NATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION EQUITY POLICY

Bangladesh

Policy Frameworks

Does equity with regard to supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education feature in any government produced policy documents? If so, which government policy document(s) are these and can you provide website link(s) to them?

➔ National Education Policy 2010 http://www.moedu.gov.bd/site/page/318a22d2-b400-48a7-8222-303ab11cc205/-
➔ Eighth Five Year Plan 2020-2025 http://www.plancomm.gov.bd/site/files/8ec347dc-4926-4802-a839-7569897e1a7a/-
➔ Masterplan for Information and Communication Technology for in Education 2012-2021 http://www.moedu.gov.bd/site/page/2859c582-aaf8-40bb-909c-57b409ead7d6/-
➔ Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2018-2030 http://www.ugc.gov.bd/site/publications/6dc675fc-db66-42bd-88e3-5fcbb3a5c497/Strategic-Plan-for-Higher-Education-in-bd-2018-2030

What policies and actions are described in these government policy documents in terms of supporting students from low-income or marginalized populations to enter or succeed in higher education?

Strategic Plan for Higher Education 2018-2030

➔ Enhancing equal access to university education in terms of socioeconomic and demographic characteristics
➔ Making university education affordable for all qualified students
➔ Sizeable government budget for need-based scholarship
➔ Financial aids, grants for meritorious students from poor families
➔ Need-based student financing plan will earmark at least 2% of the total revenue collected by a private university in a given year
➔ Student loan programs with interest rates of less than 1%

National Education Policy 2010

➔ At least one trainer will be recruited in each of the PTIs to facilitate the special teaching methods and needs of various types of challenged learners. (Primary Level)
➔ Special provisions like free admission, free education materials, free lunch at schools and stipends will be arranged to attract and retain street children in the schools. Effective measures will be taken for their safe protection within the schools. (Primary Level)
➔ Measures will be taken to provide residential facilities, special help and scholarships for the children of freedom fighters, of small ethnic communities and socially backward groups for sundry reasons. (Higher Education)
➔ Scholarships will be awarded to the students according to their merit and financial solvency of their parents. Moreover, provisions will be made for meritorious students for academic bank loans at soft terms.

Masterplan for Information and Communication Technology for in Education 2012-2021

➔ Opportunities to be created in Bangladesh Open University for remote learning, irrespective of geographic location and marginalization such as creation of interactive virtual classrooms.

Eighth Five Year Plan 2020-2025

➔ Target dropout rate by 2025 9% (from 15%)
➔ The girls on the other hand are sent to perform paid/unpaid household work. Child marriage, despite legal restrictions, is common practice too. Another common problem in poor households is that they tend to send the boys to school and use the girls to perform for paid/unpaid household works. Generous stipends to students and financial incentives to parents will be provided under the 8FYP to reduce this disparity. (Secondary Level
➔ Reduce the gender-gap: Gender-parity is established in primary and secondary level but not at the

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tertiary/higher levels and in the TVET sector. Male students outnumber female students almost by 3:1 ratio in universities. Anti-female social biases create challenges in implementing the policy and female labour force participation rate is considerably lower (36 per cent) than male (82 per cent). Establishing public universities just for women, generous scholarships and other funding packages under the 8FYP will help narrowing and eventually eliminating the gap.

Is there a standalone policy document dedicated to equity promotion in higher education? If so, which document(s) is/are these? Can you provide a link(s)?

No information was available.

Which equity target groups are identified in the policy documents? (Please choose as many groups as apply in your own country)

➜ Low-income or lower socio-economic background students
➜ Gender groups
➜ Indigenous populations
➜ Students with disability

Does the country have concrete targets for the participation of specific equity groups in higher education?

No.

Which agency has responsibility for policies related to equity in student participation/success in higher education?

Ministry of Education and the University Grants Commission.

Which stakeholder groups are consulted during the equity policy formulation? (Please choose all the stakeholders that are invited to the consultation process in your own country)

➜ Higher Education Institutions' Associations
➜ Civil society Organisations
➜ International Organisations

Achieving Policy Targets

Are there any non-monetary instruments such as outreach work between schools and universities, reforms to university admission etc. used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

➜ "These universities cannot discriminate students in respect of race, religion, caste, socio-economic conditions and physical disabilities. Such institutions will not be established and conducted for profiteering. They cannot advocate anything against our freedom, spirit of war of liberation and Bengali culture and must refrain from doing anything of that kind." (National Education Policy 2010, p. 24)
➜ Encourage access to higher education from all ethnic and minority groups of people by placing admission quotas in universities and other higher education institutions.
➜ Quota system for persons with disabilities in public universities

Are there any financial instruments such as bursaries, scholarships and loans used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education? If so, can you describe what they are?

➔ Scholarships, grants, and aid to meritorious students from poor families
➔ Merit-based scholarships
➔ Financial aid in private universities

Who is responsible for monitoring the impact of measures used to promote access/success for students from specific equity groups in higher education?

No information was available.

What instruments, methods and data are in place to carry out the monitoring and evaluation?

No detailed monitoring and evaluation tools and criteria are in place for higher education.

What kind of autonomy do higher education institutions enjoy in reaching the policy targets set by government?

There are four self-governed public universities that enjoy autonomy, but all other universities are subject to the policies of University Grans Commission (UGC). The four self-governed universities also generally follow UGC policies.

How do you see the role of inter-governmental/international organisations in supporting higher education equity policies? In which areas would be their contribution the most valuable? (1= most valuable contribution 4=least valuable contribution)

1. Policy setting
2. Technical assistance and capacity building
3. Financial assistance (grants, loan financing, scholarships)
4. Facilitating peer learning, exchange of experience among countries

COVID-19 and Equitable Access and Success in Higher Education

How, if at all, has Covid-19 affected the existence and implementation of policies designed to encourage greater access and success on higher education of those from low-income/marginalized groups?

It has created a big digital divide which is important since classes are remotely held. There is a geographical (rural students are worse off due to bad bandwidth) and income inequality (poor students have less required devices) in higher education during COVID-19.

Sources

This country brief was prepared as part of the *"ASEM National Equity Policies in Higher Education"* report, a collaboration between the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) and the National Education Opportunities Network (NEON). The report was launched at the 8th ASEF Regional Conference on Higher Education (ARC8) on *"Inclusive and Diverse Higher Education in Asia and Europe"* on 10 September 2021.

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