

Education System in Chad

Abdus Sattar Molla

CHAD is a republic (official name: Republic of Chad) located in Central Africa, south of Libya, bordered largely by Niger, Sudan, and Central African Republic. The country was part of France's African holdings until 1960, endured three decades of civil warfare as well as invasions by Libya before a semblance of peace was finally restored in 1990. The government eventually drafted a democratic constitution, and held presidential elections in 1996 and 2001. Sporadic Sudanese and ethnic rebel campaigns continued throughout 2006 and 2007, and the capital experienced a significant rebel threat even in early 2008.

The total area of Chad is 1,284,000 sq km (over 8 times larger than Bangladesh) and it harbors slightly over 10 million (10,111,337) people (about 1/15th of Bangladesh population). Population growth rate is 2.195 % that is slightly more than Bangladesh's 2%.

The per capita income in Chad is about US \$ 1,700 (2007 estimate). The literacy rate is about 25.7% (male: 40.8%, female: 12.8%; 2000 estimate). Chad spends only about 2% of its GDP in education.

Education is the known way to enrich people with required knowledge, skills and values in any country. Requirement for these qualities changes over time and curriculum requires periodic revision. Bangladesh completed the third revision of the primary curriculum and such a revision is now due on the lower secondary, to be followed by upper grades. We can have a look into the education system of this African country influenced by European system (like us) to find some lessons for us, even though education system in this country is not much developed. The description follows the usual format having Education Policy & Administration, the Structure, Program of Study, Assessment System and lastly Lessons for Bangladesh.

I-Education Policy & Administration

The educational system in Chad was destroyed by the incessant civil war that annihilated the country's civil service infrastructure between 1960

and 1985. That is why Chad has had to struggle since the mid-1980s to salvage its educational system. In the late 1980s, the Ministry of Education had administrative responsibility for all formal schooling. Because of years of civil strife, however, local communities had assumed many of the ministry's functions, including the construction and maintenance of schools, and payment of teachers' salaries. As in other parts of the Francophone world, the Chadian educational system inherited most of its principles from the French colonial system.

II-The Structure

Primary education in Chad lasts for 6 years. Secondary education consists of two cycles: lower secondary or junior school for 4 years followed by a 3-year senior secondary cycle. There are options for technical education both at the junior secondary and senior secondary levels. University level Bachelor Course lasts for 3 years. The duration of Masters Course is 2 years. Therefore, the structure becomes [6+ (4) + 3] + (3+2).

Higher Education

During independence in 1960, Chad had no university, but only some institutions of higher education. The lone university- *Université du Tchad* was established during 1971-72. Later it was renamed the *Université de N'Djaména*. The university has four faculties. This only university, however, provides education at the Bachelor, Masters and even Doctoral level. The first cycle lasts for two years and leads to a General Diploma in various subjects. The second cycle of higher education leads to a Licence (Bachelor) after one year's further study. The *Maîtrise* (Masters) is conferred one or two years after the Licence. The University awards a Doctorate in Medicine after seven years of study.

Teacher Education

The primary teachers are required to complete a 3-year upper secondary course at an *Ecole normale d'Instituteurs* leading to the title of *Instituteur*. Students who hold the Baccalauréat (senior secondary certificate) can sit for a competitive examination for entry to the *Institut supérieur*

des Sciences de l'Education, N'Djaména, to follow a 2-year course (Holders of the Licence are required to follow a one-year course) leading to the *Certificat d'Aptitude professionnelle de l'Enseignement aux Collèges d'Enseignement général* (CAPCEG). The CAPCEG entitles the holders to teach at the lower secondary cycle. Senior secondary teachers must hold at least a Licence. For the *Institut supérieur en Sciences de l'Education*, teachers must hold the *Maîtrise* or the Doctorate.

III- Program of Study

The primary curriculum comprises of language, arithmetic, history, geography, natural sciences, geometry, animal husbandry, civics, etc. The medium is usually French, Arabic in few schools.

The first cycle of secondary, i.e., the junior secondary (Grades 7-10) students study an integrated curriculum consisting of French, mathematics, history, geography, biology, geology, English, (or Arabic), drawing, civic education, physical training, drawing, physics, chemistry, and philosophy (in Grade 10 termed "*Terminale*").

The senior secondary education (Grades 11-13) is specialized and usually divided into one of four specializations: Physical or Natural Sciences, Philosophy and Literature, Mathematics, or Economics and Social Sciences. The science stream elective curriculum consists of mathematics, biology, physics, chemistry, geology, etc.

IV-Assessment System

There is national examination in completion of 6-year primary education. *Certificat d'Etudes Primaires* (CEP) qualifies students to enter a general secondary; while *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnelle* (CAP) draws students to vocational secondary. The second national examination is junior high school diploma held in completion of Grade 10. *Baccalauréat de l'Enseignement Supérieur* (high school diploma), an examination devised and organized by the University of N'Djaména is used to decide on the students' admission into higher education.

Chad follows a simple grading system under a 20-point scale. The successful candi-

dates are grouped into four grades: Very good (*Tres Bien*; obtaining 16-20 points), Good (*Bien*; 14-15.9), Not bad (*Assez-bien*; 12-13.9), and Acceptable (*Passable*; 10-11.9).

V- Lessons for Bangladesh

The major characters of Chadian education system that Bangladesh can follow or adapt can be as follows:

Chad spends only about 2% of her GDP in education and is a case sufficient to explain its very low rate (about 25%) of literacy. Bangladesh spends about 2.4% and should try to gradually reach the UNESCO standard of 7%.

The duration of primary education in Chad is 6 years. For providing a better primary education Bangladesh can easily implement a 6-year primary education with a slight development of the present infrastructure, giving up the unrealistic plan of making 8-year long primary education.

In Chad the junior secondary education (up to Grade 10) is integrated. Specialized streaming is done at the senior secondary (Grades 11-13). To deal with both the required enhancement of integrated education and a functional group-based preparation, Bangladesh can either elevate the higher secondary by another year (Grade 13) as in Chad or introduce lower/junior secondary integrated course till Grade 9 followed by a group-based higher secondary consisting of Grades 10-12 at a stretch.

There is provision for public examination on completion of every major step of schooling to award a certificate in Chad. We can follow this three-step examination system before entering higher education.

Chad has provision for vocational education just on passing the primary Grade 6. We can follow this under our education project "Reaching out-of-school children". However, for entering into polytechnics, passing the lower secondary can still be in vogue.

The writer is a PhD Researcher in NIE, Singapore; e-mail: asmolla@yahoo.com.