

# **Continuation of BRAC non-formal school graduates of 1995 in formal school education**

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## Summary

The education programme of BRAC not only provides quality basic education to its learners it also put emphasis on their enrolment in formal schools for further education. The Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC started a tracer study on the graduates of BRAC non-formal schools in 1995. This article, based on the data generated from the tracer study, explores the continuation of education of the graduates of BRAC non-formal schools in formal schools. Three types of schools were considered. These are BRAC operated Non-Formal Primary Education (NFPE) and Basic Education for Older Children (BEOC), and NFPE under Education Support Programme (ESP). A representative sample of 1,259 graduates of 1995, who completed three years course in BRAC schools, was followed up and surveyed in 1995, 1997 and 1999 to collect various information including their schooling status. However, in this third survey 1,106 could be traced. The following are the major findings from the third survey round:

1. After graduating from BRAC schools in 1995, 90% children were enrolled in formal schools for further education (90.4% for boys and 89.9% for girls).
2. On average, around 10% of the graduates dropped out from the formal systems per year. Highest dropout occurred during the second year of formal schooling (16.6%). Up to October 1999, 39.6% of the graduates were continuing education in different formal schools.
3. There was no gender gap at the time of entering the formal schooling but boys dropout increased from the second year. In October 1999, 33% of the boys and 42.3% of the girls was continuing education in formal schools.
4. A higher proportion of children of NFPE continued education in formal schools than children of BEOC and NFPE-ESP.
5. The children who graduated from NFPE generally enrolled in Class IV or V, and the graduates of BEOC mostly enrolled in Class V or VI. Some children enrolled in Class III even they completed three years curriculum in BRAC schools.
6. Over three-quarters of the graduates of 1995 completed five-year cycle of primary education by 1998 (69.1% for boys and 79% for girls). School-wise 78.2% of NFPE, 70.4% of BEOC and 65.2% of NFPE-ESP completed primary cycle.
7. The relationship between survival rate and grade of entry in formal schools was negative. The survival rate was highest among those enrolled in Class IV (50.6%), less among those enrolled in Class V (42.2%) and least among those enrolled in Class VI or more (33.1%).
8. After graduating from BRAC schools the children mostly got enrolled in government primary schools (70.7%) and non-government high schools (17.5%). After about four

years of their graduation, among the children who survived in formal schools up to early 1999 85.6% were found in non-government high schools.

9. Proportion of graduates enrolled in Madrassas was 4.5% in 1995. Among the children who survived up to early 1999, 11.4% were in such type of schools.
10. Two major causes of dropout was 'scarcity of money' (39.1%) and 'marriage' (40.1%). For boys dropout, the major reasons were 'scarcity of money' (65.3%), 'disliking for school' (16.4%), and 'has to work at home or outside' (12%). For girls two major reasons included 'marriage' (59.2%) and 'scarcity of money' (26.5%).
11. Demographic and socio-economic characteristics played significantly important role in continuation of education. Younger children were more likely to continue for longer period than older children. Parental education has significant positive relationship with survival rate. The survival rate decreased from 83.3% in early 1995 to 24.6% in October 1999 among the children came from the households eligible for BRAC rural development programme. However, these rates were respectively 93.7% and 47.4% among those came from non-eligible households.

## **Introduction**

The non-formal education has been considered as an academic activity outside the structural frame of formal education. Identifying the difference between two forms of education it is said that the formal provision is a 'hierarchically structured' and 'chronologically graded' system, whereas the non-formal one is for a special target group towards specific learning objectives. The learning area covered under non-formal education is obviously much wider and the system is very flexible compared to the formal system. The concept of non-formal education is not new. This provision was widely used to tackle the educational crisis after the World War II. Under the names of 'community development', 'community education' and 'functional literacy' UNESCO also dealt with similar concept in the 1950's and 1970's. In the declaration of the latest World Conference on Education for All (WCEFA), held in Jomtien in 1990, the provision of non-formal education got much importance to meet the basic educational needs of the countries (WCEFA, 1990).

Like many other developing countries the education system in Bangladesh is no exception. The literacy rate for all population increased only 6.3 percentage points from 1961 to 1991 (BBS, 1994). The first education commission of Bangladesh, formed by the government immediately after the birth of the nation, advocated wide use of non-formal education methods to eradicate mass illiteracy from the country. However, no serious government initiative was taken in this regard for long time. On the other hand, the non-governmental development organisations have taken a leading role to run non-formal education programmes for children, youths and adults. The primary education has been made compulsory for children aged 6-10 years since 1993. Not all school-aged children go to school and overall quality of education is poor. About 77% of primary school aged children are currently enrolled and less than 30% of the children aged 11-12 qualify criteria for basic education (Chowdhury et al., 1999). Although the enrolment rate was higher for boys than girls in recent past, the gender gap has been reduced recently. The gross enrolment ratio of the girls is higher than that of boys in some areas. On the other hand, enrolment rate at secondary level is less than primary level, about two-thirds of the secondary school-aged children do not go to school. The government started scholarship programme for girls to

popularise secondary education among them. Different types of institutions provide primary education in Bangladesh. These may be State-owned, privately managed, Kindergarten, religious and non-formal type of schools. The formal systems cover over 90% of all children enrolled at primary level and only 8.5% covered by the non-formal schools (Chowdhury et al, 1999). The non-formal schools in the country were mostly established by the non-governmental development organisations, three-quarters of which was by BRAC.

BRAC Education Programme currently operates two models of primary schools for children of two different age groups. One is Non-formal Primary Education (NFPE) for children aged 8-10 years, and the other is Basic Education for Older Children (BEOC) for the children aged 11-14 years. The NFPE was started as a three-year programme and the BEOC was started as a two-year programme. However, the former was extended to a four-year programme in 1998 and the later was extended to three years since 1993. The expansion of NFPE is much wider than that of BEOC. It was observed that children older/younger than these targeted age groups were also enrolled in both types of schools. Another initiative of BRAC is Education Support Programme (ESP). Under this programme BRAC provides technical support to 284 small NGOs to replicate NFPE model of schools in their working areas (BRAC, 1999).

BRAC non-formal schools are not settled as permanent institutions. It is a one-room school with a teacher and an average of 33 students. A cohort of 33 students enrolls during the same school year and move together through three/four years of schooling. Once that cohort completes a cycle, the school ceases to exist unless there are at least 30 eligible children in the community. The curriculum of BRAC schools is broadly based on the formal school curriculum set by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). However, the books are separately prepared by BRAC. Extra curricular activities are very common in these schools. It can be mentioned that no technology related education is provided in BRAC schools. No tuition fee is charged in these schools and all teaching materials are provided by BRAC. At present 34,481 BRAC non-formal schools are in operation all over the country. More than 1.1 million children are enrolled in these schools (BRAC, 2000).

Over 66% of the students are girls and among the teachers 97% are female. Up to the end of 1999, the total number of children graduated from BRAC schools reached over 1.5 million.

Generally, it is thought that the non-formal way of schooling is very much effective to teach a specific curriculum to a specially targeted group of people. In many cases continuation of education of these learners have not been considered. Thus, non-formal schooling for the youths and adults ultimately went on to programmes eradicating illiteracy. BRAC not only provides quality basic education to the poorer children in Bangladesh, it also prepares them for further education through formal schooling. It might be interesting to see how long these poorer children continue their educational life. This paper aims to explore the continuation of education of a cohort of graduates of BRAC non-formal education programme in formal schools.

## **Objectives**

The objectives of the study were to:

- 1) find the enrolment rate of the graduates of 1995 at different point of time for the last five years;
- 2) explore the differentials in enrolment rate among the graduates of different types of BRAC schools and according to sex of graduate;
- 3) explore the causes of dropout;
- 4) find out the relationship between survival rate and grade of entry; and
- 5) find out how the enrolment rate changes over time with respect to different socio-economic status of the graduates.

## **Methodology**

The Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC launched a tracer study in 1995 to measure the level and trend of basic educational performance of BRAC school graduates, and to explore their enrolment in formal schools. The students of BRAC schools who graduated (completed the three-year curriculum) in early 1995 were the subjects of the first round

survey of the project. The survey for the tracer study is conducted every alternative year. The 1995 graduates were surveyed thrice between 1995 and 1999. Information on current enrolment status, grade and type of school of the currently enrolled children, month and year of leaving of the dropped out children, and causes of that was collected in each survey. The 1999 survey verified the previously collected information and updated the changes made after 1997 survey. Besides, information on age and sex of children, parental education, and self perceived yearly food security status of household was collected in 1995. Information were collected through interviewing the respective graduates and their parents/guardians.

### **Study population and sampling**

Three groups of children who completed three years non-formal curriculum under BRAC Education Programme in early 1995 were considered as target population for this study. These are the graduates of NFPE and BEOC directly operated by BRAC, and NFPE operated under ESP. All schools considered for the study were located in rural areas. For administrative purpose, BRAC operated schools are clustered in teams, where each team looks after around 50 schools. ESP schools are operated by other small NGOs, five schools each. A total of 3,993 schools completed three-year BRAC curriculum in 1995, of which 3,008 were NFPE, 856 were BEOC and 129 were NFPE-ESP. From these schools approximately 119,790 students were graduated in 1995.

Separate samples were drawn from each of the three categories of schools. It was calculated that for a precision level of 7% and with 95% confidence limit 196 graduates are needed for a single estimate. As cluster-sampling procedure was applied the size of the sample was doubled in order to reduce intra cluster correlation affect. For BRAC operated schools, 30 teams were randomly selected. From each selected team (here cluster), one school was selected randomly and another one was chosen adjacent to it. However, for ESP schools thirty schools (from the list of 129) were randomly selected and another 30 were chosen among those NGOs from which the first 30 schools came. From the list of the graduates of each pair of schools two lists were produced according to sex. Fourteen graduates (seven boys and seven girls) from each of 30 random clusters were selected for each type of school.

Instead of 1,260 (14 x 30 x 3) graduates 1,259 were interviewed during first survey in 1995. All the above graduates were attempted to trace during the survey of 1997 and 1999. However, some could not be located due to shift of family from the area, and information of some could not be collected due to lack of memory of the graduates and the family members. Complete information of 1,106 graduates were available from three surveys, of which 360 from NFPE, 360 from BEOC and 386 from NFPE-ESP (Table 1).

**Table 1** Study population and the sample

Type of School	No. of schools completed	No. of students graduated	No. of graduates selected for first survey in 1995			No. of children traced in third survey in 1999		
			Boys	Girls	Both	Boys	Girls	Both
NFPE	3,008	90,240	210	210	420	185	175	360
BEOC	856	25,680	207	213	420	180	180	360
NFPE-ESP	129	3,870	191	228	419	179	207	386
All	3,993	119,790	608	651	1,259	544	562	1,106

## Results

### Socio-economic characteristics of the graduates

The socio-economic characteristics of the graduates of 1995 collected during first survey (November–December 1995) are presented in Table 2. The mean age of the graduates was 12.3 years. The mean age was highest among the graduates of BEOC (13.4 years), followed by NFPE-ESP (12.3 years) and NFPE (11.9 years). Proportionately more graduates of NFPE and NFPE-ESP were less than 12 years. However, more BEOC graduates were 13 and above. Over three-fourths of the mothers and nearly 60% of the fathers of the graduates did not attend any school. Proportionately more literate parents were found among the graduates of NFPE-ESP, followed by NFPE and BEOC. Self-perceived yearly food security status of half of the graduates households was deficit. Little more than 36% of the graduates came from the households eligible for participation in BRAC development programmes. This rate was around 36% in NFPE and BEOC and 30.4% in NFPE-ESP. Three quarters of the graduates satisfied the criteria of basic education when tested during

the first survey. Separately, 75% of the NFPE, 76.1% of the BEOC and 74% of the NFPE-ESP graduates qualified in the test.

**Table 2** Socio-economic characteristics of the graduates as per 1995 survey

Characteristics	NFPE	BEOC	NFPE-ESP	All
Mean age	11.9	13.9	12.3	12.3
Age distribution (%)				
9 – 10 y	20.0	3.0	11.4	16.1
11 – 12 y	47.7	21.5	46.4	42.1
13 – 14 y	28.0	39.8	35.9	30.8
15+ y	4.3	35.7	6.2	11.0
Mothers education (%)				
Nil	76.9	77.6	72.6	76.8
I – V	18.5	19.2	20.4	18.7
VI+	4.7	3.2	7.0	4.5
Fathers education (%)				
Nil	58.4	59.8	54.5	58.5
I – V	18.8	22.1	24.9	19.7
VI+	22.8	18.1	20.6	21.7
Yearly food security status of household (%)				
Always in deficit	20.6	19.2	21.3	20.3
Sometimes in deficit	32.5	28.7	30.5	31.6
Balance	32.8	37.4	32.4	33.8
Surplus	14.1	14.6	15.8	14.3
Household eligible for participation in BRAC programme (%)	36.4	36.1	30.4	36.1
Qualified in basic competency test (%)	75.0	76.1	74.0	75.2

Source: First round tracer study in 1995

## The scenario of continuation and dropout

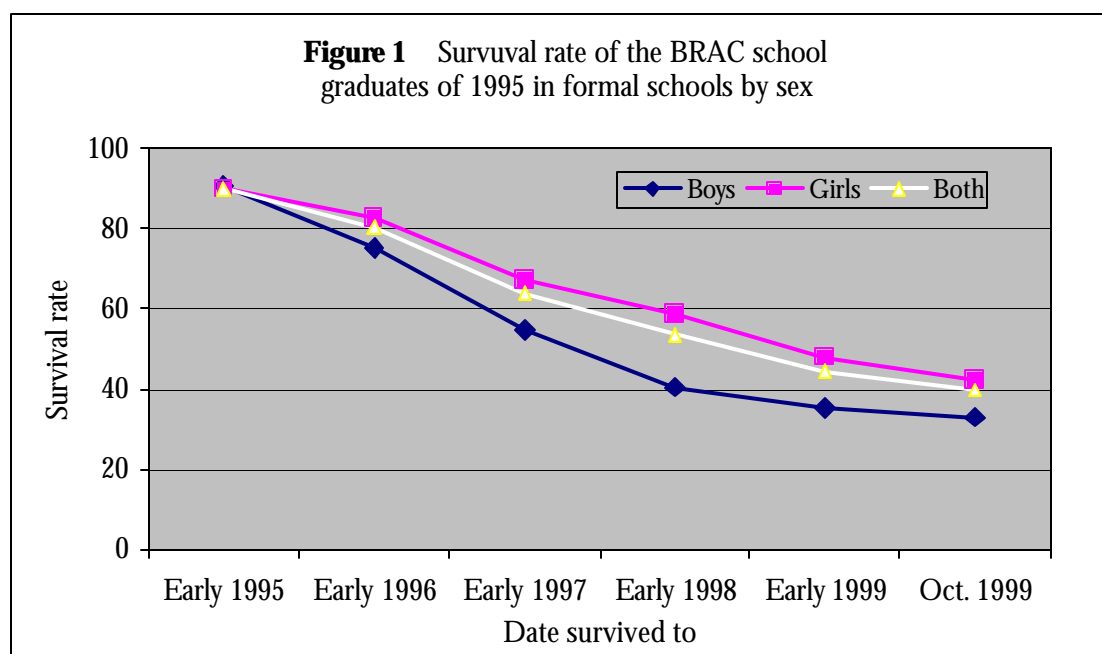
Table 3 presents enrolment rate of the BRAC school graduates of 1995 in formal schools during early 1995 to October 1999. After graduating from BRAC schools 90% of the graduates enrolled in formal schools in early 1995, this rate was 90.4% for the boys and 89.9% for the girls. The overall enrolment rate significantly decreased to 80.3% by early 1996, 63.7% by early 1997, 53.5% by early 1998, 44.3% by early 1999 and 39.6% by October 1999. Although there was no statistically significant gender difference in the enrolment of

the graduates at the beginning of their formal schooling it started to happen by a year. In early 1996, three-fourths of the boys and 82.4% of the girls were found enrolled ( $p < 0.01$ ). That is, proportionately more girls than boys continued their education in formal schools. The gender gap of the same form increased by the next one year, which continued up to early 1999. However, the gap slightly decreased by October 1999. In October 1999, 33% of the boys and 42.3% of the girls were found currently enrolled in different formal schools. Figure 1 also presents the same.

**Table 3** Survival rate of the BRAC school graduates of 1995 in formal schools by time and sex

Date survived to	Boys	Girls	Both	Significance
Early 1995	90.4	89.9	90.0	ns
Early 1996	75.3	82.4	80.3	$p < 0.01$
Early 1997	54.9	67.3	63.7	$p < 0.001$
Early 1998	40.3	58.8	53.5	$p < 0.001$
Early 1999	35.4	48.0	44.3	$p < 0.001$
Oct. 1999	33.0	42.3	39.6	$p < 0.01$
Significance	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.001$	$p < 0.001$	

Note: Early means January and February

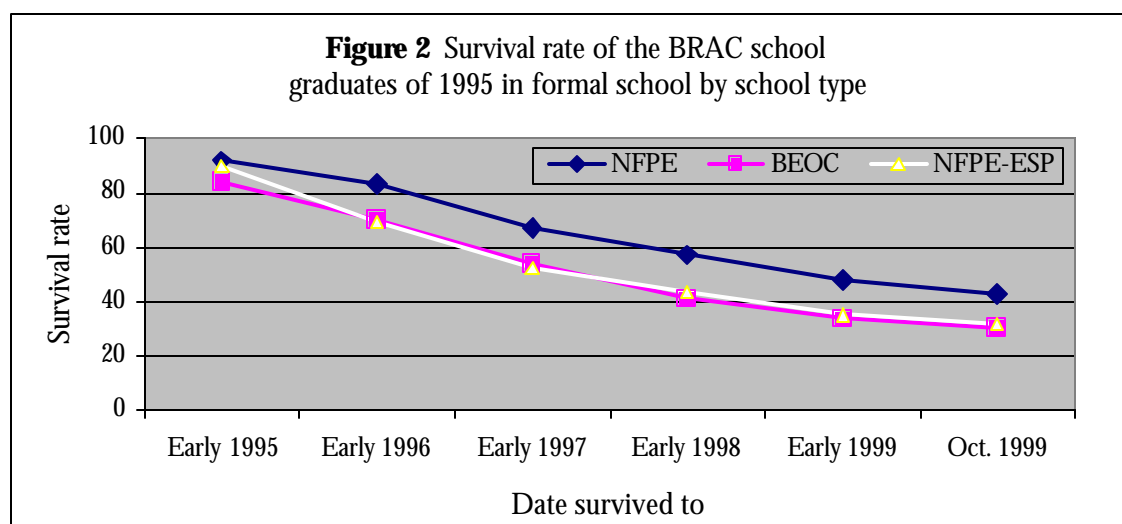


Variation in the enrolment rates of the graduates of three types of BRAC schools started at the beginning of their formal schooling and continued up to October 1999 (Table 4). During first three years, proportionately more children of NFPE, less children of BEOC and least children of NFPE-ESP continued education in formal schools. However, since 1998 onwards, graduates of NFPE-ESP started to survive more than those of BEOC. In October 1999, 42.6% of NFPE, 30.5% of BEOC and 31.8% of NFPE-ESP graduates were currently

**Table 4** Survival rate of the BRAC school graduates of 1995 in formal schools by type of BRAC school and time

Date survived to	NFPE	BEOC	NFPE-ESP	All	Significance
Early 1995	91.7	84.1	89.5	90.0	p<0.01
Early 1996	83.7	70.2	69.6	80.3	p<0.01
Early 1997	67.0	54.0	52.6	63.7	p<0.001
Early 1998	57.4	41.3	43.6	53.5	p<0.001
Early 1999	47.9	33.6	35.1	44.3	p<0.001
Oct. 1999	42.6	30.5	31.8	39.6	p<0.01
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	

Note: Early means January and February



enrolled in formal schools. Statistically significant decrease in enrolment rate was observed in all three types of schools (p< 0.001). Annex 1 presents such analysis by school type and

sex. This Annex shows that gender gap was least among the graduates of NFPE-ESP. Figure 2 presents survival rate at different time by school type.

The graduates of BRAC schools enrolled in different classes in formal schools (Table 5). Most popular classes were IV and V, where over three-fourths of the graduates enrolled. Of the graduates who enrolled in formal schools, 49.6% enrolled in class IV and 26.3% enrolled in class V. Nearly 20% of the children enrolled in class VI and 0.7% enrolled in class VII. Children enrolled in Class VII were mostly from BEOC. It was also observed that 3.8% of the graduates enrolled in class III or bellow, although, they completed three years curriculum in BRAC schools. It can be expected that those enrolled in class III and IV in 1995 would be in classes VII and VIII in 1999, if they do not repeat in the same class for more than a year. Table 5 shows that in 1999, the proportion of graduates against class VII and bellow increased by 6.4 percentage points and the proportion against class IX decreased by 5.4 percentage points. Proportion of the children, who enrolled in class VII in 1995 and were suppose to be in class XI in 1999, were also decreased. Similar trend would be found among those enrolled in class V in 1995 and are suppose to be in class IX in 1999. The above results indicate that very few graduates of BRAC schools repeated more than a year in the same class in formal schools. Over three-fourths of the enrolled children were in class VII or VIII in early 1999. Figure 3 presents that over a third of the sampled graduates were in class VIII and above in October 1999.

**Table 5** Percentage distribution of the graduates of 1995 by grade and year of enrolment in formal schools

Enrolment grade in formal schools	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
III	3.8	0.6	0.2		
IV	49.6	5.2	0.6	0.3	
V	26.3	50.7	8.8	0.7	0.4
VI	19.6	24.2	47.3	7.6	1.5
VII	0.7	18.6	24.9	51.1	8.2
VIII		0.7	17.6	24.8	50.4
IX			0.6	15.0	25.0
X				0.5	14.2
XI					0.3
Total children in school	976 (100.0)	878 (100.0)	694 (100.0)	579 (100.0)	490 (100.0)

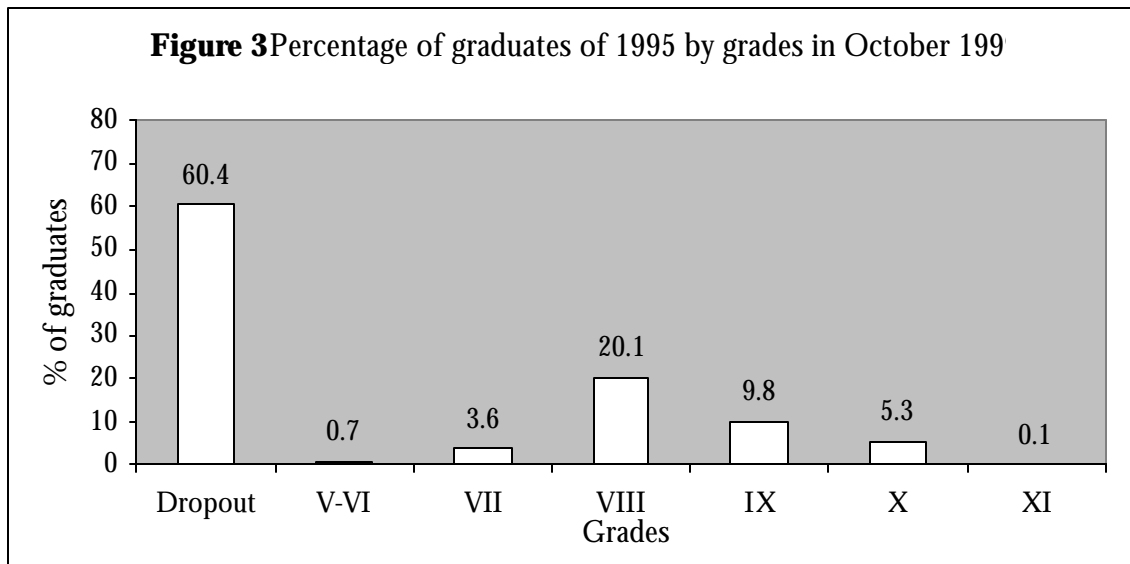


Table 6 presents distribution of the graduates by years of schooling completed. As the data were last collected before the end of 1999, this Table reflects completion rate by December 1998. On average, 17.4% of the graduates could not go beyond what they taught in BRAC schools and 6.4% taught one more year in formal schools. The five-year primary cycle completion rate was 76.2%, 69.1% for boys and 79% for girls. School-wise analysis shows that 78.2% of NFPE, 70.4% of BEOC and 65.1% of NFPE-ESP graduates completed five or more years of schooling.

**Table 6** Distribution of the graduates of 1995 by years of schooling completed

Years of schooling completed	Type of school			Sex		All
	NFPE	BEOC	NFPE-ESP	Boys	Girls	
III	14.6	26.8	22.1	22.7	15.3	17.4
IV	7.1	2.7	12.1	8.2	5.7	6.4
V	13.5	5.9	19.0	17.9	9.8	12.1
VI	14.1	13.5	12.6	13.4	14.1	13.9
VII	35.2	14.3	15.5	25.6	31.8	30.0
VIII	13.3	14.4	14.3	8.4	15.7	13.6
IX	2.2	21.9	4.1	3.7	7.5	6.4
X	-	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
V+	78.2	70.4	65.1	69.1	79.0	76.2

A negative relationship between class of enrolment and survival rate can be seen in Table 7. The survival rate in the formal schools was highest among those children who enrolled in class VI after graduating from BRAC schools and least among those enrolled in Class III. The survival rate in October 1999 was 50.6% among those enrolled in class IV, 42.2% among those enrolled in class V and 33.1% among those enrolled in class VI or more. Similar trend was observed when data were arranged separately for boys and girls.

**Table 7** Percentage distribution of the graduates of 1995 who enrolled in formal schools after graduating from BRAC schools by grade of enrolment and year of dropout

Grade of enrolment in 1995	Year of dropout					Still continuing
	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	
<b>Both</b>						
≤3	7.7	2.4	38.1	17.1	0.1	34.5
4	6.7	20.6	6.5	10.2	5.4	50.6
5	15.3	18.1	9.9	9.2	5.4	42.2
6+	15.8	18.2	17.9	9.1	6.0	33.1
<b>Boys</b>						
≤3	17.7	5.2	29.9	11.9	0.3	35.1
4	11.7	28.2	10.9	6.0	3.8	39.5
5	20.1	20.1	17.5	3.6	2.0	36.8
6+	27.3	16.5	24.9	3.2	0.8	27.3
<b>Girls</b>						
≤3	1.0	0.5	43.7	20.7	0.0	34.2
4	4.5	17.2	4.6	12.0	6.1	55.5
5	13.4	17.3	6.7	11.4	6.8	44.2
6+	12.3	18.7	15.8	10.9	7.5	34.8

Of the graduates who enrolled in formal schools, 70.7% enrolled in State-run primary schools, 17.5% in privately managed secondary schools, 5.7% in privately managed primary schools, 4.5% in the Madrassas and others in other types of schools (Table 8). It can be seen from the Table that proportion of children in different primary schools is decreasing and proportion in secondary schools is increasing. After about four years of their graduation, among the children who survived in formal schools up to early 1999, 85.6% were in the privately managed secondary schools. The rate of students in the Madrassas also increased

over time. Proportion of students in the Madrassas was equal in 1995 and 1996, which doubled in 1997 and gradually increased up to 11.4% in 1999. Annex 2 presents similar analysis by type of BRAC schools. This shows two things; firstly, at the initial stage of their formal schooling NFPE graduates mostly enrolled in State-run primary schools and the BEOC graduates enrolled in privately managed secondary schools. Secondly, proportionately more children from BRAC managed NFPE enrolled in Madrassas followed by BEOC and NFPE-ESP.

**Table 8** Percentage distribution of currently enrolled graduates by type of school and year

Type of school	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
Government primary	70.7	48.5	7.7	1.1	-
Non-government primary	5.7	4.6	1.2	0.1	-
Other non-formal primary	0.3	0.7	0.5	-	-
Madrassa	4.5	4.4	9.0	9.8	11.4
Junior secondary	0.2	-	-	-	-
Government high school	1.2	1.8	2.4	3.2	2.7
Non-government high school	17.5	39.9	79.3	85.9	85.6
College	-	-	-	-	0.3

**Table 9** Percentage distribution of the graduates of BRAC schools of 1995 by enrolment status at different time period

Enrolment status	Type of school			Sex		
	NFPE	BEOC	NFPE-ESP	Boys	Girls	All
Did not enrolled	8.3	15.9	10.3	9.6	10.1	10.0
Dropped out during 1995	8.0	13.9	20.1	15.1	7.5	9.7
Dropped out during 1996	16.7	16.2	17.0	20.4	15.1	16.6
Dropped out during 1997	9.7	12.7	9.0	14.6	8.5	10.3
Dropped out during 1998	9.5	7.8	8.5	4.9	10.8	9.1
Dropped out during 1999*	5.2	3.1	3.3	2.3	5.7	4.7
Currently enrolled*	42.6	30.5	31.8	33.0	42.3	39.6

\* Since the data were collected during November 1999, the status is up to October 1999.

If we look at the dropout rate of the graduates from formal system it can be seen that highest dropout rate occurred at the second year of formal schooling (16.6% dropped out

during 1996) (Table 9). During that period the dropout rate was 20.4% for boys and 15.1% for girls. The dropout rate increased from 1995 to 1996 and then gradually decreased. Analysis of data by type of school shows that highest proportion of NFPE-ESP graduates dropped out at their initial year in formal schools and then gradually decreased over time. Annex 3 presents similar analysis with more details.

The causes of dropout as reported by parents were analysed and presented in Table 10 and Annexes 4 and 5. Table 10 presents the causes of dropout of all graduates who were not found in the formal schools at the time of last survey. Two main causes of dropout were 'scarcity of money' and 'marriage', 39.1% of the BRAC schools graduates dropped out due to 'scarcity of money' and 40.1% dropped out due to 'marriage'. When data were arranged separately by sex, three causes came in front against boys dropout. These are 'scarcity of money' (65.3%), 'the graduate does not like to go to school' (16.4%) and 'has to work at home or outside' (12%). For girls there were two reasons, 59.2% of the girls dropped out due to 'marriage' and 26.5% dropped out due to 'scarcity of money'. None of the boys dropped out due to 'marriage'. Compared to girls a significant proportion of boys dropped out due to 'scarcity of money'. Not much variation was observed in this respect when data were analysed by types of schools.

**Table 10** Percentage distribution of graduates who were not found currently enrolled in school during last survey by causes of non-enrolment/dropping out

Causes	Type of school			Sex		All
	NFPE	BEOC	NFPE-ESP	Boys	Girls	
Schools away from home	0.7	0.2	0.5	0.2	0.8	0.6
Lack of money	40.5	34.9	39.4	65.3	26.5	39.1
School authority refused	-	-	0.5	-	0.1	0.1
No use of more education	2.0	1.8	5.2	2.0	2.2	2.1
Has to work at home/outside	4.5	7.6	6.2	12.0	2.2	5.3
Graduate does not like	7.5	6.8	10.4	16.4	3.2	7.4
Insecure road transportation	2.9	1.7	1.6	-	3.7	2.6
Marriage	39.4	43.1	34.3	-	59.2	40.1
Disability	0.6	0.2	-	1.4	-	0.5
Others	2.0	3.6	1.7	2.7	2.2	2.4

## Continuation of education according to socio-economic characteristics

Younger children are more likely to enrol in formal schools after graduation from BRAC schools (Table 11). Over 97% of the graduates aged 9-10 years were enrolled in formal schools in 1995; this rate was 93.4% among children aged 11-12 years, 88.3% among children aged 13-14 years and 71.4% among children aged 15 years and more. The enrolment rate gradually decreased for the children of all ages. Among the children who were 9-10 years old in 1995, 69.2% were found currently enrolled in October 1999. The current enrolment was found 41.3% among the children aged 11-12 years, 28.7% among 13-14 years and 21.2% among 15+ years.

**Table 11** Enrolment rate of the BRAC school graduates in formal schools at different time by age (during 1995) of the graduates

Date survived to	Age (in year)				Significance
	9-10	11-12	13-14	15+	
Early 1995	97.2	93.4	88.3	71.4	p<0.001
Early 1996	94.1	83.9	76.3	57.9	p<0.001
Early 1997	86.9	66.7	54.6	43.6	p<0.001
Early 1998	78.0	56.9	45.2	28.1	p<0.001
Early 1999	72.6	47.6	32.8	23.4	p<0.001
October 1999	69.2	41.3	28.7	21.2	p<0.001
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	

Information on age was collected during first survey at the end of 1995

Parental education also played significant role in the continuation of education of the graduates (Tables 12 and 13). Children of the parents with more education are more likely to enrol in formal schools after graduation from BRAC schools and also to survive for a longer period in the formal schools. Although it was observed that survival rate in the formal schools of the children with any level of parental education has significantly decreased over time. However, the rate of decrease was less among the children of educated parents compared to that of the children of non-educated parents.

**Table 12** Enrolment rate of the BRAC school graduates in formal schools at different time by mothers level of education

Date survived to	Mothers level of education			Significance
	Nil (847)	I-V (208)	VI+ (51)	
Early 1995	88.7	93.3	99.7	p<0.01
Early 1996	78.5	84.8	92.5	p<0.01
Early 1997	60.6	75.0	70.6	p<0.001
Early 1998	50.5	64.1	60.4	p<0.001
Early 1999	40.6	58.3	51.1	p<0.001
October 1999	35.1	55.8	50.7	p<0.001
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	

**Table 13** Enrolment rate of the BRAC school graduates in formal schools at different time by fathers level of education

Date survived to	Fathers level of education			Significance
	Nil (646)	I-V (242)	VI+ (218)	
Early 1995	86.2	93.6	97.2	p<0.001
Early 1996	75.5	81.8	91.9	p<0.001
Early 1997	59.0	65.9	74.5	p<0.001
Early 1998	46.9	54.5	70.0	p<0.001
Early 1999	36.4	45.9	64.3	p<0.001
October 1999	31.1	40.5	61.9	p<0.001
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	

A significant positive relationship between yearly food security status of the household and continuation of education of the children was observed (Table 14). Although the enrolment rate significantly decreased in each group of households, compared to the households with 'balanced' or 'surplus' economy the rate of decrease was much in the households with deficit food security status. Thus, the gap between the groups increased over time.

**Table 14** Enrolment rate of the BRAC school graduates in formal schools at different time by yearly food security status

Date survived to	Yearly food security status				Significance
	Always in deficit (228)	Sometimes in deficit (336)	Balanced (373)	Surplus (162)	
Early 1995	84.1	89.5	91.5	96.3	p<0.001
Early 1996	74.7	79.4	81.7	87.0	p<0.02
Early 1997	60.1	58.9	66.5	72.8	p<0.01
Early 1998	47.1	48.6	57.5	63.7	p<0.001
Early 1999	37.5	38.0	49.4	55.9	p<0.001
October 1999	33.3	36.3	42.0	50.7	p<0.001
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	p<0.001	

Information on food security status was collected during first survey at the end of 1995

**Table 15** Enrolment rate of the BRAC school graduates in formal schools at different time by eligibility status for BRAC rural development programme

Date survived to	Eligibility status of household		Significance
	Eligible (393)	Not eligible (703)	
Early 1995	83.3	93.7	p<0.001
Early 1996	72.3	84.9	p<0.001
Early 1997	52.1	70.1	p<0.001
Early 1998	39.7	60.8	p<0.001
Early 1999	29.0	52.4	p<0.001
October 1999	24.6	47.4	p<0.001
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001	

Eligible = Households with less than 50 decimals of land and at least one person sell labour more than 100 days a year; Non-eligible = others.

Information on labour sale status and land was collected during first survey at the end of 1995

An attempt was taken to see the continuation rate of the children according to the household's eligibility status to the BRAC rural development programme (Table 14). The children of non-eligible households were more likely to enrol in formal schools compared to those of the eligible households. Here also the gap increased over time. Over 83% of the children of the eligible households enrolled in formal schools after graduating from BRAC schools in early 1995, which reduced to 24.6% by October 1999. On the other hand, the

enrolment rate of the children of non-eligible households reduced from 93.7% in early 1995 to 47.4% in October 1999.

## **Discussion**

Most of the non-formal education programmes run with a specific objective to teach a specific curriculum to a specific target group. These programmes prepare the learners for everyday life with some meaningful literacy. It is widely recognised that the non-formal education programmes are supportive to the national literacy programmes. Thus, a general trend is not to think about further education of the learners of these programmes. BRAC, a Bangladeshi non-governmental organisation established a large-scale non-formal education programme to provide quality basic education to the children of Bangladesh and to prepare them for further education in formal schools. Studies showed that a higher proportion of the learners of BRAC schools receive quality basic education each year (Nath et al., 1996, 1998; Nath 2000). Sometimes the performance of these schools was found better than the formal primary schools (Nath et al., 1999). This paper explores continuation of education of the BRAC non-formal schools graduates in formal schools. To do this a cohort of the graduates of 1995 was observed for five years and information on enrolment and dropout was collected. It should be mentioned that these children completed three-year curriculum in BRAC schools established in rural Bangladesh.

The BRAC schools generally complete the course at the beginning of calendar year. After completion of the course the respective programme organisers took the graduates to the head teachers of the nearer formal schools to enrol them for further education. The programme reports show that after completing three-year curriculum in BRAC schools around 90% of the graduates do enrol in formal schools (BRAC 2000, 1997). This study also observed similar enrolment rate among the graduates of 1995. It was observed that equal proportion of boys and girls enrolled in schools at the beginning of their formal schooling. This may happen because the programme organisers tried to enrol all the graduates irrespective of sex. No gender discrimination was observed at entry level in formal schools. However, it actually depends on other factors rather than BRAC how these

graduates would continue in formal schools. On average, about 10% of the graduates dropped out each year. Dropout rate was higher among the boys than girls. Thus, the survival rate was higher among the girls than the boys in 1996 and onwards. One reason for this may be that the government is emphasising education for girls in recent years. Girls education is free up to Class X in rural areas whereas it is free for boys up to Class V. Highest dropout rate was observed during the second year of schooling. At this stage of formal schooling many children completed primary cycle. The reason behind highest dropout might be children and the families found it difficult to search for a new school and again there was none to help them enrol in secondary schools. It can be remembered that two years back BRAC programme organisers took them to formal primary schools for enrolment. The survival rate of the BEOC graduates was less than that of the NFPE graduates. This situation is understandable as there was a strong association between age and survival rate, and the BEOC graduates were older than the NFPE graduates. It is not clear why dropout rate among the graduates of NFPE-ESP was mostly equal to that of the graduates of BEOC, although their ages were similar to that of the NFPE graduates. The question gets more importance when we see that graduates of both the NFPEs equally enrolled in schools at the beginning of their formal schooling.

The children who graduated from NFPE generally enrolled in Class IV or V, and the graduates of BEOC mostly enrolled in Class V or VI. Although the children took a three-year course in BRAC schools it was surprising to observe that the head teachers found many of them suitable for grade V or above. A bad reaction of this situation may be understood if we look at the negative relationship between survival rate and Class of entry in formal schools. In October 1999, the survival rate was highest among those enrolled in Class IV, less among those enrolled in Class V and least among those enrolled in Class VI or more. For a better understanding of this issue contribution of Class of entry in the overall explanation of survival could be explored. A comparative study on continuation of education of BRAC school graduates and formal school students with similar level might be considered. Some children were found enrolled in Class III even they completed three-year curriculum in BRAC schools. This observation might not be surprising if we see that over

30% of the BRAC school graduates do not achieve minimum level of basic education (Nath, 2000). Probably the head teachers of formal schools did not find these children suitable for Class IV. Let us have a look at the five-year primary cycle completion rate of the BRAC school graduates. It was seen that 76.2% of the graduates passed at least grade five by December 1998. Comparing this finding with national rate (72.7%) (Chowdhury et al., 1999) it can be said that more children from BRAC schools do complete five-year cycle of primary education than their peers in the country. After graduating from BRAC schools nearly 5% of the graduates enrolled in Madrassas, the religious schools. It might be interesting to see how these children cope with Madrassa situation after BRAC school environment. Because, Madrassas put more emphasis on religious (Islamic) education, whereas, BRAC schools bear relatively secular and progressive thoughts.

Like national survey on primary education this study also observed that 'scarcity of money' was one of the main causes of dropout of the BRAC school graduates. It was more significant among the boys. Boys also dropped out due to demand of their labour for family's survival. Both of the causes are due to poverty. Children from poorer families normally enrol in BRAC schools and many of them can't continue for longer period due to poverty. The girls did not have to face poverty so deeply because they utilised the scope of free education policy of the government. However, many girls had to surrender to the social norms, values and culture. Nearly 60% of the girls dropped out due to 'marriage'. Some girls had to face such situation immediately after completing the course in BRAC schools and many faced it during the last five years. It can be seen in the data that many of these girls got married before 18 years of age, the minimum legal age at marriage. At least, schooling with BRAC could not make any impact on attitudinal change of these girls or their families in this regard. This study also observed that socio-economic characteristics of the graduates play significant role in their survival in formal schools. Children with lower parental education and poorer economic background are more likely to dropout from schools earlier than others. Similar findings also reported in a national study where children from all walks of life were considered (Chowdhury et al., 1999).

Considering the underdeveloped socio-economic conditions of Bangladesh, it can be said that a good number of BRAC school learners do enrol in formal schools after completing BRAC course. The survival rate over the years was not so bad. However, in this study it was not possible to see these children's situation compared to children of other systems. Although BRAC has little or no role to play for its graduates survival in education unless the formal schools take right policies in this regard. Positive influence of government's free education policy for the girls has rightly been reflected through survival of more girls for longer period. BRAC can help (financially or by providing textbooks and other stationaries) those children, specially the boys who dropped out due to poverty. This may protect their early dropout.

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## Annex Tables

**Annex 1** Enrolment rate of the BRAC school graduates of 1995 in formal school by time and type of BRAC school and sex

Time	BFPE			BEOC			NFPE-ESP		
	Boys	Girls	Sig.	Boys	Girls	Sig.	Boys	Girls	Sig.
Early 1995	92.4	91.4	ns	83.3	84.4	ns	87.7	90.3	ns
Early 1996	78.9	85.7	ns	63.9	72.8	ns	63.7	71.5	ns
Early 1997	57.8	70.9	p<0.05	46.1	57.2	p<0.05	43.6	55.6	p<0.05
Early 1998	42.7	63.4	p<0.001	32.2	45.0	p<0.01	35.2	46.4	ns
Early 1999	37.8	52.0	p<0.05	27.2	36.1	ns	30.2	36.7	ns
Oct. 1999	35.1	45.7	ns	26.1	32.2	ns	28.5	22.9	ns
Significance	p<0.001	p<0.001		p<0.001	p<0.001		p<0.001	p<0.001	

**Annex 2** Percentage distribution of currently enrolled graduates by type of school and year

Type of school	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999
<b>NFPE</b>					
Government primary	81.0	57.7	9.0	1.3	0.3
Non-government primary	6.2	5.3	1.3	-	-
Other non-formal primary	0.4	0.9	0.6	-	-
Madrassa	5.0	4.7	10.4	10.8	12.1
Junior secondary	-	-	-	-	-
Government high school	0.5	1.2	2.1	3.2	2.5
Non-government high school	7.1	30.3	76.5	84.8	85.1
College	-	-	-	-	-
<b>BEOC</b>					
Government primary	30.8	9.0	1.3	-	-
Non-government primary	2.0	0.8	-	-	-
Other non-formal primary	-	-	-	-	-
Madrassa	3.5	4.5	3.7	6.4	8.8
Junior secondary	0.9	-	-	-	-
Government high school	4.4	4.8	4.1	3.7	4.0
Non-government high school	58.4	80.9	90.8	89.9	85.5
College	-	-	-	-	1.7

*Cont ... ..*

<b>NFPE-ESP</b>					
Government primary	72.8	51.5	9.9	1.2	1.5
Non-government primary	14.7	8.5	3.3	2.4	2.4
Other non-formal primary	-	-	-	-	-
Madrassa	0.8	0.4	2.1	3.4	5.3
Junior secondary	0.2	0.2	0.3	-	-
Government high school	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.7	1.9
Non-government high school	11.3	39.0	83.9	92.3	88.3
College	-	-	-	-	0.5

**Annex 3** Percentage distribution of the graduates of BRAC schools of 1995 by enrolment status at different time period

Enrolment status	NFPE		BEOC		NFPE-ESP	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Did not enrolled	7.6	8.6	16.7	15.6	12.3	9.7
Dropped out during 1995	13.5	5.7	19.4	11.7	24.0	18.8
Dropped out during 1996	21.1	14.9	17.8	15.6	20.1	15.9
Dropped out during 1997	15.1	7.4	13.9	12.2	8.4	9.2
Dropped out during 1998	4.9	11.4	5.0	8.9	5.0	9.7
Dropped out during 1999*	2.7	6.3	1.1	3.9	1.7	3.9
Currently enrolled*	35.1	45.7	26.1	32.2	28.5	32.9

\* Remember that data were last collected during early November to early December 1999, thus the status is up to October 1999.

**Annex 4** Percentage distribution of graduates who did not enrolled in formal school after graduating from BRAC school by causes of non-enrolment

Causes	NFPE	BEOC	NFPE-ESP	Boys	Girls	All
School is away from home	-	-	3.4	-	0.2	0.1
Lack of money	40.6	46.2	52.5	58.9	36.8	42.8
School authority regretted	-	-	3.4	-	0.2	0.1
No use of more education	9.9	2.4	-	-	9.6	7.0
Has to work at home/outside	-	10.5	8.5	13.2	0.2	3.7
Graduate does not like	12.9	4.5	8.5	21.0	5.6	9.8
Insecure road transportation	9.8	-	-	-	8.2	6.2
Marriage	24.7	34.3	23.7	-	38.9	28.4
Disability	-	-	-	-	-	-
Others	2.0	2.1	-	7.0	-	1.9

**Annex 5** Percentage distribution of graduates who dropped out from formal schools by causes of dropping out

Causes	NFPE	BEOC	NFPE-ESP	Boys	Girls	All
School is away from home	0.8	0.3	-	0.2	0.9	0.7
Lack of money	40.8	32.0	38.9	66.4	24.3	38.3
No use of more education	0.7	1.7	6.1	2.3	0.6	1.1
Has to work at home/outside	5.3	7.1	6.1	11.8	2.6	5.7
Graduate does not like	6.7	7.7	12.0	15.7	2.6	7.0
Insecure road transportation	1.7	2.2	1.8	-	1.7	1.8
Marriage	41.4	44.6	33.0	-	63.6	42.4
Disability	0.7	3.0	-	1.6	-	0.5
Others	2.0	4.1	2.0	2.0	2.7	2.5