



EDUCATIONAL POLICIES OF SOUTH ASIA REGION

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South Asia is a term used to represent the southern region of the Asia continent it is a well defined entity in political and geographical terms. The region is geographically knit together and is homogenous in terms of socio-cultural, political historical, economic, and educational factors. The people of this area are heirs to a heritage of common culture and civilization steeped in history. South Asia is a realm of one of the oldest civilizations in the world where people from all races and religions have coexisted over a long period of time. The population of South Asia is about 1749 billion which makes it the most populated region in the world. It is socially very mixed, consisting of many language groups and religions, and social practices in one region that are vastly different from those in another. Most of the countries in the region rank fairly poorly in terms of the human development index, a crude summary statistic of development compiled by the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). All the countries of the region, except Sri Lanka, are classified as low human development countries. Modern definitions of South Asia are consistent in including Afghanistan, India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Bhutan and Maldives as its constituent countries. "India has been the central core of this region both physically and culturally. The other countries form the peripheral region that has been influenced historically and politically by the core for many centuries" There are numerous languages in South Asia. The spoken languages of the region are largely based on geography and shared across religious boundaries. There is a lack of cooperation in South Asia in terms of its shortcomings as a region. The main contention is that South Asia is still in the process of evolving as a 'region' due to two basic factors an adequate degree of complementarity of interests has not yet been achieved among the South Asian and the almost perpetual preoccupation with intra-state conflicts and crises leaves individual states with scarce time or resources to work towards regional solutions. "Such lack of 'region-ness' in South Asia can also be understood in terms of another related phenomenon, that is, the persistence of myriad social, economic and political problems in practically each and every South Asian state. Such intra- state problems are often either the cause or consequence of inter-state disputes and misperceptions as well. Thus, there emerges an inextricable connection between the internal and external relations of South Asian states with patterns that are further complicated by what has been succinctly explained as the pursuit of 'order, welfare and legitimacy'" Adherents to every major world religion are to be found in the subcontinent. It is the source of two of the world's great religions and the home to more devotees by a third than either the Middle East or Southeast Asia. Hinduism with its ancient roots, modern transformations and multiple interpretations plays a vital part in the culture and politics of the subcontinent " At the federal level, India is the most populous democracy in the world "At the same time, the population growth rate, at around 3% per annum, is the highest in South Asia"

Adherents to every major world religion are to be found in the subcontinent. It is the source of two of the world's great religions and the home to more devotees by a third than either the Middle East or Southeast Asia. Hinduism with its ancient roots, modern transformations and multiple interpretations plays a vital part in the culture and politics of the subcontinent. At the federal level, India is the most populous democracy in the world. Progress of nation's which combines both economic growth and social development. When we go by income measurement, like the traditional economic growth approach, it appears that development process has failed in South Asia and other developing countries, as these countries remain at the bottom of the ladder. However, when we evaluate these countries by including the real t (social) indicators of human development, we find that most of these countries have made tremendous progress. Mahbub ul Haq calculates that the average life

expectancy has increased by 16 years, adult literacy by 40 per cent and per capita nutritional levels by more than 20 per cent. In fact, developing countries have achieved in the past 30-2 years the kind of real human progress that industrialised countries took nearly a century to accomplish. While the gap between the industrialised and the developing countries, in terms of income is large (the average income of developing countries is only 6 per cent of the industrialised countries) the human gap has been narrowing. Average life expectancy in the developing countries is 80 per cent of the average of industrialised countries, adult literacy 66 per cent and nutrition 85 per cent.

How do these countries fare in human development? Where does South Asia stand in comparison to other developing regions in terms of human progress? In this section we will attempt to examine these and other dimensions of human progress by focusing on the three critical human choices- longevity, knowledge and standard of living.

Education is no longer an achievement of the individual but the basis of one's existence. There is clear evidence that education leads to many social benefits, such as improvements in the standards of hygiene, reduction in infant and child mortality rates, in decline in population growth, etc. Education therefore acquires a core position in the overall framework of human development and is used as a proxy for knowledge.

Education is also important because it directly contributes to economic growth. In the present context of rapidly globalizing world, education (knowledge and skills) is also necessary to compete in global markets. In this context, South Asia presents a dismal picture. With nearly half of the world's adult illiterates, South Asia is the most illiterate region in the world.

In the last three decades, the rate of adult literacy has increased from 32 per cent in 1970 to 54 per cent in 2001. The region has made considerable progress in providing education to its citizens during this period and both the gross enrolment rates and enrolments at secondary levels have registered a rapid growth.

However, the absolute number of illiterates in the region during the same period has increased from 366 million to over 600 million suggesting that the literacy rate has not kept pace with the increase in population. South Asia still has the world's largest illiterate population. Further, there are variations among the countries of the region. While Maldives and Sri Lanka always performed well, registering adult literacy rates of well over 90 per cent, Nepal and Bangladesh lagged behind with low literacy rates of 40 per cent.

The general apathy towards female education is one of the biggest shortcomings in the human development in the region. With over 60 per cent of the female population illiterate, South Asia, along with the Arab states, has the highest number of adult females. Efforts made to correct this disparity in the 1990s, have not reduced the educational gaps between girls and boys. While enrolment of girls at the primary level has improved, their drop out rate at the secondary levels of education has remained quite high. It indicates that after primary schooling most of the girls (especially rural or belonging to poor families) either get married or work as child labour which forces on them to abandon education. Only for Sri Lanka and Maldives the female secondary school enrolment rate is somewhat respectable but not 100 per cent. A significant female drop-out rate at secondary level jeopardizes the process of human development. Most of the poverty-related problems are directly associated with female illiteracy.

The HRD Reports indicate that compared to other developing regions of the world, the level of public investment in education in South Asia is low and has barely kept pace with the rising population. During the 1990s, public expenditure on education in India, Sri Lanka and Nepal has been little over 3 per cent of the GDP, while it has remained at 2 per cent in Bangladesh and less than 2 per cent in Pakistan. The decomposition of public expenditure on education across South Asian countries shows that Pakistan spent the most on primary levels of education, Bangladesh on secondary education and Nepal on tertiary level. In May 2003, at a ministerial conference of South Asia on Education for All, the countries of the region have committed to increase allocation to 4 per cent of their GDP.

Afghanistan Education System

In the new Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, approved in 2004, Article 22 states that "Education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan." The right to education for all Afghan children, regardless of their gender, abilities, disabilities, backgrounds, or circumstances is reiterated in the Education Law, adopted in August 2008.

The Afghan education system includes primary education, secondary education, higher education, vocational education, teacher training, and religious education. The Education Law of 2008 mandates nine years of

compulsory education (primary education and lower secondary education). Free education through the bachelor's level is a constitutional right in Afghanistan. Public education is a relatively recent concept in Afghanistan. It wasn't until 1969 that the Afghan government legislated free, mandatory education for children between the ages of 7 and 15. However, capacity is lacking in public institutions, and in the last decade or more, dozens of for-fee private institutions, most of them also for-profit, have sprung up to absorb young Afghani's growing demand for higher education. The costs of private education are variable and largely unregulated.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) is responsible for the administration of primary education, secondary education, vocational education, and religious education, including funding, policy development, curriculum design, evaluation, and basic teacher education. The MoE oversees 34 provincial departments of education, which in turn supervise all district offices. (There were 412 such district offices as of 2008. (<http://wenr.wes.org/2016/09/education-afghanistan>))

The Financing of Education

Afghanistan is presently the world's second largest recipient of Official Development Assistance (ODA) and dependent on external donors to maintain and develop their education sector. A noted concern is the expected reduction in external funding and the ensuing ability of the Afghan government to maintain their own revenue generation.

(<http://reliefweb.int/report/afghanistan/financing-education-afghanistan-opportunities-action-country-case-study-oslo>)

Structure of Education System Primary Education

Primary education runs from grades 1 to 6. Children typically begin school between the ages of six and eight. The primary curriculum is consistent nationwide; however, teachers can tailor it to the local content. Primary education is divided into two cycles. The first cycle covers grades 1 to 3, and the curriculum includes subjects such as religious studies, first language (Dari or Pashtu, depending on the region), mathematics, arts, and physical education. The second cycle includes grades 4 to 6. The curriculum covers the same subjects as the first cycle, plus additional subjects such as natural sciences, history, geography, and a secondary language (Dari or Pashtu, depending on the region).

At the end of grade 6, students must pass an examination to gain admission to lower secondary education (MaktabehMotevasteh). At this point, they may opt to pursue a religious studies track, or a more general education track. The vast majority of students pursue the latter.

Secondary Education

Secondary education includes two three-year cycles. The first cycle, from grades 7 to 9, is referred to as lower secondary education, and the second cycle, from grades 10 to 12, is referred as higher secondary education. The curriculum of the first cycle includes subjects such as religious studies, local languages, mathematics, natural sciences, social studies, foreign languages (English, German, French and Russian), and physical education. Students who pass the examination at the end of grade 9 can continue to higher secondary education. (Upon completion of grade 9, students may opt to pursue technical and secondary vocational education, rather than higher secondary education.)

Technical and secondary vocational education

These programs offer an alternative to higher secondary education. The duration of technical programs ranges from two years to five years, depending on the field of specialization and a student's entry level regardless of how students enter, the program is considered complete at grade 14. Students are awarded the Vocational Education Certificate following completion of the program.

(<http://wenr.wes.org/2016/09/education-afghanistan>)

Policies and Acts after 2000

Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Policy, November (2003)

ICTs and Education

Education is universally recognized as key to spurring economic growth and alleviating poverty. For individuals, education enhances opportunities and improves socio-economic conditions. At a minimum, ICTs have a significant role in improving adult literacy rates. In an increasingly technology-oriented and globalizing world, the use of ICTs has become a critical factor in enabling more people to gain an education, which in turn ensures that a country's workforce is skilled and prepared to meet the challenges of development. Education is a cornerstone of the development process because it directly involves individuals and communities and engages a range of actors from both public and private sectors. By emphasizing ICTs in educational efforts Afghanistan can "leapfrog" some presumed stages of development, and be better prepared to enter the global economy of the 21st century.

The establishment of an ICT infrastructure in Afghanistan is therefore essential to promoting education and its subsequent benefits. Together with the purchase and installation of computers and related equipment, ICTs can facilitate education and training. In turn, both distance learning, which has proven to be a highly cost-beneficial investment for developing countries worldwide and in-service training to improve the skills and knowledge of the existing labor force will be facilitated. ICTs is particularly critical in countries where large segments of the population (including women) are educationally disadvantaged and live in rural areas, as is the case in Afghanistan.

For this reason, the Government of Afghanistan, the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and associated institutions will take steps to:

- Develop ICTs curricula at both the secondary and tertiary levels, promote participation in related courses (such as computer science, multimedia, communications, and engineering) and develop teacher training and training-of-trainer's courses in ICTs-related subjects.
- Invite prestigious foreign universities to collaborate with Afghan universities in establishing research and development programs. This will include initiating the highest level of academic education, including but not limited to Ph.D. programs, in ICTs in Afghanistan.
- Create opportunities through which students; in particular those in remote locations can be exposed to technology. These would include Mobile Internet Units, i.e. buses equipped with computers and Internet access that visit schools; Networking Academies that give students and teachers the skills to design, build, and maintain computer networks; and tele-centres that would be operational in schools during and after class hours.
- Support opportunities for distance education, including the establishment of centres that provide access to international online courses. Distance education expands resources available to both students and employees and can compensate for a lack of trained faculty and supervisors.
- Establish partnerships with the private sector to develop and provide ICTs training for business personnel. Coordinate public agencies in the training of civil servants in ICTs skills and applications.
- Enhance public access to information regarding ICTs and opportunities in the sector through educational radio programs, distribution of written materials where appropriate and establishment of kiosks at public locations (such as airports, Government offices, etc.).

Right to education, 2004

The constitution of Afghanistan has covered education and its development in articles 43, 44, 45, 46 and 47.

Article 43- "Education is the right of all citizens of Afghanistan, which shall be offered up to the B.A. level in the state educational institutes free of charge by the state. To expand balanced education as well as to provide mandatory intermediate education throughout Afghanistan, the state shall design and implement effective programs and prepare the ground for teaching mother tongues in areas where they are spoken."

Article 44- "The state shall devise and implement effective programs to create and foster balanced education for women, improve education of nomads as well as eliminate illiteracy in the country."

Article 45- "The state shall devise and implement a unified educational curricula based on the tenets of the sacred religion of Islam, national culture as well as academic principles, and develop religious subjects curricula for schools on the basis of existing Islamic sects in Afghanistan. "

Article 46- "Establishing and administering higher, general and specialized educational institutions shall be the duty of the state. The citizens of Afghanistan shall establish higher, general and specialized educational as well as literacy institutions with permission of the state. The state shall permit foreign individuals to establish higher, general and specialized institutions in accordance with the provisions of the law. Admission terms to higher educational institutes of the state and other related matters shall be regulated by law."

Article 47- "The state shall devise effective programs for fostering knowledge, culture, literature and arts. The state shall guarantee the copyrights of authors, inventors and discoverers, and, shall encourage and protect scientific research in all fields, publicizing their results for effective use in accordance with the provisions of the law" (Constitution of Afghanistan, 2004).

3.2 Bangladesh Education System

"Education is a fundamental right of every human being, Bangladesh Constitution recognized this right and enjoins on the State "to adopt effective measures for ... establishing universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children ... and removing illiteracy" (Bangladesh Constitution, Fundamental Principles of State Policy, Part II, Clause 15),

The education system consists of three stages:

- Primary- Primary education runs for 5 years. Age 6-10. No qualification or examination at the end of the primary level is taken. The primary education is compulsory. Due to lack of formal schooling opportunities in some rural areas, in city, slums means that many students go to non-traditional education programs focusing on basic education and literacy, mainly organized by NGOs.
- Secondary- secondary education has in Bangladesh has three levels 1st level- Junior Secondary Education (6-8) - the entrance is via examinations conducted by individual schools.

2nd level- Secondary education (Grade 9-10) -leads up to the secondary schools certificate. At secondary level, students pursue either Secondary School Certificate Vocational Courses or enroll in one of the other secondary streams (science, humanities, commerce).

Between the age of 16-18, students can study at higher secondary level (grades 11-12) at intermediate colleges, students can enroll for general education stream (science, humanities, commerce) which leads to a Higher Secondary Certificate, or enroll in The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), established in 1981, under MoE. It is responsible for the administration of secondary schools, teacher training programs for secondary education and development of the Curriculum Secondary Certificate- Vocational.

Madrasah- students can choose to study at madrasah and, which offer Islamic religious education at primary, secondary, and higher level. Public Madrasah are required to adopt National Curricula to secure government funding. There are different nomenclatures for the education in madrasahs.

- Primary education- (ibtedayee)
- Secondary education- (dakhil)
- Higher secondary- (alim)
- Degree- (faizal)
- Post graduation (2 year)- (kamil)

Higher education- it is offered by degree colleges, universities and other higher level institutions providing specialized and professional education.

Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) share responsibility for the entire education system with (MoE) responsible for all education after Primary Education. The Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE), established in 1981, under MoE. It is responsible for the administration of secondary schools, teacher training programs for secondary education and development of the curriculum. For higher education UGC is there to promote quality education but it is not an accreditation body.

National education policy 2010 Aims and Objectives

The directives as noted in the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (Annex I) have been taken into consideration in the formulation of National Education Policy 2009. The UN Child Rights Convention that emphasizes the ensuring of rights of children in every member state has been a further area of consideration. The primary objectives of this policy are directed toward the cultivation of human values. It seeks to prescribe ways through which citizens can be groomed to become leaders in pro-people development programs and progress of the society. They will become rational and intellectually accomplished human beings with ethical perceptions, who have respect for their own religion as well as for others' faiths. Education will help them to grow up as non-communal, patriotic and efficient persons free from superstitions. And simultaneously, it is only education that can equip the nation to acquire the qualities and skills that will strengthen Bangladesh to work with equal capacity and pace of the global community. This education policy will work as a basis for an education system suitable for the delivery of education which will be pro-people, easily available, uniform, universal, well planned, science oriented and of high standard according to the constitutional directives and it will also work as a strategy to counter all problems. With this idea in view, the aims, objectives, goals and principles of the Education Policy will be as follows

- To reflect the Constitutional guarantee at all levels of education and make learners aware of the freedom, sovereignty and integrity of Bangladesh.
- To stimulate the intellectual and practical qualities of the learners so that moral, human, cultural, scientific and social values are established at personal and national levels.
- To inspire the students with the spirit of our war of liberation and develop patriotism, nationalism and qualities of good citizens.
- To promote the continuity of national history, tradition and culture through an intergenerational process.
- To foster creative and thinking faculties among the learners through a system of education that contains indigenous spirit and elements and which will lead to a life-oriented development of knowledge of the learners.
- To evolve an education process that is oriented to creativity, practicability and productivity to achieve advancement in the economic and social fields of the country; to create a scientific mindset of the students and to develop in them the qualities of leadership.
- To remove socio-economic discrimination irrespective of race, religion and creed and to eradicate gender disparity; to develop non-communalism, friendliness, global fraternity, fellow-feeling and respect for human rights.

To create unhindered and equal opportunities of education for all as per learners' talents and aptitudes, irrespective of geographical, social and economical situations to establish a society that is free from discrimination; to resist use of education as a commodity to reap profits.

To show tolerance for different ideologies for the development of a democratic culture and to help develop a life-oriented, realistic and positive outlook.

To ensure the marginal competencies of learners at each level so that they are discouraged from rote learning, rather use their own thoughtfulness, imagination and urge for curiosity.

To ensure skills of high standard at different areas and levels of education so that learners can successfully compete at the global context.

To attach substantial importance to information and communication technology (ICT) along with mathematics, science and English in order to build up a digital Bangladesh based on knowledge-orientation and cultivation of ICT.

To put special emphasis on the extension of education; to give priority to primary and secondary education; to motivate the students to show dignity of labour; to enable students to acquire skills in vocational education to facilitate self-employment, irrespective of levels of education.

To develop some uniform and basic ideas amongst all learners; to establish a sense of equal status amongst all citizens of the country to implement a uniform curriculum of certain basic subjects at the primary level schools

of diverse delivery systems; to prescribe and ascertain the learning of some uniform textbooks to attain that; to initiate some method of teaching in some basic subjects at the secondary level to achieve similar objectives.

To ensure a creative, favorable and joyful environment for the students at the primary and secondary levels for their proper protection and congenial development.

To help students grow up with sound moral character through lessons from their respective religious teachings and moral sciences.

To ensure proper quality of education at each level and to correlate the competencies learnt at the earlier level (as per the aims and objectives of education) with the next one to consolidate the formations of knowledge and skills; to promote extension of such knowledge and skills; to enable the learners to acquire these skills; to motivate the people to participate in the educational process, at the primary, secondary and vocational levels, in particular to realize the objectives of education.

To build students as skilled human resources to fight the challenges of the world threatened by climate change and other natural disasters and to create in them a social awareness about environment.

To ensure quality of the higher education in all disciplines and motivate students in research and to create a congenial and necessary environment of research within the country through the cultivation of knowledge and sciences.

To ensure the proper context and situations in the education system at the higher level that facilitates ideal cultivation of learning.

To extend the use of information and communication technology (ICT) instrumental in educational process at every level. To take special measures for the development of education of the backward classes of the country including the street-children.

- To promote and develop the languages and cultures of the indigenous and small ethnic groups.
- To ensure the education of the physically and mentally challenged learners.
- To create a society free from the curse of illiteracy.
- To initiate special measures to promote education in the areas identified as backward in education.
- To ensure efficient and correct teaching of Bangla language.
- To take necessary steps to create facilities of playground, sports, games and physical exercises in all educational institutions for the healthy growth of the physical and mental qualities of the learners.
- To take various steps to foster hygienic awareness of the students.
- To caution the students and make them aware of the dangers of taking drugs or similar items.

Some distinctive features

- It seeks to bring ALL children, irrespective of their caste, class, gender, under one system of education.
- One-year pre-primary education for children over 5 years would be introduced.
- Free education up to class 8th.
- The policy was a Non-communal policy, still a compulsory subject on religion and ethic up to class 8th.
- ICT and Bangladesh studies have been introduced at primary and secondary level.
- All degree courses have been made four years instead of the previous three years.
- The committee proposed decentralization of the National University with centers in all divisions. These centers will later turn into universities and colleges in its jurisdiction will be affiliated to it.
- The policy says technical education institutions would be established in every upazila and the number of educational institutions on polytechnic, textile and leather will be increased.

ICT policy 2009

Rationale for a National ICT Policy

The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh has edified social equity and ICTs are the best means to propagate that ethos within a framework optimizing the effective utilization of the nation's limited natural and abundant human resources. The article 19 of the constitution clearly mandates:

Equality of opportunity- (1) The State shall endeavor to ensure equality of opportunity to all citizens.

(2) The State shall adopt effective measures to remove social and economic inequality between man and man and to ensure the equitable distribution of wealth among citizens, and of opportunities in order to attain a uniform level of economic development throughout the Republic.

Objective for education-Expand the reach and quality of education to all parts of the country using ICTs, ensure computer literacy at all levels of education and public service and facilitate innovation, creation of intellectual property and adoption of ICTs through appropriate research and development.

The ICT policy of 2015 encompasses a large number of topics. The following are the points of the policy in special reference to the education.

- The focus is to encourage closer collaboration between academia and industry to align curriculum with market needs.
- Boost use of ICT in education sector.
- Ensure access to education and research for people with disabilities and special needs using ICT tools.
- Initiate diploma and trade courses to enable ICT capacity building for teachers. Teacher training institutes are to be empowered with ICT capacity to meet the challenges.
- Promote the use of ICT for the purpose of training in the public sector.
- Enhance the quality and reach of education at all levels with a special focus on Mathematics, Science and English.

Essential elements for planning ICT:

- Rigorous analysis of the present state of the educational system. ICT- based intervention must take into account institutional practices and arrangement.
- Identification of stakeholders and the harmonizing of efforts across different social groups.

The specification of existing sources of financing and the development of strategies for generating financial resources to support ICT use over the long term.

3.3 Bhutan Education System

The education structure in Bhutan can be divided as follows:

- Monastic Education: Monastic education in Bhutan is administered by the Central Monastic Body and privately managed independent monasteries.
- General Education, Higher Education and Vocational Training Non-formal Education (NFE) and Special Education General Education, Higher Education and Vocational Training

The school-based education in Bhutan consists of three phases:

Phase I: 11 years of Basic Education (General Education)

Phase II: 2 years of Higher Secondary Education or Vocational Training

Phase III: 3 years of Tertiary Education (Higher Education)

• Early Childhood Care and Development (ECCD)

At present, early childhood care and development (ECCD) programmes in Bhutan remain limited to a few centres providing health and nutrition services. There is a lack of planned integrated services that are required at this stage.

The government of Bhutan provides 11 years of free basic education up till grade X after which students may complete their general education in classes XI and XII or they may join vocational training institutes and enter the job market. At the tertiary level, students may enroll for a degree or a diploma in an institute under the Royal University of Bhutan.

The Legal Framework of Education- Education is considered both as a basic right and a pre-requisite for achieving the wider social, cultural and economic goals. Though Bhutan at the moment has no legal framework or an education act, the government has strong commitment to pursue universal basic education. Education is provided free to all children even beyond basic level. More importantly, education is considered as one of the fundamental needs required to achieve Gross National Happiness the framework for the overall development of Bhutan" (national report on the development of education, Bhutan)

The Division of Education is entrusted with policy formulation and the implementation of all general educational programmes in the country. There prevail two tiers of administrative structures at present regarding the education administration; the central division or the headquarters based in Thimphu and the twenty Dzongkhags (districts), The Education Headquarters is responsible for setting the content and standard for all levels of learning within the general education system and providing comprehensive supervision and guidance for primary and secondary education (EFA, 1999).

Education ICT Master Plan (2014 - 2018)

This education sectoral ICT master plan is a follow-up from Bhutan eGov Master Plan developed in 2012. It was formed to harness power of ICT as an enabling tool in teaching and learning as well as to rationalize and streamline ICT activities, systems and projects under the Ministry of Education (MoE) and across the education sector.

The vision and outcomes for this Education ICT Master Plan are as follows:

- Effective teaching and learning environment
- Efficient educational administrative systems
- Motivated life-long learners for the 21st century

In order to achieve these outcomes, 3 key strategic thrusts have been identified to focus investment into areas that can make the biggest impact to the communities. These are:

- iAble- iAble focuses on programmes that will develop the capabilities and capacities of students, educators, supporting staff and the industry so as to best utilize the many investment into infrastructure, systems and content in the sector.
- iBuild- iBuild develops the content for an ICT-driven curriculum to support a vibrant ICT-led teaching and learning environment across Bhutan.
- iConnect- It enables better access to ICT resources, computers and the Internet in the educational institutions and communities to support teaching and learning across the country. It also establishes governance structures to drive the implementation of ICT projects in the education sector.

This Education ICT Master Plan is named iSherig which translates to ICT in Education in general sense. Specifically "i" alludes to innovation and integration that this master plan intends to promote through use of ICT in Education.

iSherig comprises a total of 27 projects grouped into nine programmes. The nine programmes are grouped into three strategic thrusts as follows:

Thrust	Programmes
iAble	1. ICT capacity development for
	2. ICT capacity development for
	3. ICT capacity development for educators
iBuild	4. Promote educational interactive materials and software
	5. Pervasive use of e-learning in educational institutions
iConnect	6. Computerisation Programme
	7. Expansion of MIS, admin and communication systems
	8. Establish distributed learning support infrastructure
	9. Establish governance and Programme management framework

eGov Master Plan in 2012

Bhutan developed a 5-year eGov Master Plan in 2012. The eGov Master Plan sought to establish a clear roadmap of ICT initiatives that would cut across the whole government. Various initiatives and budgets were developed and aligned to three broad desired outcomes - ICT for Good Governance, ICT for a Bhutanese Information Society and ICT as a Key Enabler for Sustainable Economic Development. These outcomes form the foundation of Bhutan's ICT Vision: "An ICT-enabled, knowledge-based society as a foundation for Gross National Happiness".

1. Build ICT Capability through Education
2. Enhance Service Access Channels
3. Preserve and Promote Culture
4. Manage eWaste
5. Promote ICT Awareness and Adoption in the Community

An education sector master plan development team was formed to focus on the following broad areas:

1. Harness the power of ICT as an enabling tool in teaching and learning;
2. Rationalize and streamline ICT activities, systems and projects under the Ministry of Education (MoE) and across the education sector.

National Education Framework (NEF); Shaping Bhutan's Future 2012

The national development goals and priorities that shape the future direction of Bhutan include:

Building a strong foundation for education the process of social transformation and the achievement of national goals and priorities. The emerging role of education, in the context of social, economic, political, cultural and environmental goals in the local, national and global perspectives, include the following:

- Nurturing individuals capability of ensuring a harmonious balance between material well-being and the spiritual, emotional and cultural needs of both the individual and society at large.
- Creating awareness and commitment on the part of learners to protect, conserve and improve the environment and safeguard the biodiversity of the country. Preserving the nation's cultural heritage and its continued values as a rich source of social philosophy. Education must bring about a fine synthesis between change-oriented technologies and the country's continuity of cultural tradition, thus enabling people to preserve their identity.
- Promoting good governance by making available qualified personnel, who demonstrate accountability, transparency and commitment to the principles of morality in government and of ethical behavior in public affairs.
- Ensuring that citizens develop virtues of peace, fostering tolerance and respect for diversity.
- Equipping people with the knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that are required to promote a distinctive Bhutanese identity, maintain unity and harmony and ensure political stability.
- Enable individuals to contribute to the building of a vibrant democracy and the overall well-being of society. It should provide opportunities for individuals and enhance their capacity to participate in decision-making processes at the household, community and national levels.
- Strengthen the strong tradition of self-reliance, self-sufficiency, self-help and organization and enhance the nation's research and development capacity.

Curriculum Design at Different Stages of Schooling

The curriculum has a specific focus and design at different school levels.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) will reflect the learning needs of students and form the cornerstone of classroom instruction and assessment. This will provide a shift in education - a shift from teachers lecturing

on content, to facilitating students' development of knowledge, skills and values; from students studying subjects, to becoming lifelong learners.

The following principles of school education are informed by, and feed back into, the national agenda of GNH (Gross National Happiness).

1. Holistic
2. Clear Learning Expectations
3. Inclusive
4. Dynamic
5. Integrated, Broad and Balanced Curriculum
6. Developmentally Appropriate
7. Collaborative
8. Lifelong learning
9. Excellence
10. Transformational Pedagogy

Curriculum Design at Different Stages of Schooling

The curriculum has a specific focus and design at different school levels.

Partnerships

The governance and management of the education system can be improved by an effective organizational structure and improved managerial capacity at all levels of the education system. With the expansion of schooling to remote areas, there is an increasing need for material and human resources for effective implementation, Bhutan will need to reach out to human resources beyond the government, share resources, develop school to school linkages, and develop greater links with teacher education colleges and teacher trainees. To improve the efficiency and equity of basic education, the responsibility of planning and implementation is transferred to local authorities. Bhutan is a small country with a widely distributed population; it is highly desirable that local bodies play an active role in decision-making and, thereby, in the implementation process for better results and accountability. In this context, the following policy options can be explored:

- Public and private schools
- Community linkages
- Mobilizing parental and community support
- Model Schools:
- Collaboration with Industries:
- Collaboration with international bodies and universities
- Developing linkages with NGOs and civil societies (EPCI-2007)

Conclusion

It can be concluded that South Asia has evolved into a complete region because the propensity towards conflict has always prevailed over the desire for peace and stability among the states comprising this geographical area. It is hoped that such trends would be zealously encouraged with the desire of imparting the long-eluded quality of 'region-ness' to south asia in the not-so-distant future. It must be hoped that, however complex, such solutions will ultimately be implemented in order to build an economically stronger and socio-politically more cohesive region.

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