

সন্তানদের স্কুল সম্বন্ধে পিতামাতার মূল্যায়ন : বাংলাদেশের ঢাকার উত্তরা উপশহরের স্কুলের গুণগত মানের বিষয়ে পিতামাতার উপর একটি সমীক্ষা

## What Parents Think of Their Children's Schools

A Survey of School Quality Among Parents  
in Uttara, Suburban Dhaka, Bangladesh



Sandra Nikolic and John Richards



CENTRE FOR POLICY RESEARCH

IUBAT



IUBAT – International University  
of Business Agriculture  
and Technology  
Dhaka, Bangladesh



সন্তানদের স্কুল সম্বন্ধে পিতামাতার মূল্যায়ন ঃ বাংলাদেশের ঢাকার উত্তরা  
উপশহরের স্কুলের গুণগত মানের বিষয়ে পিতামাতার উপর একটি সমীক্ষা

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A Survey of School Quality Among Parents in Uttara, Suburban Dhaka, Bangladesh

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## About the Centre

Created in 1999, the Centre for Policy Research is a nonprofit research and educational institution, linked to IUBAT – International University of Business Agriculture and Technology.

Its goals are to identify current and emerging economic and social issues facing Bangladesh; to analyse options for public and private sector responses; to recommend, where appropriate, particular policy options; and to communicate the conclusions of its research in an accessible and nonpartisan form, in both English and Bengali. Publications of the Centre are freely available at [www.iubat.edu/cpr](http://www.iubat.edu/cpr)

Simon Fraser University in Burnaby (Vancouver), Canada, has entered into a memorandum of understanding with IUBAT. By this agreement, SFU will encourage participation by its faculty and students in projects of the centre.

While the centre takes care to assure the quality of published research, the conclusions of individual studies lie with the authors. Conclusions do not necessarily represent the opinion of IUBAT, SFU or the members of the centre's management committee.

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**JOHN RICHARDS** is a professor of public policy at Simon Fraser University. He holds the Roger Phillips chair in social policy at the C.D. Howe Institute, and is a visiting professor and member of International Advisor Council of IUBAT.

Photo courtesy of M. Iftekher Alam

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Nadene Rehnby prepared the text for publication.

## Foreword

I AM PLEASED TO INTRODUCE THIS FOURTH MAJOR PUBLICATION BY THE CENTRE for Policy Research. The Centre is continuing its commitment to support research into public policy problems in Bangladesh, with wide dissemination – both by internet and by print – of all monographs.

Quality is a major concern in education in Bangladesh, be it at the primary, secondary or tertiary level. With this monograph, the Centre is launching a series focusing on education at different levels. The first in this series concerns school quality at the primary level. The study authored by Sandra Nikolic and John Richards deals with parental concern for quality in different types of schools in suburban Uttara, the community in which IUBAT is located. The study points to major concern of parents and suggests strategies for improving quality of education. Both the authors have spent considerable time in Bangladesh to study an issue of major concern in our society. I thank them for their contribution.

IUBAT—International University of Business Agriculture and Technology was the first non-government university established in Bangladesh. Since its founding in 1991, IUBAT has grown in stature and it has become a valuable source of intellectual activity in our country. This monograph is another step forward for IUBAT. I hope that, in the years to come, the Centre will serve both IUBAT and our country as a forum for serious, nonpartisan research into economic and social dilemma facing Bangladesh.

I appreciate our cooperation with Simon Fraser University over the decades in developing IUBAT as a quality educational and research institution in Bangladesh. The most vital aspect of this cooperation is the intellectual stimulation provided by the visiting faculty and students from Canada. Under the active stewardship of Professor John Richards, who also serves on the IUBAT Overseas Advisory Council, our Canadian visitors are covering diverse subjects from business to nursing.

Dr. M. Alimullah Miyan  
Vice-Chancellor and Founder, IUBAT

## Foreword

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY (SFU) HAS SINCE 1998 MAINTAINED AN AGREEMENT WITH IUBAT – International University of Business Agriculture and Technology. This agreement encourages faculty and students at SFU to undertake policy research in Bangladesh in conjunction with Bangladesh scholars, and to publish their results via the Centre for Policy Research.

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the fourth publication of the Centre – a report on the challenges of providing quality education in Bangladesh. The authors of the study are Sandra Nikolic, a graduate of our Masters in Public Policy program, and Professor John Richards. A novel feature of the study is that Ms. Nikolic, with the help of students at IUBAT, surveyed parents of primary school children to find out what type of school they send their children to and what they look for in a good school. Analysis of the data revealed a number of valuable insights into the problems of delivering quality education in Bangladesh. Strategies to improve school quality are identified and put through a rigorous assessment of their impact and viability.

The cooperation between IUBAT and Simon Fraser University has produced an insightful study that I hope provides “food for thought” and directions for action.

Professor Nancy Olewiler  
Director, Public Policy Program  
Simon Fraser University  
Vancouver, Canada

# Executive Summary

THE GOVERNMENT OF BANGLADESH (GOB) HAS COMMITTED TO REALIZE INTERNATIONAL and national education targets, and over the last decade, Bangladesh has made impressive gains in the *quantity* of education available. As of 2004, there were 18 million children enrolled in 110,000 primary schools, an enrolment increase of one third since 1991. Still, many parents choose to enrol their children in private schools where parents pay, in nonformal schools run by NGOs such as BRAC, and in madrasas. The popularity of school types other than government-run schools suggests that parents have concerns about school quality – as well as the availability of school spaces.

This study briefly reviews the significant challenges to providing quality primary education in Bangladesh. Common problems within the primary education sector include management and administration deficiencies, inadequately trained teachers, excessive distance between schools and homes, and lack of access to quality primary schools for hard-to-reach and poor families.

In an attempt to assess parental attitudes to problems of school quality, student researchers from IUBAT—International University of Business Agriculture and Technology conducted street interviews in Uttara, a suburb in northern Dhaka. A total of 349 parents (or guardians) of primary-aged children

participated in the survey, conducted in summer 2005.<sup>1</sup> The survey affords interesting, if tentative, insights.

Following are the highlight of the survey results:

- BRAC nonformal schools (that target disadvantaged girls and poor populations) are utilized by families of all socio-economic backgrounds. Two thirds of parents making this school choice have below-median economic status, as defined. However, one third, a sizeable minority, have above-median economic status. This finding is consistent with that of others: the relatively high quality of BRAC schools attracts many parents beyond the targeted groups.

- Relatively few parents claim to withdraw children from school in order that the children earn income. In the case of those sending their children to either a private school or madrasa, virtually none do. However, about one quarter of parents sending their children to either a government or nonformal school do withdraw children for this reason.
- An encouraging result is that over four out of five parents believe equally in educating girls and boys. This result holds regardless of the parents' choice of school type.
- Poor quality of teachers is a concern among only a minority of parents sending their children to a private school or madrasa. However, it is a concern among roughly half the parents using government and nonformal schools.
- When asked a more specific question, is teacher quality a problem in the school their children attend, the percentage saying yes varies across school types. Three parents in five say yes if their child is in a government school; slightly less than half with children in nonformal schools say yes. Among parents with children in private schools, about a quarter believe that poor teacher quality is a problem in their children's school; among parents sending their children to madrasas, only one in six do.
- Poor school management and administration is most likely to be considered a problem among parents whose children

attend government public primary schools. Among these parents, well over half perceive problems. Among parents sending their children to any of the other three school types, management and administration is problematic for only small minorities.

- Associated with schools are school management committees and in some, school parent-teacher associations. Variously composed of teachers, parents, guardians, and community leaders, their purpose is to involve parents and community in local school activities. Survey results indicate that of ten respondents sending children to government primary schools, only three are aware of the roles and responsibilities of PTAs and SMCs; another three are unaware of either group, and four are unsure. These figures are in sharp contrast to those for private primary schools, where of ten respondents over six are aware of the roles and responsibilities of the PTAs and SMCs, less than one is unaware, and three are unsure.

The study concludes with discussion of three broad strategies for overcoming education problems. The first is to replace the current government stipend programme with a selective school voucher programme. The second strategy is to transfer meaningful power over education policy from central authority and Members of Parliament to elected regional or local councils. The third strategy is to reform teacher training to stress "active" teaching techniques.

## মূলবক্তব্য

জাতীয় এবং আন্তর্জাতিক পর্যায়ে শিক্ষা বিস্তারের যে লক্ষ্যমাত্রা নির্ধারন করা হয়েছে, বাংলাদেশ সরকার তা অর্জনে প্রতিশ্রুতিবদ্ধ এবং পরিমানগত দিক দিয়ে বিগত দশকে শিক্ষার প্রাপ্যতা বিস্তার করে বাংলাদেশ প্রশংসনীয় সাফল্য অর্জন করেছে। ২০০৪ ইংরেজি সালে ১৮ মিলিয়ন শিশু ১,১০,০০০ প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ে ভর্তি হয়। যা ১৯৯১ সালের প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় ভর্তি সংখ্যার তুলনায় এক তৃতীয়াংশ বেশি। এতদসত্ত্বেও দেখা যায় যে অনেক পিতামাতা তাদের সন্তানদেরকে বেসরকারি স্কুলে ভর্তি করান, যার ব্যয়ভার তাদেরকে বহন করতে হয়। আবার কেউ কেউ বেছে নেন বেসরকারি সংস্থা কর্তৃক পরিচালিত অনানুষ্ঠানিক স্কুল, যেমন ব্র্যাক পরিচালিত স্কুল বা মাদ্রাসা।

সরকার পরিচালিত স্কুলের চেয়ে বেসরকারি পর্যায়ে পরিচালিত স্কুলের জনপ্রিয়তার মধ্যে আমরা দুটি বিষয়ের দিক নির্দেশনা দেখতে পাই যথা স্কুলের গুণগতমান সম্বন্ধে পিতামাতার উদ্বেগ এবং স্কুলে স্থান সঙ্কলান সম্পর্কে সচেতনতা।

বর্তমান গবেষণায় বাংলাদেশে গুণগতমান সম্পন্ন প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা প্রদানে উলেখযোগ্য বিঘ্নসমূহ সম্পর্কে সংক্ষিপ্ত পর্যালোচনা করা হয়েছে। প্রাথমিক শিক্ষা ক্ষেত্রে সাধারণ সমস্যাগুলির মধ্যে রয়েছে ব্যবস্থাপনা ও প্রশাসন ক্ষেত্রে ত্রুটি, প্রশিক্ষণপ্রাপ্ত শিক্ষক স্বল্পতা, বাড়ি থেকে বিদ্যালয়ের অত্যাধিক দূরত্ব এবং গরিব ও হত দরিদ্র পরিবারের সন্তানদের জন্য গুণগত মানসম্পন্ন প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ে ভর্তি হওয়ার সীমিত সুযোগ।

স্কুলের গুণগতমান সম্পর্কীয় সমস্যা সম্পর্কে পিতামাতার মনোভাব যাচাই করার জন্য, ঢাকা শহরের উত্তরাংশে অবস্থিত উত্তরায় আইইউবিএটি - ইন্টারন্যাশনাল ইউনিভার্সিটি অব বিজনেস এগ্রিকালচার এবং টেকনোলজি'র গবেষণারত ছাত্র-ছাত্রীগণ ২০০৫ সনে একটি পথ জরিপ পরিচালনা করে। ২০০৫ ইং সালের গ্রীষ্মকালে পরিচালিত এই জরিপে মোট ৩৪৯ জন পিতামাতা বা অভিভাবক অংশ নেন এবং তাদের প্রত্যেকেরই প্রাথমিক স্কুলে যাওয়ার বয়সি ছেলেমেয়ে আছে<sup>১</sup>। এই জরিপের মাধ্যমে অন্ততঃ প্রাথমিক পর্যায়ে, কিছু তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ তত্ত্ব পাওয়া গেছে।

নিম্নে জরিপের ফলাফলের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয়গুলি তুলে ধরা হলোঃ-

- ব্র্যাক অনানুষ্ঠানিক স্কুলগুলি মূলতঃ স্থাপিত হয়েছে হতদরিদ্র মেয়েদের ও গরিব পরিবারগুলির সন্তানদের শিক্ষাদানের জন্য। তবে বাস্তবে দেখা যায় যে, এই স্কুলগুলির ব্যবহারকারীদের মধ্যে অবস্থাপন্ন ও গরিব, এই দুই আর্থ-সামাজিক স্তরের পরিবারেরই সম্মান আছে। অনানুষ্ঠানিক স্কুল বেছে নেওয়ার ক্ষেত্রে দেখা যায় ২/৩ অংশ পরিবারেরই অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থা এই জরিপে সংজ্ঞায়িত মধ্যম স্ত-রের চেয়ে নিচে। তবে ১/৩ অংশ, যার সংখ্যা উলেখযোগ্য মাত্রার তাদের অর্থনৈতিক অবস্থা হল মধ্যম (median) স্তরের উপরে। এই তথ্য, অন্যান্য অনুসন্ধানে পাওয়া তথ্যের সাথে সংগতিপূর্ণঃ ব্র্যাক স্কুলগুলি তুলনামূলকভাবে উচ্চতর উৎকর্ষতা সম্পন্ন হওয়ার কারণে টার্গেট শ্রেণীর বাইরের অনেক পিতামাতাকেও আকর্ষণ করে।
- আয়করী কাজে নিয়োগের জন্য তুলনামূলকভাবে খুব কম সংখ্যক পিতামাতাই তাদের সন্তানদেরকে স্কুল থেকে ফিরিয়ে নেন বলে দাবি করেন। বস্তুত যারা তাদের সন্তানদের বেসরকারী স্কুল বা মাদ্রাসায় পড়ান তাদের কেউই শিক্ষা প্রতিষ্ঠান থেকে তাদের সন্তানদের এই উদ্দেশ্যে ফিরিয়ে নেন না। তবে যাঁরা সন্তানদের সরকারী বা অনানুষ্ঠানিক স্কুলে পাঠান তাদের এক চতুর্থাংশ অর্থ উপার্জনের উদ্দেশ্যে সন্তানদের স্কুল থেকে ফিরিয়ে নেন।

<sup>১</sup> তুলনামূলকভাবে অধিক সংখ্যক উচ্চতর মাত্রায় শিক্ষিত ব্যক্তিদের নমনায় অন্তর্ভুক্ত করার ফলে, এটা দুঃখের সাথে বলতে হয় যে, এই জরিপটি উত্তরার পিতামাতা বা অভিভাবকদের দৈবচয়িত নমুনা হিসাবে গণ্য করা যায় না। অধিকন্তু, উত্তরা তুলনামূলকভাবে একটি সম্পদশালী এলাকা এবং এই এলাকাকে অন্যান্য এলাকার প্রতিনিধিত্বকারী এলাকা বলে গণ্য করা যায় না।

- আশার কথা এই যে প্রতি পাঁচ জনে চার জন পিতামাতাই শিক্ষিত করার জন্য মেয়ে ও ছেলের মধ্যে পার্থক্য করেন না। এই ফলাফল স্কুল পছন্দ নির্বিশেষে সকল পিতামাতার ক্ষেত্রেই সমানভাবে প্রযোজ্য।
- যারা তাঁদের সন্তানদের বেসরকারী স্কুল বা মাদ্রাসায় পাঠান তাঁদের খুব কম সংখ্যালঘিষ্ঠ পিতামাতা শিক্ষকদের গুণগত মানের অভাব বিষয়ে চিন্তিত, কিন্তু যারা তাঁদের সন্তানদের সরকারী স্কুল বা অনানুষ্ঠানিক স্কুলে পাঠান তাঁদের প্রায় অর্ধেক এ বিষয়ে চিন্তিত।
- যে স্কুলে তাঁদের ছেলেমেয়েরা পড়ে সেখানে শিক্ষকদের গুণগত মান কোন সমস্যা কিনা এ বিষয়ে সুস্পষ্ট প্রশ্ন করা হলে, যারা হ্যাঁ সূচক মন্তব্য করেন তাঁদের মধ্যে সব ধরনের স্কুলই দেখা যায়। সরকারি স্কুলে পড়ে ছেলেমেয়েদের ক্ষেত্রে ৫ জনের মধ্যে ৩ জন পিতামাতাই এই ব্যাপারে হ্যাঁ সূচক মন্তব্য করেন; অনানুষ্ঠানিক স্কুলে পড়ে ছেলেমেয়েদের ক্ষেত্রে অর্ধেকের কিছু কম পিতামাতা এই ব্যাপারে হ্যাঁ সূচক মন্তব্য করেন। বেসরকারি স্কুলে পড়ে ছেলেমেয়েদের ক্ষেত্রে এক চতুর্থাংশ পিতামাতা বিশ্বাস করেন যে তাঁদের সন্তানসন্ততিদের স্কুলে শিক্ষকের গুণগত মান একটি সমস্যা; অন্যদিকে যারা মাদ্রাসাতে ছেলেমেয়ে পড়ান তাদের মধ্যে ৬ জনে ১ জন এই বিষয়টিকে সমস্যাসঙ্কুল বলে মনে করেন।
- যেসব পিতামাতা সরকারি প্রাথমিক স্কুলে ছেলেমেয়েদেরকে পড়তে পাঠান তাঁদের মধ্যে নিম্নমানের স্কুল ব্যবস্থাপনা ও প্রশাসনের বিষয়টি সমস্যা বলে চিহ্নিত হওয়া স্বাভাবিক বলে ধরে নেওয়া যায়। জরিপে দেখা যায় যে অর্ধেকের বেশি পিতামাতা এই বিষয়টিকে সমস্যা বলে মনে করেন। সরকারি স্কুল ব্যতীত যে তিন প্রকারের স্কুলে যারা ছেলেমেয়ে পাঠান, তাঁদের মধ্যে খুব কম সংখ্যকই ব্যবস্থাপনা ও প্রশাসনের বিষয়টি সমস্যাসঙ্কুল বলে মনে করেন।

- স্কুলগুলির সাথে সম্পৃক্ত রয়েছে স্কুল ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটি সমূহ এবং কোন কোন ক্ষেত্রে স্কুলভিত্তিক পিতামাতা ও শিক্ষক সমিতি। শিক্ষক, পিতামাতা, অভিভাবক এবং কমিউনিটি নেতাদের সমন্বয়ে বিভিন্নভাবে সংঘটিত, এইসব কমিটি ও সমিতির মূল উদ্দেশ্য হলো স্থানীয় স্কুলের ক্রিয়াকর্মে পিতামাতা এবং কমিউনিটিকে সম্পৃক্ত করা। জরিপের ফলাফল থেকে দেখা যায় যে, সরকারি প্রাথমিক স্কুলে পড়ে ছেলেমেয়েদের পিতামাতার মধ্যে, ১০ জনের মধ্যে মাত্র ৩ জন স্কুল ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটি বা পিতামাতা ও শিক্ষক সমিতির ভূমিকা ও দায়িত্ব সম্বন্ধে অবগত আছেন; অন্য ৩ জন এই সম্বন্ধে অবগত নন এবং অবশিষ্ট ৪ জন এই বিষয়ে অনিশ্চিত। এই ফলাফল বেসরকারি স্কুলের ক্ষেত্রে বিপরীতধর্মী। বেসরকারি স্কুলের ক্ষেত্রে, প্রতি ১০ জন উত্তরদাতার মধ্যে ৬ জনই স্কুল ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটি ও পিতামাতা ও শিক্ষক সমিতির ভূমিকা ও দায়িত্ব সম্বন্ধে সচেতন, ১ জন অবগত নন এবং ৩ জন অনিশ্চিত।

উপসংহারে, এই সমীক্ষায় শিক্ষাগত সমস্যা দূরীকরণের লক্ষ্যে তিনটি বিস্তৃত পর্যায়ের কৌশলের বিষয় আলোচনা করা হয়। এরমধ্যে প্রথমটি হলো বর্তমানে চালু সরকারি বৃত্তি কর্মসূচির বদলে একটি নির্বাচিত স্কুল ভাউচার কর্মসূচি চালু করা। দ্বিতীয় কৌশলটি হলো অর্থবহভাবে ক্ষমতা বিকেন্দ্রীকরণ যার মাধ্যমে শিক্ষা নীতি সম্বন্ধীয় বিষয়াদি কেন্দ্রীয় সরকার এবং জাতীয় সংসদের সদস্যদের হাত থেকে নির্বাচিত আঞ্চলিক বা স্থানীয় কাউন্সিলের নিকট হস্তান্তর করা। তৃতীয় কৌশলটি হলো শিক্ষক প্রশিক্ষণ পদ্ধতি সংস্কারের মাধ্যমে অংশগ্রহণমূলক শিক্ষা পদ্ধতির প্রতি অধিকতর গুরুত্ব আরোপ।



**UTTARA, SECTOR 10:** How many of these children will learn to read and write? Primary school enrolment has risen by over one third since the early 1990s. Nation-wide, about four of five children now enrol in primary school and enrolment of girls now equals that for boys. Only about three quarters of those who enrol complete all primary grades however, and among those who do complete, a significant minority do not achieve effective literacy.

# I. Introduction

THIS STUDY IS A MODEST CONTRIBUTION TO THE ASSESSMENT OF SCHOOL QUALITY. It reports education concerns from a sample of parents and guardians of school-aged children in a suburb of metropolitan Dhaka: Sector 4 of Uttara Model Town in Bangladesh (see map in Appendix B). The study also discusses broad education policy reforms and their implementation.

Children are the future of a nation. And deciding how to achieve reasonable education levels for a nation's children is perhaps the most important political discussion for citizens to undertake. Reasonable education goals differ across countries, depending on their stage of development. For a low-income country like Bangladesh, the highest education priority is for all children to have access to a primary school of good quality. This is not to ignore secondary and tertiary education: Bangladesh has need for people educated to these higher levels. Nevertheless, the first questions Bangladeshis should ask are: Are all children realizing the education goals of primary schooling? Are all children able to read and write Bangla? Are they able to undertake basic arithmetic? Are they familiar with simple scientific ideas? Without a better education foundation, Bangladesh will inevitably remain poor; its economy will

not realize its potential. Realizing reasonable education goals is certainly not a sufficient condition for economic prosperity, but it is definitely the necessary foundation.

Those without good quality primary education cannot read and write, and must rely on knowledge that passes orally from one generation to the next. Such traditional knowledge may be of great practical use; it may also be of great historical and cultural value, but children without quality primary education cannot perform jobs requiring literacy and other formally learned knowledge. Education is important not only for reasons of economic development. Mothers who can read and know about hygiene make better use of health clinics, and are more likely to have healthy children. And debating ideas in a free press, accessible to a literate population, improves the quality of government.

Over the last decade, Bangladesh has made impressive gains in the *quantity* of education available. As of 2004, there were 18 million children enrolled in 110,000 primary schools, an enrolment increase of one third since 1991. Table 1 is reproduced from a recent report from the Campaign for Popular Education (CAMPE 2005). There is now parity in initial enrolment: about four of five boys and girls enrol in the first year. And there is near parity in the percent of boys and girls who complete the primary cycle.

However, many doubt whether Bangladesh has made gains in the quality of education

available. Only three in four enrolled children are completing the primary cycle. On a typical day, only three of five enrolled children are in attendance. There are many reasons for non-attendance and dropping out. Some are on the education “supply side” – such as weak teaching techniques, lack of teaching material, and overcrowded classrooms. Others are on the “demand side” – such as parents’ requiring their children to perform domestic duties during school hours.

CAMPE is not the only agency concerned with school quality. While acknowledging the impressive increase in numbers enrolled,

**Table 1: Key Features of Primary Enrolment, Learning Achievement, and Literacy in Bangladesh**

	Net enrolment rate of children aged 6-10 years (%)	Attendance rate (%)	Primary cycle completion 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 (%)
<b>Sex</b>					
Boys	79.8	60	76.2	16.7	47.6
Girls	79.9	63	73.5	15.3	35.6
<b>Area</b>					
Rural	79.6	57	73.8	15.3	37.2
Urban	81.5	65	78.8	19.1	63.6
<b>Family food status</b>					
Always in deficit	65.4	n/a	n/a	15.4	n/a
Occasional deficit	77.7	n/a	n/a	15.7	n/a
Break-even	82.0	n/a	n/a	16.4	n/a
Surplus	89.0	n/a	n/a	17.7	n/a
<b>Primary school type</b>					
Government	61.1	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
Ibtyee. Madrasa	7.0	88	82.6	n/a	51.4

Source: CAMPE (2005, 6). Note: The statistics are drawn from CAMPE field surveys conducted between 2000 and 2002.

authors of the latest Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper express serious concerns:

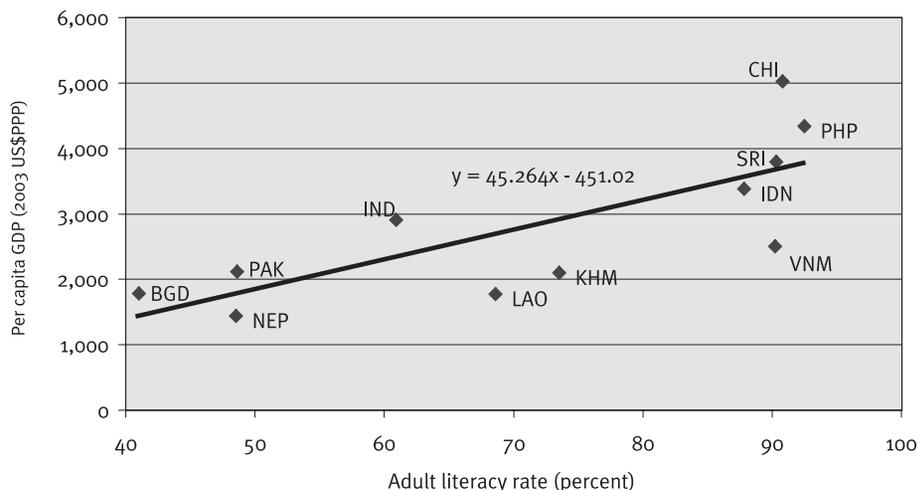
*Deprivation from education itself is a key element of poverty. The number of poor people deprived of education is disproportionately high, and lack of education in turn limits their capacity to overcome income poverty, thus creating a vicious and intergenerational cycle. Empowering people with knowledge and skills is the most vital component of human development for poverty reduction. Education and learning have thus become key elements of poverty alleviation. The education system in Bangladesh is not pro-poor; and the quality and content of education do not effectively serve the goals of human development and poverty reduction. There is a general agreement that the number of institutions and enrol-*

*ments have grown at all levels, but quality of education has deteriorated especially in institutions where the children of the poor families go (GoB 2005, 129).*

## Literacy Statistics

To generate literacy statistics requires choice of an instrument to measure literacy and appropriate sampling statistics. Both are open to debate, and hence caution is required in interpretation. The estimate of overall Bangladesh literacy most readily compared to the rates of other countries is that of the United Nations. The UN's latest estimate is that 41 percent of adult Bangladeshi are literate. This is the lowest rate among 11 low-income Asian countries included in Figure 1 and Table 2. It is lower than estimated literacy for either

**Figure 1: Per Capita GDP for Selected Low-Income Asian Countries, by Adult Literacy Rate**



Source: UNDP (2005).

Note: Countries displayed have per capita GDP below the middle-income threshold of US\$6,000.

India or Pakistan, and less than half that for Sri Lanka.

Economic prosperity requires much more than a good primary education system. Nonetheless, the trend line in Figure 1 is indicative of the link between education levels and economic development. The 11 countries include most of the low-income Asian countries with per capita annual GDP below the middle-income threshold of \$6,000 (measured in purchasing power parity 2003 US dollars). Cumulatively, the 11 countries account for nearly half the world's population. Among them, a ten-percentage point increase in adult literacy is associated with an increase of \$453 in per capita GDP. Admittedly, this association does not prove the link. However, among the five countries with literacy near or above 90 percent, all but Vietnam had per capita GDP above US\$3000 in 2003 – and the statistic for

Vietnam is now about US\$3000 given its rapid economic growth in recent years. By contrast, none of the six countries with literacy below 80 percent enjoyed per capita GDP above US\$3,000 in 2003.

To be functionally literate as adults, most children need to complete a primary education program of five to six years (Brus et al., 2003, 29ff). As measured by CAMPE field tests throughout Bangladesh, students having completed five grades could perform, on average, fewer than two thirds of the tested competencies. After five years of schooling, one third of those tested remained either illiterate or semi-literate.

If we assume that four of five children enrol in primary school, that three of four who enrol complete a five-year cycle, and two of three who complete the cycle are effectively literate, then only two of five among the cur-

**Table 2: Literacy Rate and Per Capita GDP, Selected Asian Countries**

	<b>Adult literacy rate (percent)</b>	<b>Per capita GDP (2003 US\$PPP)</b>
Bangladesh (BGD)	41.1	1770
Cambodia (KHM)	73.6	2078
China (CHI)	90.9	5003
India (IND)	61.0	2892
Indonesia (IDN)	87.9	3361
Laos (LAO)	68.7	1759
Nepal (NEP)	48.6	1420
Pakistan (PAK)	48.7	2097
Philippines (PHP)	92.6	4321
Sri Lanka (SRI)	90.4	3778
Vietnam (VNM)	90.3	2490

Source: UNDP (2005)

rent generation of Bangladeshi children are gaining literacy by the age of primary school completion. The implication of CAMPE's field surveys is that Bangladeshi children are currently achieving literacy rates no higher than did their parents' generation.

## A Tiered School System

The majority of children attend government-run primary schools. But the range of school types in Bangladesh is large (CAMPE 2005, Box 3.1). For our purposes, schools can be grouped into four categories:

1. a highly centralised system of government-run Bangla-medium schools;
2. a diverse group of non-government schools, including private fee-charging English-medium schools serving the urban elite;
3. religious schools<sup>2</sup> (Ibtyee madrasas) that combine general and Islamic religious education; and
4. NGO-facilitated nonformal schools, many of which follow a one-room, one-teacher model and serve hard-to-reach children from very poor families. The most important supporter of such schools is BRAC.

## Teacher Training

Not surprisingly, some advisers recommend improved teacher training as the optimum strategy to improve education quality (ADB, 1997). There are vast differences in teacher qualifications, training, and experience across the country's primary schools. In a 2004 survey, CAMPE found that approximately one quarter of all teachers held a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) or less; another quarter held a Higher School Certificate (HSC), and slightly less than one half had received some form of university degree. In terms of teacher training, five sixths of teachers in government schools held a certificate in education (C-in-E), whereas less than one quarter of those teaching in other school categories did. The most serious problems of teacher training occurred in the madrasas where only one teacher in 16 had formal training (see Table 3).

Formal teacher training does not assure good teaching. Some training institutions are very weak and are, in effect, "selling" certification without adequate content. In general, teachers in government schools are not encouraged to use active-learning techniques, such as visual aids, singing,

**Table 3: Teacher Training by School Category**

School type	Number of teachers	Type of training (%)			
		C-in-E	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: CAMPE (2005, 51). Note: The statistics are drawn from a CAMPE field survey conducted in 2004.

dancing, and teacher-student dialogue; rote-learning practices persist despite their being repeatedly criticized (ABD, 1997; Kumar Das, 2005, interviews). In many cases, limited teacher-student contact time contributes to low scholastic achievement (ADB, 1997). To compensate, two of five parents pay for their children to receive out-of-school tutoring, often provided by their children's teachers (CAMPE 2005,71).

Training for teachers in other types of schools may also be weak, but in some cases is more effective. For example, BRAC's nonformal school teachers receive a short sequence of practical pre-service training, constant hands-on supervision, and refresher courses. Their training focuses on teaching practices rather than theory. Table 4 summarizes some key differences between teacher training in government and in BRAC schools.

The differences noted in Table 4 may help explain why BRAC students are experiencing lower dropout rates and why their primary

school graduates are earning a growing share of high school entrance scholarships (White, 2005, interview; Haiplik, 2003; Kumar Das, 2005, interview).

## Conclusion

The large number of primary-aged children not enrolled (approximately 2.5 million in 2001) is disturbing; so too the large number of children dropping out of school prior to completion of all five primary-level grades, and the low achievement among those who do complete the full primary cycle of schooling. On average, children who complete grade five usually do so at a grade three achievement level (CAMPE, 2001). As well, attendance rates are alarmingly low.

Before Bangladesh's parents can confidently provide their children a good educational start in life, clearly, there is much to be done.

**Table 4: Comparison of BRAC and GoB Teacher-Training Expectations**

BRAC-trained teachers	Government-trained teachers
Teachers must have SSC or HSC formal education	Teachers should have an advanced (BA) degree, post secondary level formal education
Teachers must visit/observe a BRAC school in their area for at least 3 days before attending BRAC basic training course	Teachers are expected to begin teaching as soon as they are hired without any pre-service training
Teachers attend an intensive 12 day pre-service training course	Within the first year of service, teachers should have attended a one year C-in-E in-service course at a Primary Teacher Training Institute
Teachers have constant supervision (minimum 2 days out of 6 day weekly visits from BRAC officials)	Teachers have limited and sporadic supervision
Participatory refresher course (monthly, needs-based training)	Refresher courses offered after every 3 months (not necessarily needs-based)
Training is based heavily on practice, and is light on theory	Training is based heavily on theory, and is light on practice
Source: Haiplik (2003)	

**UTTARA, SECTOR 10:** Will either of these girls enrol and complete secondary school?

**UTTARA, SECTOR 6:** Girls en route to their secondary school. Unfortunately, among girls who do reach secondary school, too many drop out before completion.



## II. Surveying Parents

IN SUMMER 2005, A TOTAL OF 349 RESIDENTS OF UTTARA, A SUBURB IN NORTHERN Dhaka, participated in a survey to assess attitudes on issues of school quality. Due to oversampling of the better-educated, the survey cannot unfortunately be considered a random sample of parents (guardians) in Uttara.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Uttara is a relatively prosperous far-from-typical community. Nonetheless, the survey affords interesting, if tentative, insights to the problem of school quality. Table 5 summarizes the sample in terms of parental school choice and various parental characteristics (gender, education level, employment, economic status, and age).

### Economic Status

The economic status of respondents was based on questions regarding weekly expenditure on essential household items (such as food and clothing) and how many people live in the respondent's household (excluding domestic employees).<sup>4</sup> The median value among survey respondents was approximately Tk.1100.

Nonformal schools (such as those organized by BRAC) are well known as a free schooling option for poor and hard-to-reach families. Hence, it is not surprising that nearly two thirds of parents making this school choice have below-median economic status, as

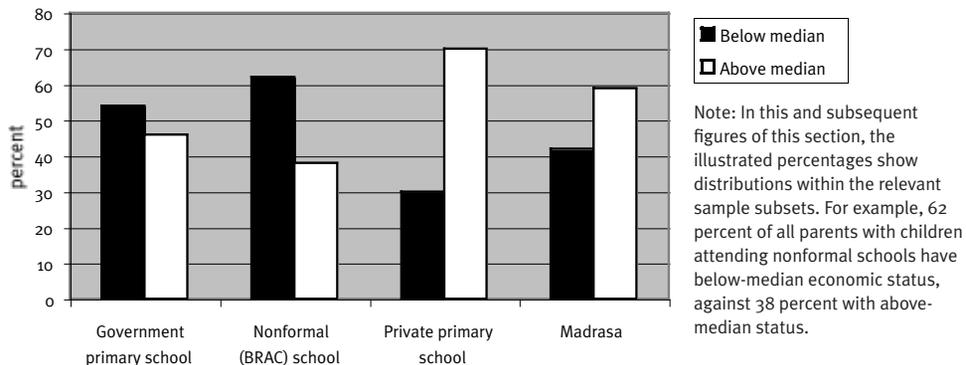
defined (see Figure 2).<sup>5</sup> The finding that a sizeable minority have above-median economic status is consistent with that of others: the relatively high quality of BRAC schools attracts many parents beyond the targeted groups. Some of the parents entrusting their children to BRAC schools could presumably afford to send their children to private schools, but find this option superior. According to one study, about half of all children enrolled in BRAC schools do not belong within the target group of poor and disadvantaged children, dropouts, and girls (Sunkotomarn 2003).

Relatively few parents claim to withdraw children from school in order that the children earn income. In the case of those sending their

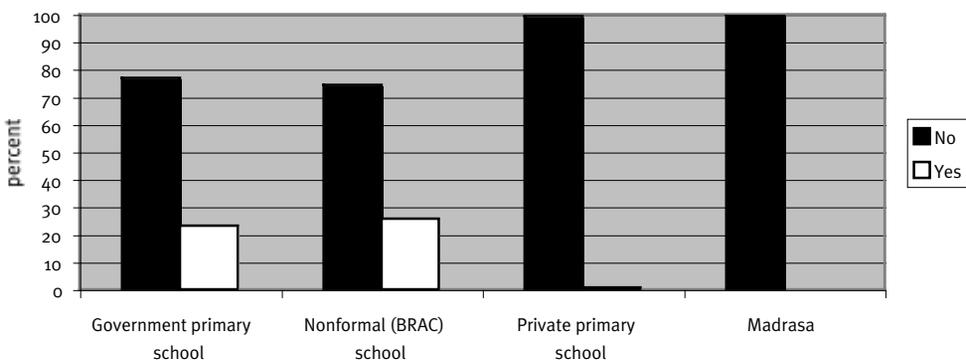
**Table 5: Characteristics of the Study Sample**

	Totals	Parents/guardians whose children attend ...				Parents who do not send children to school
		Government primary school	Nonformal (e.g., BRAC) school	Private primary school	Madrassa	
Count (in parentheses, percent of parents within each school category, except as indicated)						
Respondents	349 (100)	123 (35)	39 (11)	126 (36)	17 (5)	44 (13)
Parent's Gender						
Female	150 (43)	52 (42)	16 (41)	63 (50)	2 (12)	17 (39)
Male	199 (57)	71 (58)	23 (59)	63 (50)	15 (88)	27 (61)
Parent/guardian age						
18-24	14 (4)	6 (5)	1 (3)	2 (2)	0 (0)	5 (11)
25-34	102 (29)	34 (28)	10 (26)	42 (33)	4 (24)	12 (27)
35-44	155 (44)	51 (42)	17 (44)	65 (52)	4 (24)	18 (41)
45-54	60 (17)	23 (19)	8 (21)	13 (10)	9 (53)	7 (16)
55-64	18 (5)	9 (7)	3 (8)	4 (3)	0 (0)	2 (5)
Parent's highest education level <sup>a</sup>						
Primary	63 (18)	26 (21)	6 (15)	22 (18)	1 (6)	8 (18)
Secondary	92 (25)	28 (23)	6 (15)	43 (34)	10 (59)	5 (11)
College/university degree	151 (43)	55 (45)	24 (61)	55 (43)	6 (36)	11 (25)
Trades certificate	6 (2)	1 (0)	0 (0)	2 (2)	0 (0)	3 (7)
Not available	37 (11)	13 (11)	3 (8)	4 (3)	0 (0)	17 (39)
Parent's employment						
Full-time	68 (20)	20 (16)	7 (18)	32 (25)	5 (29.4)	4 (9)
Unemployed <sup>b</sup>	86 (25)	24 (20)	13 (33)	39 (31)	1 (6)	9 (21)
Self-employed	89 (25)	38 (31)	8 (21)	28 (22)	6 (35.3)	9 (21)
Part-time	62 (17.8)	20 (16)	6 (15)	23 (18)	5 (29.4)	8 (18)
Seasonal	27 (8)	18 (15)	3 (8)	3 (2)	0 (0)	3 (7)
Rickshaw puller	15 (4)	3 (0.2)	2 (5)	0 (0)	0 (0)	10 (23)
Other	2 (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	1 (0)	0 (0)	1 (2)
Distribution by economic status (intervals defined relative to sample median)						
Below 50%	88 (25.2)	33 (27)	14 (36)	11 (9)	3 (18)	27 (61)
50% - 100%	82 (23.5)	33 (27)	10 (26)	27 (21)	4 (24)	8 (18)
100% - 150%	90 (25.8)	32 (26)	7 (18)	40 (32)	6 (35)	5 (11)
Over 150%	89 (25.5)	25 (20)	8 (21)	48 (38)	4 (24)	4 (9)
Notes: a. The education levels of survey respondents are much higher than the general education level of the total population of Bangladesh. This is due to two reasons: over-sampling of highly educated individuals who disproportionately attend private schools, and the prosperous status of the case study area. b. Figures include stay-at-home mothers who were conservatively classified as unemployed.						

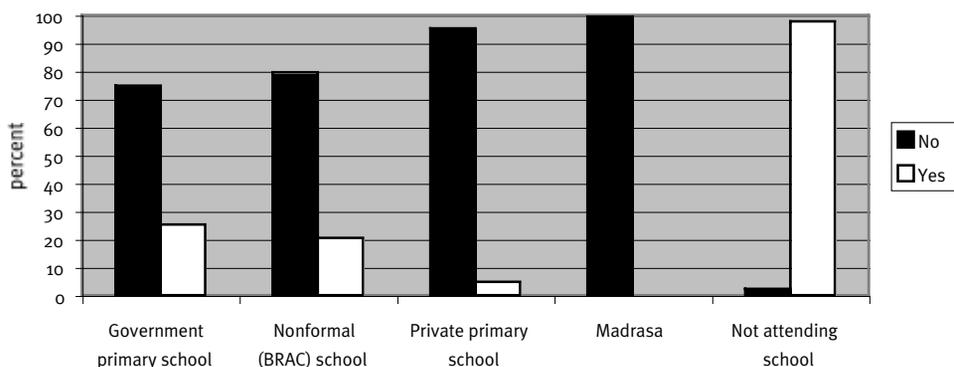
**Figure 2: School Choice, by Economic Status of Parents**



**Figure 3: Does your child need to miss school in order to work?**



**Figure 4: Do financial difficulties cause your child to miss school?**



**SCHOOL MATERIALS:** Too many schools lack adequate books, supplies and teaching aids.



children to either a private school or madrasa, virtually none do. However, about one quarter of parents sending their children to either a government or nonformal school do withdraw children for this reason (see Figure 3). Similar results emerge from the question as to whether family financial difficulties lead parents to withdraw children from school (see Figure 4). Among parents not sending their children to school, nearly all cite this as a reason.

In the case of government schools, the imposition of various fees likely adds to absenteeism. In the case of BRAC schools, results concur with elite interview data (White, 2005, interview).

## Girls' Education

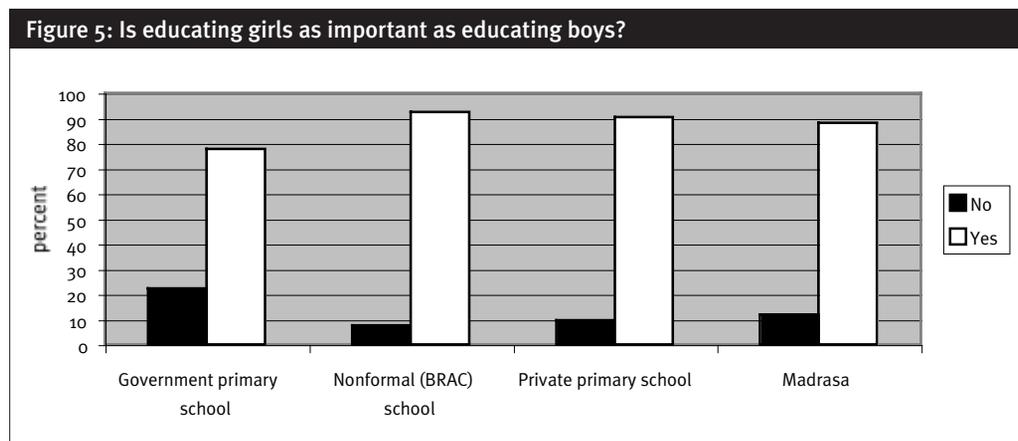
An encouraging survey result is the high percentage of parents who believe equally in educating girls and boys (see Figure 5). Note that parents who choose madrasas, who are presumably more devout than average, are somewhat more likely to believe in educating girls than parents who choose government schools.

Over the last decade, various incentives have been employed to encourage parents to send girls to school, both at the primary and secondary level. If the results from this survey are generally valid, the question needs to be posed: could money spent on such incentives be better spent elsewhere? We return to this question in the final section on policy considerations.

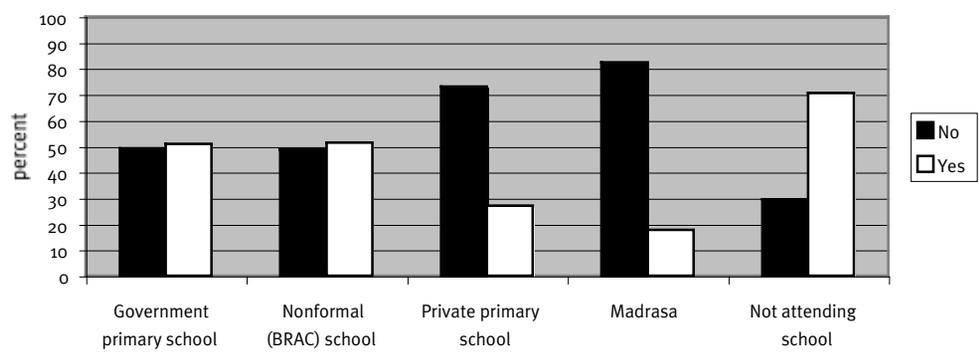
## Teacher Quality and School Management

Teacher quality is a concern among only a minority of parents sending their children to a private school or madrasa. However, it is a concern among roughly half the parents using government and nonformal schools (see Figure 6). There is no evidence here that BRAC school teachers are superior to that of government teachers. Finally, over two thirds of parents who currently do not send their children to school responded that better teachers would influence them to enrol their child in school.

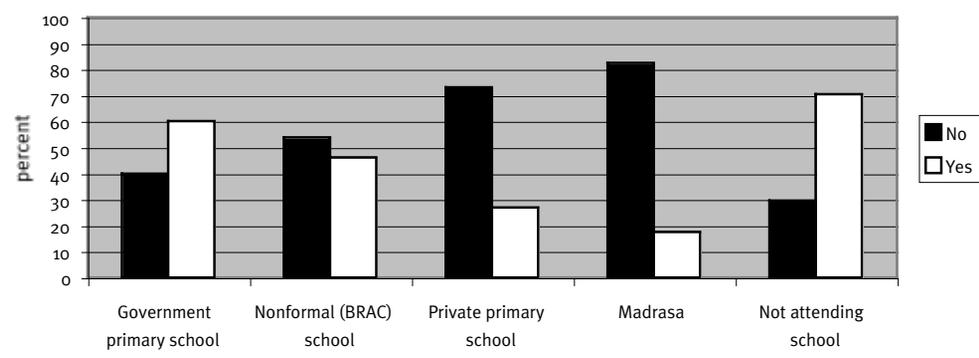
When asked a more specific question, is teacher quality a problem in the school their



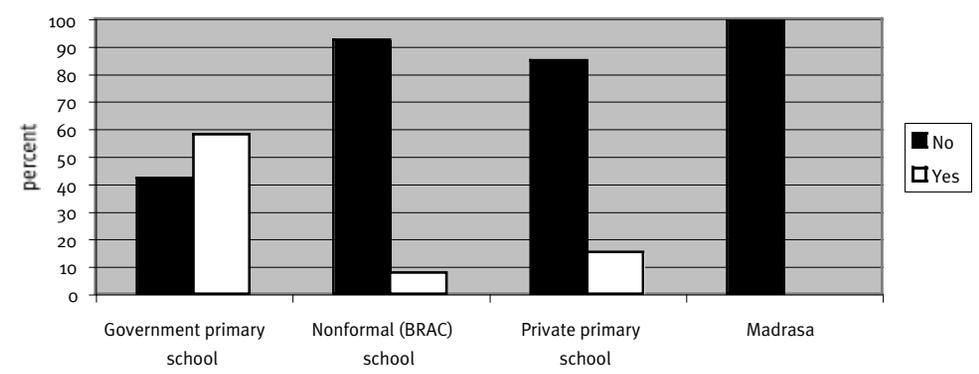
**Figure 6: Would better teachers encourage you to send your children to school more often?**



**Figure 7: Is teacher quality a problem in your child's school?**



**Figure 8: Do poor school management and administration cause problems in your child's school?**





**MADRASA STUDENTS:** Ibtayee madrasas combine general and Islamic religious education. Few madrasas accept girls as students.

children attend, the percentage saying yes declines as we move across school types (see Figure 7). Three parents in five say yes if their child is in a government school; slightly less than half with children in nonformal schools say yes. Among parents with children in private schools, about a quarter believe that poor teacher quality is a problem in their children's school; among parents sending their children to madrasas, only one in six do. Finally, one can imply from answers to this question that, among those who do not send their children to school, seven in ten consider poor teacher quality a factor in their decision.

Among parents sending their children to three of the four school types, management and administration is problematic for only small minorities. However, among parents

using a government primary school, well over half perceive problems (see Figure 8).

Associated with schools in Bangladesh are school management committees and in some, schools parent-teacher associations. Various composed of teachers, parents, guardians, and community leaders, their purpose is to involve parents and the community in local school activities. Survey results indicate that of ten respondents sending children to government primary schools, only three are aware of the roles and responsibilities of PTAs and SMCs; another three are unaware of either group, and four are unsure. These figures contrast with those for private primary schools, where of 10 respondents over six are aware of the roles and responsibilities of the PTAs and SMCs, less than one is unaware, and three are unsure.

# III. Policy Implications and Conclusion

IT WOULD BE FOOLISH TO DRAW POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM ANY ONE SURVEY such as that conducted in Uttara. However, the survey does illustrate themes emerging among those who have studied the country's education problems in detail.

The government of Bangladesh has committed itself to realizing the goal of universal primary education by 2015. This is among the Millennium Development Goals established by the United Nations. If present trends continue, however, there is general consensus that Bangladesh will *not* meet the target. To have a reasonable probability of success, concludes CAMPE (2005, xxxvii), “[t]here 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.”

While resolving them is painfully difficult, the key problems within the primary education system can be readily identified:

- Overcentralised control of schools from Dhaka (for example, excessive rigidity of school curriculum);
- Weak local school management and inadequate role for parent participation, exacerbated by political interference;
- Poor quality of teaching;
- Inadequate school infrastructure and learning material;
- Severe poverty among some families, which serves as a barrier to accessing education.

Below is a brief discussion of several broad strategies for overcoming these problems.



**UTTARA, SECTION 10, OUTSIDE IUBAT CAMPUS:** Better primary schools will mean that more of these children will complete primary and secondary education, and have the chance to attend university.

### **Strategy 1: Replace Government School Stipend with Selective School Voucher Programme**

The current government stipend programme is intended to increase enrolment among children of poor, landless families. However, the programme has been subject to abuse. A recent survey found very little targeting of the stipend to the poor. Among those below the median value for the economic index employed in the survey, slightly over one-third received the stipend; among those above the median, slightly over one quarter did (CAMPE 2005, 78). Since gender parity has been achieved, and primary enrolment rates have been continuously improving, the current stipend

programme should be rethought.

Instead of using stipend funds to target the poor, something the CAMPE survey suggests is not occurring; the government might define the program as a voucher system available to most or all parents. The objective of voucher programmes is to “provide families with maximum choice within a decentralised and competitive system of public and private schools” (West 1996, para. 14). Rather than transfer revenue to schools directly, the government or donor provides vouchers to parents who spend them to pay tuition at the school of their choice. The school redeems the vouchers from the government or donor.

Currently, one third of families are receiving about Tk.1000 annually per child attending school. The parents receive the stipend whether their child attends a government or some other registered school. Hence, the stipend has already become a modest voucher system. Were schools to receive all revenues via tuition or vouchers, it would require a massive expansion of the stipend allocation. The majority of the government and donor primary school budgets would be required to finance such a scheme. That in turn would impose complex implementation problems. Would schools try to attract students based on superficial advertising campaigns or bribes to parents? In addition to potential abuse by schools, a voucher scheme would face acute opposition from interest groups, such as teachers unions, fearful that the system disrupt present funding allocations.

Despite obvious and severe implementation problems, vouchers are of interest. In a recent survey of NGOs in Bangladesh, the World Bank (2006, x-xi) recommends voucher pilot projects in communities where both government and nonformal schools co-exist. Vouchers have the potential to force schools to be accountable to the consumers of primary education, namely parents and their children, and they may promote competition among schools based on quality (UNICEF 2006).

**Strategy 2: Transfer meaningful power over education policy from central authority and Members of Parliament to elected regional or local councils**

In many countries, local or regional communities elect “school boards” with the power to raise taxes and exercise considerable authority

over school management and policy. Such boards are subject to central review, but play a valuable role in enabling parental influence.

In an analysis of South Indian schools, Banagiri (1999) argues that “central control saps local initiative, restrains interaction between school and community, excludes teachers from curriculum development and text book preparation, and prevents teachers from developing a broader role in and accountability to the community” (para. 14). Further, a bureaucratic culture often disregards teachers’ commitment and promotes a theory-based, rather than skills-building curriculum (Gottlieb, 1999).

Recently, Bangladesh has experienced delegated decentralization in the area of primary education inasmuch as many administrative decisions and actions are now made at the upazila level. Yet the regional officials making decisions are appointed, directly or indirectly, from Dhaka. There is no effective means whereby regional communities (at the upazila level) or local communities (at the union level) can significantly influence school management and policy. Elected upazila councils do not exist, and elected local union parishads exercise no authority over local schools.

School management committees and parent teacher associations are intended to afford some community influence on local schools. But these are appointed bodies and there are consistent reports to the effect that local Members of Parliament interfere actively in appointments in pursuit of partisan patronage.

In discussing education administration, the latest Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper concludes, “It is necessary to shift operational decisions to Division, Zila and Upazila levels” (GoB 2005,133). Creation of effective regional and local councils has long been debated in

Bangladesh – with little result. Bangladesh remains one of the most administratively centralized of populous countries.

Here is an ideal case for pilot projects: create elected councils within one or more districts and evaluate the results. Unfortunately, given the entrenched power of interest groups based in Dhaka, no immediate change here is likely. A recent study of local government in Bangladesh came to the following sober conclusion:

*If decentralization is to make any headway against a jealous central bureaucracy and rapacious MPs intent on diverting its meager resources to themselves, local governments – urban and rural – need “a friend at court” in the form of advocacy organizations that can argue their case at the macro-level with the GOB, the media, the think tanks and the donor community. This is not a short-term initiative, however, and will have to be carried over into a follow-on activity if it is to gain enough traction to reach self-sustainability (Blair et al. 2004, viii-ix).*

### **Strategy 3: Reform teacher training to stress “active” teaching techniques**

Most primary schools in Bangladesh rely on a one-way transmission of knowledge from teacher to student. Although the National School Board has recommended that teachers learn at the training stage how to employ an

“active” environment of student participation, and evidence shows that this will improve outcomes, most teachers in most schools continue to use rote learning techniques. There are few examples of dynamic classroom activities – student physical exercise, singing, drawing and dancing – at the primary level.

Many education administrators believe that only professional, full-time teachers, holding both a Bachelor’s Degree as well as a C-in-E should be hired as primary school teachers. On the other hand, survey results show that teachers trained in “active” techniques (such as those in BRAC and other nonformal schools) are as successful as – if not more successful than – the more formally trained teachers in government schools.

Adapting the more “active” techniques used by nonformal schools to the government milieu will require cooperation at all levels, including coordination between NGOs, donors, and GoB education officials.

## **Conclusion**

Education is a key factor in the development of Bangladesh. Success has been realised in improving the *quantity* of and access to primary education, yet the policy question remains, how best to improve the *quality* of primary education. There are no simple answers, but establishing a school system that is accountable and schools that focus on learning outcomes is imperative.

# Appendix A: Survey, English Version

## PARENT/GUARDIAN OF PRIMARY AGED STUDENT SURVEY (5 MINUTES)

This survey is being conducted by a visiting professor at the IUBAT—*International University of Business Agriculture and Technology*. Your participation in this survey is voluntary and you may stop at any time. Your responses will be confidential and will not be distributed to others. If you have any questions or complaints, you may contact Sandra Nikolic or Dr. Allimulah Miyan at: 891 1209

PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AS THEY APPLY TO YOUR CHILD

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <p>1) What is your child's age group?<br/><input type="checkbox"/> under 3      <input type="checkbox"/> 8-10 years<br/><input type="checkbox"/> 3-5 years      <input type="checkbox"/> 11-13 years<br/><input type="checkbox"/> 5-7 years      other _____</p> <p>2) Is your child employed?<br/><input type="checkbox"/> yes      <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>3) Does your child attend primary school?<br/><input type="checkbox"/> yes      <input type="checkbox"/> no</p> <p>4) What type of school does your child attend?<br/><input type="checkbox"/> government formal primary school<br/><input type="checkbox"/> BRAC run school<br/><input type="checkbox"/> Private Primary School<br/><input type="checkbox"/> madrasa<br/>other _____</p> | <p>5a) Do you pay your child's teacher for extra lessons (outside of the classroom) or pay for a private tutor?<br/><input type="checkbox"/> extra lessons from teacher<br/><input type="checkbox"/> tutor      <input type="checkbox"/> neither</p> <p>5b) If yes, how much is the teacher/tutor paid per month? _____ taka.</p> <p>6) When/if your child misses school, what is the primary reason? (check all that apply)<br/><input type="checkbox"/> child needs to help at home with household chores or other personal/family matters<br/><input type="checkbox"/> child needs to help with seasonal farm work<br/><input type="checkbox"/> child needs to help earn money for family (out of home paid work)<br/><input type="checkbox"/> poor health of child</p> |
|---|--|

- poor health of parent
- family financial difficulties
- reside too far from the nearest primary school (difficult to travel to school)
- child has a mental or physical disability
- other \_\_\_\_\_

7a) Have any of your children ever stopped going to school completely? (dropped out of school)

- yes                       no

7b) If yes, why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

8) What factors would influence you to send your child to school (more often)?

- free textbooks/school supplies
- more teachers
- better teachers
- government stipend (food or money given by the government for enrolment of your child)
- None. My child always attends school
- other \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

9) Would you like your child to complete:

- primary school
- secondary education
- college/university education
- other \_\_\_\_\_

10) Is it important to you that girls have as much schooling as boys?

- yes                       no

11) If you receive a government stipend (money or food) for enrolling your child in school, how much do you receive monthly?

- <100 taka
- 100-150 taka
- 151-200 taka
- 201-250 taka
- less \_\_\_\_\_ taka
- more \_\_\_\_\_ taka

12) If your child is enrolled in primary schooling, are you aware of the roles and policies of the *School Management Committee* and the *Parent Teacher Associations*?

- yes                       no
- I don't know

13) How would you rate the physical structure of your child's school? (cleanliness, safety, hygiene, access to sunlight, air circulation)

- excellent
- good
- fair
- poor
- I don't know

14) Which of the following is a problem in your child's school?

- lack of space
- too few desks for children
- not enough books
- lack of cleanliness
- too many students
- class sizes too big
- poor teacher quality
- poor management/administration
- I don't know
- none

15) Is there opportunity in your child's school for you to have a relationship with the teachers?

- yes                       no
- I don't know

16a) Does your child's school facilitate and encourage parent-teacher interaction?

- yes                       no
- I don't know

16b) If yes, how?

- parent-teacher interviews
- involvement in curriculum design
- volunteering
- other \_\_\_\_\_

## DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

17) Are you:  male       female

18) Age:

- 18-24                       45-54
- 25-34                       55-64
- 35-44                       65+

19) What is your current employment status?

- full-time employed
- part-time employed
- unemployed
- seasonal worker
- self-employed
- other \_\_\_\_\_

20) What is the highest level of education you have obtained?

- secondary                       trades certificate
- college degree                       PhD degree
- masters degree

21) On average, how much does your family spend on household food per week?

\_\_\_\_\_ taka.

22) How many people live in your household? \_\_\_\_\_

# Appendix B: Dhaka City Map

SHOWING UTTARA SUBURB



# Notes

1. The education levels of survey respondents are much higher than the general education level of the total population of Bangladesh. This is due to two reasons: over-sampling of highly educated individuals who disproportionately attend private schools, and the prosperous status of the case study area.

2. There exist several categories of madrasas. The category described here is affiliated with the Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board (BMEB). These madrasas combine general and Islamic religious education.

Their students can advance through the education system. They sit BMEB-conducted Dhakil (SSC equivalent) and Alim (HSC equivalent) examinations. They also qualify to enter tertiary educational institutions. The other category of madrasa known as Quami, provide only Islamic religious education. There exists a private Quami Education Board, run by orthodox religious leaders. They are seeking recognition by the government for their madrasas, but do not currently have

it. It is their view that introducing general education will be at the cost of religious education and is not desirable.

3. Student researchers from the IUBAT—International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, a non-government university located in Uttara, conducted street interviews in the sample area. Surveys and responses were originally composed and transcribed in Bangla, and later translated into English for research purposes. See Appendix A for the translated survey questionnaire. Only respondents who resided within the selected case study area were asked to complete the survey.
4. The per capita status statistics reported entailed division of reported expenditure by the square root of the family size. This is an approximate means of allowing for scale economies in satisfying family essentials.
5. The majority of parents with children in a nonformal school claim to hold a college or university degree (see Table 5). This presumably reflects oversampling among the better educated.

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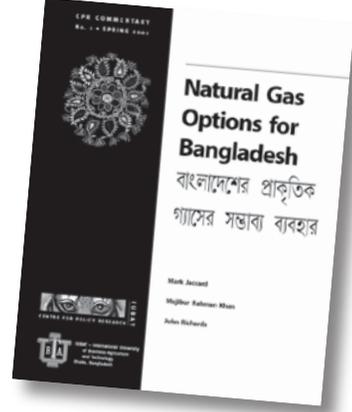
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# Abbreviations/Glossary

ADB	Asian Development Bank
BMEB	Bangladesh Madrasa Education Board
BRAC	Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (a major NGO in Bangladesh)
CAMPE	Campaign for Popular Education
C-in-E	Certificate in Education
CPR	Centre for Policy Research
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
HSC	Higher Secondary Certificate
IUBAT	International University of Business Agriculture and Technology
Madrasa	Islamic School
NGO	Nongovernmental organisation
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PSQL	Primary School Quality Level
SMC	School Management Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
Upazila	Geographical and political region

# Natural Gas Options for Bangladesh

বাংলাদেশের প্রাকৃতিক  
গ্যাসের সম্ভাব্য ব্যবহার



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The very low level of available commercial energy is a serious constraint on economic development in Bangladesh. Fortunately, there is one bright prospect – sizeable discoveries of natural gas.

This report explores three options for how Bangladesh might use its natural gas endowment: exporting gas to provide public revenues that could be directed to many other development needs; expanding the many possible end-uses for gas in domestic industry, agriculture and households; or concentrating natural gas use on accelerated electrification. After assessing the three options, the authors conclude that rapid electrification should have the highest priority.

In addition, the report discusses institutional reforms to foster private investment and to improve the transparency, efficiency and consistency of government corporations, ministries and agencies. There is an important case to be made for integrated resource planning that includes environmental and social objectives.

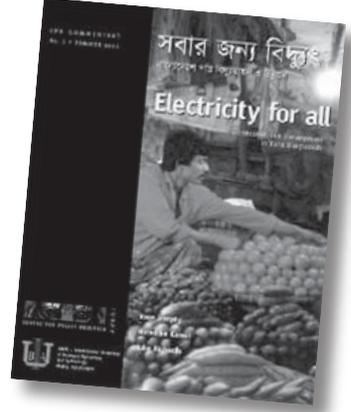
বাণিজ্যিক খাতে জ্বালানি শক্তির অতিস্বল্পতা বাংলাদেশের অর্থনৈতিক উন্নয়নের পথে একটি গুরুত্বপূর্ণ অন্তরায়। সৌভাগ্যক্রমে প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাসের বড় ধরনের উৎস আবিষ্কৃত হওয়ায় উন্নয়ন ক্ষেত্রে একটি উজ্জ্বল সম্ভাবনা সৃষ্টি হয়েছে। এই প্রতিবেদনে বাংলাদেশের প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাস সম্পদ ব্যবহারের তিনটি সম্ভাবনা নিয়ে পর্যালোচনা করা হয়েছে : গ্যাস বিদেশে রপ্তানী করে সরকারী রাজস্বখাতে অর্থ আয় যা উন্নয়নের চাহিদা মিটাতে পারবে, দেশীয় শিল্প, কৃষি, গৃহস্থলি ও অন্যান্য সম্ভাব্য কাজে গ্যাসের ব্যবহার সম্প্রসারণ; বা দ্রুত বিদ্যুতায়নের ক্ষেত্রে প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাসের ব্যবহার কেন্দ্রীভূত করা। এই তিনটি সম্ভাবনা যাচাই করে প্রতিবেদকগণ এই সিদ্ধান্তে পৌঁছেন যে দ্রুত বিদ্যুতায়নই সর্বোচ্চ প্রাধান্য পাওয়া উচিত।

অধিকন্তু এই প্রতিবেদনে কিছু কিছু প্রাতিষ্ঠানিক সংস্কারের বিষয় আলোচনা করা হয়েছে যা বেসরকারী বিনিয়োগকে উৎসাহিত করবে এবং সরকারী প্রতিষ্ঠান, মন্ত্রণালয়সমূহ এবং এজেন্সিসমূহের কাজের স্বচ্ছতা, দক্ষতা এবং নির্ভরযোগ্যতা বৃদ্ধি করবে। পরিবেশগত এবং সামাজিক লক্ষ্যগুলি অন্তর্ভুক্ত করে সমন্বিত সম্পদ পরিকল্পনার গুরুত্বের বিষয়ও এই প্রতিবেদনে সুপারিশ করা হয়েছে।

# Electricity for All

## বাংলাদেশের জ্বালানি নীতি

by **ROSE MURPHY**, Research Associate with the Energy and Materials Research Group at the School of Resource and Environmental Management at Simon Fraser University, **NURUDDIN KAMAL**, Senior Research Fellow for the Centre for Policy Research at IUBAT, and **JOHN RICHARDS**, Professor, Master of Public Policy Program at Simon Fraser University



বাংলাদেশে পাঁচজনের মধ্যে মাত্র একজন বিদ্যুতের সুবিধা পান। গ্রাম বাংলায় বিদ্যুতের সুবিধা পান প্রতি সাতজনে একজন।

বাংলাদেশে বিদ্যুৎ খাতে এই সমস্যাগুলি কেন অব্যাহত থাকছে? এই সমস্যাগুলি সমাধানের জন্য কি ব্যবস্থা নেয়া যায়? এই রিপোর্টে দ্রুত বিদ্যুতায়ন, বিশেষ করে পল্লি বিদ্যুতায়নের ক্ষেত্রে বাধা সমূহের মূল্যায়ন করা হয়েছে। একই সাথে এই বাধাসমূহ দূর করার জন্য কিছু বাস্তবধর্মী সুপারিশ রাখা হয়েছে।

বর্তমানে পল্লি বিদ্যুতায়ন বোর্ড (আর ই বি) এবং তার সমবায় নেটওয়ার্ক পল্লি বিদ্যুৎ সমিতিগুলির মাধ্যমে পল্লি এলাকায় দেশে ব্যবহৃত বিদ্যুতের এক চতুর্থাংশ বিতরণ করে। এই আকর্ষণীয় সাফল্য সত্ত্বেও, বাংলাদেশে বিদ্যুতায়নের ক্ষেত্রে আরো অনেক কিছু করার বাকি আছে।

গবেষকগণ সুপারিশ করেন যে আর ই বি'কে স্বাধীনভাবে বিদ্যুৎ উৎপাদনের প্রতি অগ্রাধিকার ভিত্তিতে অধিক গুরুত্ব দিতে হবে, বিশেষ করে জাতীয় সঞ্চালন গ্রীড বহির্ভূত এলাকাসমূহে। এই সম্প্রসারণের জন্য প্রয়োজন হবে অধিকতর মাত্রায় ব্যক্তিগত বিনিয়োগে এবং আর ই বি গ্রাহকদের ক্ষেত্রে বর্ধিত হারে গড় ট্যারিফ।

অধিকতর হারে নতুন বিনিয়োগ আকর্ষণ এবং ট্যারিফসমূহের সংস্কার কঠিন কাজ, তবে বিদ্যুৎ ব্যবস্থার ব্যাপক সম্প্রসারণের লক্ষ্যে গুরুত্বের সাথে এই প্রয়োজনীয় সংস্কারসমূহ বাস্তবায়ন যুক্তিসঙ্গত।

Only one in five Bangladeshis has access to power; among those in rural areas the ratio is about one in seven. What can be done to improve access? This report assesses the barriers to accelerated electrification – rural electrification in particular – and offers practical recommendations.

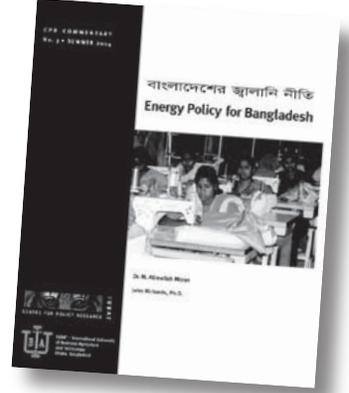
The Rural Electrification Board (REB) and its network of cooperatives – Palli Bidyut Samitees – now distribute nearly a quarter of electricity consumed in the country. Despite this impressive accomplishment, they need to do more.

The authors recommend that the REB place a high priority on power generation independent of the national transmission grid. This expansion will require private investment and higher average tariffs for REB customers. Securing major new investment and revising tariffs will not be easy, but the goal of increased electrification is sufficiently important to justify the required reforms.

# Energy Policy for Bangladesh

## বাংলাদেশের জ্বালানি নীতি

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বাংলাদেশের ভবিষ্যৎ সমৃদ্ধির জন্য পর্যাপ্ত পরিমাণ বাণিজ্যিক জ্বালানি সরবরাহের গুরুত্ব সম্বন্ধে অতিরঞ্জনের কোন অবকাশ নেই। বাংলাদেশ সরকার ২০০৪ সালের মে মাসে একটি খসড়া জাতীয় জ্বালানি নীতি ঘোষণা করে এবং এর উপর জনসাধারণের অভিমত আহ্বান করে। সরকারের এই প্রতিবেদনে বর্তমান নীতির গুরুতর সমস্যার বিষয় এবং নূতন নীতি প্রণয়ন যে অতীব বিতর্কপূর্ণ তা স্বীকার করা হয়।

সেন্টার ফর পলিসি রিচার্সের এই তৃতীয় প্রতিবেদনটির মাধ্যমে খসড়া জাতীয় জ্বালানি নীতির উপর মন্তব্য এবং সুপারিশ করা হয়েছে। ড. এম আলিমউল্যা মিয়ান, উপাচার্য ও প্রতিষ্ঠাতা, আই ইউ বি এ টি - ইন্টারন্যাশনাল ইউনিভার্সিটি অব বিজনেস এগ্রিকালচার এন্ড টেকনোলজি এবং ড. জন রিচার্ডস, অধ্যাপক, সাইমন ফ্লেজার ইউনিভার্সিটি, কানাডা এবং আই ইউ বি এ টি'র ভিজিটিং অধ্যাপক এই প্রতিবেদনটি প্রণয়ন করেছেন। তাঁদের সুপারিশ মালার মধ্যে প্রাকৃতিক গ্যাসের রপ্তানি থেকে শুরু করে জৈব জ্বালানি শক্তি ব্যবহারের উন্নতি সাধনসহ গুরুত্বপূর্ণ বিষয় সমূহ অন্তর্ভুক্ত হয়েছে।

It is hard to exaggerate the importance of adequate supplies of commercial energy for the future development of Bangladesh. In May 2004, the Government of Bangladesh released a draft National Energy Policy, and invited public commentary. The government report acknowledges the serious shortcomings of present policy and the dilemmas in designing new policy.

In this third report of the Centre for Policy Research, Dr. Alimullah Miyan, Vice-Chancellor and Founder of IUBAT – International University of Business Agriculture and Technology, and Dr. John Richards, Professor at Simon Fraser University in Canada and Visiting Professor at IUBAT, respond to the draft National Energy Policy and offer a series of recommendations. The recommendations cover major issues from export of natural gas to improvements in the utilisation of biomass fuels.

বিগত এক দশকে শিক্ষার প্রাপ্যতা বিস্তারে বাংলাদেশ প্রশংসনীয় সাফল্য অর্জন করেছে। ২০০৪ ইংরেজি সালে ১৮ মিলিয়ন শিশু, ১,১০,০০০ প্রাথমিক স্কুলে ভর্তি হয়। এতদসত্ত্বেও অনেক পিতামাতা তাঁদের সন্তানদেরকে বেসরকারি স্কুলে ভর্তি করান, যার ব্যয়ভার তাঁদেরকে বহন করতে হয়। আরো অনেকে বেছে নেন বেসরকারি সংস্থা কর্তৃক পরিচালিত স্কুল, যেমন ব্রাক পরিচালিত স্কুল বা মাদ্রাসা। সরকার পরিচালিত স্কুলের চেয়ে বেসরকারি পর্যায়ে পরিচালিত স্কুলের জনপ্রিয়তার মধ্যে আমরা দুটি বিষয়ের দিক নির্দেশনা দেখতে পাই যথা স্কুলের গুণগতমান সম্বন্ধে পিতামাতার উদ্বেগ এবং স্কুলে স্থান সঙ্কুলান সম্পর্কে সচেতনতা।

স্কুলের গুণগতমান সম্পর্কীয় সমস্যা সম্পর্কে পিতামাতার মনোভাব যাচাই করার জন্য, ঢাকা শহরের উত্তরে অবস্থিত উত্তরায় আইইউবিএটি-ইন্টারন্যাশনাল ইউনিভার্সিটি অব বিজনেস এগ্রিকালচার এবং টেকনোলজি'র গবেষণারত ছাত্র-ছাত্রীরা একটি জরিপ পরিচালনা করে। জরিপের ফলাফল এই প্রতিবেদনে উপস্থাপন করা হয়েছে। এই সমীক্ষায় শিক্ষার ফলাফল উন্নত করার লক্ষ্যে কয়েকটি কৌশলের মূল্যায়ন করা হয়েছে।



Over the last decade, Bangladesh has made impressive gains in the *quantity* of education available. As of 2004, there were 18 million children enrolled in 110,000 primary schools. Still, many parents choose to enrol their children in private schools where parents pay, in nonformal schools run by NGOs such as BRAC, and in madrasas. The popularity of school types other than government-run schools suggests that parents have concerns about school quality – as well as the availability of school spaces.

To assess parental attitudes to problems of school quality, student researchers from IUBAT – International University of Business Agriculture and Technology surveyed residents in Uttara, a suburb in northern Dhaka. This study reports their findings. The study also assesses broad strategies for improving education outcomes.