



RED Update

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Education Research Update

Study on out of school children: final report released

The final report on the study on out of school children in tea gardens and the ethnic minority communities in Bangladesh was released in November 2005. This study covered 6,006 households from 136 village/para/tea gardens. It was a CAMPE commissioned study. The findings show that 20.2% of the ethnic minority and 40% of the tea garden children aged 6-15 years were out of school. Gender difference existed among the secondary school-aged children. Strong relationship between school enrolment and socioeconomic status was observed. The non-formal and Christian missionary schools played a significant role in enhancing the school enrolment in the study communities. Children's participation in work (home and outside) was very common. Overall literacy rate of the study population was little lower than the national average, however the females of the study households had much lower literacy rate than their male counterparts. Only 19% of the adult females in the tea gardens were literate. Formal publication of the report is under process.

BRAC school students sat in competency test

Randomly chosen 6,000 students completing full course of primary education from 300 BRAC non-formal schools sat in a competency test during the last three weeks of December 2005. The test was administered by RED as part of continuous assessment of the achievement of competencies by the BRAC school graduates. Special emphasis of this year's study is to explore the factors affecting school-to-school variation in learning

achievement. More data for this study will be collected in January 2006 and the results of the study can be expected during the second quarter of 2006.

Study on supplementary private tutoring initiated

A study exploring the prevalence, spread and consequences of supplementary private tutoring among the school children in four villages in Khansama and Fulbari has been initiated recently. Over 900 students of primary and secondary schools were brought under the study. The fieldwork was done in December 2005. This study would help understand the situation of supplementary tutoring in the context of quality of education for all. The report is expected in April 2006.

Education Watch

The preliminary findings of *Education Watch* 2006 were presented in a seminar in mid December 2005. The theme of this year's *Education Watch* is secondary education. The preliminary results show that 71.7% of the secondary school aged children (11-15 years) were currently enrolled in schools – a third of which were in primary classes. The net and gross enrolment ratios were 64.5% and 45.1% respectively. The girls were ahead of boys in school enrolment. The gross enrolment ratio was highest in the municipal areas and lowest in rural Sylhet division. At the aggregate level, three quarters of the secondary school students enrolled in non-government schools, 14.2% in madrassas, 6% in government schools, and others in various types of other schools. Of the students enrolled in class VI, only a fifth could pass the school final examinations (26.4% boys and 15.5% girls). Participation in secondary education increased over time. The government schools were more efficient than other types. The report is in progress.

New Frontier of BRAC Research in Afghanistan

A Research Unit has been formed within BRAC Afghanistan in October 2005 to carry out several tasks such as research and evaluation, designing new programme for BRAC and capacity development in research in Afghanistan. The unit has completed two studies – Investment opportunities in Samangan province: a feasibility study, and assessing teachers training programme of SAB in Afghanistan. Two studies are currently underway – assessment of the basic package of health services in Badghis province, and evaluation of health programme of REACH in Paghman district.

PHILL Project Ends with Hosting of an International Conference on Ageing

BRAC (Bangladesh), University of East Anglia (UK), Health Strategy and Policy Institute (HSPI) (Vietnam), and Karolinska Institutet (Sweden) have recently completed a European Commission-funded project called PHILL (Primary Healthcare In Later Life: Improving services in Bangladesh and Vietnam). The study aimed to test the effectiveness of low-cost, preventive and health promotion interventions to improve primary health care (PHC) for older persons in rural communities. Active participation of family and the community and using existing PHC facilities are two main features of this operation research implemented during October 2002 to September 2005 by the Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC in Bangladesh and by HSPI of Vietnam.

Findings from the PHILL research show that elderly health issues can be

addressed through existing PHC infrastructure, by appropriately sensitizing the family and the community, and giving training to health care providers and the care-givers on common elderly health, nutritional and emotional problems. The self-help groups of the elderly show another innovative approach to organize the elderly in taking care of themselves and their peers, besides providing a forum for recreation and leisure time. This and other issues related to ageing in low-income countries were discussed in an 'International Conference on Mainstreaming Ageing in Health Systems and Rural Development' held on 28-30 November in Dhaka. The opening session was chaired by Mr Fazle Hasan Abed, founder and Chairperson of BRAC and the keynote speech was delivered by Dr Tim Evans, Assistant Director General, WHO. Mr. Khandker Mosharraf Hossain, Minister for Health and Family Welfare, GoB was present as chief guest. The conference deliberated on how the elderly issue can be integrated in the mainstream health and development agenda and came up with guidelines and policy recommendations.

Food Supplementation Process of BRAC NNP

RED initiated a new research project entitled 'Exploration of Food Supplementation Process in BRAC NNP' since October 2005. The major objective of this study is to explore the process of management of food supplementation procedure of NNP in BRAC-operated *upazilas*. It will assess the selection procedure, quality and quantity of food packets, preparation and storage procedure, distribution system and evaluate the acceptability of supplementation to target group. Data collection is going on in 20 CNCs of Monohordi and Laxmipur sadar. The study is expected to be completed in April 2006.

Workshop on Programmes for the Excluded Held

A workshop and consultation was held on 'Programmes for the Excluded: Conceptualization and Mapping' on 03 December 2005 in Dhaka. This was part of the joint work done by the Economic Research Group (ERG) and RED. A conceptual paper on the attributes leading to exclusion in different space

was presented. A detailed map of NGO activities addressing different forms of exclusion was showcased. This map can be accessed at www.ergonline.org which contains information at upazila level. A proposal on comparative study of different approaches was also presented.

Study on Comparative Analysis of Approaches

A study has been initiated to analyze the approaches and process of different programmes for the hardcore poor. This study would consider the programmes targeting hardcore poor at two upazilas in Bangladesh. This study is being conducted in partnership with ERG.

TUP Repeat Survey Completed

Repeat survey of beneficiaries and non-beneficiaries of TUP programme has been completed. All the 5,625 households of the baseline were considered in this survey.

PhD Awarded

Syed Masud Ahmed, Research Coordinator obtained PhD in Public Health from Karolinska Institutet, Sweden. The title of his thesis is 'Exploring health-seeking behaviour of disadvantaged populations in rural Bangladesh. Congratulations to Dr. Ahmed.'

Abstracts accepted for presentation

Six abstracts on nutrition-related research of BRAC RED have been accepted for oral presentation at the '8th Commonwealth Congress on Diarrhoea and Malnutrition' to be held on 6-8 February 2006 at ICDDR,B, Dhaka. The theme of the congress is 'Combating malnutrition and intestinal diseases in children: are we doing enough?'

Conferences/Seminars/ Workshops Attended

Syed Masud Ahmed, Research Coordinator presented a paper titled 'How do you measure the concept of poverty? BRAC experiences' in a workshop on 'TB and poverty: are we doing enough?'

held in Bellagio, Italy on 6-8 December 2005.

M Jakariya, Senior Research Associate gave a presentation on 'Implementing safe water options in Bangladesh' at a seminar on 'Arsenic in ground water: health, remedial actions and development aid' at the Department of Earth Science, Uppsala University, Sweden on 19 December 2005.

M Mahbulul Kabir, Staff Researcher presented a paper on the 'Needs of ethnic minority students for learning improvement in secondary schools' in the UNESCO BAFED Education Researchers Forum held in Dhaka on 19 November 2005.

Imran Matin, Director Research presented a paper titled 'Creating a leader for the poorest: the BRAC experiences' in a conference on 'Microfinance in South Asia: Today and Tomorrow' held in New Delhi, India on 5-7 December 2005.

Samir R Nath, Senior Research Fellow presented a paper titled 'Reaching primary education at the doorstep of the poor: the BRAC experience' in the Fourth Asia-Pacific Urban Forum and Citynet Congress 2005 held on 11-14 October 2005 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

He also participated in a regional workshop on 'Mother tongue/bilingual literacy programmes for ethnic minorities' held on 6-10 December 2005 in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Mr. Nath was a co-presenter of a country paper on a bilingual education programme in Bangladesh.

Two papers on CFPR/TUP were presented at the BRAC Donor Consortium Meeting on 24 October 2005. Vivek Prakash presented a paper titled 'The impact of the CFPR/TUP on women's self-reported health status: evidence from a longitudinal survey.' The other paper on the targeting effectiveness of TUP in 2005 was presented by Munshi Solaiman..

Recent Publications

(Arranged alphabetically)

Journal and book publications

Ahmed M and Nath SR. Quality with equity: primary agenda – summary of main report of *Education Watch* 2003

and 2004 (In Bangla). *Bangladesh Shiksha Samoiki* 2005 Jun;2(1): 23-42.

Begum HA, Yasmin RN, Shahjamal MM. An assessment of BRAC pre-primary graduates in formal primary schools. *Bangladesh Edu J* 2004 Dec;3(2):9-18.

Begum HA, Yasmin RN, Shahjamal MM. Assessment of BRAC pre-primary graduates in formal primary schools (In Bangla). *Bangladesh Shiksha Samoiki* 2005 Jun;2(1): 13-22.

Matin I. Delivering inclusive microfinance with a poverty focus: the experiences of BRAC. In: Brody A, Greeley M, Wright-Revolledo K (Editors). *Money with a mission*. Vol. 2. London: ITDG Publishing, 2005: 15-25.

Matin I. The very poor who participate in microfinance institutions and those who never have. *Small Enterprise Dev* 2005 Sep; 16(3):51-7.

Nath SR. *Bangladeshe samata saha mansammata prathamik shiksha* (in Bangla). Dhaka: Campaign for Popular Education. 2005, 26p.

Newsletter and newspaper articles

Ahmed SM. Mainstreaming ageing in health systems. *The Daily Star* 27 Nov 2005.

Gani MS and Karim F. Rickets: an emerging public health problem. *The Daily Star* 20 Nov 2005.

Kabir MM and Ahmed N. Schoole sharirik shasti bandha houq (in Bangla). *Shaksharata Bulletin* October 2005;140:23-4.

Nasreen HE. A response to HIV/AIDS. *The Daily Star* 02 Oct 2005.

Roy G and Mallik JI. Prathamik shiksha o sushiksha andolone (in Bangla). *Jugantar* 14 Sep 2005.

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