

CHAPTER VI

EVALUATION OF OBJECTIVES

1. INTRODUCTION

Primary Education in Bangladesh has been fully nationalised in terms of its content and structure as well as organisation and finance. Thus, it is quite natural that the objectives of primary education have been specified by the Government of Bangladesh. The set of objectives that form the basis for the primary education curriculum being used at present in Bangladesh are actually those formulated by the National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee (1976). Therefore, it is essentially these set of objectives which have been subjected to a critical analysis and examination in this chapter. The evaluation, as was mentioned earlier, involved a comparative analysis against both internal and external criteria. The internal criteria were derived from the Report of the National Education Commission (1974). This was done with a view to finding out the extent to which the primary education objectives were in line with the national goals and aspirations of Bangladesh. The external criteria consisted of two sets of objectives derived from two different documents published outside Bangladesh. One of these was a publication of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (1975) in India and the second was a booklet entitled "Planning the Primary School Curriculum in Developing Countries" published by the International Institute for Educational Planning, UNESCO, Paris (1978).



It would be pertinent, here, to explain the rationale for the selection of these three sources to provide the criteria for evaluation. The appropriateness of considering the report of the National Education Commission for providing the internal criteria was in a way self-explanatory. It might be mentioned that the Commission itself was set up immediately after the formation of the People's Republic of Bangladesh with the explicit purpose of reconstructing the national education system in conformity with the national goals of the country. Selection of the other two documents, namely, the publications of the National Council of Education Research and Training in India and of the UNESCO, was also in no way arbitrary. The NCERT document represented the thinking and experience of leading experts of India, which continuously have had influence on Bangladesh people, their life and thinking, both historically and in the struggle for independence of the people of Bangladesh. It should further be observed that during the early periods after the formation of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, Indian expertise played a major rôle in shaping the policies of the Bangladesh Government in a variety of fields, including education. In fact, prior to the finalisation of the report, the members of the National Education Commission (1974) paid a special study visit to India and held discussions with a number of experts in the country. It is these considerations which prompted the investigator to consider the objectives specified in the NCERT document to constitute a set of external criteria. As far as the UNESCO document was concerned, two points would be

worth mentioning. First of all, among a plethora of publications available to the researcher, this document was unique as it focussed exclusively on the problems of developing countries and yet was not confined to any single national perspective. Secondly, the objectives presented in the document were based on an international meeting of experts on curriculum in general education.

Further discussions dealing with the evaluation of objectives are presented in the following pages under two sections. The first section includes reproduction or re-statement of relevant portions from the four publications, out of which, three had been chosen to serve as criterion references. This was done to facilitate comparison of the set of objectives being evaluated with the criterion sets. The second section presents interpretations based on a comparative critical analysis of the objectives.

2. (A) OBJECTIVES FORMULATED BY THE NATIONAL EDUCATION
COMMISSION

The National Education Commission was formed with a view to renovating the traditional education with proper and relevant planning which would be in consonance with the national principles. The final report of the Commission was published in May, 1974. The report was based on the evaluation of the articles and essays on education published in newspapers and periodicals. The opinions of educationists, experts, teaching institutions in various stages, teachers

organisations, and leaders were collected through a questionnaire and were taken into consideration in the report. It was emphasized that education was the main instrument in materializing the hopes and aspirations of the nation. Accordingly, the primary goal of education was to generate among farmers, workers and other classes of people a feeling for the basic necessities of life and to solve different problems and inspire the people towards the creation of a desired society leading to socialism. This objective was in conformity with the four stage principles of democracy, nationalism, socialism and secularism. Keeping these principles and ideology in view, the National Education Commission formulated the objectives of education. The general objectives of education in Bangladesh were formed and presented in a global way which were then followed by stagewise objectives, namely, objectives of primary education, secondary education etc. The objectives formulated by the Education Commission are presented in the following paragraphs.

(i) General Objectives of Education in Bangladesh:

1. Education for patriotism and good citizenship:

Education plays a vital role in teaching the ideals of good citizen. Every citizen of Bangladesh should respect the national goals. He should try to devote himself to the welfare of his fellow citizens as well as his motherland. Through education the four principles of the nation should be taught to the citizen so that they can implement those principles in their practical lives.

2. Education for humanity and world-citizenship:

Education helps in extending assistance and co-operation among the people of the world, devoted to creating an exploitation free society. Moreover, education also develops friendship and intimacy among the individuals. It also teaches the individuals to respect human, rights and dignity.

3.

3. Education for moral values: Education plays an important role in the moral upliftment of the children and youths. It should also create a favourable atmosphere in the educational institutions.

4. Education - an instrument of social change: In the long-exploited society, education should be used as an instrument of social change. All citizens should be provided with equal opportunities for receiving education. Education should provide scope and freedom to individuals so that they can establish themselves in their practical life.

5. Education - as a means of economic progress: Education is responsible for increasing the efficiency of manpower. Bangladesh is one of the poorest countries in the world. The immediate task, therefore, is to expedite the progress of the nation by ensuring economic advancement.

6. Education teaches the qualities of leadership:

Education will ensure free thinking and will also develop qualities of leadership. It will not only gather

information but also will analyse it to find out the truths.

(ii) The Objectives of Primary Education in Bangladesh:

The Education Commission report states that the overall development of a nation depends on a progressive primary education system. Keeping this in view, the Commission formulated the following objectives of primary education:

- 1) To develop the physical, mental, social and moral aspects of a child's personality;
- 2) To arouse the sense of patriotism, responsibility, citizenship, inquisitiveness, perseverance and dignity of labour in the mind of the children;
- 3) To enable the children to read, to write and to keep accounts in the mothertongue;
- 4) To prepare the children for receiving higher education.

In order to achieve these objectives, the Commission recommended that appropriate and relevant curriculum should be introduced. Only such materials should be prescribed which would be useful in the development of mental and physical personalities of children. The basic character of children would be formed in the primary school and most of the children would finish their education at the primary level. Therefore, basic national principles should be taught to the children at the primary level. The primary curriculum accordingly should

reflect these principles. For inculcating these ideologies in the children through education, the commission suggested the formation of a curriculum and syllabus committee to prepare the curriculum and syllabus as soon as possible.

(B) OBJECTIVES SET BY NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATION
RESEARCH AND TRAINING

The set of objectives of primary education formulated and presented in the document entitled "The Curriculum for the ten-year school - A framework" by the NCERT has been chosen as one of the external criteria for evaluation of objectives. This document was prepared in accordance with the initiative taken by the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare who constituted an expert group in 1973 to develop the curriculum for the 10 + 2 pattern in India. This group was expanded in 1974 to include experts from within the NCERT which had drafted a version of the curriculum in 1972 and revised it in 1973. A number of sub-committees were appointed for different subject areas, and in the course of this work, many other educationists were consulted. An approach paper was then drafted and circulated for comments to all the states and to many other teachers, educational administrators, and individual educationists in 1975. Finally, a national conference on curriculum was convened in Delhi in August 1975 to discuss the draft. It was attended by about 200 educationists from all over India. This document was the result of all these endeavours to have as wide a consultation

as possible and perhaps represented the largest measure of common understanding which was possible in such a matter. The document pointed out that the broad objectives of general education would have limited utility unless they were spelt out in terms of stagewise and subjectwise objectives for the guidance of educational planners, administrators, supervisors and teachers. Considering the difficulties of the practical implications of general of broad objectives of education, the NCERT document (1975) stated the objectives of primary education in the following way:

1. The first objective is literacy. The child should learn the first language, which would generally be his mother tongue to a level where he can communicate easily with others through properly articulated speech and in writing.
2. The second objective is attainment of numeracy. The child should develop facility in the four fundamental numerical operations and be able to apply these in the life of the community to solve practical problems.
3. The third objective is technocracy. The child should learn the method of inquiry in science and should begin to appreciate science and technology in the life and world around it.
4. The child should develop a respect for national symbols, like the flag and the anthem, and for the democratic processes and institutions of the country. He should

know about the composite and plural culture of India and learn to denigrate untouchability, casteism and communalism.

5. The child should acquire healthy attitudes towards human labour and its dignity.
6. The child should develop habits of cleanliness and healthful living and understanding of proper sanitation and hygiene of its neighbourhood.
7. The child should acquire a taste for the good and the beautiful and should take care of its surroundings.
8. The child should learn to cooperate with others and appreciate the usefulness of working together for the common good. Other desirable qualities of character and personalities such as initiative, leadership, kindness, honesty, should also be developed as well as an understanding of its role as an individual in the home, the school and the neighbourhood.
9. The child should be able to express itself freely in creative activities and should acquire habits of self learning.

(c) OBJECTIVES SET BY UNESCO

The objectives of primary education set by the UNESCO have been taken as another source of criteria for making a comparative evaluation. This set of objectives has been supplied by a UNESCO meeting of experts on Curriculum of General Education held in 1968 in Moscow as a set of common

objectives of Primary Education. Looking into the political instabilities and the educational crisis, UNESCO Expert, Howes (1978) summarised the objectives with slight additions for highlighting and adapting them to developing countries. He presented these objectives in a booklet entitled "Planning the primary school curriculum in developing countries" which was published by IIEP, UNESCO.

1. Learning to learn: basic knowledge and techniques

- the aim should be to teach methods of thinking and working and means of expression.
- the basic techniques, reading, writing and arithmetic (skills of hand and observation) should be taught as tools, not as ends in themselves.
- the ends are the development of the use of languages, of thinking and reasoning, of purposive learning, of an enthusiasm to learn, of an ability to receive instruction, of an ability to work independently (and of an appreciation and critical awareness of the physical world).

2. Communication

- the development of the basic communication skills of reading, writing, listening and speaking.
- the ends are the development of vocabulary and the use of accurate language patterns, of the ability to listen and comprehend, of the ability to express.

3. Values of Society
 - the development in the individuals of the basic values of society 'learned through actions and situations rather than through formal instructions.
 - such values as those attached to learning, those involved in interaction with others, adult-child relationships, role of differentiation, attitude to other persons and groups.
 - (the development in individuals of a sense of national unity and of the role of their nation in a wider world community).
4. Personality
 - the development of certain aspects of personality, especially those involving the expression of feeling and relations with others.
5. Participation in a variety of activities
 - in music, art, poetry, physical activity; in a variety of areas of human experience.
6. Health and hygiene
 - to learn fundamental habits and attitudes towards health, nutrition and hygiene.

(D) OBJECTIVES OF PRIMARY EDUCATION STATED BY
CURRICULUM AND SYLLABUS COMMITTEE

The Government of Bangladesh announced the decision to form a National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee in November,

1975 essentially as a follow-up of the recommendations of the National Education Commission. The Curriculum and Syllabus Committee submitted its final report in December 1976. While instituting the committee, the responsibility of the Committee was categorically stated in the following way.

To give suggestions and advice for framing and implementing a curriculum in accordance with the recommendations of National Education Commission and the state principles made by the Government towards maintaining an equal standard in educational institutions;

To ensure an appropriate place for science and technology in the syllabus for keeping pace with the progress in the modern world;

To assist in the formulation of rules and regulations for preparing the syllabuses from classes I to X and to introduce professional and technical education;

To formulate a general criteria for preparing the curriculum and syllabus for the different subject committees in different stages;

To integrate and balance ~~the~~^{the} curriculum as a whole; and to suggest the possible ways for providing the proper training to teachers and essential teaching aids for implementing the newly introduced curriculum and syllabuses.

With these terms of reference, the National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee consisting of 47 experts and specialists in the respective fields, held their first meeting on 4th March, 1976. This Committee pointed out that education reform was a complex and debateable issue. This debate would, however, give rise to different solutions. So the task of preparing syllabuses should be regarded as a continuous progressive attempt in order to achieve the national goals and to establish a relationship between ever increasing knowledge and manpower. On the basis of these instructions, ten sub-committees and 27 subject-committees were formed. These committees consisted of specialists in the respective subjects.

It is to be noted here that after the publishing of the report of the National Education Commission, a frequent administrative change took place. With the administrative change in the country, the preamble to the constitution was also changed. But no other special commission was formed before preparing the curriculum. It was not stated whether national aims of education would be changed in accordance with the change of the constitutional directive. However, the above mentioned National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee submitted its report for primary classes on 1976.

Objectives presented by the National Curriculum and Syllabus Committee:

The general objectives accepted by the curriculum committee were as follows:

- a) To ensure mental, physical, moral and social upliftment of an individual through a creative exploitation of his inherent qualities;
- b) To develop a sense of regard, responsibility, good manner and unity among the individuals;
- c) To show regard to each other, to extend friendship, sympathy and fellow-feeling, and to human rights;
- d) To create an efficient and productive manpower for the social welfare and economic development of the country with the help of science and technology;
- e) To inspire the students to take an active role in solving the national problems for development and to develop a sense of dignity of labour through work-oriented education;
- f) To prepare the individuals to accept professions according to their talents and to teach them to apply their knowledge in their day-to-day lives.

It can be observed that these objectives stated by the NCSC represent overall objectives of education. The committee neither clarified their position that the objectives set by NEC for primary education were to be accepted without any change or elaboration as the basis for

preparing the curriculum and syllabus; nor did they formulate a new set of objectives of primary education in specific terms which would be essential for preparing an appropriate curriculum. Even then, the Committee did not explicitly explain the basic terms and concepts of the objectives of primary education set by the NEC and the way in which they were to operate. It is needless to mention that a clear statement of objectives of primary education in specific terms would be essential for making an effective comparative analysis of the objectives of primary education in Bangladesh with those included in the sets of objectives given by the NCERT, and the UNESCO. Therefore, the investigator had to draw a comprehensive set of objectives of primary education in Bangladesh from the objectives specifically stated for each subject in each class by the NCSC. Statements of objectives as given in the syllabuses of nine subject areas when taken together in a comprehensive way, could be specified as follows:

1. To arouse the child's imagination, feeling, thinking, and creativity by acquiring communication skills of reading and writing through mother tongue in an articulated fashion;
2. To help the child to develop numerical and analytical skills by acquiring original competence of counting, addition, subtraction, multiplication, division,

- measuring system, weight etc. in mathematics for leading daily healthy civic life;
- 3 To develop in the child proper understanding of his environmental life, the world, the universe, and to develop inquisitiveness with respect to the environment (social, physical, cultural);
 - 4 To imbibe in the children a sense of dignity of physical labour and inspire them to take part in work experience activities for developing some basic skills and abilities in the individual child which can be applied in future occupational life;
 - 5 To develop mental, emotional, and physical health or character of the child;
 - 6 To enable the child to lead a healthy life through acquisition of minimum knowledge in health, hygiene and sanitation;
 - 7 To develop the abilities and attitude for appreciation of art and culture, music and dancing;
 - 8 To arouse a sense of honesty, patience, tolerance, unity, equality and justice for leading a successful citizenry life in future;
 - 9 To ensure morality, disciplined behaviour, fellow feeling, world brotherhood and humanity by acquiring spiritual and moral values; and

- 10 To equip the child for dealing with real life situations outside the schools by developing considerable proficiency in the skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing of English.

3. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

It is evident from the data presented in the foregoing sections that the general objectives of education in Bangladesh have been formally stated by the Government through the NEC with proper emphasis on the national goals. Further, the objectives of education have also been stated with regard to different stages of education viz. primary, secondary, and higher stages by the NEC appointed by the Government of Bangladesh. While framing the report on national education, the NEC had already taken into consideration the views and findings of the educationists, experts, leaders, teachers, etc. But these objectives stated by the NEC happen to be very broad and general in nature, and therefore need to be stated more explicitly by explaining the terms and concepts under different sets of objectives. In fact, the NCSC was constituted for framing the curriculum for school-stage, keeping in view the recommendations of the NEC. However, it should be observed that the NCSC submitted its report within a matter of a few months (4th March, 1976 to 31st December 1976) without any field trial or tryout. The Committee did not consider the reactions of society in the report as they did not ask for the opinion

or views from the society. Furthermore, in the report the objectives mentioned by the NCSC were only in the form of general objectives for school education in general and not for different stages. These objectives, therefore, did not provide adequate guidelines for framing a curriculum in a particular stage without translating the general objectives into specific ones. The Committee could have at least considered the objectives of Primary education set by the NEC and elaborated the same in appropriate detail.

However, it is important to mention that the Committee worked out in detail the specific objectives for each subject and at each class from I to V. A closer examination of the objectives of primary education derived from these specific objectives and then comparison with objectives specified by the NEC bring forth two important observations. First of all, there appears to be a general coherence between the sets of objectives for primary education given by the NEC and the NCSC. A second point which seems to be paradoxical, if not conflicting, is regarding the place of Mother-tongue and English language learning at the primary level. The objectives read with other contents of the NEC do not give any indication of the need for studying a foreign language, namely, English, during the primary school years. Nevertheless, the NCSC made it compulsory for every child to learn English in addition to the mother-tongue from class III onwards. Yet, it is surprising that NCSC report does not clarify whether the decision to include learning of English was based—

on any suggestion of the NEC or it was an independent decision. In the absence of any such clarification, it is difficult to arrive at any final conclusion in this regard. However, one may conjecture whether this step has been taken by the NCSC in pursuance of the objectives of preparing children for higher education as indicated by the NEC. It is worth noting in this context that English continues to be the medium of instruction as well as interaction in many of the quality institutions; particularly, those leading to professional degrees.

A comparative analysis between the NCSC objectives of primary education in Bangladesh and the objectives formulated by the NCERT, reveal four important findings. First of all, most of the objectives in both the sets are similar in character and quality with respect to the application of the terms and concepts. The second point indicates a difference with respect to the concept of values. The NCSC emphasises greatly on spiritual values in relation to religion in its objectives while the NCERT does not emphasise spiritual values as it has taken values in a general form. The third observation refers to the acquisition of language skill. The NCERT does not consider the skill in English language at the primary stage, while NCSC considers it as the foundation for communication outside the school in real life situations in its objectives. The fourth important point refers to the difference in dealing with the teaching

of democratic processes or ideas. The NCERT clearly advocates developing democratic attitudes among the children in its objectives, but the NCSC does not mention it in the objectives. The NCSC might have possibly thought that these are indirectly implied as part of the objectives of environmental studies. Yet, these points raise doubts regarding some basic differences in the perspective adopted by the two sets of objectives.

Further, a comparison with the set of objectives given by the UNESCO reveals that the basic techniques of the 3R's are adequately covered by the objectives set by the NCSC. These basic techniques, although very important, the UNESCO accepted them as tools and not ends in themselves. As far as differences are concerned, the UNESCO gave a separate objective on value of society and method of practicing those values, but the NCSC put the values in a scattered form and it focussed on spiritual values through religious education. Again, a difference can be observed in relation to the development of language skill. The UNESCO objectives do not refer to many languages for primary education while the NCSC seems to overemphasise language communication skills, providing English in addition to the mothertongue. The UNESCO does not provide any objectives in relation to work experience and vocational skill but the objectives set by the NCSC emphasise work experience and vocational skills in its objectives. Finally, it can be said that the objectives

set by the UNESCO are very clear with respect to their presentation, organisation and implications. It explicitly put the objectives along with its operational procedure. But as compared to these, the NCSC objectives are broad and lack a clear direction.

4. SOME MAJOR OBSERVATIONS

1. It can be observed that there is some contextual gap between the framing of the objectives of primary education by NEC and that by the NCSC. The objectives were set by the NEC in a democratic situation and the objectives set by the NCSC have come into operation in a different situation, although the NCSC states that the curriculum has been prepared in line with the recommendation of the NEC.
2. There seems to be a major gap as the NCSC does not clearly specify the objectives of education at the primary stage. Nor does it point out whether the NEC objectives were to be taken in to ^{account} ~~and~~ without any further elaboration or modification.
3. The objectives of the NCSC maintain coherence with the objectives of the NEC in general. But it seems to be paradoxical as to why the teaching of English from standard III onwards has been specified.
4. The comparative analysis between the objectives of the NCERT and the NCSC reveal that they are similar in

character but different in perspective particularly in their implications for the way in which these objectives are to be achieved.

- 5 The objectives of the NCSC are similar to the objectives of the UNESCO, even though objectives of NCSC appear to lack clarity and direction.
- 6 A comparison with the external criteria clearly revealed the difference with regard to language teaching. While both the external criteria do not make any reference to the teaching of a second language, namely, English, the NCSC has made acquisition of communication skill in English as one of the major objectives.
- 7 Another major difference happens to be regarding the imparting of values. While the NCERT as well as the UNESCO documents do refer to value education, they do not relate it with spiritual values or religious learning. However, the NCSC, more or less, makes Religious Education the main channel for imparting values.
- 8 A significant factor that needs mention is the explicit specification made in the NCSC frame for providing work experience and vocational skills. The NCERT objectives also lay emphasis on these aspects, viz., work experience and vocational skills. However, such explicit reference to vocational orientation is completely absent in the UNESCO document.

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