



**Impact Evaluation Study of
"Higher Secondary Female Stipend Project (Phase - 3)"**

Sponsoring Ministry : Ministry of Education



**Carried out by
EVALUATION SECTOR
IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING AND EVALUATION DIVISION (IMED)
MINISTRY OF PLANNING
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH**



**Conducted by
Pathmark Associates Limited
6/A/1, Segunbagicha, Dhaka**

June, 2012

Impact Evaluation Study of “Higher Secondary Female Stipend Project (Phase – 3)”

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Bangladesh has a very low female literacy rate. One main problem of female education is poverty. To facilitate education of girls at Higher Secondary Education level the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh undertook the Project "Higher Secondary Female Stipend Project (HSFSP)". Phase-3 of the project was implemented between 2005 to 2008. Total budget was Tk. 18485.99 lac and actual expenditure was Tk. 16619.27 lac i.e. 89.9%

The objectives of the project were:

- Stimulate a significant increase in the enrolment of girls at the HSC level from 40 to 50 percent by the year 2008 through the implementation of Female Stipend Program;
- Encourage more female students to study science and commerce at HSC and tertiary levels by providing incentives and improve the quality of science teaching by offering refresher training among the science teachers;
- Reduce population growth rate by ensuring compliance criteria of remaining unmarried stipend recipient girls up to HSC level;
 - o Encourage the participation of women together with men in socio-economic activities of the country by providing education up to higher secondary level and thereby establishing their social prestige in the community;
 - o Provide support to the Government for acceleration of poverty alleviation program by providing financial support to the stipend recipient girls and thereby enhancing the scope for employment and self employment.

An Evaluation study was conducted to assess the impact of the project. The objectives of this study were:

- i) To review the implementation status of the following major components of the Project:
 - Female Education Awareness Program;
 - Training of science teachers;
 - Training of Officers & Staff on Computer and on Project Management;
 - Stipend giving to female students of science, commerce, arts & other groups;
 - Subvention against tuition fees.
- ii) To review whether the selection criteria were followed for selection of girls as per project objective:

iii) To assess the impact of the project on the following expected areas:

- Increase in enrolment of female students up to H.S.C level;
- Employment or self employment situation of female students;
- Reduction of Population growth rate by ensuring compliance criterion of the remaining unmarried for getting stipend;
- Poverty alleviation situation by providing financial support to the stipend recipient girls;

iv) To identify the major strengths and weaknesses of the project and suggest appropriate recommendations to overcome those.

The study was conducted in 16 districts selected proportionately from the seven Divisions. From each district two upazilas were selected. A total of 64 colleges were selected and the respondents were selected in and around these colleges. The study turned out to be a tracer study because girls who got stipend support at HSC level during 2005 to 2008 had to be traced and interviewed.

The study sample was 1024 beneficiary girls, 192 girls who did not go to college after passing SSC, 192 girls who pursued study without stipend, 64 college principals and 37 science teachers who got training from the project. There was a component to conduct training in Project Management and Computer application for officials of concerned agencies. But this component could not be implemented.

The study was conducted through field survey, Focus Group Discussion Sessions, holding of a local level workshop and preparation of a case study for each Division. The data collected from field survey were analyzed, the proceedings of local level workshop and of FGD session and the findings of case studies were reviewed. Based on these analyses and reviews, study findings have been developed.

Summary of Findings

- Among the treatment girls 26.46% were married as against 73.96% girls who after passing SSC did not go to college and 36.46% girls who continued studies but without stipend support. Thus the stipend support can be linked to reduction in rate of marriage of girls.
- Among the stipend recipient girls 23.93% opted for Science group, 21.97% opted for Commerce group and 53.03% opted for Humanities group at SSC level. Among the girls who did not pursue studies after SSC 13.02% took Science, 16.75% took Commerce group and 67.71% took Humanities subjects. Among the girls who continued studies without stipend support, 17.19% took Science, 18.75% took Commerce group and 63.02% took Humanities subjects. The stipend support can be said to have promoted science education to some extent among the treatment girls.
- Among the treatment girls 77.73% are still pursuing studies and among the control group girls who continued studies without stipend support 63.54% are pursuing studies.
- The average income of those who completed studies with stipend support was found to be Tk. 5,992.35 compared to Tk. 3,476.47 for those who did not continue studies and Tk. 3,800 of those who continued studies without stipend support.
- The places of employment of those who did not go to college are private offices, schools, industries, NGOs. The places of those who continued without stipend support are schools and NGOs and places for those who availed stipend support are govt. officers, private offices, schools and NGOs.
- Average age at marriage of those treatment girls who got married is 19.47 years, 17.73 years for those who did not go to college after SSC and those who had to pursue studies without stipend support got married at an average age of 18.99 years.
- Average age at child birth for treatment group married girls was found to be 20.35 years. This age was 19.61 years for those who discontinued studies after SSC and 20.54 for those who pursued studies without stipend.

- On women empowerment the study found that in the case of treatment girls 21.48% participate in meetings/conference in women's issues, in the case of those who studied without stipend support 17.19% participate in such meetings and 15.63% of the girls who did not study after SSC participate in meetings / conference on women's issues.
- The study has revealed that the project has some weaknesses and these are:
 - Inadequate amount of money
 - Not giving money every month
 - 75% attendance is too high
 - Intervention of influential people in selection process in some areas

The study has found out that the project has some strengths. These strengths are:

- Field level offices got documents and information quite in time to complete the process of selection of beneficiary girls.
- Educational activities increased due to increase in number of girls.
- Colleges were benefited due to tuition subvention.
- Science teachers were benefited as a result of training.

The Case Studies have identified the sustainable benefits the project has initiated. The stipend support added with support from the community and educational institutions have been found to work as impelling force for meritorious girls of poor families to pursue their studies to excel in life.

Recommendations

The study findings gave rise to a number of recommendations and these are mentioned below:

- The study investigation has found the project beneficial to enhance education of girls particularly at higher secondary level. In sample areas the proportion of girls in Higher Secondary classes has been found to be around 50%. The project has achieved the most important objectives. It is recommended that the project on priority stipend support to girls studying at HSC level should continue to further the case of female education and in generation of multiplier effect through female education.
- Limiting 40% quota for awarding stipend support has been considered as a restricting factor. Poverty situation varies from area to area. It is recommended that the system of selection of stipend girls should be in keeping with level of poverty in different regions instead of present limit of 40% of girls in all districts.
- The beneficiary girls and teachers have given the opinion that the amount of stipend is not sufficient. The stipend support should be increased to Tk. 200/- for Humanities and Business studies group and to Tk. 300/- for girls of science group.
- A component of the project on conducting training on Project Management and Computer uses for officers of concerned agencies was not implemented. This is a serious management problem of the project. It is recommended that in future the project authority should be very careful to ensure that all components of the project are implemented.

- The project had a component on conducting training program for science teachers. The reality is that many teachers could not be given such training. Given the situation of science education in the country, scope should be widened to provide training to all science teachers of the colleges.
- The beneficiary girls mentioned that money is not given to them regularly. It is recommended that the stipend money be given quarterly.
- The study has revealed that meritorious girls from poor families who are pursuing higher studies at universities or similar institutions are facing problems of financial support. A separate project may be undertaken to provide financial support to meritorious girls from poor families for university level education.
- The study has revealed that enrolment in science group is far lower than other two groups. This is because of lower enrolment in science group at secondary school level. To attract girls (and boys) for science education motivate needs to be started at primary education level.