ENROLLMENT STATUS OF BRAC PRIMARY SCHOOL IN BANGLADESH: AN EVALUATION

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Abstract:

BRAC has been a pioneer in the education arena. It has been working in the domain of primary education for almost two decades. BRAC has improved access and quality education for a significant number of children in Bangladesh. This paper focuses on enrollment, status, attendance, completion and dropout position of the child (students) of BRAC Primary School. This study was based on two sets of interview schedule designed in the light of the objectives of the study. The study reveals that the students of BRAC School (grade-iii students) are in the age 9 to 12 years. Though most of the students of BRAC primary school come from lower middle class or poor family, their enrollment and completion rates are very good. Their dropout rate is very low but attendance rate is very high. Their learning status is also good. In this study, it was found that boys and girls enrollment rates are 37.18% and 62.82% in BRAC primary school respectively. Teacher's education level is not high-quality. Their salary is also poor. This paper draws some recommendations like Scholarship program; awareness program, more evaluation and monitoring program etc. need to be taken for BRAC Primary School.

Key words: Enrollment, Status, Completion, Attendance, Dropout, BRAC Primary School

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Introduction:

BRAC is a non-governmental development organization that was founded in early 1972 in Bangladesh. BRAC has been working in the domain of primary education for almost two decades. In the mid -1990s, the government used food ration and feeding programs to encourage attendance in already overcrowded government schools. While access to education increased, quality slowly declined. It was in this context that the BRAC began to explore ways to help children from its rural development program gain access to improved education (Abed, 2002).NGOs play an important role in promoting basic formal and non-formal primary education in Bangladesh. The largest single non-government primary education program is the BRAC Non-formal primary education program. BRAC started its experimental education program in 1985 with 22 one-room primary schools (BRAC Annual Report, 2008).The BRAC education program is now a leader in providing non-formal primary education to underprivileged children out of the formal education system. BRAC schools work to build the skills and confidence level of the children and motivate them to continue their education through the formal system. These schools are in one-room rented house. These schools are for children who enroll at age 8-10 and complete a five –year government curriculum in just four years (BRAC Annual Report, 2009).Each school typically consists of 30-33 students and one female teacher who is a local married woman with at least 10 years of schooling. BRAC develops textbooks and other material for up to grade iii following the national curriculum. Government textbooks are being used in grade IV and V. The school timings are flexible and are fixed according to needs. Children do not have to pay any fees. There is no long holiday or homework for the students. Each BPS has a school management committee made up of three: parents, a community leader and the teacher. The SMC and the other parents help maintain the school and ensure the children's regular attendance. Parents meetings are held once a month in each school to encourage guardians to take an interest in their children's education. According to BRAC Annual Report 2008, 38250 primary schools and 24750 pre primary schools have been established by BRAC, enrolling 1.18 million students and 0.70 million students respectively. 65% of them are girls. The schools have a drop-out rate of less than 5% (http:www.brac.net). BRAC also provides education for ethnic children. BRAC operates 2015 EEC schools with more than 49000 children from 42 ethnic communities in the north, northeast and southeast of Bangladesh (BRAC Annual report-2009). To improve the quality of education for its students, BPS begins with low quality inputs (e.g.

students, teachers, buildings), places them in a higher quality teaching and learning environment, ensures the inputs and environment come together by investing in pedagogic management, enlists a reliable, if modest, level of parent participation in governance. The study aims at examining child enrollment status of BRAC School.

Literature Review:

(Hornby, 2001): Enrollment indicates the act of officially joining a course, school etc; the number of people who do this: Enrollment is the first week of September, School enrollments are currently falling. Status indicates the legal position of a person, group or country: They were granted refugee status; the party was denied legal status. Women are only asking to be given equal status with men.

(Rashid, and chowdhury, 1994) made study on "An inside Case at two BRAC Schools in Matlab Thana". In this study they saw, local peoples help or hostility, local people's relationship with school, local leaders support, regular observation, to look after the teachers' and students, guardian-teacher regular conference etc. play an important role to develop the quality of the school. They suggested improving the above factors to develop the quality of the school. Further they suggested, program organizer need to be transferred after a mentioned time.

(Nath, Khan,.and Chowdhury,1994) made study on "Progress in basic competencies of NFPE and PEOC graduates over time". In this study they found 56.2% students of BRAC School acquired basic education and 59.1% students acquired ABC knowledge. NFPE students are better than PEOC students. AS a whole the students of BRAC School have been developed their basic efficiency. It was found, this rate was 58% in 1991.It was increased to 63% in 1994. This success was remarkable very much for the girl students of PEOC School. They did not put any suggestion in this study.

(Hossain, and Jahan, 2007) made a study on "A Study on the Accounting System of BRAC Education Program". They found, BEP follows the accrual basis of accounting or a modified form or key income and expenditure items. Most of the field offices are using Computer Aide Accounting Systems but the field office of Dhaka Urban does not have this system. The Regional Managers are coming to Head office to transfer the accounting documents. In the Head office

inter office data transmission process is not so strong. They suggested, more training and support should be provided to the employees of the BRAC Education Program. BRAC should enhance the collaboration with the GOB thoughtfully and sensitively to support BEP. Strong advocacy and information sharing in accounting systems should be introduced. BRAC should be given attention to qualitative issues in targeting, monitoring, evaluation, reporting and research.

Objectives of the Study:

The present study was undertaken with a view to achieving the following objectives:

1. To study the enrollment status of the students of BRAC school.

2. To identify completion and dropout position of the students of BRAC Primary School.

3. To examine the attendance position of the students.

4. To investigate overall status of the students of BPS.

5. To observe the teaching and learning materials of BPS.

Methodology:

The study was based on two sets of interview schedule designed in the light of the objectives of the study. One set of schedule was used for the teachers and the other one was used for the students. The researcher followed also Classroom Observation. A total number of 5 women teachers from 5 BRAC school, 38 boys and 62 girls (Students of class-iii/grade-iii) from 4 BRAC school of Shailkupa upozilla in Jhenaidah district were taken on a random basis as subjects for the present study. The researcher did not select the students of pre- primary school as a respondent because they acquired only ABC knowledge. The data were collected during the period from 10 February to 20 February in 2011. Further secondary data has been used here in this study. The secondary data has been collected from various Govt. and Non-Govt. sources like Related Websites, Journals, Books, Publications and Research Works etc. Statistical tools such as percentage, frequency table, arithmetic mean, standard deviation, t statistic and chi- square

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statistic were applied for analyzing data. Where $t = \dfrac{\overline{X1} - \overline{X2}}{\sqrt{\dfrac{S1^2}{n1} + \dfrac{S2^2}{n2}}}$ with degrees of freedom (df)

$=n1+n2-2$ Here n1 and n2 = Sample size and $\chi^2 = \sum \dfrac{\left(O - E\right)^2}{E}$ with degrees of freedom (df)=N-1

Here N, is the number of classes or Groups .Further in this study analysis of data (results) is presented using the software Ms-word and Calculator.

Analysis of Data and Findings:

Data were collected from the respondents (both teachers and students) in the form of questionnaire and interview method .First we analyze the teachers questionnaire**.** Here we find about enrollment, completion, dropout and attendance of the BRAC Primary School. It was found that all teachers of BRAC School are women. 100% of them are married. In this study teacher respondents are 5 in total. One teacher completed 10 years of schooling, one teacher completed HSC and 3 teachers completed SSC. It indicates, 20%, 20% and 60% of them completed 10 years of schooling, HSC and SSC respectively. From the selected 5 BRAC schools descriptive statistics of enrollment have been shown in the table-1 below:

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Enrolment of BRAC School by Gender:

T. S.	Boys		Girls		Boys		Girls	
	Number	%	Number	%	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.
5	58	37.18	98	62.82	11.6	1.14	19.6	2.07

Source: Field Survey-2011 and Own Calculation.

Table-1 shows that higher percentages of the girls (62.82%) are enrolled in the BRAC School. Boys are only 37.18%.Girls enrolments are higher than boys enrollment Girls average enrollment are also higher than Boys average enrollment. It indicates a significant change in the society.

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Table-2: Mean differences in Enrollment of BRAC School by Gender:

Gender	Mean	S.D.	t	P
Boys	11.6	1.14	7.58	.01
Girls	19.6	2.07		

Source: Own Calculation.   Here Level of significance=.01, DF=8

The results in table-2 reveal that there is a significant difference between boys and girls enrollment of BRAC School.

Table-3: Completion and dropout of BRAC school by Gender:

Gender	Enrolment	Completion	%	Dropout	%	χ^2	P
Boys	35	32	91.43	3	8.57	24.02	<.01
Girls	64	61	95.31	3	4.69	52.56	<.01

Source: Field Survey-2011 and Own Calculation

Here 3 schools are included; two schools are avoided because teachers of three schools gave the answer about completion (grade V) of the students. Here DF=1, D=Dropout

The results in the table-3 show that a significantly higher percentage of the boys and girls are completed their education (grade-v).Boy's completion and dropout rates are 91.43% and 8.57% respectively. On the other hand girl's completion and dropout rates are 95.31% and 4.69% respectively. Girl's status is better than boy's status. These differences are statistically significant. Child labor and early marriage is the responsible for the dropout of the students. Course curriculum is also responsible for the dropout, because course curriculum is hard for some of the students.

Table-4: Attendance of BRAC School by Gender:

T. S.	Factors	Total	Boys	%	Girls	%	χ^2	P
4	Enrolment	129	47	36.43	82	63.57	9.50	<.01
	Attendance	116	43	37.07	73	62.93	7.76	<.01

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Source: Field Survey -2011 and Own Calculation

Here 4 schools are included; one pre primary school is avoided. Here DF=1

The results in table-4 show that Boys and girls enrollment rates are 36.43% and 63.57% respectively. On the other hand boys and girls attendance rates are 37.07% and 62.93% respectively. These differences are statistically significant.

From the above analyzed data of the teachers' questionnaire, it is evident that BPS attributes high attendance and completion rates to the close relationship between the teacher and the students and to their close proximity to the school.

Now we analyze the students' questionnaire:

The student's respondents are 100 in number. All the students of BRAC School can read and write easily. Here all the students indicate 100 respondents from 4 schools.

Table-5: Age wise distribution of Respondents:

Age (in years)	No. of Respondents	(%)	χ^2	P
9	33	33%		
10	43	43%		
11	19	19%	32.96	<.01
12	05	05%		
Total	100	100%		

Source: Field Survey-2011 and Own Calculation. (Here DF=3)

The results in table -5 show that the highest percentage 43% of the respondents are in the age 10 years.33%, 19% and 05% of the respondents are in 9, 11 and 12 years respectively. These differences are statistically significant.

Table-6: The students learn their lesson according to the following way:

V	R	Q	N	χ^2	P
87%	07%	06%	0%	206.16	<.01

Source: Field Survey-2011 and Own Calculation.

Here DF=3 (V= Very enjoyable, R= Roughly enjoyable Q= Quite enjoyable N= Not enjoyable)

Table-6 shows that the students are comfortable with the topics delivered by their teachers. Most of the students (87%) learn their lesson with very enjoyable. These are statistically significant.

Table-7: The students get enjoy in the following subject very much:

Drawing	S. Sc.	Math.	Ananda Path	English	Bengali	Science	χ^2	L S
2%	2%	2%	24%	6%	64%	0%	230.41	P<.01

Source: Field Survey -2011and Own Calculation.

Here: Degrees of freedom =6, S. Sc. =Social Science

Table-7 shows that the highest percentages (64% students) of respondents get enjoy in Bengali very much. 24% students get enjoy in Ananda path very much. There is significant difference between observed distribution and expected distribution.

Table-8: Understand and learn chosen subject:

P	V	Some	N	χ^2	L S
13%	87%	0%	0%	209.52	P<.01

Source: Field Survey-2011 and Own Calculation

Here, P= Properly, V= Very Well, N= Not at all, DF=3

Table-8 shows that 87% students understand and learn the chosen subject very well. 13% students understand and learn the chosen subject properly. There is significant difference between observed distribution and expected distribution.

Table-9: Taking full participation in the class work:

Properly	Some	Not at all	χ^2	L S
85%	15%	0%	123.51	P<.01

Source: Field Survey-2011 and Own Calculation. Here DF=2

Table-9 shows that 85% students take full participation in the class work properly.15% students take some participation in the class work that is; sometimes they are engaged in group work or any other work in the class. There is significant difference between observed frequency and expected frequency.

From the above analyzed data of the students' questionnaire, it is evident clear that the quality of the students is good.

Table-10: Size of Income of the Respondents' Guardian:

Size of Income Per Year	No. of Respondent	% of Respondents	Average	χ^2	P
10001-20000	04	04%			
20001-30000	45	45%			
30001-40000	27	27%			
40001-50000	09	09%			
50001-60000	12	12%	36740	140	<.01
60001-70000	01	01%			
70001-80000	00	00%			
80001-90000	02	02%			
Total	100	100%			

Source: Field Survey-2011 and Own Calculation. Here DF=7

The results in table-10 show that 45% respondents' guardians' income are TK.20001-30000. 27% respondents' guardians' income are TK. 30001-40000. Their average income is 36740 taka. Most of the respondent's guardian's are in satisfaction of hunger stage. So their economic status is very low.

Table-11: Source of Inspiration of the Respondent for learning at home:

Source of Inspiration	No. of Respondents	% of Respondents	χ^2	P
Father	20	20%		
Mother	58	58%		
Brother	07	07%	100.5	.01
Sister	14	14%		
Other's	01	01%		
Total	100	100%		

Source: Field Survey-2011 and Own Calculation (Here DF=4)

The results in table -11 show that 58% of respondents get inspiration for learning at home from their respective mother. 20% of respondents get inspiration from their respective father. So the role of father and mother is very important for learning at home.

The researcher observed the classroom of the BRAC School. It was found that the teacher uses teaching materials to teach the students. BPS ensures that students receive slates, stationery, and a complete set of textbooks prior to the beginning of each new grade.

Recommendations:

On the basis of the findings in this study, the following recommendations may be drawn:

* More training and salary should be provided to the teacher of the BRAC Primary School.

* More teaching and learning materials should be provided to the BRAC School.

* More scholarship should be provided to the student of BRAC School.

* More evaluation and monitoring program need to be implemented.

* Awareness program needs to be taken for the guardian of the students to stop child labor and early marriage.

* Course curriculum should be easier.

Conclusion:

Bangladesh has been successful in increasing primary school enrolment. BRAC and other NGOs are playing an important role for the enrollment of primary school. Especially BRAC is the pioneer in this sector. It has a track record of providing good quality education. BRAC focuses on improved quality through improved education service delivery, management detail and finance. In this study, it was found that boys and girls enrollment rates are 37.18% and 62.82% in BRAC primary school respectively. Boys and Girls completion rates are 91.43% and 95.31% and Dropout rates are 8.57% and 4.69% respectively. Attendance of the students is very good. Quality of the students is excellent. Most of the students come from lower middle class or poor family.100% teachers of BRAC primary school are women. They are getting small salary. However, the biggest challenge for the primary education system in Bangladesh is to improve quality and continue to reach the underserved population. BRAC School is trying for this. In pursuit of making Bangladesh a great nation, let us work with BRAC towards giving child their much deserved education.

Abbreviation:

BRAC-Bangladesh Rural Advancement committee

BEP-BRAC Education Program

BPS-BRAC Primary School

DF- Degrees of freedom

EEC-Education for Ethnic Children

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GOB –Government of Bangladesh

HSC-Higher Secondary Certificate

NFPE-Non Formal Primary Education

NGOs-Non-Governmental Organizations

PEOC-Primary Education for Older Children

S.D. =Standard Deviation

SSC-Secondary School Certificate

T. S. =Total School.

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Appendix:

Name of the BRAC School (primary school) where the researcher went to collect data to conduct this research.

Name of BRAC school (of Shailkupa upozilla in Jhenaidah district)	No. of Teachers (Respondents)	No. of Respondents (Students)	
		Boys	Girls
Aushia south para brac school	1	9	20
Aushia madhya para brac school	1	8	12
Mali para brac school	1	11	16
Satgachi brac school	1	10	14
Aushia madhya para brac school (Pre-primary School)	1	---	---
Total=	05	38	62

*** Total teacher respondent =5

*** Total student respondent= (38+62) =100