



2006/ED/EFA/MRT/PI/35

Background paper prepared for the
Education for All Global Monitoring Report 2006
Literacy for Life

**EFA in South and West Asia:
an overview of progress since Dakar**

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2005

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EFA in South and West Asia

An Overview of Progress since Dakar¹

By R. Govinda, and K. Biswal

I. Uneven development across the region

The South and West Asia region, consisting of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, the Islamic Republic of Iran, The Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, is home to 1491.14 million persons, which is 23.78% of the world's population (see Table 1). South Asia alone, having the total population of 1424.74 million, accounts for 22.72% of the world's population. The average annual growth rate of population is 1.7% in South Asia. The region has an aging population having significant implications for health care and education provisions.

Table 1: Key indicators of development in South and West Asia

Country	Population			GDP Avg. annual growth 1990- 2003 (%)	Life expectancy at birth 2002	Adult literacy rate (15+ age group) 2003	Population below poverty line (%, national poverty line)/ survey year	Population living on below \$1 a day (%)/ survey year	HDI Rank 2004**
	Persons, 2003 (Millions)	Avg. Annual growth 1990- 2003 (%)	Population density 2003						
Afghanistan	28.77 ^c	3.7	44	..	43	..	..	..	..
Bangladesh	138.1	1.7	1061	4.9	62	41	49.8/2000	36.0/2000*	138
Bhutan	0.874	2.9	19	..	63	..	..	..	134
India	1064.4	1.7	358	5.8	63	61 ^a	28.6/1999-00	34.7/1999-00*	127
Maldives	0.293	2.5	977	..	69	97	..	..	84
Nepal	24.7	2.4	172	4.6	60	44	42.0/1995-96	37.7/1995*	140
Pakistan	148.4	2.4	193	3.6	64	..	32.6/1998-99	13.4/1998*	142
Sri Lanka	19.2	1.3	297	4.7	78	98	25.0/1995-96	6.6/1995-96*	96
Iran	66.4	1.5	41	4.0	69	77 ^b	..	<2.0/1998*	101
World	6271.7	1.4	48	2.6	67	79	..	..	..

Notes: a: National estimates based on census data; b: national estimates based on survey data; c: Does not account for recent refugee flows. * Estimates based on expenditure. .. Data not available; ** Data from *HDR 2004* of the UNDP. Human Development Index (HDI) measures achievements in terms of life expectancy, educational attainment and adjusted real income.

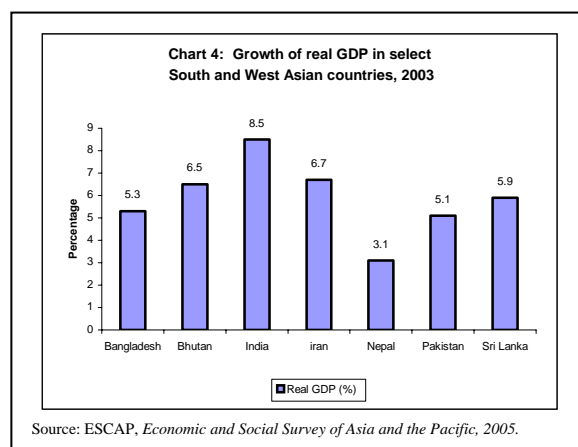
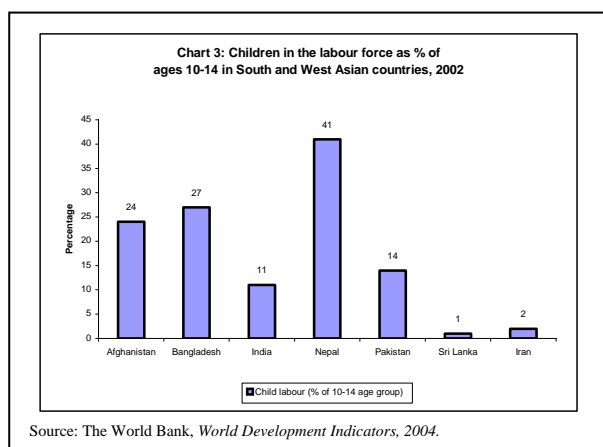
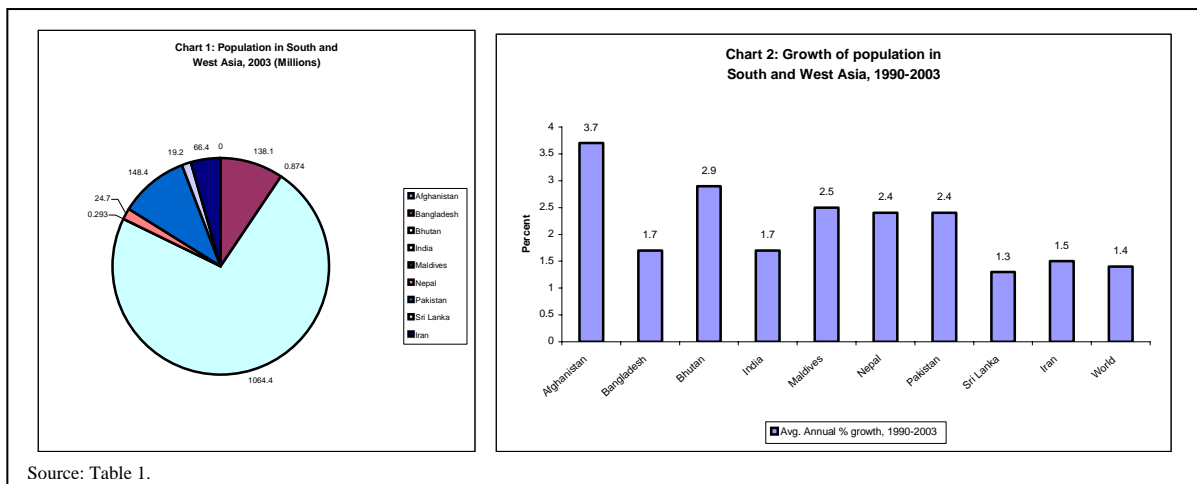
Sources: (i) The World Bank, *The World Development Report 2005*; and (ii) UNDP, *Human Development Report 2004*.

The relative size of population of South and West Asian countries ranges from 0.290 million in The Maldives to 1064.4 million in India. In fact, India accounts for around 73% of population of South and West Asia, whereas The Maldives' population share is as little as 0.02%. Iran accounts for only 5% of the total population of South and West Asia. Around 92% of population of the South and West Asia region lives in India, Bangladesh and Pakistan (see Chart 1). The region also houses two of the world's densely populated countries – Bangladesh and The Maldives. During the period 1990-2003, the country specific average annual growth rate of population varies significantly in the region from as low as 1.3% in Sri Lanka to a maximum of 3.7% in Afghanistan (see Chart 2).

Though countries in the region share more or less similar history of colonial subjugation, they vary greatly in terms of level of social, economic and educational development. Between countries, there exist diversities and complexities in ethnic and religious composition of population; political-administrative framework; economic development policies as well as size and geo-physical features. Life expectancy at birth ranges from 43 years in Afghanistan to 78 years in Sri Lanka. Among the countries for

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which data are available, Bangladesh and Nepal have little over 40% of adult literacy rate (age 15+), whereas Sri Lanka and The Maldives have nearly achieved universal adult literacy and participation in primary education. Iran has adult literacy rate very close to the world average of 79%. In Afghanistan, nearly two-thirds of the population cannot read and write.²



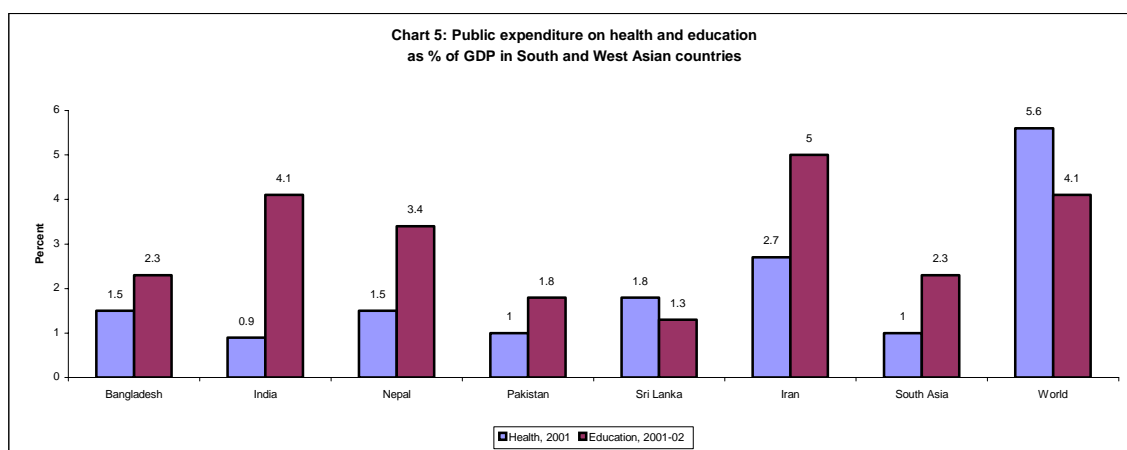
In recent years, almost all countries in the region have experienced natural or other types of emergency, thereby affecting the EFA and other developmental efforts. The Taliban Rule in Afghanistan and the subsequent war and crop failure due to widespread draught; long civil strife in Sri Lanka and Nepal; earth quakes in Iran and some of the provinces in India and Pakistan; persistent floods in Bangladesh; and, the damages to life and property caused in Sri Lanka, The Maldives and India due to recent Tsunami have left a negative impact on efforts towards EFA in the region.

Poverty is the major challenge pervasive in almost all countries in the region. As per the UN classification, except The Maldives, Sri Lanka and Iran, the rest are low-income countries.³ The Maldives, Sri Lanka and Iran are lower middle-income countries.

² <http://www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/asia/afghanistan.asp>.

³ The World Bank, (2005), *World Development Report 2005: A Better Investment Climate for Everyone*. New York: Oxford University Press. Economies have been grouped according to 2003 GNI per capita. Low-income countries have GNI per capita \$765 or less; lower

As such the growth of GDP also varies significantly between countries (see Table 1 and Chart 4). It is important to note that children in the labour force as percentage of ages 10-14 in some of the South Asian countries is very high indicating the level of educational and economic deprivation (see Chart 3). The share of population living below the national poverty line is significant in most of the countries in the region. Around one-fifth of population in rural Afghanistan (3.5 million of the 17.5 million rural population) live in extreme poverty and another 10.5 million are vulnerable to it.⁴ Seven out of 10 Afghans earn less than a dollar a day⁵. Nearly half of the population in Bangladesh; around 40% in Nepal; one-third in Pakistan; and about 29% in India live below the national poverty line. It may be recalled that these five countries account for 98.6% of total population of South Asia.



Source: Source: The World Bank, *World Development Indicators*, 2004.

Except Pakistan, all other countries in the region have medium human development indicators (see Table 1).⁶ South Asia region lags behind even Sub-Saharan Africa in terms of per capita expenditure on education and health care. Within the region, public expenditure on health and education is relatively low in many countries (see Chart 5). According to the end decade EFA 2000 assessment, the region had the largest share of out-of-school children in the world; and the trend still continues. An estimated 30.41 million children (15.58 million girls) in 6-10 age group were out of primary school in India alone in 2002-03.⁷ In absolute terms, largest number of out-of-school children in the region is found in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh. Besides, quality of basic education is a major concern in all countries in the region. Given the relative size and level of educational development in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, the progress towards EFA in South and West Asia largely depends on the progress in these three countries, although Afghanistan and Nepal face huge problems in achieving EFA goals.

II. Policy perspectives and National Plans of Action for EFA

All countries in the region have the stated policy of focusing on investment in education and human resource development as a means to counter the challenges of poverty. There is relatively more emphasis on expansion of basic education and adult

middle-income countries have GNI per capita \$766-3035; upper middle-income countries have GNI per capita \$3036-9385; and high-income countries have GNI per capita \$9386 or more. Maldives, Sri Lanka and Iran are lower middle-income countries.

⁴ ADB, *Asian Development Outlook 2005*. data is based on the findings of the national Risk and Vulnerability Survey conducted in 2003.

⁵ DFID, *Country Profiles: Asia*.

⁶ Information on HDI is not available for Afghanistan.

⁷ Estimated by authors based on 7th All India Educational Survey data of the National Council Of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, applying the share of under and overage children as reported in the District Report Cards, 2003 of the District Information System in Education, NIEPA, New Delhi.

literacy as compared to other levels of education in all the countries. Most of the countries have prepared national Plans of Action for EFA, and have tried to introduce new strategies and programmes in the basic education sub-sector. Decentralization of planning and management is a key strategy for improved governance and development of basic education in almost all countries in the region. Empowering communities and local governments; mobilisation and better management of domestic resources; gender sensitiveness in development programmes; quality improvement through teacher empowerment and innovative classroom practices; improving frequency and quality of educational statistics; networking and building partnerships with private and NGO sectors are some of the current strategies being followed by South and West Asian countries to achieve EFA goals. Some countries, namely, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal have also set interim national targets to achieve universal basic education by around 2010. Some of the recent developments in the basic education sub-sector in the region have been briefly discussed in the following paragraphs.

Afghanistan has prepared a 12-year education development plan, which is being implemented by two different, formal and semi-formal, education systems. The Ministry of Education has decided to establish one new literacy complementary school in each district in addition to the previous complementary schools. The number of these literacy complementary schools based on 10% increase in number of students in each year will reach to 3210 with a capacity of training 780000 students by 26000 teachers in the next 12 years. To eliminate the illiteracy in the country it has been planned to educate a total of 12,219,000 people through literacy courses during next 12 years in the country to implement the mentioned plan. The biggest challenge before the country is to find adequate number of qualified teachers as the country would need around 26000 teachers for complementary and 32500 teachers for literacy courses. With the assistance of international agencies and NGOs, the country is in the process of making necessary infrastructure and manpower provisions for providing primary education for all. However, with the fall of the Taliban in November 2001, Afghanistan emerged from 23 years of strife and although there is now peace, the country faces enormous problems in developing its social sectors, particularly education and health care.

Bangladesh had prepared earlier its first National Plan of Action for EFA (NPA 1) taking 1991 as the base-year, and in view of limited resources, NPA 1 had set its EFA goals for primary education, non-formal basic education and adult literacy to be achieved by 2000. It covered the period 1992-2000. EFA goals and strategies as specified in the Dakar Framework of Action, achievements through implementation of NPA 1 and basic education needs of the country assessed at the end of 2001 provided the framework for preparing the NPA II. Under NPA II prepared in 2002, a sector-wide approach has been adapted to reform primary education, focusing on quality improvement through better governance, management reforms and introduction of key performance indicators. A performance-based school supervision system has been introduced and the teacher recruitment and certification authority have been established to ensure quality. Enabling factors for quality assurance in primary education such as effective leadership at school level, provision of trained teachers, adequate physical facilities, timely availability of textbooks, reading materials and teaching aids, reasonable teacher-pupil ratio, ensuring attendance of teachers through effective supervision, introduction incentives and community participation are being given emphasis in the implementation of the Primary

Education Development Programme II (2003-09)⁸ Which forms part of the long term plan for achieving the goals of EFA.

The National Action Plan for EFA in **Bhutan** is based on the country's National Education Strategy Paper, "Realizing vision 2020". Early Childhood Care and Development; expansion of basic education; improving quality of basic education; adult literacy programme; youth development; and special education sub-sectors are considered as being particularly relevant for meeting the EFA goals for Bhutan. Considering the sparse nature of population spread across difficult terrain, the country focuses on the family unit as the place and process for providing quality and sustainable early childhood development programme. Special efforts are being made to improve the participation rate of girls in basic education. Although no social bias exists against the enrolment of girls, historically, fewer girls have been able to attend school because of the distances involved in reaching the schools.

The NPA targets full adult literacy by 2012. The Youth Development Programme has been further strengthened to provide for holistic development young persons with particular emphasis on the learning needs of females. All children with any form of disability are being accommodated in the education system and are provided with a meaningful programme. Community level planning and management of education is seen as a cornerstone to effective development of Education for All programme. To that end, the 9th Five Year Plan has as its basis local-level plans which articulate development priorities as determined and implemented by communities themselves. The center provides overall guidance and support to take up development activities that are beyond the scope of the districts.

Both on the literacy and the primary education fronts, **India** has been implementing a number of specially designed programmes to move towards EFA goals. As a follow-up of the Dakar Framework of Action for Education for All (EFA), an attempt has been made to link national goals and targets with the global targets of EFA. Based on EFA 2000 assessment and other reviews, the strategy for achieving total literacy and universal elementary education focuses on several interrelated interventions. Contextualized action plans are being prepared at the district levels, which are being implemented through the programme of *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) and the National Literacy Mission (NLM). The focus is on reaching the unreached through innovative and alternative modes of schooling. Decentralised district wise planning introduced in the 1990s is expected to address local needs and demands more effectively. Social mobilization and eradication of adult illiteracy are being attempted through mass literacy campaigns, largely as a national programme but planned and implemented at the district level. The NLM aims at full functional literacy in the age group 15-35. On the basis of analysis done in 2001, the NLM has identified 45 districts in the country having female literacy less than 30% for focused intervention.

The ECCE has been designed to provide necessary maturational and experiential readiness to the child for meeting the demands of the primary curriculum and care facility for younger siblings. The SSA provides for special components for girls, children of marginalized groups and other backward communities. Through decentralised planning and management strategy, the SSA focuses on educationally backward blocks and includes special programmes like Education Guarantee and Alternative and Innovative

⁸ Khanam and Sattar (2005), *Report on EFA Implementation: Teacher and Resource Management in the Context of Decentralised Primary and Secondary Education System in Bangladesh*.

Education Schemes, *Mahila Samkhya*, National Programme for Education of Girls at Elementary Level and Residential Schools for Girls.

The SSA provides adequate opportunities for NGOs and private sector to contribute towards the achievements of goals in the elementary education sub-sector. A critical element in India's move towards EFA goals is the partnership between the Centre, States and the community based organizations through local self-governments. The new Government, which came into power in 2004, has reiterated its commitment to EFA through several policy pronouncements and has adopted a national Common Minimum Programme that commits for providing at least 6% of GDP for education. Additional resources for basic education is being mobilized through a levy of 2% cess on all Central taxes, and a non-lapsable Primary Education Fund has been created to ensure availability of funds for primary education. The Central Advisory Board of Education is currently looking into the strategy and programmes for education, and is expected to recommend further strategies and programmes for achieving the goals of universal elementary education in the country. The Right to Elementary Education Bill, 2005 is being introduced in the Parliament to serve as an enabling instrument for universal elementary education in the country.

The National Plan of Action of **Maldives** focuses on four major goals: (i) expanding and improving comprehensive early childhood care and development, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children; (ii) ensuring that all children, irrespective of gender, ability and location have access to good quality basic education; (iii) ensuring equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults; and (iv) ensuring that young people's learning needs are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills programmes. The Government has upgraded the EFA Committee to a multi-sectoral committee by inviting members from all stakeholder groups, reflecting the participatory spirit of the EFA process. This Committee assists in the implementation and monitoring of the progress of the planned strategies and programmes. The Maldives has nearly achieved universal participation in primary education. School expansion programme designed to achieve universal basic education places stress on the systems capacity to deliver quality and efficient education at an affordable price. However, quality of education, particularly teacher quality is a major concern in the country. In its Vision 2020⁹, the Maldives aims to achieve universal basic education comprising grades 1 to 10. Currently, because of limited number of higher secondary school places, only one in eight students are able to progress to grade 11.

The EFA goals in **Nepal** are part of the comprehensive national vision regarding implementation of basic and primary education. The overall strategy is to co-ordinate and streamline all the ongoing programmes including those undertaken by the government, local bodies, communities, NGO's and others concerned. Towards this end, the Government of Nepal has adopted a sector-wide approach for basic and primary education since 2004. Amendment to the Education Act has been made to further empower the local governments, i.e. District Development Councils and Village Development Committees. A five-year programme has been designed to achieve EFA by 2009-10. A bottom-up approach to planning and management of basic education is being attempted, and educational statistics and monitoring systems are being further strengthened. However, all development activities including EFA programmes have suffered in recent years due to persisting civil strife situation across the country.

⁹ <http://www.planning.gov.mv/vision2020.htm>.

In **Pakistan**, the NPA for EFA focuses on institutional reform, better utilization of existing resources, quality improvement and creation of effective monitoring mechanisms. The monitoring system focuses on: (i) strengthening of EFA units at all levels to create a dependable database; (ii) strengthening and expanding the scope and role of existing Education Management Information System (EMIS) and its coordination with district EMIS; (iii) improving the mechanism and capacity of district education and literacy departments for effective supervision, monitoring and evaluation of EFA activities/plans at all levels; (iv) establishment of Village Education Committees (VEC), School Management Committees (SMCs), Citizen Community Boards (CCBs), Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Councils for Community mobilization and monitoring of EFA projects at grassroots level; and (v) establishment of EFA forums with specific tasks of EFA monitoring at national, provincial and district levels. The Education Sector Reform Programme (2001-04) was the major intervention for expansion of basic education in the country. The other EFA strategies envisaged in Pakistan are: expansion of primary schooling facilities; strict enforcement of Compulsory Education Act; provision of free textbooks, uniforms and related teaching learning materials to children from deprived sections; establishment of trade schools, vocational centers and village workshop schools for working children and dropouts; assigning teachers to schools on the basis of empirical need and reducing transfer rate by recruiting local teachers; optimum utilization of teachers; making primary schools coeducational; introducing school based budgeting; and strengthening decentralised planning and management of basic education.

Having registered substantial progress in participation of children in basic education, **Sri Lanka** has been focusing on quality improvement strategies. As part of the Reform process, apart from scholastic competencies, competencies that directly impact quality of life have come for serious attention. These include competencies in communication; competencies relating to the natural, social and artificial environment; competencies in ethics and religion; competencies relating to the use of leisure enjoyment and recreation; and competencies in learning to learn. The Government has created a separate office within the Ministry of Education for monitoring EFA activities. Corresponding to this at the national level, separate Education For All committees have been established at all levels of management. Recent reform efforts have led to restructuring of school system, making primary education more autonomous and introducing more equitable resource allocation mechanisms to ensure provision of adequate resources to primary schools and training all primary teachers and principals in new curriculum. The reforms measures have specifically led to making separate budgetary provisions both at provincial and national level, providing senior level posts for Primary education both in the Ministry of Education and in provinces and zonal offices. All the above features functioning simultaneously and nurtured by the compulsory education act has evolved into a national movement towards achieving the goal of quality education for all.

Iran has introduced several policy changes with a view to achieving the goals of EFA. The Ministry of Education now pays more attention to pre-school education; allocates more indirect funds and have expanded teacher-training facilities and education at the primary level has been made compulsory. Other strategies contributing to EFA goals include: revision and structural change of the national education system; coordinating the policies adopted by the Ministry of Education with other national policy-making entities for cultural, political, social and economic affairs; giving priority to overcoming shortages and problems related to the content and methods of education, especially in the early stages of primary education with reference to national ethnic and cultural diversities; adapting the use of space and educational tools and equipment

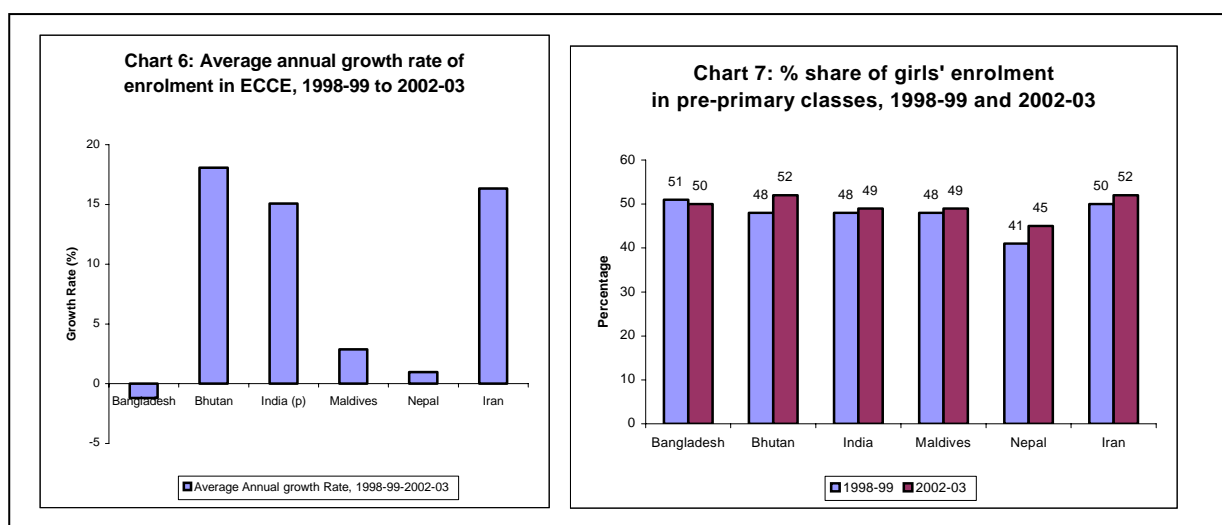
according to the local situation, type and level of education, gender concerns and pupil's interests and aptitudes; and priority to teacher training and in-service programmes on a continuous basis and promoting the status of teachers.

3. Regional patterns and progress towards EFA goals

In the post-Dakar period, participation in primary education and adult literacy programmes has increased through out the world. The increase in girls' participation is quite impressive West and South Asia region also. Yet, some of the countries in south Asia have continued to lag behind in terms of various EFA indicators while some others have achieved near universal participation and are focusing on quality improvement. Thus, the status of EFA presents a mixed picture in South and West Asia as several countries have performed poorly in improving many critical indicators of participation, internal efficiency and quality of pre-primary and primary education. Participation and gender disparity in primary education continues to be low, and almost 42 million children (nearly 37% of the total out-of-school children in the world) in the relevant age group remain out of school in South Asia alone (UNICEF, 2005). Afghanistan is the least developed country in the region in terms of basic education provision, although it is slowly recovering during the post-war period. Besides, there is little information about quality of basic education in the region. In fact, because of data gaps, it is becoming very difficult to assess the region's progress towards EFA goals since Dakar. Given the limited information, this section attempts to summarize the trends in some of the key indicators of EFA.

Early Childhood Care and Education

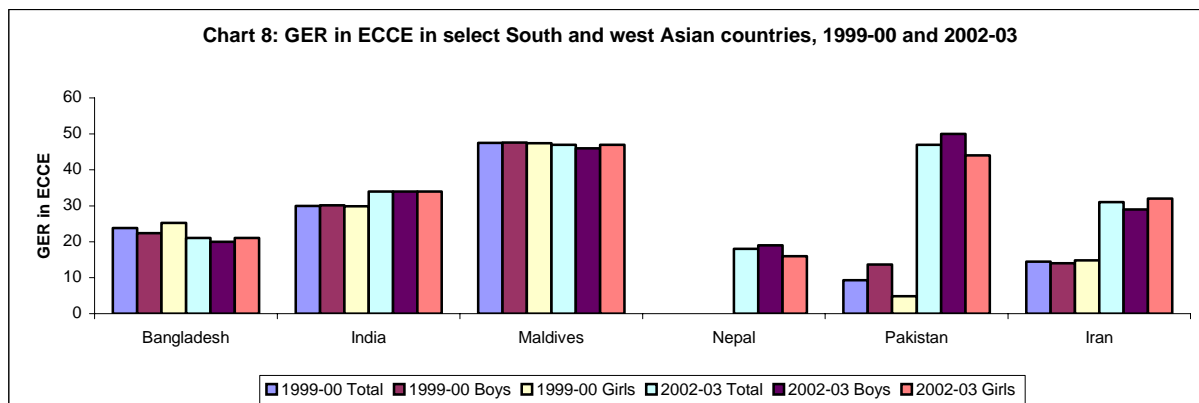
Though there has been progress in some countries, the overall participation in ECCE is still low in this region. A child in South and West Asia can expect, on average, only 0.7 years of pre-primary education¹⁰. In half the region's countries, gross enrolment ratio (GER) in pre-primary education was less than 25% in 2000 and lowest in Nepal (12.7%) and Iran (17%). The average annual growth rate of enrolment in ECCE in most countries is too slow or in the negative raising serious concerns on the capacity of the region to meet the Dakar commitments on this goal (see Chart 6).¹¹ It may be noted that the share of private providers is quite significant in several countries of the region; for instance it is 100% in Bhutan and around 50% in the Maldives. Except for Bangladesh which has, in general, registered slow progress in ECCE provision, the share of girls in the total enrolment has improved in all countries in the region in 2002-03 (see Chart 7).



¹⁰ GMR 2005.

¹¹ Growth rate has been estimated using data from Global Education Digest 2005.

Source: Global Education Digest 2005.



Note: Data for all countries are not available, and for some countries, data for 1999-00 are not available.
Source: (i) 1999-00 data from GMR, 2002; and (ii) 2002-03 data from Global education Digest 2005.

There has been considerable increase in the GER in ECCE in most countries of the region during 1999-00 and 2002-03 (see Chart 8). The GER in India and Iran was little over 30%, whereas it was approaching 50% in Pakistan and The Maldives in 2002-03. The GER of girls in Pakistan has improved at a faster rate (from 4.8% in 1999-00 to 44% in 2002-03) compared to other countries in the region. In recent years, in India, where more than two-thirds of children in relevant age group do not have access to ECCE, efforts are being made to expand the pre-primary education facilities through Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and several other programmes, particularly in rural areas. Currently, ICDS centres are spread over almost all parts of the country, and it covers nearly 20.23 million children in 3-6 age group.¹²

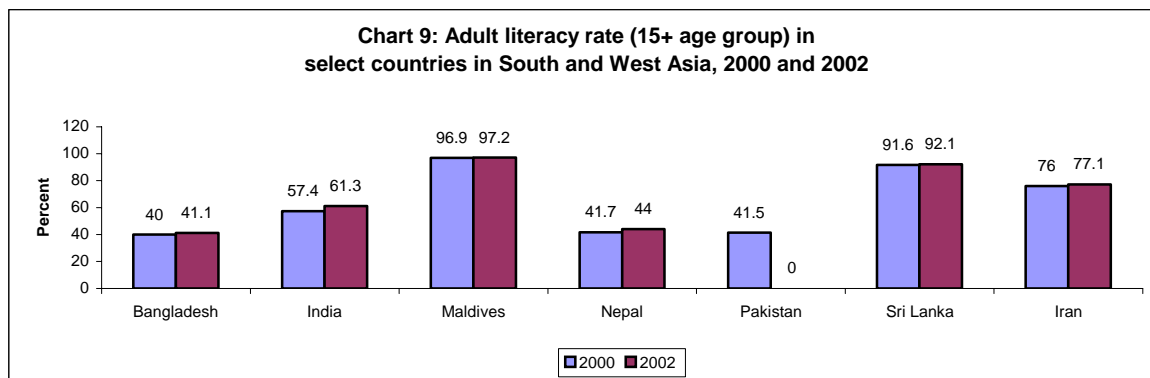
In most countries in the region, girls' enrolment in ECCE equals or exceeds that of boys. However, Nepal and Pakistan continue to have wide gender disparity (against girls) in GER in ECCE. During 2001-02 and 2002-03, the GPI for GER in ECCE has improved from 0.74 to 0.88 in Pakistan and 0.85 to 0.86 in Nepal. This is despite the fact that GER has grown at a faster pace in Pakistan as compared to others. Teacher-pupil ratio in ECCE continues to be very high in Bangladesh and India, (i.e. around 40%) (see Table A2 in Annexure). Inadequate provision and low participation in ECCE is major problem in almost all countries in South and West Asia. The major stumbling block affecting progress in ECCE is that most countries of the region have no clearly defined policy perspective at the national level on providing access to ECCE on a universal basis.

Adult Literacy

In South and West Asia, the adult literacy rate in 2000 was estimated to be 55%. About 412 million adults were illiterate in this sub-region, of whom 61% were women. Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan had around 40% of adult literates (age 15+), whereas in India, 57% of adults were literate. Increase in the adult literacy rate in these countries is not very impressive, and Bangladesh continues to have 59% of adult illiterates (see Table A5 in Annexure). Sri Lanka and The Maldives have already achieved high adult literacy rates of over 90%, and Iran has improved its adult literacy rate from 76% in 2000 to 77% in 2002 (see Chart 9). However, in absolute terms, the largest number of adult illiterates in the region is found in India, followed by Pakistan and Bangladesh. Besides, except Sri

¹²MHRD, GOI, EFA: *India Marches Ahead*, 2004

Lanka and The Maldives, gender gap in adult literacy rate continues to be high in other countries in the region. In India, in 2001, the gender gap in the literacy rate of population (age 15+) was estimated to be as high as 24.0 percentage points¹³. In fact, since 1961, the gender gap in the literacy rate of population (age 15+) has been reduced by only 4 percentage points.



Source: Table A5.

In South and West Asia, the youth (age 15-24) literacy rate is 77% for males and 61% for females in 2002, which was lower than the world average of 89% for males and 83% for females.¹⁴ Most recent information on youth literacy rate is not available for 5 countries in the region (i.e. for the year 2002), making it difficult to assess the progress. However, female youth literacy rate continues to be very low in Bangladesh (41%), Nepal (46%) and Pakistan (42%). Gender disparity in youth literacy rate is highest in Nepal (GPI = 0.58) followed by Pakistan (GPI = 0.65) and Bangladesh (GPI = 0.71) (see Table A1 in Annexure). In India the illiteracy rate for population in the age group 20-29 was 33% (19.2% for males and 45.8% for females) in 1998-99.¹⁵ Corresponding GPI of the youth literacy rate (20-29 age group) in India was as high as 0.67 in 1998-99.

Four countries in the region – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal still have substantial number of youth illiterates, particularly females. As youth literacy level and level of participation in primary education in any country is positively correlated, low female youth literacy pockets in South Asia such as India, Nepal, Bangladesh, Pakistan and also in Afghanistan may adversely affect the efforts towards EFA in the region.

Access to Primary Education

Participation in primary education has been consistently improving in South and West Asia during the last few years, but not at the desired rate to achieve the EFA goal of universal primary education by 2015. Further, the increase in enrolment in primary education has been neutralized by simultaneous growth in relevant school age population in the region. Though the growth rate of child population in some countries like India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Iran has shown a declining trend, it continues to be high in other countries of the region. In South Asia, the percentage share of population aged 6-17 was 26.8 in 2000, which is expected to come down to 21.3% in 2005.¹⁶ Except Afghanistan, all other countries will have a declining share of child population, but the decline in child population in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Nepal would not be very significant to reduce the required rate of growth of enrolment in primary education. However, countries

¹³ For further details see, Govinda, R. and Biswal, K. (2005), *Mapping Literacy in India: Who Are the Illiterates and Where Do We Find Them?*

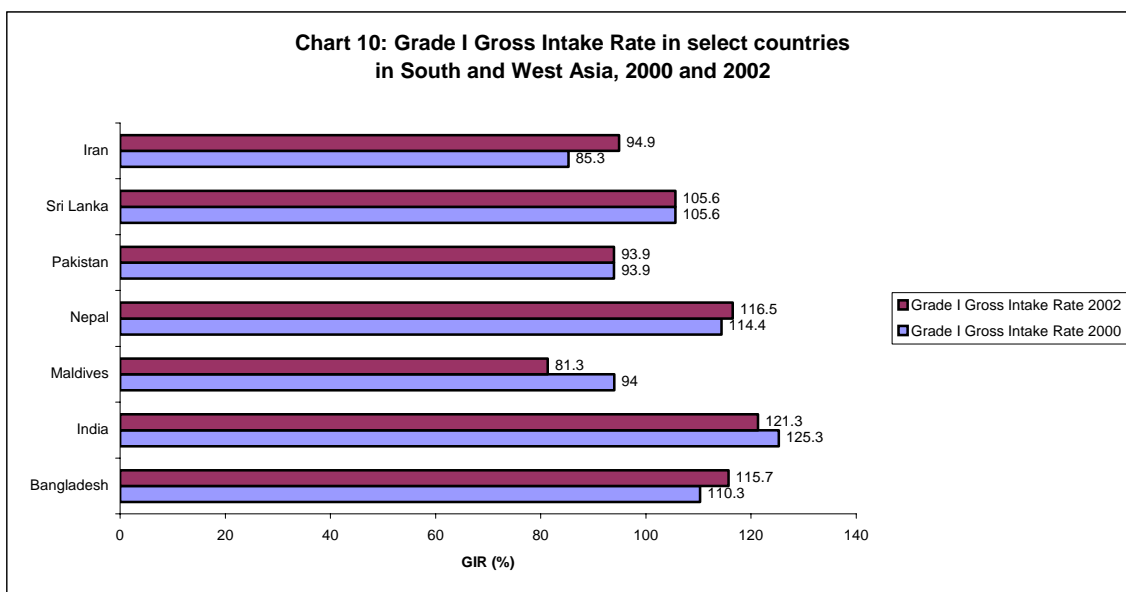
¹⁴ *World Development Report 2005*.

¹⁵ International Institute for Population Sciences, (2000), *National Family Health Survey-2, 1998-99*. Mumbai, India.

¹⁶ ADB, *Key Indicators 2003*.

in the region are making visible progress in the coverage of primary school age population, particularly girls (see Box 1).

Access to primary education is uneven across countries in the region. If Intake rate in Grade 1 is considered as effective access the grade I gross intake rate (GIR) is more than 100%, except in The Maldives, Pakistan and Iran. (see Chart 10). The grade I GIR has remained the same in Sri Lanka and Pakistan during the period 2000 and 2002. In India and The Maldives, the GIR has declined. Iran, Nepal and Bangladesh have marginally improved the GIR; and the increase is the highest in Iran (9.6 percentage points between 2000 and 2002).



Source: Table A5.

In 2002-03, the GER in primary education in Asia region was 106%; and Sri Lanka, India, The Maldives and Nepal had more than the Asian regional average. All other countries in South and West Asia except Pakistan had GER in primary education more than 90% in 2002-03 (see Chart 11). Between 1999-00 and 2002-03, the GER improved in India¹⁷ (8.1 percentage points) and Iran (4.4 percentage points), while in The Maldives, Nepal and Pakistan, it declined significantly. The decline in GER is very large in Pakistan (28 percentage points), followed by The Maldives (15.7 percentage points).

Assessment of progress in the coverage of primary school age population in South Asia becomes very difficult because of lack of data on NER for most of the countries. However, with the exception of The Maldives and Sri Lanka, which are at or close to universal primary education (NER of 96% and 99.9%, respectively in 2001-02), other major countries like India, Bangladesh and Iran have more than 80% of NER at primary level. In 2002-03, among countries in the region with data, the NER in primary education in Bangladesh was less than the Asian regional average of 87% of NER (see Table A4). In Pakistan NER in primary education was very low at 59.1% (67.5% for boys and 50.0% for girls) in 2001.¹⁸

¹⁷ According to the MHRD, GOI, the GER in primary level was 103.0% (107.2% for boys and 98.6% for girls). See, *Education for All: India Marches Ahead*, 2004.

¹⁸ T. M. Qureshi, T.M. and Saleem, Muhammad (2005), *EFA Implementation: Teacher and Resource Management in the Context of Decentralization in Pakistan*.

Though countries in the region have initiated a number of programmes to universalize primary education, the progress seems to far from satisfactory. Countries, which need to improve significantly the key indicators of EFA, are Pakistan, India, Bangladesh and Nepal and Afghanistan (see Table 3). In fact, Pakistan and Afghanistan are perhaps the least developed countries in the region in terms of their performance to reach the EFA goals by 2015.

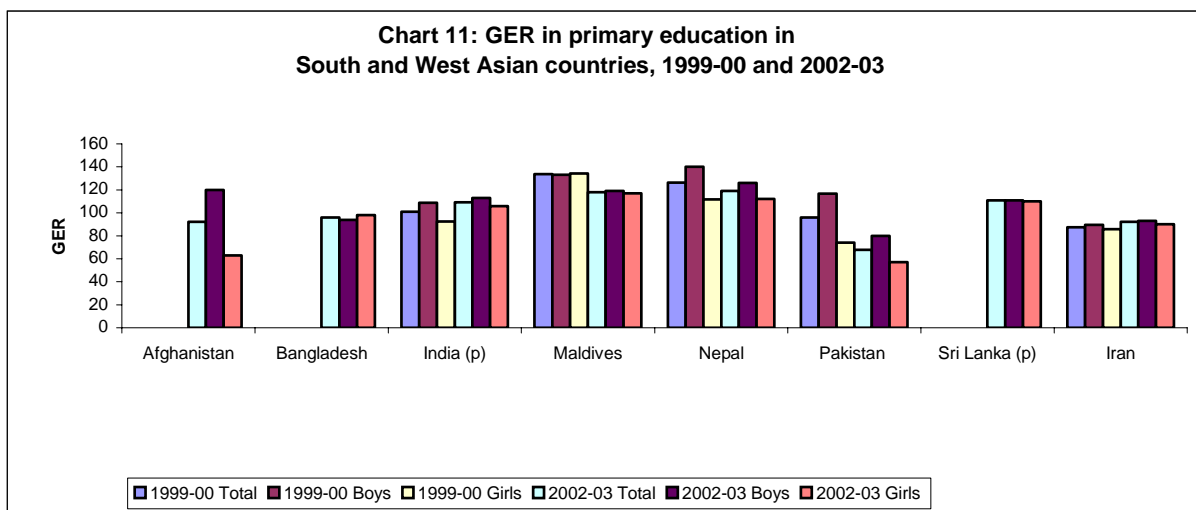
Table 3: Classification of countries in South and West Asia based on GER, NER and survival rate to grade 5

<p>Category A: High GER, High NER, High Survival Rate</p> <p>Sri Lanka The Maldives Iran*</p> <p>GER > 95; NER > 90 Survival Rate > 85</p>	<p>Category B: High GER, Medium NER, Low Survival Rate</p> <p>Bangladesh India Nepal</p> <p>GER > 95; 70 < NER < 90 Survival Rate < 65</p>
<p>Category C: Low GER, Low NER, High Survival Rate</p> <p>Bhutan</p> <p>GER < 95; NER < 90 Survival Rate > 85</p>	<p>Category D: Low GER, Low NER, Low Survival Rate</p> <p>Pakistan Afghanistan**</p> <p>GER < 80; NER < 70 Survival Rate < 65</p>

Note: * Added by authors, based on 2002 data. Iran has only less than 95% of GER in 2002, and fulfils two other conditions of NER and survival rate to grade 5; ** Added by the authors. However, Afghanistan had GER > 90% in 2000. Data on other indicators are not available.

Source: Original classification by Jyotsana Jha, *EFA in South Asia, Analytical Study on Dakar Goals (Series), Goal 2 Universal Primary Education*. UNESCO, New Delhi, March 2004.

Overcoming Gender Disparities



Source: (i) GMR 2002 for 1999-00 data; and (iii) global Education Digest 2005 for 2002-03 data. (Table A4, in Annexure)

Gender disparity (against girls) in participation in primary education continues to be large in many countries in South and West Asia, particularly in Afghanistan, Nepal and Pakistan (see Chart 12). The GPI of GER was as low as 0.52 in Afghanistan, 0.71 in Pakistan and 0.89 in Nepal. Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and The Maldives have more or less equal share of girls in primary level enrolment. In India, girls' participation in primary education continues to be low compared to that of boys (GPI of GER 0.94 in 2002-03). In

South Asia, there are 94 girls in primary school for every 100 boys, which is lower than the global average.¹⁹

Box: Progress in Girls' Education in South Asia

School access for girls and boys has improved significantly throughout the region. In Afghanistan, for instance, some 3 million children returned to school after a gap of nearly 10 years through the "Back to School" campaign. Nearly a third were girls. In Bangladesh, the Intensive District Education for All (IDEAL), an initiative for parent and community school management, now covers 9.9 million children. Additionally the Basic Education for Hard-to-Reach Urban Working Children Project has enabled 14,000 children with disabilities to complete a two-year, non-formal education course. Half those children are girls. While school enrolment in the region has increased, only Bangladesh, Maldives and Sri Lanka have achieved gender parity at the primary level. Efforts to improve enrolment, especially for girls, continue region-wide.

In the wake of peace efforts, Sri Lanka's National Institute of Education, with support from UNICEF, has taken on a rapid needs assessment of the education system in the eight districts in the war affected North-East Province and four bordering districts. Plans of action for community involvement in these districts have been drawn up. In Bhutan and Nepal, efforts have been made to provide needed educational supplies to primary children. Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan and Pakistan have spearheaded advocacy campaigns for girls' education. Afghanistan, Bhutan and Nepal have undertaken gender reviews, education policy reviews for gender sensitivity and concentrated campaigns for girls' education.

In terms of quality, half the countries in the region –Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka – have identified the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning as an objective. Maldives, with 98 per cent of girls and boys completing primary school, topped the list. It placed quality of education as its highest priority. The government of Pakistan has chosen 2,000 schools to transform into Child-Friendly Schools and has trained the teachers of these schools in child-friendly school methodologies. In Sri Lanka, the government is in the middle of national primary education reform designed to improve the quality of learning achievement. UNICEF has selected 124 schools to be developed into Child-Friendly Schools. In Nepal, the majority of the Out of School Project classes use child-centred teaching methodologies. New teachers have been trained in Bangladesh, Bhutan and Maldives. India and Nepal support local level resource centres to strengthen teachers' use of technology. And in Bhutan and Nepal teachers are encouraged to participate in distance learning through the Radio Instruction Programme.

All countries in the region continue to rely on traditional teacher-centred classrooms and promote rote learning. As a result, the overwhelming majority of children in the region who complete their primary cycle are unable to read, write or tackle simple mathematical problems in real life situations.

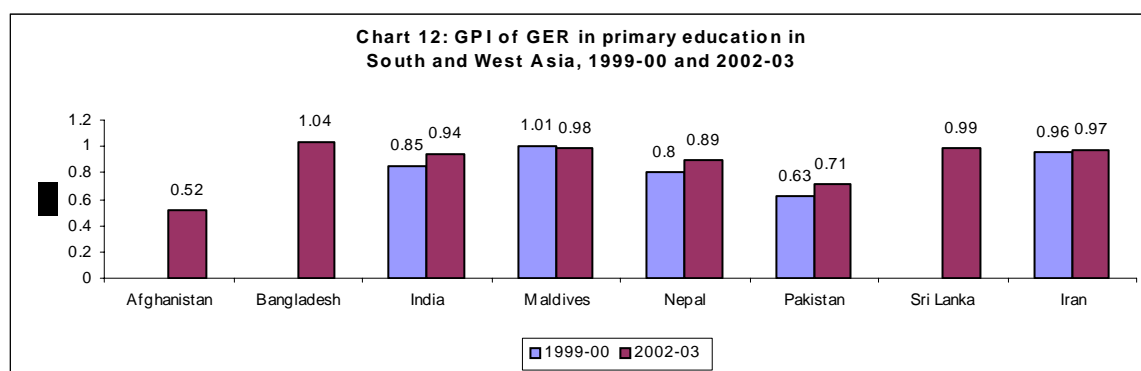
The greatest achievement throughout the region is community involvement in school planning and management. This has been especially true in Bangladesh, India and Pakistan. The greatest constraints in the region are: lack of effective planning; inadequate supervision and monitoring of yearly targets for enrolment and retention; lack of support systems; absence of comprehensive plans to improve learning in primary schools; failure to recruit teachers and other staff for vacant posts; shortage of trainers, inadequate staff and poor logistic support; lack of physical facilities; and Continued low levels of government spending on the social sector.

Source: UNICEF website, http://www.unicef.org/girlseducation/index_regionalperspectives.html.

Afghanistan, Pakistan and Nepal are far from this regional average of participation of girls in primary education. In Pakistan alone, half of the primary school age girls were out-of-school in 2001 (also see Table 2). The Taliban rule in Afghanistan, and socio-cultural factors and particularly, poverty in most countries in the region have an adverse impact on the participation of girls in primary education (also see Box 2). As a result, nearly 23.5 million girls (around 5 million more than the number of out-of-school boys) are out of school in South Asia.²⁰

¹⁹ UNICEF, *Progress for Children 2005*.

²⁰ *Ibid.*



Source: (i) GMR 2002 for 1999-00 data; and (iii) Global Education Digest 2005 for 2002-03 data. (Table A4, in Annexure)

Box 2: Bhutan: School shortage forces pupils to leave home

Chandra, 9, Tika, 8, and Lela, 7, are sisters attending Beteni Community School in the district of Tsirang in south-central Bhutan. Because their home is a 6-hour walk from the school, their father, a farmer, has built a small hut for them to live in during the week. The hut is near the school and is made of mud and sticks, with an iron sheet as the roof. The hut has no windows other than slits in the walls. The interior is dark even during the day. Chandra, Tika and Lela live, cook, eat, study and sleep in the hut during the week, only seeing their parents on weekends, walking home to their village, Pakhey, on Saturdays and returning the next day with food for the following week.

“I like studying,” Chandra says, “but I don’t like staying here, away from mother and father. I want to study and live with my parents.” During the week, the sisters’ daily routine is simple. The trio get up at 6 a.m., cook breakfast and eat, and then go to school at 8 a.m. Since most of the children at the school cannot afford to bring lunch, there is no lunch break. The school day ends at 2 p.m.

After school, the sisters collect firewood with their friends, cook dinner and eat, and study in the evening. They also play with friends. Since there is no electricity for lighting, they go to bed by 7 p.m. All three sleep in one small bed of about 1.5 m x 1.5 m in size. All three girls want to continue going to school, despite the conditions, which they face in doing so. Whatever life goal she finally decides on, Chandra is definite in saying that she wants to be educated. Tika and Lela aspire to become officers in the Government.

The sisters are far from the only pupils at Beteni Community School who live in temporary huts. Children and parents alike seem determined that the opportunity for learning must be used. But for those who don’t see their family members for days at a time, the new community schools, allowing children to live at home with their parents while going to school, cannot come soon enough.

Source: UNICEF website, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/media_24589.html, March 2005.

Table 2: Out-of-school children in the primary school age group in South and West Asia, 2001 (000)

Countries	Total	Boys	Girls
Afghanistan	-	-	-
Bangladesh	2425.1	1325.0	1100.1
Bhutan	-	-	-
India	20549.0	6918.7	13630.4
Iran	1097.2	-	-
Maldives	2.2	1.2	1.0
Nepal	917.7	407.8	509.9
Pakistan	8144.6	3331.8	4812.7
Sri Lanka	2.2	2.2	-

Source: EFA Global Monitoring Report 2004/5.

Box 3: Empowering girls through education in India

The state of Bihar, India's poorest, is home to nearly 90 million people. Half of them live in conditions of extreme poverty. Key development indicators, such as those related to public health or literacy, are among the lowest in the nation. As in much of the world, it is the children who suffer most from poverty. Thousands live on the streets of the capital, Patna. Twelve-year-old Halima is one of them. She has been living on the streets for nearly a year and her existence is best described as marginal. "My village is somewhere on the Bengal border and I travelled to many places by hiding on trains. I don't steal from people, but we find things the passengers leave behind and sell them for food."

Halima's travelling days came to an end two weeks ago when workers from a child protection organization met her at a railway station, where she had been living. She was brought to a dormitory in the capital, where she is now staying along with dozens of other vulnerable children. The children are provided with clothes and food, and they are also given an education and skills training. Halima is happy to study. "I'm learning to read and write and also to sew. These are important skills that I never had and I think they will help me lead a better life."

Girls' education is now a state priority in Bihar, owing in part to efforts by the Indian government, international agencies and local non-governmental organizations. Quality education for all girls is a basic right, and UNICEF is working to ensure it remains high on the agenda.

Female literacy in India today is still considerably lower than male literacy, but the situation is improving: the rate of female literacy rose from 34 per cent in 1990 to 45 per cent in 2000.

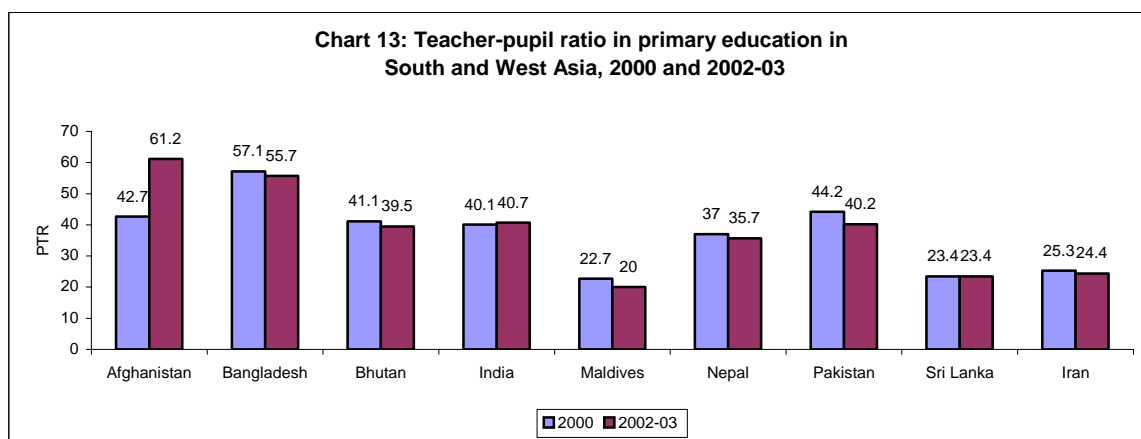
In Bihar's rural villages, a programme is encouraging parents to educate daughters along with their sons. As a result, thousands of girls are now attending school for the first time, in informal settings organized by village women. This is just one of several girls' education programmes in the state, but much more needs to be done to realize the right of a quality education for all.

By Sabine Dolan
New York, 4 April 2005

Source: UNICEF website, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/media_24589.html.

Meeting Quality Concerns

More than half of the countries in South and West Asia (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, India and Pakistan) have overcrowded classrooms in primary schools, i.e. the teacher-pupil ratio in more than 40 (see Table A4 and Chart 13). In the region, teacher-pupil ratio ranges from 20 in The Maldives to 61 in Afghanistan. Between 1999-00 and 2002-03, teacher-pupil ration in primary education has marginally improved in all countries in the region except Afghanistan, India and Sri Lanka (see Chart 13). Such high teacher-pupil ratio in major countries in the region makes it difficult to provide quality primary education. Besides, the teacher quality is relatively poor in many countries in the region. Iran is the only country having all its primary school teachers trained. On the other hand Nepal has only 16% of trained primary school teachers. The Percentage of trained primary school teachers is also very low in The Maldives (64%) and Bangladesh (67%). Besides, teacher shortage is a major problem in The Maldives and Afghanistan.

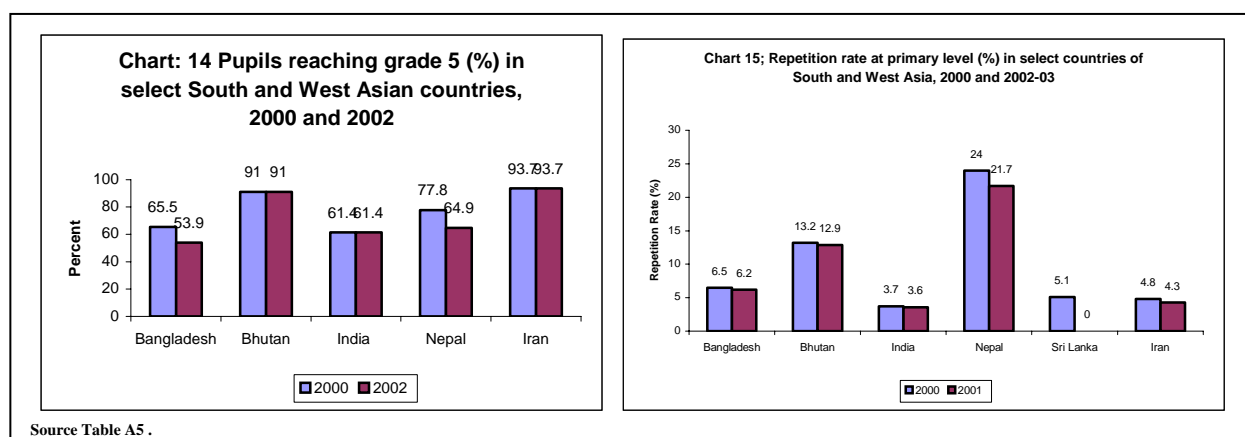


Source: Table A5.

In South Asia, even if the required qualifications are low in many countries, many teachers do not reach the national requirements to teach. The data on teachers' qualifications is insufficient. However, on the basis of available data for 1995, it has been found that more than one fourth of the teachers in Nepal did not have a teacher certificate. In the Maldives, 30% of the teachers lacked a certificate and another 22% did not have any other nationally identified qualifications to teach.²¹ The situation was more or less the same in Bangladesh, where more than 18% of the teachers did not have a teacher's certificate. The countries with the largest gender disparities in education are also the countries with the lowest proportion of female teachers. There is a wide variation in the share of females in the total teachers in Asia. Bangladesh, Nepal and India have the lowest share of female teachers. There is also a shortage of qualified teachers in Nepal, Bhutan, the Maldives, and in remote areas of India and Pakistan. Given the characteristics of teachers and low share of females in the total teachers in major countries in the region, the quality of primary education remains a major concern.

Internal Efficiency of Primary Education

Apart from problems of access and participation in primary education in South and West Asia, the internal efficiency of the system is very low. The survival rate to grade 5 and school life expectancy is low in many countries in the region. However, repetition rate is low in all countries, except Nepal (21.7%) and Bhutan (12.9%). Many children drop out before reaching grade 5 in India, Bangladesh and Nepal (see Chart 14). Between 2000 and 2002, the percentage of pupils reaching grade 5 has remained stagnant in India, Bhutan and Iran, and it has declined significantly in Bangladesh (11.6 percentage points) and Nepal (12.9 percentage points) further worsening the internal efficiency of primary education. In India, nearly 36% of pupils (36% of boys and 33.92% girls) drop out at the primary level.²² High dropout rate in these countries have neutralized their efforts to improve the enrolment rates at primary level thereby slowing down the pace of progress towards EFA goals.

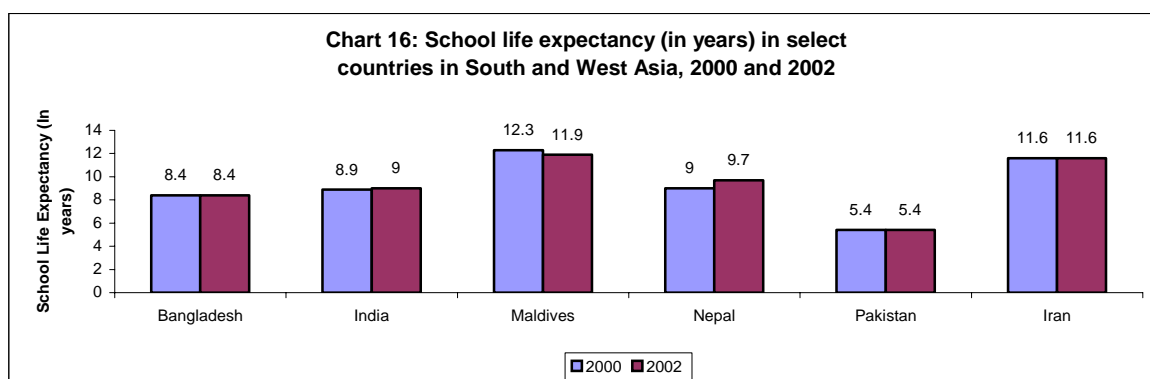


However, repetition rate at primary level is unusually high in Nepal and Bhutan. Between 2000 and 2002, the repetition rate at primary level has marginally come down in almost all countries, and remained almost stagnant in India (see Chart 15). The decline in the repetition rate during this period is highest in Nepal (2.3 percentage points). School life expectancy is relatively high in Sri Lanka, The Maldives and Iran, and lowest in Pakistan. Between 2000 and 2002, school life expectancy has remained stagnant in

²¹ Nilsson, Paula (2003), *EFA: Teacher Demand and Supply in South Asia*. Working Paper No. 13, Education International, Brussels, Belgium.

²² MHRD, GOI, *Selected Educational Statistics, 2002-03*.

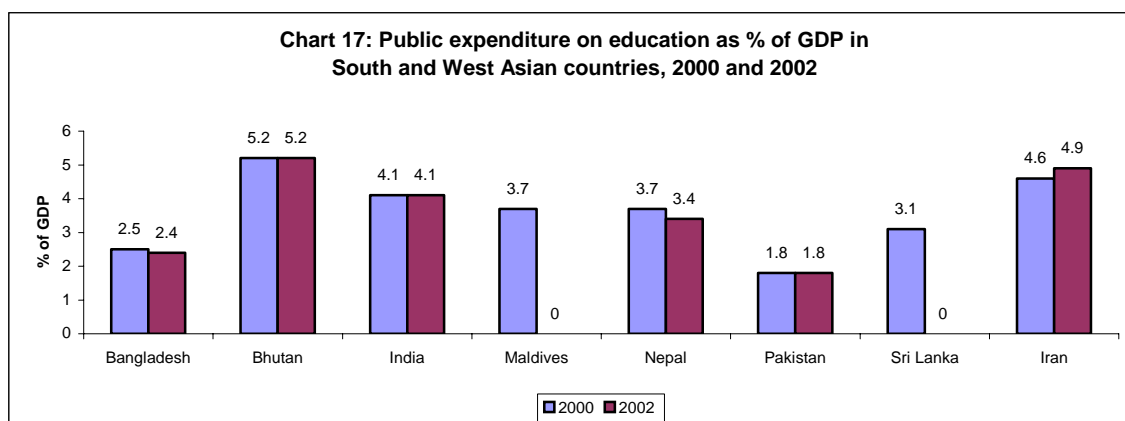
Bangladesh, India, Pakistan and Iran (see Chart 16). It has improved marginally in Nepal, and has come down in The Maldives. In all, the internal efficiency of India, Bangladesh and Pakistan continues to be very low, keeping the region away from the EFA goals.



Source Table A5.

Public Expenditure on Education

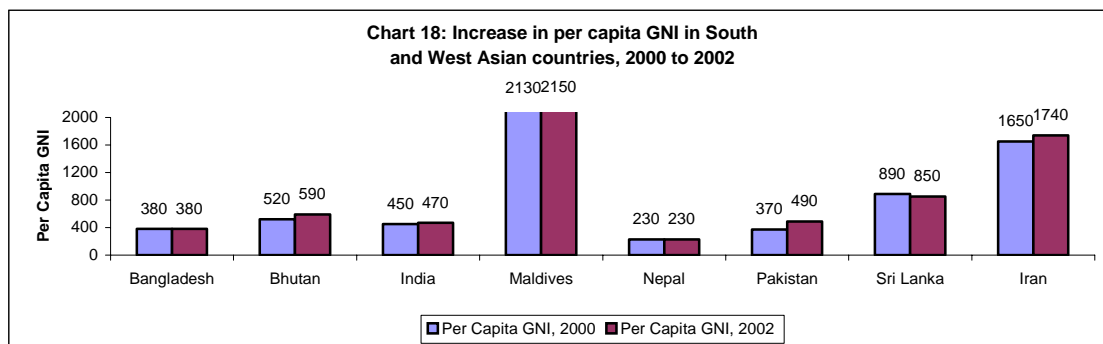
Public investment in education is low in majority of the countries in the region. Except Bhutan, all other countries in the region are far from the target of investing 6% of the GDP in education. Though public investment is relatively higher in basic education in these countries, it is very low to meet the requirements of expanding primary education sector. Public investment in education ranges between 1.8% of GDP in Pakistan to 5.2% of GDP in Bhutan. Most of the countries in the region are spending little more than 3% of GDP (see Chart 17). Bhutan, Iran and India are spending more than 4% of the GDP in education. Between 2000 and 2002, public expenditure as percentage of GDP has remained stagnant, whereas it has increased only in Iran. It has marginally declined in Bangladesh and Nepal.



Source: Table 5.

Small countries in the region are heavily dependent on external funding to meet the cost of major EFA interventions. With inadequate funding support from the developed world, the EFA initiatives in these countries have also been affected. Besides, slow growth rate of per capita GNI in South Asian countries is a major constraint in generating additional domestic resources to finance EFA interventions. Except The Maldives, Iran and Sri Lanka, the per capita GNI is extremely low in other countries in the region. To further add to the problem, the per capita GNI in Bangladesh, India and Nepal has almost remained stagnant during the period 2000 to 2002. Small increase in per capita GNI is

observed in Iran and Pakistan in 2002, and the per capita GNI has declined in Sri Lanka (see Chart 18).

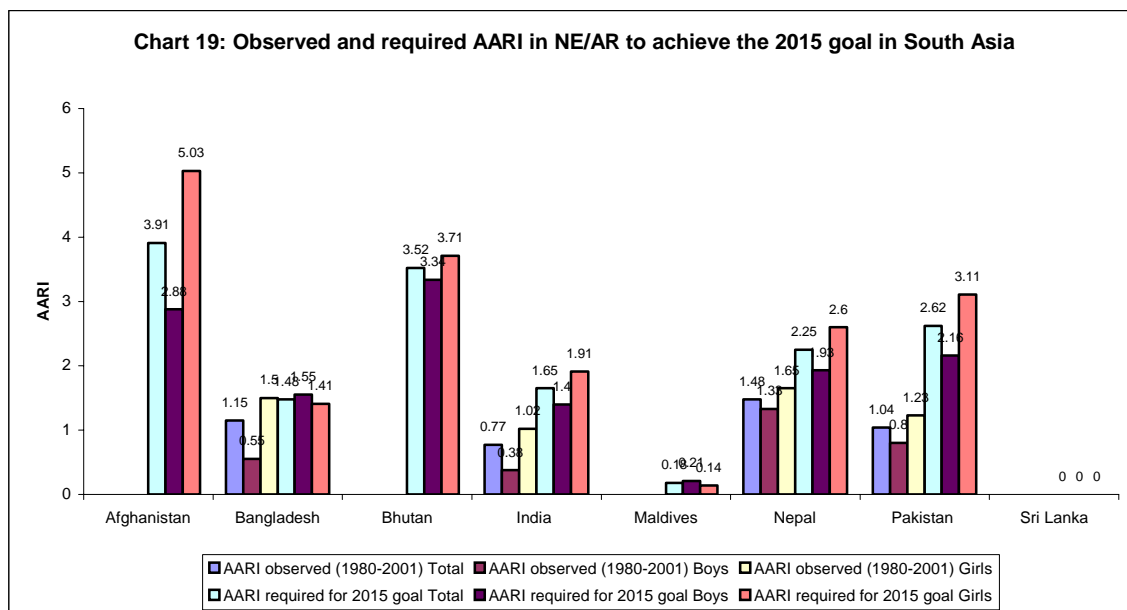


Source: Table A5.

Required Rate of Growth of Enrolment to Achieve EFA by 2015

According to the UNICEF estimates, nearly half of the primary school age children were out-of-school in Bhutan and Afghanistan in 2001, and the net enrolment/attendance in primary education in Pakistan was only 60% (see Table A9 in Annexure). In 2001, Sri Lanka and The Maldives had nearly achieved universal participation in primary education, and there was no gender gap. In other countries in the region, the gender gap (against girls) was very high in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Nepal. Almost 32% of boys and 47% of girls of the relevant age group were out of school in Pakistan. The observed average annual rate of increase (AARI) in net enrolment/attendance rate was also very low in India (0.77), Bangladesh (1.15), Pakistan (1.04) and Nepal (1.48) during the period 1981-2001. During this period, the AARI of girls' net enrolment/attendance rate was relatively much higher than that of the boys in these four countries. Even with faster growth of girls' net enrolment, these countries have almost failed to achieve gender equity in participation in primary education.

If countries in South Asia are to reach the EFA goal of universal participation by 2015, the required average annual rate of increase on net enrolment/attendance rate would be much higher, particularly for girls, in Afghanistan (3.91 for total and 5.03 for girls), Nepal (2.25 for total and 2.60 for girls), Bhutan (3.52 for total and 3.71 for girls) and Pakistan (2.62 for total and 3.11 for girls) (see Table A9 and Chart 19). The required AARI in girls' net enrolment in India would also be 1.91, which is higher than the observed AARI during 1981-2001. Unless governments in six countries – India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, Afghanistan and Bhutan – step up their efforts to more than double the AARI of net enrolment/attendance rate in the next 10 years, they are unlikely to achieve EFA by 2015.



Source: UNICEF, *Progress for Children 2005*, (Table A9 given in Annexure).

Role of NGOs and Community Participation

A positive development during the last few years has been a new partnership emerging between the government and non-government organizations in the area of basic education. For instance, Bangladesh and India have a very vibrant NGO sector. Bhutan as a monarchy has not provided much scope for NGO action in basic education sector. In general, NGO activities in the region have been confined to the non-formal education sector. However, exemplary models have evolved as in Janshala, a government sponsored project for primary education in India, showing the way for active participation of NGOs in the formal education sector. The efforts of large NGOs in Bangladesh such as BRAC, Dhaka Ahsania Mission and Proshika have demonstrated that even the NGO sector can contribute significantly towards universal provision of primary education. Several international NGOs such as Action Aid, Plan International and Aga Khan Foundation have also expanded their primary education portfolios in recent years. In particular, NGO action in primary education has added an element of vibrancy and optimism with respect to three aspects: (a) Designing special delivery mechanisms for reaching the unreached and marginalised sections; (b) Designing and demonstrating innovative and workable models for providing quality education; and (c) Identifying through field experimentation, basic parameters for ensuring an efficient delivery system for primary education, formal and on-formal. How are these lessons from the NGO sector helping the mainstream? Influencing the mainstream cannot be a one-sided affair. It requires a better quality dialogue between the government and the NGOs characterized by a sense of mutual trust and respect. Obviously, NGOs do not have answers for all the ills of primary education. There is increasing evidence to show that throughout South Asia, education programmes have been most successful when governments have collaborated closely with communities and local NGOs.

Another important facet of the civil society response has been the spontaneity of increased community participation in the area of basic education. The Campaign approach in India has demonstrated the tremendous potential of voluntary action in mobilizing the community for basic education. It has also shown that government could itself become the

promoter and prime mover of mass action by providing adequate space for voluntarism and minimizing the hold of traditional bureaucratic channels. Efforts of BRAC in Bangladesh, Buniyad in Pakistan and several NGOs in other countries of the region, have clearly shown how essential community participation is for successful action in primary education. These developments of voluntary community participation go well along with the concrete moves made by the governments, in the recent years, towards decentralization of primary education in most countries of the region. This movement towards increased involvement of the community has received additional thrust through two sets of actions. One is the increased effort by the Governments in the region to move towards grassroots level democracy thereby ensuring that elected representatives at the local level become more involved in educational action. Developments in some of the Indian states during the last couple of years have demonstrated the tremendous positive value added by such actions to primary education. Second, in all the countries of the region considerable efforts are being made to empower school management committees and parent groups for ensuring fuller participation of children and effective functioning of local primary schools. Some of the states in India as well as the Nepal government have initiated major steps to bring changes in the legal framework to facilitate this move. Thus on the issue of civil society participation South Asia has demonstrated tremendous thrusts in the last few years, though there is scope to do better.

Corporate Support to EFA

Private support for public school education has a long history in South Asia. This has however been in the form of charity. Emergence of corporate houses led to a new phenomenon of establishing private self-financing schools essentially meant to meet the demand for quality education from relatively rich sectors of population. However, recent years have seen the emergence of a new relationship between corporate houses and public primary education sector. This is still a fledging phenomenon but shows excellent potential for dramatically changing the situation. The trend at present is to support education of the poor mainly in urban areas possibly as it facilitates direct association of the donors and visibility of action that can be monitored. Though the contributions go into public education development, corporate bodies do not seem to trust government to utilize the funds efficiently. What is evolving is a tripartite relationship involving the NGO sector between the donors and the public schools. There is no comprehensive data on this. But the experience of one such NGO called *Pratham* in India is any indication, it is clear that there is a new found interest among the corporate bodies to support basic education of the poor. It is difficult of course to predict how this trend will grow in the years to come. It would probably depend on how responsive the state system would be to capitalize on this in its own efforts. Initial indications in India are that Government is keen on strengthening this new tripartite relationship.

Major challenges and constraints

Progress towards meeting the EFA goals is a mixed bag in South and West Asia. While some countries have made substantial progress in the last decade and a half and are on the threshold of reaching the goal of EFA, there are some which are far behind. With one out of two adult illiterates and around 40 percent of all out-of-school children in the world living in the region, the Region continues to be in a difficult position with respect to almost every EFA goal. Low completion rates in primary classes and only marginal

reduction in gender disparities at various levels continue to be matters of serious concern along with the problem of quality.

Box 4: The impact of Tsunami on Sri Lanka's schoolchildren

In Addalaichenai, on Sri Lanka's east coast – hit hard by the 26 December tsunami – 10-year-old Aboosalih is a Grade 5 student at the Al-Arham School. "I didn't want to sit at home while other children were going to school. I wanted to go back because education is important. It can help me lead a good life," she says.

Aboosalih only returned to school about two weeks ago, more than two months after the tsunami. The youngest of five children, her father was killed when the giant waves struck. Aboosalih and the rest of her family were forced to leave what was left of their home and find temporary accommodation.

Like many of her classmates, Aboosalih lost everything in the tsunami and is very happy to have the bag, books and school uniform she received from UNICEF.

Al-Arham is just one of 182 schools that were either destroyed or severely damaged by the tsunami. It is operating from a series of temporary structures on private land, some distance inland from its former site. The fact that 310 of its 340 students are back in class – albeit under tarpaulins instead of under a roof – is short of a miracle, given the difficult conditions. The oppressive heat, the blazing midday sun, the dust and the noise make it difficult for children to concentrate on learning and for teachers to teach.

Anecdotal evidence suggests there are a number of reasons why some children are still not back in classrooms. Poor families who have lost their means of earning a living are likely sending their children to work instead of school, to generate income. Some families are reluctant to send their children to learn in partially damaged or temporary school buildings. Some children are attending schools in other districts which were not necessarily affected by the tsunami and which may not be receiving vital school supplies.

Source: UNICEF website, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/media_24589.html.

Several countries of the Region have further been afflicted by political turmoil or natural disasters negatively impacting progress in basic education activities. What are the major challenges faced by the countries of South and West Asia and what factors constrain faster progress towards EFA goals? Some of these are highlighted in the following based on the analysis presented in the paper.

1. Even though all the countries have recorded substantial progress in terms of proportion of children attending schools or percentage of adults becoming literate, the size of the problem in terms of absolute numbers continues to remain alarmingly high. It is clear that the population size and the relatively high growth rate will continue to increase demand for school places in the years to come and thus negatively impact progress towards EFA goals in the Region.

South and West Asia accounts for nearly one fifth of the world's population. As already noted, more than fifty per cent of adult illiterates and possibly two thirds of out of school children are in this Region. Of this, four countries in South Asia contribute the most in numbers bringing population control efforts of the countries into sharp focus for achieving EFA goals. Though there is a general deceleration of population growth in most countries of the region, in several of the countries the pressure of population growth on demand for increased school places will continue. For instance, between 2000 and 2010, school age population (6-11 age group) is estimated to increase at one percent or more per year in Bangladesh (1.0), Nepal (1.2), and Pakistan (1.5). In fact, 6-11 age group population is likely to continue its growth trend even during the period 2010 to 2020 in some of these countries, which would seriously affect the overall move towards achieving universal participation of children in primary schooling by 2015. In India, even though the national average

shows a negative growth pattern for the age group during 2000 to 2010, there is high unevenness across different states. In some of the larger states of India, population growth pattern is very similar to the countries such as Bangladesh, Nepal and Pakistan. Therefore, India will have to continue being watched on the demographic front for its impact on progress towards EFA goals.

Two points in this regard should heighten our concern. One, three countries in the Region are members of the E-9 group indicating that the increasing growth rate would lead to enormous pressure of numbers for accommodation in schools. Of particular concern will be Pakistan and Bangladesh, in that order. Second, some of the countries in the region are Least Developed Countries indicating that their capacity to mobilize resources from within would continue to be extremely limited. In South Asia as a whole, the school-age population will increase by 13% (45.9 million) between 2000 and 2025. The situation is of course quite uneven across countries within the region. In Bhutan, Nepal, Maldives and Pakistan the number of school-age population is likely to continue increasing beyond 2025. In India and Bangladesh, though fertility rates are, in general, falling, demographic dividend will begin to be felt only gradually during the next two decades in terms of reduced demand for school places.²³ In fact, in Sri Lanka and the state of Kerala in India this has already begun to happen offering the planners an opportunity to focus more effectively on the issue of quality. But the effort required in all other countries is enormous. In some cases, such as Nepal and Pakistan the challenge of meeting EFA goals will, in all likelihood, spill over beyond 2015 as rising populations will only increase the demand for places in primary schools which are already over stretched in terms of teacher supply as well as provision of learning materials.

2. In general, early childhood education is a neglected sector in all countries of the Region. It is important that ECE is not viewed as merely giving a head start for better achievement in formal primary schooling through preparatory classes or as a luxury affordable only by the rich families. Rather it should be embedded in a larger perspective of human development and viewed as an integral part of basic education programmes. Viewed in this background, some of the countries in the region are operating massive programmes of childhood care and nutritional support. Yet, the latest Human Development Report of UNDP observes that nearly 312 million people in South Asia are undernourished – the region houses the largest number of poor and undernourished people.²⁴ The situation in Afghanistan which is still recovering from the emergency condition is even more alarming. Studies have also revealed unambiguously that early childhood care and support would have a positive and long-lasting effect on the life of the growing child in general and on his or her learning capabilities, in particular.

Unfortunately, early childhood care and education is still to catch the attention of the planners and policy makers in the region effectively. ECE is available only to a small sections of the population invariably offered through private providers. Even if one cannot expect public funds to be invested in creating ECE programmes on a universal basis, it is essential that national governments come out with a clearly defined policy on provision of ECE and actively promote and support good ECE programmes with flexible organizational arrangements.

²³ Source: ADB Key Indicators 2003, Asian Development Bank, Manila, 2003 (page 21)

²⁴ *Human Development Report 2003, Millennium Development Goals: A compact among nations to end human poverty.* UNDP and OUP, New Delhi, 2003.

3. While the overall progress is quite still reasonable, gender disparity does not seem to relent in most of the countries except Sri Lanka and Maldives. Bangladesh is perhaps the best in terms of bridging gender differentials. But that is also confined only to primary classes. Gender disparities in all the countries increase as we move up the ladder. For instance, in India though the female adult literacy rates as well as school enrolment among girls have shown substantial improvement during recent years, gender differences have not got reduced significantly.

The warnings in this regard from recent assessments as reflected in the Global Monitoring Report as well as the UNICEF reports are unambiguous – the region will not reach the gender goals at the present rate. In fact, by all indications the first interim target of 2005 has already been missed. However, a positive feature is that Governments in the region appear to be making more intensified efforts to bridge gender disparities at least in enrollment and participation in primary schooling. The strategies have become better targeted to reach the sections of the population that would make major difference in this regard. There is increased realization that the worst affected are those girls hailing from low income rural households. Keeping this in view scholarships, school meals and take-home rations are being given to poor households as incentives for sending their girls to schools. With positive feedback from the field countries have begun to expand such programmes. (Box below) Subsidizing community initiatives with targeted financial inputs have also proved quite successful. In addition to universalizing school meals programme, India has also launched a large programme of residential schools for girls to significantly improve the participation of girls from low income families from remote rural areas.

Successful Approaches to enhancing girls' enrollment

In Bangladesh, a school stipend programme was established more than two decades ago to subsidize various expenses for girls enrolling in secondary school. The enrollment ratio increased significantly in the pilot project areas over a five year period of operation. In 1992, tuition fee for girls was eliminated and the stipend programme was extended to all rural areas. As a result, the school enrollment ratio of girls rose more rapidly than that of boys in the succeeding years. This also pushed up the women's enrollment ratio at intermediate colleges.

Several projects were initiated in the 1990s targeting girls' enrolment in Balochistan, the largest but most sparsely populated province of Pakistan. To overcome budgetary constraints these projects were designed to rely on partnerships with local neighbourhoods or communities. One such project provided subsidy to private sector/non-governmental organizations to open primary schools in urban slums of Quetta. While both boys and girls could attend the school, the government subsidy was linked to enrolled girl students. As a result of the initiative, the school attendance of both girls and boys increased sharply. A similar project was started in the rural areas of Balochistan subsequently which registered similar upswing in the enrollment of both boys and girls.

The success of these projects shows that the enrolment rate of girls can be increased by improving physical access through the establishment of schools in the neighbourhood, providing subsidies involving the local community and paying attention to cultural sensitivities.

Adapted from Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2002 – Economic Prospects: Preparing for Recovery, ESCAP, New York, 2002. (p. 211)

4. Having achieved a reasonable level of success in enrolling children in schools, planners have begun to focus more and more on quality of schooling. A clear indication of this is the emergence of decentralized teacher support mechanisms in almost all parts of the region. This is major step as the quality of education imparted in schools and other institutions depend essentially on the capacity of the teachers. Establishment of teacher resource centres, cluster resource centres and district resource centres as well as the massive investment made in recent years towards in-service education of teachers are illustrative of such efforts. Concern for quality improvement has also manifested itself in terms of achievement surveys to measure the outcomes of schooling. Despite such efforts, the struggle to provide quality education for all has only begun and challenge ahead is enormous..

Several factors need careful consideration. First and foremost is the supply of qualified teachers and maintaining a reasonable level of teacher pupil ratio. In several parts of the Region, the teacher-pupil ratio is beyond acceptable limits threatening to undo the gains made in enrolling more children in the schools as ineffective teaching and inadequate attention to children may make teaching learning process uninteresting to the children, eventually leading to dropping out of schools. The situation has also become quite complicated as the number of para teachers or contract teachers, many of whom do not possess minimum academic/professional qualifications and are made to work under less optimal service conditions continues to increase.

Nature of provisions being made for primary schooling also needs careful consideration. Studies have pointed out that except for some NGO managed systems, the alternate modes are invariably small single-teacher schools with very little provision of academic infrastructure. Often they employ locally available instructors who may be under-qualified and even underpaid. In an insightful analysis in India,²⁵ it is found that a virtual *hierarchy of access* is emerging with nature of school provision corresponding to the marginalized status of the children. As a matter of fact, children of the poor by definition are handicapped by poor levels of endowment in their homes. Fairness of provision demands that the poor have access, at the least, to equally endowed schools as provided for the not-so-poor, and are, perhaps, given even better provisions in order to compensate for the poor endowments at home. Second, it is important that investments are made in a more focused manner benefiting the poor instead of spending on generic programmes which spread the resources thin and fail to cumulatively reflect any substantial improvement in the situation of the poor. Constraints of educational finance are likely to continue in most of the developing countries. But, governments often treat fiscal constraints as temporary crises and adopt short-term ad hoc measures that increase the eventual costs of adjustment, undermine educational outcomes and fairness, and only mask fiscal shortfalls. It is clear that improvement of basic education provision requires policy makers to evolve a more focused and long term vision that meet requirements of both quality and equity.

The issues raised above are quite complex. They cannot be effectively addressed by doing more of the same. Rather they require creative and non-classical responses. It is here that the role of ICT needs to be explored. We have to jettison the long-held view

²⁵ Vimala Ramachandran (ed.), *Gender and Social Equity in Primary Education, Hierarchies of Access*. Sage Publications, 2004. New Delhi.

that modern technology is pertinent only for the rich. ICT is not just another new medium like radio or TV. It has the potential to open up access to a vast base of knowledge to people breaking the barriers of geographical location or cultural and social barriers. This potential could be of great value in overcoming problems of quality and equity that often accompany expansion and variety as highlighted above. Interestingly, ICT is being used in a variety of ways in out-of-school learning in many developing countries, reaching knowledge and information to the poor, which was hitherto inaccessible. In India, there is an expanding effort to improve the outreach of education creating multi-mode transactions which combine the use of satellite based transmission with web-based on-line interactions. Could such approaches be adopted for improving the status of schools, which are chronically underprovided? For instance, could such means be used for improving the quality of teachers who function in these schools and for augmenting the academic resources available? Rejecting these possibilities without adequate exploration holds the danger of increasing the digital divide which threatens to create a class of knowledge rich and knowledge poor. An open mind in this regard is essential if the expanded system of basic education is firmly built on a platform of integration and does not lead to further fragmentation on social and economic considerations.

5. On the adult literacy front, though considerable momentum was created in the 1990s in most countries of the Region, post-Dakar period seems to be witnessing an indifferent phase. Analysis made in the paper shows that enormous efforts would be required to reverse the still escalating trend in illiterate population among the 15+ age group in at least four countries of the Region, namely, Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Pakistan. As the GMR analysis points out, without substantive increase in the efforts, the Region is not likely to meet the Dakar benchmark.

A pertinent point to note is the inadequate increase in literate population in the 15 to 24 age group in several countries which is critical for breaking the cycle of family level illiteracy. This cannot be achieved, without ensuring higher levels of efficiency in the basic education cycle so that children entering schools stay on to complete and become fully functionally literate. Thus, adult literacy should not be seen in isolation of activities for providing primary education. This somewhat disjointed approach to the two sectors has to be rectified.

Another challenge for adult literacy sector is to link it more effectively with income generation programmes and poverty alleviation strategies. There is not dearth of successful models for doing this both in the Government and NGO sectors. A large number of self-help groups and micro-credit programmes, particularly involving women have demonstrated the tremendous possibilities these activities hold for integrating adult literacy programmes with programmes for improving the economic status of the participants. Needless to emphasize that even though, the Dakar Goals explicitly specify, literacy and life-skills programmes have failed to receive adequate attention in the National Plans of Action of most of the countries. In particular, programmes of literacy among adolescents and out-of-school youth require immediate attention. As the 1990s demonstrated, the way forward is to create broader partnerships between Government and civil society organizations at the grassroots level to address the needs of the sector in a more comprehensive manner.

6. While grand National Plans are drawn for EFA, most countries have inadequate capacity to implement reform programmes at lower levels of the administrative ladder. Consequently, very little attention seems to have been paid for building capacity to plan, design and implement effective monitoring mechanisms at the

grassroots level. Changing this situation does not involve mere training of administrators at village, block and district levels. Rather the solution lies in comprehensive institutional reforms leading to empowerment of the local governments and local level bodies, particularly school level organization and communities. In other words, it is necessary to make decentralization a reality and not keep it as a mere rhetoric incorporated into policy statements. In particular, fiscal decentralization is critical for improving the financial absorptive capacity and better utilization of resources and for ensuring autonomy with accountability at school and local levels. A positive factor emerging in this regard is the fast pace at which governance reforms ushering in greater involvement of community through democratic electoral processes and civil society involvement is taking place in some countries of the region.

7. Mobilizing adequate resources to meet the escalating demand for school places and providing quality education for all continues to be a major challenge in all the countries of the region. Estimates show in order to ensure quick coverage of all children in the basic education in India would require finances, at least in the initial years, to the tune of four times the current level of expenditure.²⁶ The decision to raise resources by levying a surcharge of 2 per cent on all transactions announced by the new Government in India is, of course, a welcome policy change that should help overcome financial constraints at least partially and help maintain the tempo of progress achieved during the last few years. But capacity to mobilize finances from domestic sources is uneven across the region. Some countries such as Nepal and Bangladesh continue to be heavily dependent on external funding for EFA activities; and the system in Afghanistan is still struggling to move out of the emergency assistance phase. Even in countries which have made substantial progress in EFA such as Sri Lanka and the Maldives, mobilizing resources to finance quality improvement measures is proving to be a difficult task.
8. Lack of systematic data and information on the situation with respect to different EFA goals is among the most critical constraint to locate problem areas, to plan properly; to monitor effectively; and finally to assess the progress towards EFA. Though all the countries are spending enormous amounts of money and energy on developing an Education Management Information System (EMIS), what is required is a change in the basic approach to EMIS. First, there is an urgent need to identify and calibrate locally relevant usable indicators that are useful for planning and implementing development action at the local level. Mere collation of data at national levels and publishing enrolment ratios does not suffice. Without strengthening data use at the local level, even the reliability and validity of the data generated from the schools become questionable. Second, data generated from within the system using schools as the unit has to be combined with periodic data surveys using household as the unit.²⁷ It is the combination of household based survey data and school generated information that would build a reliable and useful EMIS. Third, official data collection processes have to be coupled with mechanisms for social audit of the situation with respect to various aspects of basic education. Again, the 'Education Watch' programme of CAMPE in Bangladesh presents a

²⁶ Based on exercises being carried out at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi in connection with preparation of the 'Right to Education Act'.

²⁷ The value of such an approach is very well illustrated by the sample survey conducted a few years ago in selected states of India for the Public Report on Basic Education and also the educational data generated periodically by the National Sample Survey Organization.

useful model of this kind. The most significant part of any data generation process should be its public accessibility and verifiability. It is necessary for the Governments to view such social data audit processes not in an adversarial sense but as complementary to official sources of information of different goals of EFA. .

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Annexure

Table A1: Key indicators of inputs, participation, efficiency and outcomes in education in South and West Asia

Country	PEPS as % of GDP per capita, 2001-02			PEE as % of total govt. expenditure, 2001-02	Trained Teachers in Primary Education, 2001-02	Primary Pupil-Teacher Ratio, 2001-02	GER, 2001-02			NER, 2001-02		Primary completion rate (% of relevant age group) 2000/01-2002/03		Repeaters in primary school, 2001/02	Youth literacy rate, 2002 (Age 15-24)	
	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary				Pre-primary	Primary	Secondary	Primary	Secondary	Total	Female		Male	Female
Afghanistan	..	..	..	..	..	43	..	23	12	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bangladesh	8.3	13.4	42.5	15.8	65.6	55	19	98	47	87	44	77	78	6.3	58	41
Bhutan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
India	13.7	23	85.8	12.7	..	40	26	99	48	83	..	77	69	3.7	..	..
Maldives	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Nepal	12.5	11.8	82.3	13.9	51.8	40	13	122	44	70	..	73	67	21.6	78	46
Pakistan	..	..	..	7.8	..	44	55	73	..	67	..	..	..	..	65	42
Sri Lanka	10	..	..	..	..	..	..	110	81	..	..	108	103	0.8	97	97
Iran	11.6	13.6	81.5	21.7	97.9	24	23	92	81	87	..	123	120	4.3	..	..
South Asia	8.7	10.4	60.4	13	66.9	42	28	95	48	82	..	78	71	4.6	77	61
World	..	..	..	..	86.2	28	40	1.3	70	88	..	..	..	5.6	89	83

Notes: PEPS: Public expenditure per student; PEE: Public expenditure on education; '...' Data not available. Primary completion rate is estimated by taking the total number of students in the last grade of primary school, minus the number of repeaters in that grade, divided by the total number of children of official graduation age. Repeaters in primary school has been calculated by taking the total number of students in the last grade of the primary school, minus the number of repeaters in that grade, divided by the total number of children of official graduation age.

Source: World Development Report 2005.

Table A2 : GER and NER at pre-primary level in South and West Asia, 1998-99 and 2002-03

Country	Education System		1998-99		2002-03		GER, 2002-03				NER, 2002-03				Teacher-Pupil Ratio 2002-03
	Entry age	Duration	% girls in total enrolment	% private enrolment	% girls in total enrolment	% private enrolment	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI	
Afghanistan	3	4	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bangladesh	3	3	51	..	50	..	21	20	21	1.07	..	..	..	..	38
Bhutan	4	2	48	100	52**	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	16**
India (p)	3	3	48	..	49	4	34	34	34	1.01	..	..	..	..	40
Maldives	3	3	48	27	49	41	47	46	47	1.02	44	43	44	1.02	23
Nepal	3	2	41**	..	45	80	18	19	16	0.86	..	..	..	..	20**
Pakistan (r)	3	2	..	..	45	25	47	50	44	0.88	..	..	..	..	..
Sri Lanka (p)	4	1	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Iran	5	1	50	..	52	8	31	29	32	1.12	27	25	29	1.13	26

Notes: ** UIS estimation ; .. No data available; (p) Data for 2002-03 or later years are provisional; (r) Including enrolments in "katchi" programmes

Source: UIS (2005), *Global Education Digest 2005*.

Table A3: Gross and net intake ratios in primary education in South and West Asia, 2002-03

Country	Education System		Gross Intake Ratio, 2002-03				Net Intake Ratio, 2002-03			Change 1998-99 to 2002-03
	Compulsory education age group	Duration	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI	Total	Boys	Girls	
Afghanistan	7-12	6	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bangladesh	6-10	5	116	115	116	1.01	87	86	88	4
Bhutan	6-16	7	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
India (p)	6-14	5	131	133	128	0.96	..	..	..	..
Maldives	6-12	7	81	81	82	1.01	72	72	72	..
Nepal (h)	..	5	116	121	111	0.92	..	..	..	..
Pakistan	5-9	5	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sri Lanka (p)	5-13	5	107**	107**	106**	0.99**	100**	..	..	5
Iran	6-10	5	87**	86**	88**	1.02**	..	..	..	..

Notes: ** UIS estimates; * National estimate; .. Data not available; (h) Reclassification of programmes in ISCED mapping; (p) Data for 2002-03 or later years are provisional.
Source: UIS (2005), *Global Education Digest 2005*.

Table A4: GER, NER and pupil-teacher ratio at primary level in South and West Asia, 1998-99 and 2002-2003

Country	GER, 2002-03				NER, 1998-99			NER, 2002-03			Change 1998-99 to 2002-03	GPI		Trained Teachers, 2002-03 (%)	Pupil-Teacher Ratio, 2002-03
	Total	Boys	Girls	GPI	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls		1998-99	2002-03		
Afghanistan	92	120	63	0.52	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	61
Bangladesh	96	94	98	1.04	85**	86**	84**	84	82	86	-1	0.98**	1.04	67	56
Bhutan	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	92	38**
India (p)	109	113	106	0.94	..	..	..	87	90	85	..	..	0.94	..	42
Maldives	118	119	117	0.98	100**	99**	100**	92	92	93	-7	1.01**	1.00	64	20
Nepal	119	126	112	0.89	68**	76**	60**	..	..	..	..	0.79*	..	16	36
Pakistan	68	80	57	0.71	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	40
Sri Lanka (p)	111**	111**	110**	0.99**	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	23**
Iran	92	93	90	0.97	81**	83**	80**	86	88	85	5	0.97**	0.97	100	24
Asia (Regional Average)	106	108	103	0.95	..	..	..	87	89	85	..	..	0.98	..	..

Notes: ** UIS estimate; (p) Data for 2002-03 or later years are provisional.
Source: UIS (2005), *Global Education Digest 2005*.

Table A5: Educational Profile of South and West Asian countries (Primary Level)

Country	2000											2002											
	PCGNI (US\$)	ALR	GER (Pri)	NER (Pri)	GIR	PCR	PRG 5	RR	SLE	PEE	PTR	PCGNI (US\$)	ALR	GER (Pri)	NER (Pri)	GIR	PCR	PRG 5	RR	SLE	PEE	PTR	
Afghanistan	15.1	42.7	92.3	61.2
Bangladesh	380	40.0	98.9	87.7	110.3	76.8	65.5	6.5	8.4	2.5	57.1	380	41.1	95.9	85.1	115.7	73.3	53.9	6.2	8.4	2.4	55.7	
Bhutan	520	..	..	..	..	41.4	91.0	13.2	..	5.2	41.1	590	..	..	..	..	44.7	91.0	12.9	..	5.2	39.5
India	450	57.4	98.8	83.3	125.3	77.3	61.4	3.7	8.9	4.1	40.1	470	61.3	99.3	82.8	121.3	80.9	61.4	3.6	9.0	4.1	40.7	
Maldives	2130	96.9	131.1	98.9	94.0	..	..	..	12.3	3.7	22.7	2150	97.2	118.0	92.4	81.3	..	..	..	11.9	..	20.0
Nepal	230	41.7	116.6	70.5	114.4	70.5	77.8	24.0	9.0	3.7	37.0	230	44.0	119.3	70.5	116.5	78.1	64.9	21.7	9.7	3.4	35.7	
Pakistan	370	41.5	73.2	59.1	93.9	..	..	..	5.4	1.8	44.2	490	..	68.5	59.1	93.9	..	..	..	5.4	1.8	40.2
Sri Lanka	890	91.6	112.4	..	105.6	98.1	..	5.1	..	3.1	23.4	850	92.1	112.4	..	105.6	..	..	..	..	..	23.4
Iran	1650	76.0	93.0	79.2	85.3	104.6	93.7	4.8	11.6	4.6	25.3	1740	77.1	92.1	86.5	94.9	107.3	93.7	4.3	11.6	4.9	24.4	

Notes: ALR = Adult literacy rate (age 15 +); PCGNI = Per Capita GNI; GER (pri) = gross enrolment ratio at primary level; NER (pri) = Net enrolment ration at primary level; GIR = Grade 1 gross intake rate; PCR = Primary completion rate; PRG 5 = Pupils reaching grade 5 (%); RR = Repetition rate (%); SLE = School life expectancy (years); PEE = Public expenditure on education as % of GDP; PTR = Pupil-teacher ratio; '..' = Data not available.
Source: <http://devdata.worldbank.org/edstat/SummaryEdu...>

Table A6: Public expenditure and spending as a% of GDP in South and West Asia, 2001-02

Country	Public expenditure per student as a % GDP per capita	Total Public Expenditure on Education	
	Primary	As % of GDP	As % of total govt. expenditure
Afghanistan	..	..	..
Bangladesh	8.9	2.4	15.5
Bhutan	..	..	..
India (p)	12.4	..	..
Maldives	..	..	..
Nepal	12.0	3.4	14.9
Pakistan	..	..	..
Sri Lanka (p)	..	..	..
Iran	11.6	4.9	17.7

Table A7: School life expectancy (approximation method), in South and west Asian countries, 2002-03

Country	Pre-Primary Education			Primary and Secondary Education		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
Afghanistan	-	-	-	2.1	2.1	-
Bangladesh	0.6**	0.6**	0.6**	8.0	7.8	8.3
Bhutan	..	..	..	..	..	..
India (p)	1.0**	1.0**	1.0**	9.1	9.7	8.5
Maldives	1.4	1.4	1.4	11.8	11.7	12.0
Nepal	0.4**	0.4**	0.3**	9.5	10.2	8.7
Pakistan	0.9**	1.0**	0.9**	5.0	5.8	4.1
Sri Lanka (p)	..	..	..	12.5**	12.3**	12.6**
Iran	0.3	0.3	0.3	10.0	10.3	9.8

Notes: ** UIS estimate

Source: UIS, Global Education Digest

Table A8: Measure of progression and completion in primary education in South and West Asia, 2002-03

Country	% Repeaters, 2002-03			Survival to Grade 5 2001-02 to 2002-03		
	Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
Afghanistan	..	..	..	..	..	..
Bangladesh	6	7	6	54	49	59
Bhutan	13**	14**	12**	91**	89**	93**
India (p)	4	4	4	..	..	..
Maldives	na	na	na	..	..	..
Nepal	22	22	22	65	63	67
Pakistan	..	..	..	..	..	..
Sri Lanka (p)	1**	1**	1**	98**	98**	99**
Iran	3**	4**	2**	95**	..	..

Notes: na : not applicable; ** UIS estimate; (p) Data for 2002-03 or later years are provisional.

Source: UIS, Global Education Digest 2005.

Table A9: Observed and required average annual increase in net enrolment/attendance rate to achieve universal primary education by 2015 in South Asia

Country	Primary NE/AR (c. 2001) ^a			GPI ^d	Primary NAR (2005) ^c			GPI ^d	AARI observed (1980-2001)			AARI required for 2015 goal		
	Total	Boys	Girls		Total	Boys	Girls		Total	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls
Afghanistan	53.1	65.5	39.6	0.60	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3.91	2.88	5.03
Bangladesh	79.3	78.4	80.2	1.02	83.9	80.6	86.2	1.07	1.15	0.55	1.50	1.48	1.55	1.41
Bhutan	50.7	53.3	48.0	0.90	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	3.52	3.34	3.71
India	76.9	80.3	73.3	0.91	80.0	81.8	77.4	0.95	0.77	0.38	1.02	1.65	1.4	1.91
Maldives	97.5	97.0	98.1	1.01	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0.18	0.21	0.14
Nepal	66.2	71.1	61.0	0.86	73.7	77.8	69.3	0.89	1.48	1.33	1.65	2.25	1.93	2.60
Pakistan	60.7	67.6	53.4	0.79	65.9	71.6	59.6	0.83	1.04	0.80	1.23	2.62	2.16	3.11
Sri Lanka	100.0	99.9	100.0	1.00	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	0.00	0.00	0.00

Notes: NE/AR = Net enrolment/attendance rate; NAR = Net attendance rate; AARI = Average annual rate of increase .. Data not available; ^a Years of NE/AR estimate range from 1998 to 2002; ^b Ratio of girls' to boys' primary NE/AR; ^c Net attendance ratio; ^d Ratio of girls' to boys' NAR.

- (i) Primary net enrolment/attendance ratio (NE/AR) in the proportion of primary school age children who are enrolled in or attending primary school. Enrolment is reported through administrative records of the countries and attendance rate is reported through household surveys.
- (ii) The rate of progress in enrolment in primary education is measured by calculating the AARI in the proportion of the population with at least primary education. Data from household survey have been used to estimate the likelihood of school attendance. The AARI is the average of the observed change of this likelihood.
- (iii) The AARI required to meet the 2015 goal is calculated by subtracting the NE/AR in the year of the most recent estimate (c. 2001) from 100% and dividing the result by the number of years in the period beginning in the year of estimate and ending in 2015.
- (iv)

Source: UNICEF, *Progress for Children*, A Report Card on Gender Parity and Primary Education, Number 2, April 2005.