 states Reading material (June 2005).

Mid-day meal scheme

The Mid-Day Meal Scheme program was launched in

1995. It aims to give primary education by increasing enrolment, retention and attendance and simultaneously improving the nutritional status of students in primary classes. Under the scheme cooked meals are served with calorie value equivalent to 100 gm of wheat or rice per student per school day. The number of children covered under the program has risen from 33.4 million in about 322000 schools in 1995 - 96 to 105.1 million students in 792000 schools spread over 576 districts in 2000 - 01. Over 15 lakh tones of food grains were lifted for the scheme during 2000 - 01 compared to 14 lakh tones in 1999 - 2000. Currently, only six states – Gujarat, Kerala, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Chhattishgarh, Madhya Pradesh and the Union Territory of Pondicherry are providing hot cooked meals under the program. In Delhi ready-to-eat food is being distributed. The remaining states Union Territories are distributing food grains (wheat/rice) (The sixth All India Educational Survey, (1993)).

Janshala (GOI-UN) program

The Janshala (GOI-UN) Program is a collaborative effort of the Government of India (GOI) and five United Nations (UN) agencies- UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, ILO, and UNFPA. UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA have committed to contribute \$ 20 million for the program, while UNESCO and ILO have offered technical know-how. Janshala is a community based primary education program that aims to make primary education more accessible and effective, especially for girls and children in deprived communities, marginalized groups, minorities, working children and children with special needs. The program covers 139 blocks in nine states- Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, KarnatakaMadhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh- with a total project outlay of Rs. 103.29 crore. The project was run for five years, from 1998 - 2002. At the state level the program is implemented through existing structures of educational administration. Janshala has started a large number of alternative schools in small and remote habitations in the program areas, besides evolving strategies and setting up schools with community participation in the urban slums of Jaipur, Hyderabad, Ajmer, Bharatpur, Puri and Lucknow. Other major areas of achievement are in teacher training, multi-grade teaching, intervention for education of the disabled, setting up of block and cluster resource centers Reading material (June 2005).

Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan

Out of the approximately 207.76 million children in the 6 - 14 age groups in 2000, the number of children not attending the school is 40 million Reading material (June 005). The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan program which aims to provide elementary education to all children in the 6 - 14 age groups by 2010 is an effort to improve the

performance of the school system and provide community owned quality elementary education in the mission mode. It also envisages bridging of gender and social disparities at the elementary level. The Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan is expected to accord the highest priority to community monitoring, transparency in program planning and implementation of capacity building at all levels as also to the adoption of a mission approach by the mainstream education department functionaries.

The scheme is expected to absorb most of the existing programs including externally aided programs, within its overall framework with the district as the unit of the program implementation.

Nali Kali

The Nali kali program in Karnataka was introduced in privately managed schools in 1999. Under the program learning takes place in an interactive situation in accordance with age-wise competency. Children are divided into groups and then master one level of competency, then move to another group to learn the next level of competency. Children learn at their own pace and the move from one level of competency to another is not dependent on the whole group's learning achievement. All teaching-learning processes involve songs, games, story telling and use of educational toys¹². This method effectively eliminates the formal system of roll calls, examination, promotions, ranking- at least between the age of 5 and 14.

OPEN SCHOOLING SYSTEM IN BANGLADESH

'Bangladesh Open University' was established on October 21, 1992 by an act of Parliament. The Government of Bangladesh and Asian Development Bank (ADB) have provided funds for setting up of the University.

Bangladesh open university Bangladesh Open University, January, (2006)

'Bangladesh Open University' has opened up a new vista in distance education in the country. Prime objective of 'Bangladesh Open University' is to transform the country's vast human resources into an educated and trained work force by extending to them a wide range of academic programs of non-formal system of continuing education. BOU programs are aimed at every one, particularly working people and women and those socially disadvantaged groups who cannot enroll in traditional institutes or universities.

Non-formal programs are designed to make people aware as to how to live a better life. These are community based program and are intended for people who are willing to improve upon the level of their knowledge and understanding about environment, hygiene conditions, socio-cultural and other aspects of life. These include

basic science, agriculture, pisciculture, poultry, livestock, health and nutrition, ethics and environment etc. BOU has so far opened six schools namely:

- (a) School of Education,
- b) Open School,
- c) School of Agriculture and Rural Development,
- d) School of Business,
- e) School of science and Technology,
- f) School of Social Science Humanities and Language.

Non-formal education programs of BOU are given in the following table. Each school offers its own education programs in accordance with the felt need of the country. A country wide education needs survey conducted in 1993, identified 75 subjects which have a great demand among the prospective learners under the distance education program. BOU is offering these subjects on a priority basis in phases.

BOU admits students for its programs twice a year. Admission for January - June semester takes place between November and December and that for July - December semester between May and June. The main function of Student Support Service (SSS) and media divisions is to admit students and provide support to them. It distributes books and a cassette among the students, arrange tutorial centers, appoints coordinators and tutors, holds examinations, announces results and distributes certificates. To carry out the above works, the Student Support Service (SSS) of Bangladesh Open University (BOU) has 12 Regional Resource Centers (RRCs), one each in Dhaka, Mymensingh, Barisal, Jessore, Rangpur, Bogra, Rajshahi, Sylhet, Chittagong, Comilla, Khulna and Fridpur.

The Regional Resource Centers (RRCs) are contact points of students for information, admission, registration, tutorial services, examinations and results. It provides a library and a study room where audio, video, radio, and television facilities are made available to students. There are also Local centers (LCs) numbering about 80 spread over the country to assist the Regional Resource Centers. Tutorial Centers (TCs) have been set up in different parts of the country to extend tutorial services to students twice a month tutorial classes are arranged for students of every program. Tutorial Centers (TCs) have been opened up-to Thana/Upazila (Sub- district) level for the benefit of the learners in rural areas. The number of Tutorial Centers (TCs) opened so far for different programs stands at around 1000. The main function of the media division is to produce audio, video educational programs. Every student of BOU is provided with a set of audio cassette containing course materials together with a set of text books. BOU program is also broadcast by radio every day and six days a week by television at a fixed time. Library facilities are available at the Regional Resource Centers and the main campus at Gazipur Table 1.

As a distance mode of imparting education, BOU

depends heavily on print materials, electronic media like radio-television and audio-video cassettes, tutorial services and specialized communication such as computer networking and internet. The use of these techniques helps BOU to take its academic programs to the door-steps of people far and wide. It makes room for in-house education. BOU examination procedure includes assignment test and final examinations. Examinations are held at the end of every semester at tutorial centers.

Open schooling system in India

'National Institute of Open Schooling' and 'Indira Gandhi National Open University' provides opportunities to interested learners of India by making available courses/programs of study through open and distance learning mode.

National institute of open schooling

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) is an autonomous organization of the Department of education, ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India. NIOS was established in 1989 as an autonomous registered society. It provides opportunities for continuing education to those who have missed the opportunities to complete school and developmental education through courses and programs of general, life enrichment and vocational education from primary to pre-degree level. It also acts as a National Board of Examinations in Open Schooling. NIOS conducts its own examinations and awards certificates. With about 1.4 million students on roll from almost every State and Union territory of India and abroad, NIOS is the largest open schooling system in the world Open Learning (July 2004). It has about 2500 study centers.

The National Institute of Open Schooling provides opportunities to interested learners by making available the following courses/programs of study through open and distance learning mode:

(a) Open Basic Education Program for children, adolescents and adults. The Open Basic Education Program is offered at three levels:

- (i) Equivalent to Class III
- (ii) Equivalent to Class V
- (iii) Equivalent to Class VIII
- (b) Secondary Education Courses
- (c) Senior Secondary Education Courses
- (d) Vocational Education Courses
- (e) Life Enrichment Courses

The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) provides resource support, such as adaptation of NIOS model curricula, study materials, orientation of resource persons, and popularization of Open Basic Education, to

Table 1. Programs of BOU.

School	Program
Open School	1. Secondary School Certificate (SSC). 2. Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC).
School of Agriculture and Rural Development.	1. Certificate in Agricultural Processing. 2. Certificate in Pisciculture and Fish Processing. 3. Certificate in Poultry and Livestock's. 4. Bachelor of Science (BSc.) in Agricultural Education.
School of Business.	1. Master of Business Administration (MBA). 2. Certificate in Management. 3. Diploma in Management.
School of science and Technology.	1. Diploma in Computer Application. 2. BSc. In Nursing.
School of Social Science, Humanities and Language.	1. BA. 2. Diploma in Women Studies. 3. Certificate in Arabic Language. 4. Certificate in English Language. 5. Bachelor in English Teaching.
School of Education	1. B.Ed. 2. M.Ed. 3. Certificate of Education.

Table 2. Study Centers of NIOS (As on December, 2004)

S/N	Purposes	Number of Center
1.	For Academic Courses	1618
2.	For Vocational Education Courses	870
3.	Foreign Countries Center (UAE, Nepal, Canada)	15
4.	Open Basic Education (OBE) Accredited Agencies (AAs)	245

the NGOs and Zila Saksharta Samities (ZSSs), for implementation of its Open Basic Education program. The National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS) operates through a network of ten Regional Centers (in Hyderabad, Pune, Kolkata, Guwahati, Chandigarh, Delhi, Alahabad, Patna, Jaipur and Kochi) and more than two thousand four hundred accredited Institutions (Study Centers) in India, Nepal, Middle East, Canada and UAE Table 2. Learning strategy includes printed self-learning material, audio and video programs, Personal Contact Program (PCP) and Tutor Marked assignment (TMA). About 10.7 million copies of study materials were produced and distributed to the learners during the year of 2003 - 04 (News Bulletin, vol. XIII No. 1, (January-March 2005)). The curricular and life enrichment programs are telecast nationwide. Admission to NIOS courses is open in a year during July - August through Study Centers. Examinations are held twice a year in April - May and October - November.

In order to facilitate cooperation among NIOS and State Open Schools (SOSs) and other concerned agencies, a National Consortium for Open Schooling (NCOS) has been set up. NIOS offers combination of academic and vocational courses. A student is required to take five subjects, including one language, for certification. NIOS offers a provision of 9 chances in 5 years to complete a

course, provision of re-admission after 5 years. NIOS offers 25 courses in the six mediums for secondary Examination, and 25 courses in English, Hindi and Urdu mediums for Senior Secondary Examination. About 100 Vocational Education Courses in the areas such as agriculture, Business and Commerce, Technology, Health and Paramedical, Home Science and Teacher Training etc. are being offered.

NIOS has developed an innovative 'On Demand Examination System (ODES), which gives freedom to learner to appear in examination in the subject(s) of his/her choice whenever the learner feels confident taking an examination. NIOS generally utilizes the infrastructure facilities of the formal schooling system. At the time of admission in secondary education course, a student is charged Rs. 1000/- which include registration fee, cost of study material and Personal Contact Program (PCP). NIOS has made provision of 30 Personal Contact sessions per subject for theory and five additional sessions for subjects having practical. However, the contact sessions and practical sessions for Vocational Education Courses are organized at the Study Centers as per need (for skill development in particular courses of study). The cumulative enrolments in various courses of study in last five years (2000 - 2005) were 1330427 learners News Bulletin, Vol. XIII No. 1, (January-March

2005). Upon completion of courses of study, the pass outs from open schooling system can join higher education courses both under Open and Distance Learning (ODL) System and the Formal Education System.

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