

**National Education Budget of Bangladesh
and
Women Empowerment**

Dr. Pratima Paul-Majumder

**Bangladesh Nari Progati Sangha
Institute for Environment & Development**

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Phone 8111323, 8124899, 8158248
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Section 1

Introduction

1.1 Rationale

Empowerment of women is one of the national goals of Bangladesh. To achieve this goal, Bangladesh adopted various strategies like elimination of the gap between male and female, creating gainful employment for women, mainstreaming of women in the development process etc., in her Five-Year Plans and other national documents. But the policy makers are not much aware of the fact that none of these strategies will be successful in empowering women until and unless they are educated, since without education women can neither be employed gainfully nor can be integrated in the national development process. Education has multi-dimensional impacts on women and these impacts are influential in empowering women. Researches show that education has highly positive impact on both women's productivity and their social and political power in the society. It was found that woman's wage rate increases by 10% for each extra year's education (Human Development in South Asia 1998). Researches also show that investment on women's education has a direct correlation with eradication of gender discrimination in various spheres of life. Path-breaking findings of an on-going research of BIDS reveal that women's education is one of the most influential factors for breaking the stereotyped gender roles, which are the biggest stumble on the way of women's social and economic empowerment. This research further shows that education raises confidence and aspiration of girl children more than that of their counterpart boy children. Thus, education also affects women's

psychological development. Various researches show that among the factors, education empowers women most to participate in politics. Thus, to empower women from all sides, education is the most powerful weapon.

Women's education is also highly contributory to national growth. It was found that if the education level among women is doubled then child mortality rate goes down from 85% to 31%. The reproductive rate among illiterate Asian women is 5.8, whereas it is 3.8 among women who are educated beyond 7th grade (Human Development in South Asia 1998). Research further shows that the educational performance of children of more educated mothers (who are educated beyond 10th grade) is far better than the performance of the children of less educated mother (who are educated less than 10th grade) (Paul-Majumder 1995). Thus, education empowers women tremendously to contribute to the socio-economic development of the country. Hence, development of women's education should be achieved not only for the welfare of women folk but also for the welfare of the country. But still now, about half of the women populations aged 7 years and above are illiterate and gender gap persists and it widens more and more as the level of education rises higher.

To educate women enmass, appropriate policies are needed to be undertaken and to get these policies implemented a huge fund is necessary. There is little dearth of policy regarding women's education. A number of national documents like the constitution of the country, Five Year Plan, national education policy, 2000 and the latest document PRSP of Bangladesh have explicit policies for women's education. Bangladesh is also committed to the world to implement pro-women education priorities since she is the signatory of several international treaties including the Convention for the

Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Platform for Action (PFA). National budget of the country is the most effective tool to allocate fund for implementation of these policies and commitment. Therefore, education sector should be given the top most priority in budgetary allocation and strategy should be undertaken in the national budget to transfer adequate resources towards women's education. However, only increase in the allocation for women's education in the national budget is not enough to empower women appropriately, since to translate women's education into their empowerment, efficient use of allocated budgetary resources is essential. Nature of development programs undertaken in the annual development budget for women's education is also an important issue in empowering women socio-psychologically, politically and economically through education budget. The present study attempts at addressing all these issues.

1. 2. Objectives of the Study

Given the rationale, the first objective of the present research is to assess the gender policies and objectives of various national documents regarding education and to find out the gaps in these policies and objectives.

Second objective is to assess the performance of the education budget in diverting resources towards women and the third and foremost objective is to assess the role of national education budget in empowering women socio-psychologically, politically and economically.

Once these three objectives are achieved, it is useful to increase awareness and knowledge of the policy makers, especially who are directly involved in the budget making process, academia, media

personnel and civil society on the multi-dimensional importance of diverting budgetary resources towards women's education. Hence, third objective has been set to hold a series of dialogue sessions with the policy level personnel, WID focal points, academia, media people, women of different socio-economic and professional groups of various regions of the country, development partners and civil society of the country to build a better understanding on the implication of investing budgetary resources on women's education.

Fifthly, after having in-depth knowledge from these dialogues, strategy will be developed to divert budgetary resources towards women's education in most effective way and to suggest policies that are most effective in empowering women.

1.3. Methodology

Both revenue and development budget comprise the education budget of a country. More than half of all budgetary expenditures earmarked for education sector constitutes revenue budget of Bangladesh. Salaries, pensions, gratuities and other amenities given to the government employees in the education sector constitute lion share of the revenue expenditure. Women have very limited access to this huge expenditure because they account for about 20% of all government employees in the education sector. Moreover, very few of them hold high enough position to utilize the high revenue overhead. Hence, annual revenue budget of the education sector will be analyzed with a view to find out the avenues to increase the women's share in the revenue expenditure for the education sector.

However, to assess the role of national education budget in empowering women, much emphasis has to be given on development budget of the education sector. All annual development projects

(ADPs) undertaken in the education sector will be divided into following four broad categories:

1. Development programs which target women only, i.e. women-focused program. These projects are supposed to have exclusive impact on women
2. Development programs which will benefit women as well as men. Some of these programs specifically target women together with men, some don't. These programs are supposed to have partial impact on women. This type of program has been categorized as 'gender-sensitive program'.
3. Programs, which have no impacts on women's life. These programs are in fact, men-focused programs.
4. Programs, which are related to religious education.

Amount of budgetary resources directed to women's development both through women-focused and gender-sensitive development projects is the most important indicator to assess the extent to which national education budget of Bangladesh empowers women socio-economically and politically. Gender specific target in gender-sensitive projects is another indicator since as weak competitors compared to men, women cannot attain their share from the gender-sensitive projects without gender specific target. In addition, empowerment of women through allocation in the education budget not only depends on the amount of allocation for women but also on the nature of the development projects and extent of implementation of these projects. Taxation policy of the government is also a powerful tool to direct resources towards women's education. More or less all these indicators have been taken into consideration in assessing the performance of the education budget to empower women.

Annual national budgets of five fiscal years (2000/01-2004/05) constitute the database for this study. Information collected from dialogues will also provide data for this research. These data will be used to formulate appropriate strategies to increase allocation for women in the education budget. In addition, along with these data this research intends to bring together data drawn from a combination of existing empirical research and survey on women's budget in Bangladesh.

1.4. Plan of the Study

The study contains seven sections. Following the introductory section, the second section presents a brief note on gender objectives and policies set in various national documents regarding education. In addition, a feeble attempt has been made in this section to identify the gaps and weaknesses of the education policies of Bangladesh to empower women socio-psychologically, politically and economically. The third section and the fourth section attempts to estimate women's share in the education budget. Attempt has also been made in the same section to explore whether the allocation for women in the education budgets is in compliance with the national policies. The fifth section evaluates the performance of the national budget to act as an instrument to empower women socio-psychologically, politically and economically. The sixth section examines the nature of women-focused development projects and the effectiveness of these projects to empower women. Also in the same section, an investigation has been carried out to find out the strength and weaknesses of the national budget to empower women. The last section contains conclusions, comments and a few recommendations.

Section 2

National Gender Objectives and Gender Policies regarding Education

A number of national documents of Bangladesh have formulated gender objectives and gender policies regarding education and equal access of boys and girls in educational facilities. The constitution, the highest deed of Bangladesh pledge for equal access of men and women in all spheres of life. This policy has manifested when women are considered as target groups in all the Five Year Plan of Bangladesh. However up to fourth five year plan of Bangladesh, women were targeted as means and not as ends. Therefore, primary objective of allocating resources for women's education was to educate women for the interest of future generation and not for raising the life qualities of women themselves. In addition, most of the women focused projects during this plan period were related to development of skill, which were mostly traditional, and supply of small credit. These types of development projects were designed to make women somewhat more productive within the household but not to realize women's potential as persons.

Reduction of gender based disparity as plan's objective appeared in the Third Five Year Plan (1985-90). To achieve this objective, following women-specific development programs were undertaken in the education sector.

- (1) providing of skill training in poultry, dairy, livestock, food processing, garment and handicrafts;
- (2) strengthening of the National Women's Academy and National Women's Organization for skill training.

The Fourth Five Year Plan (1990-95) made a departure by making a commitment to bring women from the margin into mainstream development process. But due to lack of a clear understanding of the mainstreaming strategy, planning process remains the same as before. Thus, nature of development projects undertaken during this plan for women remains the same as before. Hence, most of the education projects undertaken for women's development during the fourth five year plan aimed at supporting women as mother and housewives rather than empowering them to undertake gainful jobs.

The main thrust of the Fifth Year Plan (1997-02) is also mainstreaming of women in development policies. Gender objective in this plan has been described as "to integrate women's development into the macro-framework and to reduce gender disparity in all sectors through the integration of women in mainstream development efforts" Reduction of gender gap in literacy rate in both rural and urban areas is highly emphasized in the Fifth Five-Year Plan of Bangladesh. Women specific policies, objectives and strategies set in this Plan for education sector are as follows:

- (3) to enhance participation of women in every sphere of education as well as to reduce the gap between facilities provided for male and female education;
- (4) in view of co-education existing at the primary level, and widespread at the secondary level, sporadic program for setting up gender specific higher educational institute will be reviewed;
- (5) at least 70 per cent of the primary level teachers will be female and recruited locally;
- (6) free tuition and stipend will be provided to unmarried girl students especially in rural areas.

In addition to these women-specific objectives, there are many other general objectives, which are very women friendly. The main objective of the Fifth Five-year Plan in the education sector is to make the Compulsory Primary Education Program effective through the local government, community and NGO support. This objective is very women-friendly since NGO programs on education is supposed to benefit more women than men. The Fifth Five-year's emphasis on non-formal education also favours women more than men since due to various socio reasons women in many cases are deprived from formal schooling. But there is conspicuous absence of specific guidelines needed to implement the policy of mainstreaming women into development process education. Due to absence of such guideline, a general unawareness about mainstreaming process is observed. Findings show that most of the government officers are ignorant about the exact meaning of mainstreaming women. Due to lack of clear understanding of the mainstreaming strategy, education-planning process like the planning process of other sectors remained the same as before. Gender stereotyped allocative priorities were followed in undertaking development programs in the education sector.

Realizing the importance of women's education, the latest national education policy (2000) incorporates a separate section on women's education. One of the aims of this policy is to develop self-confidence, human dignity, knowledge and skill among women through providing education and skill training. This policy is undertaken in the right direction of empowering women through education since self-confidence, human dignity, knowledge etc. lie at the root of empowerment of any person. Other main objectives of this national policy regarding women are to increase their urge for equal rights; to inspire women and make them capable of participating in

national life at all levels, to ensure participation of women in socio-economic development and alleviation of poverty; to help in the economic progress through self-employment. Some of the important strategies to achieve these objectives are as follows:

- (1) Special fund should be created and non-government initiatives should be encouraged for increasing the literacy rate of women.
- (2) Measures should be taken for decreasing the number of dropouts from school. The dropout girls should be brought under various vocational programmes.
- (3) In order to bring a large number of women under the umbrella of formal education and inspire them to pursue education from primary to higher and professional levels, necessary facilities for women education must be provided in educational institutions at all levels.
- (4) Through proper changes in the syllabus of primary education, positive and progressive images of women and the issue of their equal rights should be highlighted so that the existing social attitude towards women changes.
- (5) Biographies of a large number of great women and literary works by women need to be included in the textbooks of primary and secondary levels.
- (6) As the number of secondary schools in the country is not sufficient, transport and hostel facilities have to be arranged for girls.
- (7) Girls should be encouraged in science and other professional education (like, engineering, medical, law and business, etc). Necessary budget allocation should be made for professional education of girls.
- (8) Women must be involved in all policy formulation and decision making on education at all levels - the Ministry, higher education, secondary education and primary education.

These strategies are also very appropriate in achieving the objective of women's education. But, in this document also, there is conspicuous absence of specific guidelines needed to mainstream women into the general development process of education. Moreover, by incorporating a separate section on women's education, national education policy in fact, separates women from the mainstream education of the country. A separate section on women seems that the issue of women is not related to other sections like section on pre-primary and primary education, secondary education, vocational and technical education, engineering education, law education, etc. It has not been realized in this policy document that to achieve the national objective of mainstreaming women in the national development process, issue of women's education should be a crosscutting issue. In addition, the section on women education is included at the end of education policy and this gives a sense that issue of women is a residue issue in the education sector.

Interim-Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (I-PRSP) of Bangladesh also keeps issue of women's education aside from mainstream education system. In the I-PRSP, four broad areas of action have been identified in the education sector for reduction of poverty. Among these four broad areas of action, one area of action has been identified as female education. Main actions recommended to be undertaken in this area are as follows:

- (1) Action towards changing current education curriculum to eliminate biases against women, and include legal, human and women right issues at all levels of education starting from very early stage;
- (2) Increase women's access to education at secondary and higher levels.

- (3) To facilitate women's access to education at secondary and higher levels, provide school bus, toilet and hostel facilities for girls in addition to monetary facilities such as free education and scholarship for girls.

Full PRSP has been completed recently and the government has already published final report of this document. In this document, women's issue has been considered as crosscutting issue and integrated in each and every aspect of poverty alleviation. But it is yet to be implemented. Allocation in the forthcoming national budget (budget of FY 2005-06) will reveal whether budgetary allocation adheres to the strategies adopted in the PRSP.

In addition, since the birth of Bangladesh, several national education commissions (at least half a dozen) and committees have been appointed to develop education policies and priorities in line with national goals and aspirations. The latest commission was appointed in January 2003 to identify the major problems of the education system and to recommend remedial action. The Commission presented its report to the Prime Minister in March 2004. It made recommendations about various aspects of the education system, including those on quality, access, strengthening management and governance and promoting equity in education. All these recommendations are very women-friendly. National Policy for the Advancement of Women and National Action Plan (NAP) are two women specific national document, which outlines various objectives and strategies to develop women's education.

Bangladesh is also committed to the world to implement pro-women education priorities, since she is the signatory of several international treaties including the Convention for the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Platform for Action

(PFA). Bangladesh is further obligated to the world in terms of international human rights treaties and commitments made in international forums such as the World conference on Education for All (Jomtien, Thailand, 1990) and World Education Forum (Dakar, Senegal, 2000). Bangladesh is also committed to the world to attain the targets embodied in the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) by 2015. One of the Millennium Development Goals is to reduce gender gap in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015. Another goal is to empower women. Thus there is no dearth of national policy and strategies and international commitment for developing women's education and skill base.

Section 3

National Education Budget in Bangladesh: Some Inherent Weakness

From the discussion of the gender policies and strategies of the education sector of Bangladesh, it appears that development of education and particularly, development of women's education is an important segment of the overall development agenda of the government of Bangladesh (GOB). It is realized by the policy makers that a healthy, skilled and educated women folk plays an important role in improving standard of living, reducing gender gap and ensuring sustainable economic growth. National education budget is the technical instrument in the hands of the government through which it can implement all the gender policies and objectives regarding education. An attempt has been made in this section to assess how far fiscal policies and budgetary allocation are conducive to implement gender policies and objectives of education sector.

3.1 Taxation policy in the Education Sector

Providing tax incentive through national budget is an influential strategy to achieve the gender goal of education sector in Bangladesh, since the government can create a better gender equality by formulating policies that encourages people to invest more on women's education. But, no such taxation policy has so far been adopted in the national budget of Bangladesh for education sector. However, some tax policies have affected women's education indirectly. In the previous budget, the indirect taxes on Double Decker and large buses have been decreased. This tax reduction continues in the

current budget also. This helps the female students' transportation need. It has been found from various studies (Paul-Majumder and Shafali 1998; an on going BIDS study) that lack of secure and low cost transport facilities is one of the main reasons for female students' poor attendance in the schools and colleges and their high rate of drop out. Both in the current and previous budget, various fiscal incentives have been provided to encourage entrepreneurs to establish institute for expanding and developing information technology (IT). This policy is also very women friendly. Because, it was found that women are very eager to receive education on IT and this taxation policy is supposed to facilitate their access to IT. This taxation policy is also very conducive to empower women economically since women's access to IT will empower them adequately to undertake gainful jobs. Reduction of import duty on papers has been proposed in the current budget (2004-05). This policy is also women friendly since reduction of import duty on paper will reduce the price of teaching materials like writing paper, books etc.

3.2 Budgetary Allocation for Education Sector: 2000/01-2004/05

Education sector in Bangladesh always receives priority in the budgetary allocation. But during the last few years, education sector's share in the total annual budget decreased steadily. It can be noticed from Table 1 that this sector's share decreased from 14.5 per cent in the fiscal year 2000/01 to 13.4 in the current fiscal year (2004/05). In the revised budget, this share decreases more. This reduction will affect women's education greatly together with overall educational development of the country. In addition, budgetary allocation in the education sector of Bangladesh is very small. It constitutes only a little more than 2 per cent of GDP (Table 1). This share in education sector is very low compared to the same in other South Asian

countries. According to the report of Human Development in South Asia, education budget in Maldives constitutes 9.2 per cent of her GDP and that of India constitutes more than 4 per cent her GDP.

Table1: Budgetary Allocation (proposed) for Education Sector, 2000/01-2004/5

In core Tk)					
Fiscal Year	Revenue Budget	Development Budget	Total	Education budget as % of total national budget	As % of GDP
2000-01	3,344 (59.76)	2,252 (40.24)	5,596 (100.00)	14.5	2.20
2001-02	3,636 (60.32)	2,392 (39.68)	6028 (100.00)	14.2	2.20
2002-03	3,802 (62.23)	2,308 (37.77)	6,110 (100.00)	13.6	2.03
2003-04	4,108 (60.95)	2,632 (39.05))	6,740 (100.00)	13.0	2.05
2004-05	4,609 (60.00)	3072 (40.00)	7,681 (100.00)	13.4	2.07
Rate of increase or decrease in FY2004/05 over the FY 2000-01	37.8	36.4	37.3	-1.1	- 0.13

Budget in Brief, GOB, FY 2000/01 to FY 2004/05.

3.3 Share of education budget in the total annual budget of Bangladesh

Education budget in Bangladesh has increased over time. But the rate of increase in the budgetary allocation is far less than the rate of increase in the total national budget of Bangladesh. During the period between 2002/01 and 2004/05, budgetary allocation in the education sector increased by little more than 37 per cent, while during the same period, total national budget increased by about 50 per cent. As a result, share of education budget in the GDP remains almost the same overtime (Table 1). Whereas, share of education sector in the GDP

should have been increased if adequate resources were allocated for implementing the gender objectives and the goals of national education policy and MDG.

3.4 Share of revenue and development budget in the total education budget

Another inherent weakness of the education budget of Bangladesh is that revenue budget instead of development budget accounts for the lion share (60 per cent) of the resources allocated for this sector. The salary and other amenities given to the government employees constitute about 40 per cent of the revenue expenditure. Women get a minuscule amount from this allotment since only about 20 per cent of all government employees in the education sector are women. However, because of the policy that at least 70 per cent of the primary level teachers will be female and recruited locally, women are getting more benefit from revenue budget of the education sector since 80 per cent of the salary of the teachers of the private schools included in MPO is borne from the revenue budget. In the current budget (2004-05), recruitment of 35,000 new teachers has been proposed. Huge number of women will be benefited from this proposal if the policy of recruitment is followed strictly. But according to the policy, female teachers in the primary schools do not yet constitute 70 per cent of total primary school teachers. Women teachers in the primary schools constitute only about 38 per cent of total primary teachers (BANBEIS 2003).

3.5 Share of primary and post-primary education in the total budget earmarked for the education sector

Another inherent weakness of the education budget of Bangladesh that affects women's share in the education budget negatively is that

the share of primary education in the total education budget is far less than that of the post-primary education. It can be noticed from Table 2 that primary education sector gets only a little more than 47 per cent of the total budgetary resources earmarked for education sector in the fiscal year 2000/01. This share decreased to about 43 per cent in the current fiscal year (2004-05). During the period between the fiscal year 2000-01 and 2004-05, budgetary allocation for primary education increased only by about 21 per cent, whereas the same for post primary education increased by 53 per cent. This pattern of allocation is not women friendly, since women's education is still limited to primary education and it is very likely that they will get less benefit from budgetary resources if these are not allocated for primary education. This pattern of allocation is also not conducive to implement national education policy and MDG in the primary education sector and thus affects the attainment of gender objectives of these two documents.

Table 2: Share of Primary and Post-primary education (secondary, higher secondary and tertiary) in the total Budgetary Allocation (proposed) earmarked for education sector, 2000/01-2004/5 (in Tk. crore)

Fiscal Year	Total Allocation for Primary education	Total Allocation for post primary education	Total
2000-01	2,724 (48.67)	2,872 (51.32)	5,596 (100.00)
2001-02	2,838 (47.08)	3,190 (52.92)	6,028 (100.00)
2002-03	3,256 (53.28)	2,854 (46.71)	6,110 (100.00)
2003-04	2,801 (53.28)	3,939 (46.72)	6,740 (100.00)
2004-05	3292 (42.80)	4,398 (57.19)	7,690 (100.00)
Rate of increase/decrease in FY2004/05 over the FY 2000/01	20.85	53.13	37.3

BANBEIS, 2003

However, it is encouraging to notice from Table 3 that budgetary resources earmarked for revenue expenditure in the primary education sector decreases overtime, although at a very low rate. The table shows that in the current fiscal year, revenue expenditures account for just half of the total amount earmarked for primary education sector in the same year. In the previous fiscal year (2003-04), revenue expenditure accounted for about 54 per cent of total primary education budget. But revenue expenditure in the post primary education sector still accounts for larger share of total budgetary resources earmarked for this sector (Table 3). In the fiscal year 2004-05, revenue expenditure in the post primary education sector accounts for about 68 per cent total budgetary resources earmarked for this sector.

All these inherent weaknesses of education budget affect the attainment of gender objectives of national education policy and MDG.

Table 3: Share of revenue and development budget (proposed) in the total budget of the Primary and Mass Education and Post-primary Education, 2000/01-2004/5
(in Tk crore)

Fiscal Year	Total Allocation for Primary education			Total Allocation for post primary education		
	Revenue budget	Development budget	Total	Revenue budget	Development budget	Total
2000-01	1370 (50.29)	1354 (49.71)	2,724 (100.00)	1974 (68.73)	898 (31.26)	2,872 (51.32)
2001-02	1403 (49.43)	1435 (50.57)	2,838 (100.00)	2233 (70.00)	957 (30.00)	3,190 (52.92)
2002-03	1477 (45.36)	1779 (54.63)	3,256 (53.28)	2325	1129	2854 (46.71)
2003-04	1501 (53.59)	1300 (46.41)	2,801 (100.00)	2606 (66.16)	1332 (33.84)	3939 (46.72)
2004-05	1646 (50.00)	1646 (50.00)	3292 (100.0)	2863 (67.60)	1425 (32.40)	4,398 (100.0)
Rate of increase or decrease in FY2004/05 over the FY 2000/01	20.15	21.56	20.85	45.03	58.68	53.10

Budget in Brief, various fiscal years

Section 4

Women's Share in the National Education Budget

It has already been mentioned earlier that women get a minuscule amount from revenue budget of the education sector since they comprise a very small number of government employees employed in this sector. However, development budget plays the dominant role in achieving the gender objectives set in both national and international document. Amount of budgetary resources directed to women's development, both through women-focused and gender-sensitive development projects, is the most important indicator to assess the women's share in the national education budget.

In the section 28(4) of the constitution of Bangladesh, it is declared that nothing can desist the government to take any step for the sake of development of any backward community. Following this declaration, the GOB has undertaken various educational programmes in the development budget only for women, since womenfolk belongs to the backward community of the country as they are under-served and under-privileged. There are seven of these projects underway at present.

A project on post-literacy and continuing education has been under implementation with an emphasis on training for income earning skills. This and a second project of similar type aim to cover 3 million adults. A new project named "Reaching out of School children" with an outlay of about Taka 400 crore is being undertaken to create scope for primary education for children who are deprived of this opportunity. Under this project, 20 lakh children will be brought

within the net of primary education and will be given various amounts of financial incentives depending on their classes of study. This program is also very women-friendly.

It has already been mentioned earlier that national education policy is very women friendly. In each and every national and international document on education has women specific objectives and goals. Each and every program and policy undertaken in the primary education sector is women-friendly. Government of Bangladesh (GOB) enacted Primary Education Act in 1990 to make primary education compulsory for all citizens of Bangladesh. A program for compulsory primary education was launched all over the country in 1993. This policy and program of compulsory primary education remove the gender discrimination in the household regarding sending children to school. In the male dominated and traditional culture bound society like Bangladesh there is always a preference for boy children's education to girl children's education. But the policy of compulsory primary education makes the parents obliged to send both their boy and girl children to school. But due to pervasive poverty, parents often could not follow this policy. Therefore, Food for Education program was launched in the fiscal year 1993-94 for the poor children. A program for providing stipends to poor students was launched in 2000. Cash for Education in lieu of food for education has been launched throughout the country. All textbooks are given to the students free of cost. All these programs are highly gender sensitive since poverty discourages the poor parents to send their female children instead of their male children to school. Moreover, in the cash for education program, there is a criterion that the children of the distressed women should get priority in the selection of the beneficiaries. This criterion is very women friendly.

Other education projects that have been undertaken in the development budget of the last (2003-04) and current (2004-05) fiscal year are also very gender sensitive. A project for overall development of primary and mass education namely, Primary Education Development Program-II which mainly aims at constructing new primary schools and taking care of distribution of educational materials has been approved at a cost of Tk. 4933.08 crore. This project is very women friendly since it has been found that girl students' attendance at the school is greatly affected due to farness of schools from the residence (an on-going project being conducted by BIDS). Besides, a program named, Reaching Out of School Children (ROSC) has been undertaken for children still beyond reach of education and out of school as well as drop out children at a cost of Tk. 390.72 crore with World Bank assistance. This project is also very women-friendly. Because, it is expected that more girls than boys will be benefited from this project as drop out rate is higher for girl students than their counterpart boy students.

But in spite of undertaking affirmative actions and women friendly development programs, women's share in the total education budget is very small. Total allocation for the women focused projects increased by only 3 per cent in the current fiscal year over the fiscal year 2000-01, whereas during the same period, overall education budget has increased by about 37 per cent. Share of women focused projects in the total education budget also decreased significantly. During the fiscal year 2004-05, these projects obtained only about 11 per cent of total education budget, whereas during the fiscal year 2002-03, this share was about 15 per cent. It is also discouraging to know that women's share in the revised education budget decreased (Table 4).

One positive feature emerging from Table 4 is that budgetary allocation for gender-sensitive development projects has increased significantly. It may be an indication that in compliance with the national policy of mainstreaming, the responsibility of women's education is being shifted from few women-focused development programs to the mainstream of gender-sensitive development programs. But it can be noticed from Table 4 that allocation in this type of projects decreased significantly in the revised budget.

Table 4: Budgetary Allocation for various types of projects (as divided for the purpose of the present study) included in the Education & Religious Affairs Sector, 2000/01-2004/05

Type of Development Projects	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
	Number of Project				
Project having no direct impact on women	44 (33.8)	27 (26.5)	18 (16.8)	15 (15.0)	11 (18.0)
Women focused project	9 (6.9)	8 (7.8)	7 (6.5)	8 (8.0)	7 (11.5)
Gender sensitive project	60 (46.2)	51 (50.0)	64 (59.8)	66 (66.0)	34 (55.7)
Religious education roject	17 (13.1)	16 (15.7)	18 (16.8)	11 (11.0)	9 (14.8)
Total	130 (100.0)	102 (100.0)	107 (100.0)	100 (100.0)	61 (100.0)
Budgetary Allocation {proposed (Tk. in core)}					
Project having no direct impact on women	188.7 (8.2)	176.2 (7.2)	83.6 (2.8)	70.2 (2.6)	43.3 (1.4)
Women focused project	334.0 (14.6)	418.6 (17.2)	479.9 (16.2)	430.2 (15.9)	344.8 (11.0)
Gender sensitive project	1698.5 (74.0)	1756.2 (72.2)	2292.4 (77.2)	2090.3 (77.1)	2628.9 (83.7)
Religious education project	73.3 (3.2)	82.9 (3.4)	114.7 (3.9)	120.3 (4.4)	124.6 (4.0)

Total	2294.6 (100.0)	2433.8 (100.0)	2970.5 (100.0)	2711.0 (100.0)	3141.6 (100.0)
Budgetary Allocation {Revised (Tk. in core) (Figures in parenthesis are % of proposed budget)}					
Project having no direct impact on women	207.73 (110.1)	307.93 (274.8)	295.18 (353.1)	n.a	n.a
Women focused project	335.4 (100.4)	369.7 (88.3)	434.3 (90.5)	n.a	n.a
Gender sensitive project	1673.2 (98.5)	1439.1 (81.9)	1779.7 (77.6)	n.a	n.a
Religious education project	58.0 (79.2)	54.6 (65.9)	82.2 (71.7)	n.a	n.a
Total	2274.38 (99.1)	2171.38 (89.2)	2591.4 (87.2)	n.a	n.a

Sources: 1. Annual Development Programme, various fiscal years, Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. 2. Implementation Monitoring and Evaluation Division (IMED) Ministry of Planning (various years)

Moreover, it was found that no specific target for women was fixed in most of these gender-sensitive projects. Hence, women could attain very little benefit from these projects. In the current education budget, an amount of Tk. 15 crore is allotted for renovation, reconstruction and modernization of Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT). But only about 5 of total students enrolled in the BIT in 2002 were female (BANBEISE 2003). Similar is the case with Bangladesh College of Leather and Technology, Textile Technology College, Engineering College etc, whereas a huge amount has been allocated for the development of these colleges. In the current budget, huge amount is also allocated for vocational education. But from this allocation, women could not avail equal benefits with men as they comprise only about 26 per cent of total students enrolled in the vocational institutes.

Table 5: Efficiency (Efficiency has been measured in terms % of revised budget actually spent) of implementing various type of development projects undertaken in Education Budget: 2000/01 – 2002/03

Type of Project	Actual Expenditure as % of Revised Budget		
	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Project having no direct impact on women	94.4	89.6	96.3
Women Focused Project	72.0	86.4	90.5
Gender sensitive Project	98.8	93.7	91.1
Religious Education Project	98.3	105.5	92.2
Total	94.4	92.2	91.6

Sources: 1. Annual Development Programme, various fiscal years, Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh. 2. IMED Ministry of Planning (various years)

Women could not obtain full benefit even from the budgetary allocation on women-focused programs, since women-focused programs are not duly implemented in most cases. It is worth noticing from Table 5 that extent of use of funds allocated for the gender-sensitive and women-focused projects is less than that of the projects having no direct impact on women. All these facts reveal that women's share in the national education budget is very small.

During the last few years, Bangladesh Nari Pragati Sangha (BNPS) – the pioneering agency in analyzing women's budget, Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS) and recently the Gender Budget Secretariat of North South University held a series of opinion-sharing meetings, workshops and seminars to make the womenfolk aware about their share in the national budget, and to sensitize policy makers, political leaders and government officials to increase women's share in the national budget. Before the national budget proposed for the fiscal year 2001-2002, women leaders of Bangladesh in a body placed a memorandum to the honorable Finance Minister emphasizing the demands upheld by the womenfolk in various

seminars and workshops organized by the BNPS throughout the country. This memorandum contains following demands for education sector:

- Negative and unproductive high-expenditures for Military and *Madrassa* education should be reduced, and this money should be allocated for women's development and other social development sectors as 'peace dividend.'
- Education up to 12th standard should be made free for women. Thus, allocation in the budget should also be increased for women's education.
- Allocation must be made to establish more secondary and higher secondary schools/colleges for women.
- Allocation in the budget should also be increased to teach and train women for the information technology sector, and thus aim to build them as experts in this sector.
- Training has to be provided to women to increase their ability and expertise so that they can participate in various gainful sectors of the national economy. To this end, budgetary allocation has to be increased.
- Budgetary allocation has to be made to provide scholarships to women so that they can increase their participation in higher education.

But an assessment of the national budget of the fiscal year 2001-02 reveals that very little of these demands have been taken into consideration while allocating budgetary resources in the education sector (Paul-Majumder 2003a, BNPS). In the budget of the fiscal year 2001-02, establishment of 13 new VTI for introduction of Vocational courses at SSC and HSC level were proposed. But in compliance with the women's demand, establishment of no female vocational training

institute was proposed. Whereas, research shows that women's participation in vocational training largely depends on the availability of female vocational training institutes since these institutes can provide socially congenial atmosphere for women. For young women, socially congenial atmosphere is essential both for increasing their enrollment and continuation of studies at the vocational institutes (Paul-Majumder 2003, PLAGS). In compliance with the demand of women, no budgetary measures was undertaken to facilitate women's access to IT. Only the demand of making education up to 12th standard free for women was accepted in the education budget proposed for the fiscal year 2002- 03. An amount of Taka 3, 034.50 million was proposed to be spent for this project.

Section 5

Effectiveness of National Education Budget of Bangladesh to Empower Women

Empowerment of women through elimination of gender gap from all sectors of education and mainstreaming them into the national development process is the main gender objective of all national documents mentioned earlier. Empowerment is an active multi-dimensional process, which enables women to realize their full identity and power in all spheres of life. Power is not a commodity to be transacted; nor can it be given away as alms. Power has to be acquired and it needs to be exercised, sustained and preserved (Pillai, 1995). Education is the single most influential factor through which women can acquire this power since they don't have access to any source of power like land, capital and labour market, knowledge, politics etc. Through education, women can have access to these sources of power. In the present study, allocation in the education budget will be examined to find out whether budgetary allocation is amicable to transact power to women to have access to labour and capital market, knowledge (IT), and decision making process both at national and household level. Attempt will also be made in the present study to find whether budgetary allocation in the education sector enables women to come out of the patriarchal ideology that subordinates women to men. It has been found from various studies that subordination is the root cause of women's powerlessness. Gender subordination will be removed to a large extent if gender gap in education is eliminated.

In the present study, mainstreaming women into development is meant as initiating a process of social change, which will increase life

options of women and empower them to take control over their lives. For this purpose, ADP level programming of public resources for the education sector should be directed to women both through women-focused development projects and gender-sensitive development projects. To remove gender inequality from all spheres of life, a policy of affirmative action has to be undertaken in the education sectors and accordingly only women-focused projects have to be undertaken. To integrate women into mainstream education process, gender-sensitive education projects have to be undertaken and gender specific target has to be set in these projects. Without gender specific target, women can not have their due share from the integrated projects since because of powerlessness women are very weak competitors compared to men.

An attempt has been made in this sub-section to assess the effectiveness of education budget to empower women through achieving these objectives.

5.1 Effectiveness of education budget to eliminate gender gap in Education

Because of affirmative action undertaken in the allocation of budgetary resources in the education sector and women friendly education policies, gender gap in this sector narrowed down significantly. It has been found from the population census, 2001 of Bangladesh that during the 20 years 1981-2001, literacy rate for population 7 years and above rose from about 26 per cent to 45.3 percent. Remarkable rise in women's education during this period contributed greatly to this improvement of literacy rate in Bangladesh. As found from census 2001, the level of literacy among women aged 7 and above rose from about 18 per cent in 1981 to about 41 per cent, which is more than double. The level among men rose from about 34

per cent to about 50 per cent in the same time frame (Table 6). Though there has been a huge influx in women’s education in the last few years, still it is not enough to eliminate the gap between the sexes. This gap becomes wider if the population aged 15 years and above is taken into consideration. According to the Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS), the literacy rate among Bangladeshis aged 15 years and above is 58 per cent. Among men, this rate is 67 per cent.

Table 6: Literacy Rate of Population (7 years and above) of Bangladesh by Sex, 1981-2001

Year	Male	Female	Both Sexes
1981	33.84	17.52	25.99
1991	38.90	25.45	32.40
2001	49.56	40.83	45.32

Source: Population Census 2001

5.1.1. Extent of gender gap in Primary education

Because of various budgetary measures and the policy of compulsory primary education, Bangladesh has achieved remarkable progress in the primary level education. Gross enrollment rate in the primary schools reached at more than 97 per cent (Table 7). However, findings of some micro level studies show that gross enrollment rate has already reached at 100 per cent. However, net enrollment rate is about 87 (Table 7). It is interesting to notice from table 7 that enrollment rate of girls is higher than that of boys. As a result, gender gap in primary education has been eliminated almost totally in 2002 (Table 8). Food for education, now cash for education programme undertaken in the education budget since the fiscal year 1993-94, and the programme of supplying free books contributed greatly to achieve gender equality in primary education.

Table 7: Gross and Net Enrolment Rate in Primary level Institution by sex, 1998-2002

Year	Gross Enrolment rate			Net Enrolment rate		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	98.12	94.25	96.23	80.09	82.95	81.44
1999	97.53	94.94	96.26	82.10	84.43	83.19
2000	96.60	96.53	96.56	85.44	85.83	85.63
2001	97.33	97.65	97.49	86.19	86.96	86.57
2002	96.58	98.14	97.35	86.00	87.36	86.68

Source: BANBEIS 2003

Table 8: Number of Boys and Girls Enrolled in all primary level Institution, 1998-2002

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	9576942 (52.16)	8783700 (47.84)	18360642 (100.00)
1999	8705001 (50.43)	8556712 (49.57)	17261713 (100.00)
2000	9032698 (51.12)	8635287 (48.88)	17667985 (100.00)
2001	8989795 (50.91)	8669425 (49.09)	17659220 (100.00)
2002	8841647 (50.35)	8720181 (49.65)	17561828 (100.00)
Rate of increase of students over the period between 1998 and 2002	-7.68	-1.00	-4.05

Source: BANBEIS 2003.

But, although enrollment of the primary age school children has increased remarkably, the rate of school attendance of the primary level children is very low and this rate is low for both boy and girl students. It has been found from population census 2001 that only about 50 per cent of total students enrolled in the primary schools attend school. However, it has also been found from the same source that this rate was only 22.5 per cent in 1981. Thus, rate of school

attendance increased significantly over the period between 1981-2001. It is notice worthy that the rate of increase in school attendance is higher for girl students than that for boy students. But it is still very low for both girls and boys.

One of the dominant reasons for girl students' low attendance is absence of school nearby their residence. But this reason does not affect boy students' attendance at all (an on-going study of BIDS). This study finds very few girls are unwilling to go to school. But among the boys, 10 per cent were dropped their school because of their unwillingness to go to school. Hence, establishment of more primary schools is an essential condition for raising school attendance of girl students. But very few programmes were undertaken in the education budget to construct new primary schools. Therefore, the number of government primary schools remains nearly the same (37100 govt. primary schools) during the period between 1991 and 2002. However, it is interesting to know that the number of non-government primary level school increased to 24,416 from 11,845 during the same period (Bangladesh Economic Review 2004) and this number is increasing every year. There are other types of non-government school such as kindergarten, NGO schools, Satellite and primary schools attached to High schools and Madrasah. The number of these types of school increased to 78,363 in 2002. But majority of the primary level students (about 71 per cent) are attending at the government schools (Table 9) whereas, Govt. primary schools account for only 48 per cent of total primary schools. As a result, average number of student in each government primary school is about 350, but the same in each non-government school is less than 100. Current (FY 2004-05) and previous (FY 2003-04) education budget contains a project for overall development of primary and mass education namely, Primary Education Development Program,

which mainly aims at constructing new primary schools and taking care of distribution of educational materials. But very small amount has been allocated for this project and implementation of this program is also not efficient.

Table 9: Percentages of Total Primary Level Students Attending at Various types of school by Sex

Type of School	National	Boys	Girls
Government	70.70	70.33	71.06
Govt. subsidized	13.43	13.12	13.72
Private-Bengali	5.39	5.25	5.52
Private-English	1.40	1.61	1.20
NGO run	4.43	3.23	5.59
Madrasa	4.04	5.53	2.62
Other	0.60	0.93	0.29
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source: Household Expenditure survey, 2000.

Congential social atmosphere in the schools is an influential factor affecting the school attendance of the female students. Female teachers in the schools ensure this atmosphere to a large extent. But female teachers in both public and private primary schools do not yet constitute half of the total primary teachers whereas there is a national policy that 70 per cent of the teachers newly recruited in the primary schools should be female. In 2002, percentage of female teachers in the public primary schools were 37.5 (BENBAISE 2003). Various researches show that teachers in the public primary schools are not committed to their jobs. Often they remain absent in the schools. Most of them are also not trained. Therefore, now the quality of education is a great concern in the primary education sector. It is also a big concern that whether women would get any benefit from the elimination of gender gap in the primary education.

It is worth noticing from Table 8 that the number of primary students has decreased by more than 4 per cent during the period between 1998 and 2002, whereas during the same period, rate of net enrollment has increased by more than 5 per cent. This situation arises may be due to the fact that the primary level students in madrasah and in the non-formal schools increased to a large extent. It can be noticed from Table 10 that enrollment in the ebtedayee madrashah (which is uniform with primary level education) increased over the period between 1998-2002 by about 23 per cent. The table shows that the rate of increase in the enrollment of female student in the ebtedayee madrasah is remarkable (about 67 per cent). But even with such remarkable increase, female students could not yet achieve equal position in the madrasa education. It can be noticed from Table 10 that gender gap in the primary level madrasah education is wide while the gender gap in the primary level school education is eliminated almost totally.

Table 10: Enrolment in the Ebtedayee (Primary level) Madrasah by Sex of Students: 1998-2002

Year	Male	Female	Total
1998	887187 (70.17)	377218 (29.83)	1264405 (100.00)
1999	890044 (61.92)	547476 (38.08)	1437520 (100.00)
2000	919658 (61.79)	568655 (38.21)	1488313 (100.00)
2001	894097 (59.99)	596424 (40.01)	1490521 (100.00)
2002	923473 (59.48)	629207 (40.52)	1552680 (100.00)
Rate of increase in the number of student over the period between 1998-2002	4.10	66.80	22.81

Source: BANBEIS 2003

5.1.2 Extent of gender gap in Secondary and Higher Secondary Education

Emphasis has been given on qualitative improvement of secondary and higher secondary education through improvement in science and technological education. Education in information and communication technology has been given priority. Currently there are 16,166 secondary schools, 2427 general colleges, 7651 secondary and higher secondary level madrasah (BENBAISE 2003). In each of these institutes, the number of student has increased greatly over time. Table 11 shows that number of student in the secondary level schools (Class V to Class X) raises by about 21 per cent over the period between 1998 and 2002. It is very encouraging to notice from the table that rate of enrollment of girl students in the secondary level schools is far more than that of boy students. During the five year period (period between 1998 and 2002), the number of girl students increased by about 26 per cent while during the same period, number of boy students increased by only 15 per cent. It can be noticed from Table 11 that in the year 2002 girl students constitute about 54 per cent of all secondary level students, whereas in 1998 they constituted a little more than 51 per cent of all secondary level students. This information reveals that gender gap in the secondary education has been more than eroded and a gender gap is created against boy children.

Table 11: Enrollment in the Secondary Schools (grade 6 to grade 10), 1998-2002

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	3304336 (48.82)	3464742 (51.18)	6769078 (100.00)
1999	3478116 (48.06)	3758823 (51.94)	7236939 (100.00)
2000	3626648 (47.43)	4020237 (52.57)	7646885 (100.00)
2001	3690913 (46.80)	4196097 (53.20)	7887010 (100.00)
2002	3801356 (46.47)	4360778 (53.53)	8162134 (100.00)
Rate of increase of students over the period between 1998 and 2002	15.0	25.9	20.6

Source: BANBEIS 2003

The number of students in the higher secondary educational institutes also increased to a large extent. Total enrollment in the higher secondary level institutes increased by about 32 per cent over the period between 1998 and 2002. In this level also rate of increase of female students is far more than that of male students. It has been estimated that over the period between 1998 and 2002, the number of girl students increased by more than 39 per cent, while during the same period male student increased by only a little more than 11 per cent. As a result, share of female students in the total number of higher secondary level students exceeds that of male students (Table 12). Thus, in higher secondary education also gender gap against women is eliminated totally and a gender gap is created against men.

Table 12: Enrollment in the Higher Secondary Schools (grade 11 and 12), 1998-2002

Year	Male	Female	Total
1998	149132 (54.84)	122785 (45.16)	271917 (100.00)
1999	183165 (52.64)	164821 (47.36)	347986 (100.00)
2000	185455 (52.21)	169762 (47.79)	355217 (100.00)
2001	163152 (49.34)	167534 (50.66)	330686 (100.00)
2002	165899 (49.22)	171135 (50.78)	337034 (100.00)
Rate of increase in the number of student over the period between 1998-2002	11.2	39.4	23.9

Source: BANBEIS 2003.

Education budget plays a great role in achieving gender equality in the secondary and higher secondary education. Education budget for the last few fiscal years has five development programmes as shown in Table 13. Stipends for female students of classes VI to X in all Upazilas are being awarded since 1993 to promote female education, empower women and ensure participation of women in development pursuits. The female students up to class XII were exempted from tuition and the schools were compensated by the government for the loss of tuition. Moreover, they are provided additional financial assistance for purchasing books as well as payment of examination fees.

Table 13: Secondary Girls' Stipend Projects: Number of Beneficiary Girls and Institutions

Name of Project	Donor	No. of Institutions	No. of Girls
Female Secondary Stipend project (FSSP)	GOB	13,206	2,564,577
Female Secondary School Assistance Project (FSSAP)	IDA and GOB	5,556	973,407
Secondary Education Sector Improvement Project (SESIP)	ADB and GOB	2,265	467,818
Female Secondary Education Project (FESP)	NORAD	811	173,783
Higher Secondary Female Education Project (HSFEP)	GOB	3,954	238,046
Total (All Projects)		21,027	4,191,058

Source: BANBEIS and DSHE, cited in *Teaching Quality Improvement in secondary Education Project: Final Report to ADB*, January 2004, p.17.

The Female Secondary School Assistance Project, Phase II (FSSAP II), funded by IDA and GOB, has three major components and ten sub-components aimed at addressing aspects of quality in secondary education, access and retention of girls and strengthening management, accountability and monitoring. A project to increase employment of female teachers in secondary schools, called PROMOTE, supported by the European Union, also includes other related quality improvement inputs. Under the project, female teachers are encouraged to receive B.Ed training. Eleven Teacher Training Colleges and 250 hostels have been constructed for female teachers in Upazila towns. It encourages schools to appoint female teachers by rewarding them with grants for educational materials and

school renovation, as well as salary support for a year in newly created posts to which women are appointed. Because of all these affirmative budgetary measures, enrollment of female students in the secondary and higher secondary schools and colleges increased very remarkably.

In the Dakhil and Alim level madrasa (which are uniform with secondary level education to a large extent) also, female students' enrollment has risen remarkably. During the period between 1998-2002, enrolment of female students in this level increased by about 55 per cent whereas in the same level (secondary and higher secondary level) in the general education system, female students' enrollment increased by about 26 per cent.

Table 14: Enrolment in the Secondary and Higher Secondary level madrasah (Dakhil and Alim) by sex of students, 1998-2002

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	746953 (57.08)	561624 (42.92)	1308577 (100.00)
1999	881177 (58.34)	629173 (41.66)	1510350 (100.00)
2000	897226 (58.07)	647914 (41.93)	1545140 (100.00)
2001	902414 (52.14)	828236 (47.86)	1730650 (100.00)
2002	898333 (50.88)	867125 (49.12)	1765458 (100.00)
Rate of increase in the number of student over the period between 1998-2002	20.26	54.51	34.91

Source: BANBEIS 2003

But women could not sustain this rate upto completion of the secondary level education. Therefore, there is a gender gap in the

completion rate. About 66 percent male population and a little more than 34 per cent of female population completed education up to secondary and higher secondary education (population census 2001). Wide gender gap also remains among the students appearing in the SSC examination. Among the total students, who appeared in the SSC examination in 2003, about 45 per cent were female students (Table 15). Number of female students appearing in the SSC examination increase by only 12 per cent over the five years time period. But during the same time period, number of female students enrolled in the secondary schools increased by about 26 per cent. It appears from this fact that a large number female students enrolled in the secondary schools can not complete secondary level education. Another fact worth noticing from Table 15 is that the result of both male and female students worsened as time passes on. This fact clearly reveals that quality of secondary education worsened.

Table 15: Number of Examinee and Results of SSC Examination, 1999-2003

Year	Examinees			% of passes		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	837220 (100.00)	474345 (56.66)	362875 (43.34)	55.40	53.60	54.62
2000	918045 (100.00)	515172 (56.12)	402873 (43.88)	42.71	40.15	41.58
2001	786220 (100.00)	451965 (57.49)	334255 (42.51)	36.29	33.77	35.22
2002	1005937 (100.00)	564913 (56.16)	441024 (43.84)	42.95	37.72	40.66
2003	921024 (100.00)	511401 (55.53)	409623 (44.47)	37.76	33.60	35.91
Rate of increase/decrease in 2003 over the year 1999	10.00	7.81	12.88	17.64	22.00	18.71

There is also a wide gender gap in school attendance rate. Absenteeism among the girl students is high mainly because of insecurity of commuting to and from schools and absence of socially congenial atmosphere in the schools. In a traditional culture bound society like Bangladesh, adolescent girls are not allowed to study in co-education system. Most of the secondary level girl children belong to adolescent age group. But there are few girls' secondary schools. In 2002, only about 19 per cent of total secondary schools were girls' schools (BANBEIS 2003). It has been observed that during the period between 1998 and 2002, female students' enrollment in secondary level education is much higher than that of male students. But during that period, not a single new public secondary school was built for girls although on private initiative, 542 secondary schools were built only for girls. But still the number of secondary schools for girls is very small. During the period between 1998 and 2002, the number of female secondary school increased by little more than 26 per cent while the number of female Dakhil and Alim institution increased by about 42 per cent (Table 16).

Table 16: Number of Secondary Schools (Junior+High) and Dhakhil and Alim Madrasah, 1998-2002

Year	No. of Secondary School			No. of Dhakhil + Alim		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
1998	12082 (83.22)	2436 (16.78)	14518 (100.00)	4404 (88.68)	562 (11.32)	4966 (100.00)
1999	12648 (81.81)	2812 (18.19)	15460 (100.00)	5296 (88.80)	668 (11.20)	5964 (100.00)
2000	12846 (81.72)	2874 (18.28)	15720 (100.00)	5413 (88.71)	689 (11.29)	6102 (100.00)
2001	13145 (81.31)	3021 (18.69)	16166 (100.00)	5716 (88.24)	762 (11.76)	6478 (100.00)
2002	13483 (81.41)	3079 (18.59)	16562 (100.00)	5844 (88.00)	797 (12.00)	6641 (100.00)

Rate of increase in the number of schools over the period between 1998-2002	11.60	26.40	14.07	32.70	41.8	33.73
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Source: BANBEIS 2003

5.1.3. Extent of Gender Gap in Tertiary Education

As of 2002, the major components of tertiary education network in Bangladesh are 21 public general and specialized universities, 52 private universities, 1500 colleges of different kinds affiliated with the National University as well as the Bangladesh Open University. Institutes for professional education are also included in this network. Number of students in the tertiary level educational institutes also increased over the period between 1998 and 2002 (Table 17). Table 17 shows that between 1998 and 2002, the number of students have increased more than four-fold. But lion share of this increase has been contributed by the private sector. Like primary and secondary education sectors, in the tertiary education sector also, private colleges and Universities have grown in number and in enrollment rapidly. The politics-free environment in contrast to public universities, assurance of completing the courses of studies within the designated time, might have attracted a growing number of students to private universities. May be for the same reason, it has been found that share of female students in the total number of college and university students are higher in the private institutes. However, yet, participation in higher education is very low. Only 7 out of every 1000 persons participate in higher education. This rate is even lower for women. Therefore, gender gap in tertiary education remains very wide. Ratio of male and female students enrolled in the tertiary level

educational institutes is 61:39 (Table 17). Gender gap in the tertiary level madrasah education is even higher, although during the period between 1998 and 2002, female students in the tertiary level madrasah education increased by 40 per cent. During the same period, female students in the tertiary level general education increased by only 21 per cent (Table 17).

Table 17: Enrolment in the tertiary level educational institutes 1998-2002

Year	General education			Fazil and Kamil Madrasah		
	Male	Female	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	908085 (64.20)	506377 (35.80)	1414462 (100.00)	67264 (89.10)	8229 (10.90)	75493 (100.00)
1999	992817 (62.05)	607142 (37.95)	1599959 (100.00)	67665 (87.85)	9358 (12.15)	77023 (100.00)
2000	1039462 (60.24)	686139 (39.76)	1725601 (100.00)	69115 (87.76)	9637 (12.24)	78752 (100.00)
2001	936728 (61.03)	598105 (38.97)	1534833 (100.00)	66988 (85.95)	10948 (14.05)	77936 (100.00)
2002	955242 (60.89)	613429 (39.11)	1568671 (100.00)	68413 (85.62)	11492 (14.38)	79905 (100.00)
Rate of increase in the number of student over the period between 1998-2002	5.2	21.2	10.9	1.71	40.00	5.84

Source: BANBEIS 2003

Discussion made so far clearly reveals that gender gap persists at various level of education at various extent and nature. National education budget fails to remove all these gaps although a large number of affirmative actions were undertaken during the last few fiscal years. Discussion further reveals that gender gap widens as the level of education rises up. Table 18 shows how this gender gap widens gradually with level of education. Thus, it is still a long way to go to eliminate gender gap from all spheres of education.

Table 18: Share of Male and Female Students at Various levels of Education, 2002

Level of Education	Male	Female	Total
Primary education	8841647 (50.35)	8720181 (49.65)	17561828 (100.00)
Junior secondary	3037439 (45.99)	3566738 (54.01)	6604177 (100.00)
Secondary	1593399 (49.21)	1644468 (50.79)	3237867 (100.00)
Higher secondary	746480 (61.94)	458692 (38.06)	1205172 (100.00)
Degree	440162 (67.54)	211549 (32.46)	651711 (100.00)
Masters	156222 (69.24)	69402 (30.76)	225624 (100.00)

Source: BANBEIS 2003

5.2 Role of Education Budget in Mainstreaming Women into Development process

It was found that in the education sector, allocation in the gender-sensitive projects increased from tk. 1698.5 in 2000-01 to tk. 2292.4 in 2004-05 (Table 4 presented earlier). However, during the same period allocation on the women-focused project in this sector increased from tk. 334.0 to only 344.8. It shows only a 3.2 per cent increase over the period between 2000-01 to 2004-05, whereas the same rate in case of gender sensitive projects is about 58 per cent (Table 4). It may be an indication that in this sector, marginality of women's issue is being eroded gradually and women are increasingly integrated in mainstream development of education sector rather than in some women-focused projects. But no target for women has been made in most of the gender sensitive ADPs undertaken in the education sector. Therefore, competing with men, women could achieve very little from the gender sensitive projects. For the present

study, Food for Education now Cash for Education Project has been evaluated to collect information on target group and achievement of this project. Findings of this evaluation show that this project benefited more boys than girls although there is a policy that female-headed household would get preference. It has been found that during the fiscal year 2003-2004, female students account for 48,1 per cent of total students enrolled in the primary school under Food for Education program.

5.3 Impact of National Education Budget on the Empowerment of Women

Impact of national education budget on women's empowerment has been measured in terms of economic, social and political empowerment of women. Economic empowerment of women has been assessed in terms of their labour force participation. It has also been assessed in terms of alleviation of income poverty and rise in wage rates since it was found that women's wage rate increases by 10% for each extra year's of education they obtained (Human Development in South Asia 1998).

Labour Force Survey (LFS), 2002-2003 of Bangladesh shows that the rate of female labour force participation, which was 18.1 percent in 1995-96 increased to 26.1 in 2001-03, whereas during the same period literacy rate of women increased by more than 15 per cent. It has been further found that unemployment rate among educated women is much higher than the same among the uneducated women (Table 19). The highest unemployment rate is observed for women with higher level education, while the lowest rate was for women having no education (Table 19). Thus, it is apparent that improvement in women's education could not empower them adequately to increase their labour force participation.

Table 19: Rate of unemployed population (aged 15 years and over) by level of education and sex, 2002

Level of Education	Male	Female	Total
No Education	3.4	3.6	3.4
Class 1 to Class V	3.1	4.3	3.3
Class VI to Class VIII	3.8	4.3	3.9
Class IX to Class X	5.7	5.2	5.6
SSC, HSC & equivalent	7.0	11.7	7,8
Degree and above	8.1	17.4	9.5
Others	8.9	15.7	9.6
All levels of education	4.2	4.9	4.3

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2002-2003

Improvement in the level of women's education also could not raise their wage rate adequately. Research shows that the level of education of the female garment workers increased to a large extent over the last few years (Paul-Majumder and Majumder 2003). It was found from this research that during the period between 1990 and 2003, average years of schooling of the female garment workers increased by about 3 years. But during the same period, nominal rate of increment in the female workers' pay was only 5 per cent whereas this increment should have been 30 per cent if women's wage rate increased by 10% for each extra year's of education. Thus, educated women could not raise their earnings at the same rate of their educational attainment, and as such they are not able to alleviate their income poverty adequately and thereby to be economically empowered.

However, education played a great role in empowering women socially. A large body of research shows that education empowers women to get access to health facilities and health knowledge. It was found that garment workers having more than primary education take self-protection against occupational hazards (Paul-Majumder 2003).

Education also empowers them to undertake precaution against any infectious diseases. Preliminary findings of an on-going project of BIDS reveal that education empowers girl children socially by making them aware about gender discrimination. Education also helps the girls children to construct gender ideas more favorably than the boy children.

Decision making power is most influential in making women powerful since this power touches the core of patriarchy that sanctions male control over resources and institutions of state and the family. Education is a dominant factor affecting decision-making power of women. Hence, it is expected that with the rise of educational level, decision making power of women will also be increased and they will have more access to political power and decision making both at state, institution and household level.

Of the four tiers of the government system of Bangladesh, local government (Union Parishad) lies at the lowest level. Union Parishad election in 1997 and 2002 brought about a significant change in the women's participation in the arena of governance and decision making. Approximately 13,000 women became the member of the Union Parishad. But it is very disappointing to know that about 20 per cent of women members do not have any education. In many cases, it was observed that women with some level of education lost the election to the women having no education. The presence of women in the cabinet, the highest decision making body, remains extremely low, ranging between 2 to 6. This situation remains the same in course of the last three decades of Bangladesh's political history, whereas during this period, educational attainment of women is remarkable. In other areas of decision making such as the bureaucracy and high level jobs also women's presence is negligible. As per recent

statistics, there is no woman among 22 secretaries and 95 additional secretaries. Only 13 (4.3%) women among 301 joint secretaries and 48 (6.5%) women among 734 deputy secretaries constitute infinitesimally small percentage of women in the civil service and the administration (Ministry of Establishment, August: 2004).

However, education has tremendous positive impact on the women's empowerment of decision making at household level. It has been found that women with more than higher secondary education have strong participation in the decision regarding continuation of their education, their participation in the job market, about their marriage etc.

Annual average growth rate of employed people aged 15 years and over by major occupation has been presented in Table 20. It is apparent from the table that during the period between 1999-2000 and 2002-2003 fiscal year, growth rate of women in the high level jobs is less than that rate of men. Whereas during the same period, growth rate of completion of higher education is higher among women than that among men. For women, the highest growth rate is registered for agriculture, fisheries and forestry, which do not require much education.

Table 20: Annual Average Growth Rate of Employed Persons Aged 15 Years and over by Major Occupation; 1999/2000 – 2002/2003

Major Occupation	Growth rate (%)		
	Male	Female	Both
Professional, Technical	3.4	25	3.2
Admn. Managerial	-18.9	-37.3	-20.1
Clerical workers	7.3	12.4	7.9
Sales workers	5.6	-13.5	4.3
Service workers	1.0	-8.4	-4.0
Agri., forest & fisheries	1.8	14.8	4.5
Production, transport workers & others	6.2	6.2	6.2
All occupations	3.5	7.6	4.4

Source: Labour Force Survey, 2002-2003

Section 6

Reasons behind the Inefficiency of National Education Budget of Bangladesh to Empower Women

It has been found earlier that education budget in Bangladesh has some inherent weaknesses. These weaknesses are greatly responsible for the inefficiency of education budget in achieving gender objectives. Women's direct share in the education budget is very small and competing with men, women could not achieve equal share from the gender sensitive development projects. But even a small amount of budgetary allocation can empower women if this amount is spent on projects that are very effective to eliminate gender gap in education and to raise the productivity of women.

How women were targeted in the gender sensitive development programs is also an indication of whether national education budget can empower women. Using all these indicators, an attempt has been made in this section to find out why national education budget could not empower women adequately. How women are targeted in the education budget is also an important issue in exploring the inefficiency of education budget in attaining gender goals.

6.1 Woman's agency Role in Development got very Little Priority in Preparing Development Programs in the Education Sector

Review of the ADPs in the education sector shows that woman's agency role in development got very little priority in preparing these development programmes. In most cases, women are looked at as an agent to development. Whatever importance women received in the

education sector was due to their recognition as the agent for educating the next generation. In the First Five-year Plan, the central argument in favour of women's education was that they are the mothers of the country's future leaders. It was rarely argued that women receive education since women have the basic right to education and this quality is necessary to increase their human resource capability, which is vital for their socio-economic development. There is a little change in this argument in the Second Five Year Plan. The Third and Fourth Plan gave some emphasis on the agency aspect of women's education together with emphasizing their role as agents for educating the future citizens of the country. Reduction of gender gap in the literacy rate in both rural and urban areas is highly emphasized only in the Fifth Five-year Plan. Because of non-recognition of women's agency and their potential, all budgetary allocations for women in the education sector have been directed towards traditional education that are necessary to make women good mothers rather than a good and skilled workers. In the fiscal year 2000-01 two programs namely 'Establishment of 3 New Polytechnic Institutes for Women at the Divisional HQ' and 'Establishment of Cantt. Public Schools & Colleges' were undertaken in the sphere on non-traditional education (Table 21). It indicates that women's agency is emphasized in the education budget to some extent. But implementation of these programs is not efficient. Only 60 per cent of allocated budgetary resources has been spent for the establishment of polytechnic institutes. But no allocation was made for the program on 'Establishment of Cantt. Public Schools & Colleges' in the revised budget. This program has been proposed again in the budget of the current fiscal year (20004-05) and Tk.1 crore has been proposed to be allocated for this program. Except these two measures, no other budgetary measures have been undertaken to

encourage women's participation in non-traditional education whereas non-traditional education is influential in augmenting women's potential in the labour market.

6.2 Gap between policy and allocation in the education Budget

There is a wide gap between policy and allocation in the education budget. It has been observed that in compliance with this objective, very few development programs were undertaken in the national budget. Except stipend program no other program has been undertaken for facilitating women's higher education during the Fifth Five-year Plan period. Five years have already been passed since the National Education Policy has been formulated. But very few of the strategies mentioned in this document have been undertaken for the development of women's education, and to achieve the objectives of national education policy. Except some scholarship facilities, no special fund for women's education has been created. Still now, no incentive (either budgetary or non-budgetary) is provided to the private sector for encouraging this sector's participation in women's education.

Security of commuting and accommodation of girl students are also influential factors facilitating women's higher education. In the fiscal year 2001-02, a program namely 'Establishment of a residential hall for 500 female students of Dhaka University' has been proposed. In the revised budget of this fiscal year, this program has been revised as 'Construction of Twin Hall for 1000 female Students of Dhaka University' and an amount of Tk.2.67 core has been estimated as project cost. But it is very disappointing to know that not a single taka is released for this program in the actual budget. Still now, no budgetary measures have been undertaken to remove insecurity of girl students' commuting, and also to facilitate their commuting to and

from schools. As a result, gender gap remains very wide at the higher secondary education level and above that level.

It has already been mentioned earlier that shortage of educational institutes only for women at the higher level education is one dominant obstacle to enrollment of women in the higher level educational institutes. Almost no facility for women's education has been provided in educational institutions to bring a large number of women under the umbrella of formal education, and inspire them to pursue education from primary to higher and professional levels. Findings of a on-going research of BIDS reveal that one of the influential reasons for dropout of the girl children from formal school is the absence of school nearby their residence. Author's field visit in an union of Rangpur reveals that in that union there is only one school and 11 madrasahs, where girl children have very little access. Examination of the education budget of last five fiscal years shows that very small amount is allocated for the establishment of new schools and colleges for girls. In the education budget of the fiscal year 2000-2001 three programs namely (1) Development of Newly Nationalized Girls College and Establishment of New Government Girls College; (2) Establishment of 3 New Polytechnic Institutes for Women at the Divisional HQ; (3) Establishment of Cantt. Public Schools & Colleges at Dhaka (for Girls only), Rajendrapur, Mymensingh and Sylhet Cantonments were undertaken. But very small amount (only about 15 per cent of proposed amount) was released for the implementation of these programs. As a result number of girls' colleges has not increased over time and as such drop out rate of girl students has improved little.

It has been found that in many cases, girl children have to leave school because of lack of facilities like separate toilet and common

room for girl students in the educational institutions and social security both in the school campus and outside school campus. Findings of the earlier mentioned on-going research of BIDS reveal that girl children are more eager than boy children to continue their study. But because of the lack of social security and existence of *pardah*, girls cannot continue their study. Budgetary allocation in the form of free tuition up to 12th class, scholarship for girl students and supplying of books free of cost have solved the problem of dropout due to poverty. But adequate budgetary allocation has not yet been made to increase the number of formal school so that distance between school and girl children's residence is narrowed down. Nearness of school to residence will solve the problem of social security and *pardah* to a large extent.

6.3. Nature of Gender-sensitive and Women-focused Education Projects

It is clear from the above analysis that women are looked at as an agent for development in the development programs even though there is a marked change in gender policy and gender objectives of the government. It is also clear from the above analysis that issue of women's development remains greatly welfare-oriented. Hence, it is assumed that the nature of the women-focused development projects will also be welfare-oriented. Welfare-oriented development projects have little impact on women's development and may marginalize women further rather than improving their status and access to resources. An attempt has been made in this sub-section to examine the nature of the development projects to find out whether the development programs undertaken during the last five fiscal years affected women's development. An attempt has also been made to find out whether nature of development programs changed over time.

An examination of the list of women-focused development programs presented in Table 21 showed that nature of women-focused education project changed little over the five year time period. It can be noticed from the table that 2 out of 8 projects undertaken in 2000-01 were on the establishment of non-traditional educational institutes for women. But in the budget of current fiscal year (2004-05) the number of such project increased to three. A new project namely 'SSC/HSC (vocational) and Business Management Female Stipend Project' has been undertaken in the education budget of the fiscal year 2003-04. Efficient implementation of this project is supposed to have highly positive impact on women's empowerment since this facility will encourage women to participate in vocational and management skill training which in turn raises their productivity.

But the budgetary allocation for the women-focused projects as found earlier is very small. An examination of a women-focused project namely 'Female secondary School Assistance Project' shows that it is a very important step towards empowering women since it has the following pragmatic objectives:

- (a) To increase the number of girl's enrollment between grades 6 to 10 and assist them to pass their SSC/ Dakhil examination
- (b) To increase the number of Secondary education teachers in the project schools and raise the proportion of female teachers
- (c) To provide occupational skill training
- (d) To promote a supportive Community environment for women's education
- (e) To enhance the attractiveness of school

This project was first undertaken during the fiscal year 1993-94. But in no fiscal year, actual expenditure on this project exceeded Tk. 100

crore. Therefore still now, only the first and second objective have been implemented to some extent. Implementation of the objective – ‘To provide occupational skill training’ is very influential in empowering women. But no attempt has yet been undertaken to implement this objective. Similarly,

Table 21: List of Women-Focused Development Programs in the Education and Religion Sector, Fiscal Years 2000/2001-2004/2005

Financial Year	Name of Project	Proposed	Revised	Expenditure	% Change
2000-2001	Recruitment of women Teacher in Rural Non-Govt. Secondary School	24.40	0.186	0.092	49.46
	Award of Stipend for Girl Students of Higher Secondary level	0.01	-	-	-
	Award of Stipend at Secondary level for Expansion or Female Education	17.79	-	-	-
	Female Secondary Stipend Project (Class VI-X)(2 nd phase)	180.00	195.10	194.00	99.44
	Female Secondary	55.50	0.967	0.927	95.86

	School Assistance Project (FSSAP) (2 nd phase)				
	Development of Newly Nationalized Girls College and Establishment of New Government Girls College	6.48	5.00	4.97	99.40
	Establishment of 3 New Polytechnic Institutes for Women at the Divisional HQ.	3.60	0.018	0.018	100.00
	Establishment of Cantt. Public Schools & Colleges at Dhaka (for Girls only) Rajendrapur, Mymensingh and Sylhet Cantonments.	6.07	-	-	-
	Female Secondary Education Stipend Project (Phase-II)	-	20.00	19.20	96.00
2001-2002	Female Secondary School	132.00	103.22	86.14	83.45

	Assistance Project (2 nd Phase)				
	Recruitment of women Teacher in Rural Non-Govt. Secondary School	36.03	26.22	11.30	43.13
	Development of Newly Nationalized Girls College and Establishment of New Government Girls College	9.00	6.00	5.99	100.00
	Female Secondary Stipend Project (VI-X)	200.00	198.00	197.99	100.00
	Establishment of 3 New Polytechnic Institutes for Women at the Divisional HQ.	17.00	2.00	0.99	49.50
	Establishment of a residential hall for 500 hundred female students of Dhaka university.	1.50	0	0	0
	Female Secondary	20.00	8.72	7.72	88.53

	Education Stipend Project (Phase-II)				
	Establishment of Cantt. Public Schools & College at Dhaka (for Girls only)	3.03	-	-	-
	Stipend for the Female of Higher Secondary Level	-	20.79	20.79	100.00
	Female Secondary Education Stipend Project (Phase-III)	-	0	0	0
2002-2003	Recruiting of Women Teachers in Rural Non-Govt. Secondary Schools	14.00	24.50	21.06	85.96
	Female Secondary Stipend Project (VI-X)	200.00	201.49	201.47	100.00
	Female Secondary School Assistance Project	127.00	124.00	97.47	78.60
	Female Secondary Education	25.00	28.00	21.74	77.64

	Stipend Project (2 nd Phase)				
	Higher Secondary Female Stipend Project (2 nd Phase)	40.00	38.66	37.57	97.18
	Development of Newly Nationalized Girls College and Establishment of New Government Colleges	14.00	10.30	10.30	100.00
	Establishment of 3 New Polytechnic Institutes for Women at the Divisional HQ.	28.86	7.38	3.58	48.51
2003-2004	Recruiting of Women Teachers in Rural Non-Govt. Secondary Schools	5.52	29.85	n.a	n.a
	Female Secondary Stipend Project (VI-X)	165.69	124.27	n.a	n.a
	Female Secondary School Assistance	136.15	143.30	n.a	n.a

	Project				
	Higher Secondary Female Stipend Project	29.19	21.90	n.a	n.a
	SSC/HSC (vocational) and Business Management Female Stipend Project	4.34	-	n.a	n.a
	Development of Newly Nationalized Girls College and Establishment of New Government Colleges	5.52	-	n.a	n.a
	Establishment of 3 New Polytechnic Institutes for Women at the Divisional HQ	43.95	8.81	n.a	n.a
	<u>Technical Assistance Project</u> Advocacy on Adolescent Reproductive Health through Peer group	1.63	1.53	n.a	n.a
2004-2005	Recruiting of Women Teachers in Rural Non-	32.40	n.a	n.a	n.a

	Govt. Secondary Schools				
	Female Secondary Stipend Project (VI-X)	135.00	n.a	n.a	n.a
	Female Secondary School Assistance Project	96.34	n.a	n.a	n.a
	Higher Secondary Female Stipend Project	37.69	n.a	n.a	n.a
	Establishment of 3 New Polytechnic Institutes for Women at the Divisional HQ.	36.71	n.a	n.a	n.a
	Establishment of a Girls Cadet College at Feni	1.00	n.a	n.a	n.a
	<u>Technical Assistance Project</u> Advocacy on Adolescent Reproductive Health through Peer group	3.38			

Sources: Annual Development Programme, various fiscal years, Planning Commission, Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.

The implementation of the project 'SSC/HSC (vocational) and Business Management Female Stipend Project' proposed in the education budget of fiscal year 2003-04 is supposed to have high positive impact on the skill level of women. But in the revised budget, no resources were allocated for this project and this project is eliminated from the current year's (2004-05) budget.

An examination of the nature of the gender-sensitive development projects undertaken during the last five fiscal year, reveals that projects undertaken during the fiscal year 2000-01 is more women-friendly than those undertaken during the current fiscal year. It as been observed from the ADP that most of the gender-sensitive projects undertaken in the fiscal year 2000-01 were related to development of primary education where women have access. But a large number of the gender-sensitive projects undertaken in the current fiscal year are related to development of higher education where women have very little access. Women can get their share from these projects only if they are set as fixed target for the project. But most of the gender-sensitive projects do not have any target for women. Another thing, which is worth noticing from ADPs is that in each fiscal year, a considerable amount of budgetary funds has been allocated for *madrasah* education (religious education). The earlier discussion has revealed that during the last few years, madrasah education sector developed tremendously both in terms of enrollment and number of educational institutes due to budgetary allocation and inflow of huge private fund into this sector. It has also been found earlier that girl students' enrollment in madrasah educational institutes increased at much higher rate than that of boy students. This education limits the job market of women to a large extent and thus affects their economic empowerment negatively.

6.3.1 Absence of Budgetary Measures to Encourage and Facilitate Women' access to Vocational and Technical Education

At the present level of socio-economic development of Bangladesh, demand for post secondary education is very limited. Therefore, it has been found that the unemployment rate among the people having post secondary education is much higher than the unemployment rate among the people having less than secondary level education. The present level of Bangladesh economy needs vocational and technical education (VTE) more than general education. Hence, the Government of Bangladesh has undertaken various programs on VTE. VTE programs regulated by the Board of Technical Education attached to the Ministry of Education offers courses of one to four years duration after the junior secondary level (grade eight). The courses are offered by vocational training institutes, polytechnics, commercial institutes, technical training centers and specialized institutes. Most of these are in the public sector under the supervision of the Directorate of Technical Education. Private sector institutions are increasing, especially in the IT sector and in response to opportunity for work abroad as skilled and semi-skilled workers.

Vocational courses as part of SSC and HSC and business course at the HSC level has been introduced by the Directorate of Technical Education. In addition, diploma level courses (post-class 10) are offered in some 600 institutions, large majority of which is in the private sector, including the higher secondary schools or colleges. The Ministry of Labour and Employment offers skill training in the Institute of Marine Technology and 13 Technical Training Centres (TTCs). Female student's enrollment in vocational education is meager although during the last few years women's enrollment in the vocational training institutes increased tremendously. Over the past

five year period, the rate of increase of female enrollment is very significant and is much higher than that of the enrolment of male students. It has been estimated that during the period between 1998 and 2002, enrolment of female student increases by about 138 per cent whereas during the same period, enrollment of male students increased by 67 per cent. But even after the higher rate of enrollment, female students comprise only 25 per cent of total students enrolled in the vocational institutes (BANBEIS 2003). It is mainly because of the fact that the number of vocational public institutes is very few and has not increased much over time. Moreover, there are very few budgetary measures to facilitate women's participation in vocational education. Except the programs 'Establishment of 3 New Polytechnic Institutes for Women at the Divisional HQ' and 'SSC/HSC (vocational) and Business Management Female Stipend Project', there are no other programmes facilitating women's access to vocational education.

But it has been observed that women are very eager to have vocational training. Their eagerness is revealed when it is found that the enrollment of female students in the private vocational institutes is far more than that in the public institutes (Table 22). It can be noticed from Table 22 that during the period between 1998 and 2002, number of public vocational institutes increased by only about 10 per cent, whereas during the same period the number of private vocational training institutes increased by more than 172 per cent. It can be noticed from Table 22 that gender equality in enrolment is achieved more in the private institutes than that in the public institutes. But women have very limited access to private institutes since cost of education in these institutes are very high. In a patriarchal society such as Bangladesh, parents are generally reluctant to spend on women's education and training. Women themselves also little afford

to take training as in most cases, they have no access to financial resources. Thus, much of women's access to vocational education depends on the availability of public schools.

Table 22: Number of Students Enrolled in the Technical and Vocational Institution by sex of students and types of institutes: 1998-2002

Year	types of institutes						No. of Institution	
	Public Institutes			Private Institutes				
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	Public	Private
1998	37004 (89.38)	4397 (10.62)	41401 (100.00)	22696 (69.47)	9972 (30.53)	32668 (100.00)	144	516
1999	37134 (87.59)	5263 (12.41)	42397 (100.00)	44610 (67.90)	21090 (32.10)	65700 (100.00)	143	933
2000	40116 (88.07)	5434 (11.93)	45550 (100.00)	47813 (67.82)	22692 (32.18)	70505 (100.00)	143	994
2001	42332 (87.92)	5814 (12.08)	48146 (100.00)	56379 (67.65)	26956 (32.35)	83335 (100.00)	144	1272
2002	37312 (86.91)	5622 (13.09)	42934 (100.00)	62545 (68.67)	28537 (31.33)	91082 (100.00)	157	1405
Rate of increase in the number over the period between 1998-2002	1.00	27.86	3.70	175.58	187.17	179.81	9.72	172.28

Source: BANBEIS 2003

It was found that not only the number of public vocational institutes is very small but also the number of female teacher and female vocational institutes is very small. Female teachers comprise only about 13 per cent of total teachers employed in the public vocational institutes. In the private institutes, female teachers account for about 25 per cent. Number of women teacher is an influential factor affecting women's participation in vocational training, since their participation depends largely on the socially congenial atmosphere.

Information collected from a driving school run by a woman revealed that the number of woman trainee increases tremendously, if the training school is managed by a woman. More than 50 per cent of total trainees in this school were found to be women. The woman director of this school reported that women come to this school in larger number because of socially congenial training atmosphere. Same information was also obtained in case of training on information technology (IT). It has been found that female trainees are more in those schools where there are women trainers. In some private IT training schools, most trainers were found to be women. But it was observed that women teachers are not employed in the IT schools mainly due to non-availability of trained women. No woman IT engineer was found. Because of all these reasons women have very limited access to information technology whereas, in the modern world, access to IT is a source of empowerment. Women's very limited access to IT and other vocational training is one of the dominant reasons behind the inefficiency of education budget to empower women economically.

It has been observed that not only women's access to vocational and technical knowledge is very low but also there is wide gender gap in the nature of skill training offered to male and female students in the vocational institutes. It has been observed that the skill trainings the female students are offered are very women specific. It is found that the Department of Youth Development in the Ministry of Youth and Sports provides training to women only on dress-making, and block and batik printing while the same department provide training to men on livestock, poultry, fish culture, computer, electronics, electric wiring, refrigeration and air conditioning. However, the Ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs provides short courses for women in some non-traditional areas like plumbing, and electronics. This

ministry also provides training on poultry, dairy, livestock and food processing, which can create very gainful employment for women if they can undertake large-scale business using these skills. But it has been observed that almost none of the large scale poultry, dairy or livestock firm is owned by women.

Very few SSC and HSC level girls' schools were found to have computer and vocational course, whereas vocational courses as part of SSC and HSC and business course at the HSC level has been introduced by the Directorate of Technical Education. It has been found further that most of the girls' school do not have necessary facilities for science and other professional education where objective of national education policy is to encourage girls to study science and other professional education (like, engineering, medical, law and business, etc). No budget allocation has been made to achieve this objective.

6.3.2 Lack of women's access to Professional Education

Lack of women's access to professional education is an important reason behind inefficient performance of education budget to empower women. It is true that in response to social as well as market demand, the professional education system has not grown much in Bangladesh. But yet compared to men, women's access to this education is meager (Table 23). No budgetary measure was undertaken to facilitate women's access to professional education and thereby to eliminate gender gap in this education and to empower women to undertake gainful jobs.

Professional institutes in Bangladesh increased from 164 in 1998 to 190 in 2002. But all this increase is attributable to the private sector. During this period private professional institutes increased from 102

to 128. But, during the same period the number of public professional institutes remained the same at 62. Between 1998 and 2002, the number of students had increased by only about 13 per cent, whereas during the same period, the number of students at the university level increased more than four-fold. Like other educational institutes, in the professional institutes also the rate of increase in the female students' enrollment (17 per cent) is higher than male students (9 per cent). But gender gap both in enrollment and nature of professional education remains wide. For this reason, even with professional education, women are not adequately empowered to undertake gainful jobs. It has been found that women comprise 35 per cent of total students enrolled in the professional institutes in 2002. But professional education offered to women is very gender specific. Table 23 shows that in the nursing college and nursing training institutes, more than 95 per cent of total students are women. But in the Bangladesh Institute of Technology (BIT) and Textile Technology College (TTC), female students constitute only about 5 per cent and 6 per cent respectively (Table 23). It is mainly because of the fact that traditionally, nursing and textile technology are viewed as women's job and men's job respectively. But this gender idea about professional education affects women's economic empowerment greatly, because the jobs traditionally identified as women's jobs are less remunerative than men's jobs.

However, women could enter into the Medical colleges and medical institutes in large number although traditionally this education was also viewed as masculine. Table 23 shows that women constitute more than 41 per cent of total students enrolled in the medical colleges in the year 2002. This share remains almost the same over the period between 1998 and 2002. (Table 23). Therefore, gender gap in the enrollment also remains the same overtime.

Table 23: Male and Female Students' Share (%) in the Total Enrollment in various professional Institutes: 1998-2002

Year	Professional Institutes							
	Bangladesh Institute of Technology		Textile Technology College		Nursing Training Institutes		Share in the Medical College	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1998	95.33	4.67	95.79	4.21	8.58	91.42	59.20	40.80
1999	95.26	4.74	94.77	5.23	6.68	93.32	56.22	43.78
2000	95.19	4.81	94.83	5.17	6.73	93.27	59.55	40.45
2001	95.12	4.88	93.78	6.22	5.33	94.67	59.51	40.49
2002	95.04	4.96	93.79	6.21	4.74	95.26	58.73	41.27

Source: BANBEIS 2003

Examination of ADPs undertaken in the education budget during the last five fiscal years reveals that no program was undertaken to increase women's participation in professional education. No fiscal incentive was provided to encourage women to undertake professional training.

6.3.3 Non-formal Education is not Conducive to Undertake Gainful Employment

The Government of Bangladesh has failed to bring a large number of her populations, particularly women population under the umbrella of formal education. Therefore, the government launched a major non-formal education program in the 1990s with a focus on raising basic literacy of the poor unable to participate in formal education. Priority was given to achieving universal coverage of youth and young adults in the age range of 11 to 45 years. Now, non-formal education is an

integral part of education system in Bangladesh. This education contributes greatly to raise the literacy rate of population, particularly the literacy rate of women population of Bangladesh. Because, more women than men undertake non-formal education since more women than men live bellow the poverty line. It is also because of the fact that due to various socio-cultural reasons, more girls than boys do not have access to formal education. Moreover, non-formal education has been carried out by NGOs and it has been found that activities of NGOs benefit women more than men.

Non-formal education helps greatly to eliminate illiteracy. But this education does not help one to get job in the formal sector. It has been found from a UNICEF study on child labour that non-formal education provided to children retrenched from garment industry due to Harkin bill did not help them get better job and promotion in the job. With informal education, they also could not raise their wage level as non-formal education is not accepted in the formal sector. Development of non-formal education among women is another reason for the inefficiency of education budget to empower women.

6.4 Incompetence of the WID Focal Points

The responsibility of integrating gender issue in the education budget lies with WID Focal Points employed in the Ministry of Education. Analysis in the present research shows that the WID Focal Points failed to perform his/her responsibility.

Discussion with WID Focal Points reveals that there are a number of reasons behind this failure. Firstly, the Focal Points never got the proper leadership from the ministry of Women's and Children's Affairs. Most of the Focal Points have no clear-cut idea about their responsibilities. Most of them also do not have any clear idea about

the WID issue. It is mainly due to the fact that the focal points did not receive proper training on gender planning. Most of the officers at the focal points have not attended any training or seminar on gender issues or gender equality. It is very surprising to know that one focal point in the education sector does not know that he is performing the role of focal point.

Terms of reference for the Focal Points have recently been spelled out. But what was lacking most was a clear policy and mechanism for implementation at the grass-root level. Investigation into the focal point system reveals that most of the focal points are manned overwhelmingly by male officials who have little sympathy for WID issues.

It was found that in most cases there is no continuity of the job of focal points. Officials in the focal point were frequently transferred from one post to another. The designated persons were usually more than fully occupied with their own day to day work and were often not motivated to take additional responsibility as focal points. It is a serious drawback of the focal point system since due to temporary nature of the job, focal points can not grow a commitment towards gender issues. It was observed that none of the WID Focal Points played a strong part in their own ministries mainly because of this non-commitment. So, whenever the ministries plan their projects, they fail to integrate women with these projects.

Section 7

Discussion and Recommendations

Discussion and analysis in this study have shown that the national education budget of Bangladesh has failed to empower women to a large extent. Budgetary resources for women are directed towards those development programs, which produces low level of human capital and as such education helps women little to get gainful job and to participate in the decision making process. It was further observed that despite commitment in various national and international documents, gender gap could not be eliminated from all levels of education. Gap widens steadily as level of education rises up. Moreover, it has been found that gender gap in educational attainment in terms of school attendance and successful completion of schools, college and university is very wide. As a result, gender subordination persists in all spheres of life, which in turn hinders women in gaining empowerment. Under this situation, following measures and strategies are recommended to make the national education budget a powerful instrument to enable women to gain socio-economic empowerment adequately.

1. Women's potential as persons should be recognized

It has been found from the present study that one of the dominant reasons for not empowering women through education budget is non-recognition of their agency role in development. Hence, women's agency role should be recognized in preparing any development program. Following the national education policy of Bangladesh, main aim of education should be to develop self-confidence, human dignity, knowledge and skill among women, since these qualities lie

at the root of empowerment of any person. Women as a whole should be targeted in the national budget instead of targeting only as distressed and poor women.

2. Adequate allocation should be made in the education budget to establish more primary and secondary girl schools

Discussion in the present study shows that there is no gender gap in the enrollment in the primary and secondary schools. But wide gender gap in the drop out and completion rate is visible. Parents enroll their children in the schools in large number to get the benefit of primary school stipend programs; female secondary stipend program and female secondary school assistance program. But, in most cases, they cannot let their girl children to attend school regularly and complete full cycle of education due to various social problems that arise mainly due to long distance between school and residence. It has been found from the present study that the number of students per public primary school is more than 300, whereas in the private primary school this number is less than 100. This crowdedness in the public schools also create some social problems for girl students. Establishment of more primary and secondary schools can solve these problems to a large extent. Therefore, adequate allocation should be made in the education budget to establish more primary and secondary girl schools. These schools should be dispersed so that distances between school and residence narrows. It has been found that private initiative is very encouraging in the primary education sector. Fiscal incentive in the form of tax rebate and tax exempt should be provided to the private sector to encourage more private initiatives to establish both primary and secondary schools.

3. Budgetary expenditure for skill development for women must be increased in the education budget

Discussion in the present study shows that all women-focused development programs undertaken in the education sector direct women towards traditional education, which can not empower women to undertake gainful jobs. Hence, to empower women economically, budgetary expenditure for skill development for women must be increased in the annual budget. Women should be empowered in such a way so that they can be involved in highly productive and remunerative activities. Therefore, Skill training program undertaken for women in the education sector should be in non-traditional skill Training programs for electronic, driving, information technology (IT), mechanical technology, garment manufacturing etc. More and more training programs like this should be undertaken for women instead of undertaking training programs for handicraft, tailoring etc. For this purpose, more development programs for establishing polytechnic and IT schools and colleges should be undertaken in the education budget. These schools and colleges should be dispersed up to village level. It has been found that private initiative is very encouraging in the education sector. Policy of providing fiscal incentive in the form of tax rebate and tax waive should be undertaken to encourage more participation of private sector.

The program named “Establishment of 3 New Polytechnic Institutes for Women at the Divisional HQ” should be implemented efficiently. It has been found that in each and every fiscal year, actual expenditure on this project is far bellow the revised amount earmarked for this project. The program named ‘SSC/HSC (vocational) and Business Management Female Stipend Project’ which was undertaken in FY2003-04 and left in FY2004-05 without implementation should be

implemented. To raise the computer literacy of girl students, the policy of introducing vocational courses as part of SSC and HSC and business course at the HSC level in each and every girl's schools should be implemented with care.

4. Measures should be undertaken to increase women's enrollment in the higher education

Till now, measures were undertaken to raise the women's share in the budgetary expenditure for primary and secondary education. As a result, at present, boys and girls are enrolling in primary education almost equally and girls are enrolling in primary education more than boys. But no budgetary measures were undertaken so far to raise women's enrollment in the tertiary level education. It has been found that one of the reasons for not empowering women through education budget is very low participation in the tertiary education, particularly in the higher level professional education. Therefore, measures should be undertaken to increase women's enrollment in higher education. Provision of free education for women up to twelve class and stipend program for women prove very efficient in increasing women's enrollment in secondary and higher secondary education. Similar steps should be undertaken to make the tertiary education for women free. In addition, stipend and scholarship program should be undertaken to encourage women to undertake skill training and higher education. Tertiary education should also be made free for the poor brilliant girl students. Development program has to be undertaken in the budget to establish Girls College at the thana level.

5. Allocation should be made in the education budget to ensure social security of commuting of girl students

Preliminary findings of an on-going research of BIDS reveal that in spite of keen interest of continuing study, most girls in the rural areas can not do the same mainly due to lack of social security both in the educational institutes and in the street. It has been observed that their regular attendance in the schools is greatly affected by insecurity of commuting. Under this circumstance, both school attendance and completion rate of girls will increase if social security in the educational institutes and street is ensured. Therefore, a recommendation is made that resources should be allocated in the education budget for ensuring social security of girl students.

6. To increase the participation of women in the higher educations, budgetary allocation should be made to provide safe and secure transport facilities to girl students

Research shows that in many cases women cannot receive higher education or training for the lack of safe, secure and cheap transport facilities (Paul-Majumder and Khatun 1997; Paul-Maumder 2002). For the same reason, they also cannot participate in the more productive sectors in many cases. Hence, to increase women's enrollment in the higher education, adequate allocation should be made in the annual budget to ensure women's secure mobility.

7. Allocation should be made in the education budget to provide adequate safe, secure and cheap accommodation facilities for girl students

Provision of safe, secure and cheap accommodation facilities will increase women's ability to continue their study. Research shows that

due to the lack of safe and healthy housing facilities, women, in most cases did not participate in higher education and skill training. Thus, provision of safe and secure and healthy housing facility will play a big role in raising women's enrollment in higher education, particularly in the professional education and skill training. A development program namely "Establishment of a residential hall for 500 female students of Dhaka university" was undertaken in the education budget of the fiscal year 2001-02. But no fund was released for this project. Care should be undertaken to implement this project and to undertake more such projects in the development budget of the education sector.

8. Fixation of target for Women in the Gender-sensitive Education Projects

Findings of the study showed that woman's share in the gender-sensitive projects also depends on whether there is any target fixed for women in those projects. Therefore, gender-sensitive development programs must have fixed target for women to ensure women's due share in those projects. Gender desegregated data should be generated for this purpose. Currently used format for collecting data should be changed and a guideline should be immediately formulated for this change.

9. More women-focused development projects should be undertaken to eliminate gender gap in Education

Development sectors, which are very influential, should have more gender-sensitive projects. In this regard, it is very urgent to undertake women-focused programs in the agricultural sector. Findings of the present study showed that the agricultural sector has no women-focused development programs in any of the fiscal years, whereas

agricultural sector is very influential in empowering women. Rural Development and Institution Sector, Water supply and Housing Sector, Transport and Communication sector, Oil, Gas and Natural Resources sector and Science and Technology sector are also very influential in empowering women. But in no fiscal year, these sectors have any women-focused development program. Women-focused program should be undertaken in all these sectors.

10. Focal point system should be strengthened

Training should be provided to the Focal Points to enhance their gender knowledge. Through this training, including other gender issues, Focal Points will learn about what does it actually mean by gender sensitive education budget, what is the necessity of preparing a gender sensitive education budget and how to achieve gender goals of the education sector through education budget. Clear cut strategy to integrate gender into the overall development programs of the education sector should be formulated and Focal Point of this sector should be involved in this formulation. Measures should be undertaken to ensure the continuity of the job of Focal Points. Policy should be undertaken to designate a person in the post of a Focal Point at least for five years.

11. Importance of Madrasah education, Mosque and Temple based education should be reassessed

It has been found from the present research that the number of both educational institute and students in madrasah education system have increased at a much faster rate than those in the general education system. It has been found further that rate of increase of female student is several times higher than that of male students. May be due to assurance of social security in the madrasah education system,

female students increase in this system so remarkably. Moreover, both budgetary allocation and private resources in this system of education are increasing tremendously. In the previous two education budget, there is also allocation for temple-based education. Therefore, more madrasah and temple-based educational units have been established very easily and this encourages parents to send their girl children to madrasah. Due to availability of resources, providing other facilities like food, cloth and safe accommodation to girl students was also possible. All these are essential factors affecting regular attendance in the school and completion of full cycle of education by women. But madrasah education could not achieve the national gender goal of empowerment of women. Job market becomes very limited to women with madrasah education. Their mobility is also narrowed down greatly whereas mobility is an indication of empowerment. Hence, there are ample reasons for the reassessment of effectiveness of madrasah education to attain gender goal of national education policy and MDG.

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