January | 03

Gender and Education in Cambodia:

Historical Review of Trends & the Way Forward

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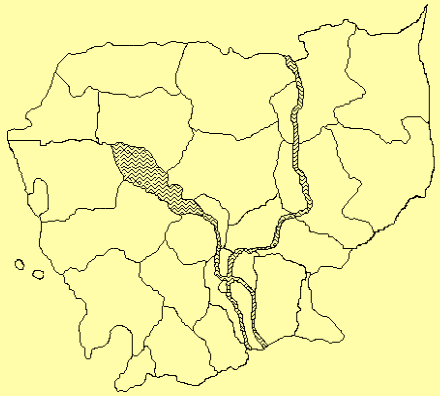


Historical Background

An estimated 2 million people (out of a prewar population of 7.5 million) were killed during the genocidal Khmer Rouge period, 1975-79. Civil War was ended in 1991 with the Paris Peace Accords. The international community spent an estimated $1.8 billion to organize national elections in 1993. A new constitution was proclaimed later that year after free and fair elections and continues to the present day. The former socialist party that expelled the Khmer Rouge is the majority party ruling in coalition with the Royalists.

Economy

Destroyed by decades of war, civil strife, political instability, and economic depletion, the infrastructure, human capital, and social services are slowly being rebuilt. GDP increased from $US 1.9 billion in 1991 to $US 3.04 billion in 1997. Nevertheless, an estimated 38% of households still live below the poverty line. The categories of poor include urban migrants, returnees from refugee camps, and families headed by young females.

Education System

Basic education comprises Grades 1-9. Upper secondary extends from Grades 10-12. Education system was virtually destroyed during Khmer Rouge era. Reconstruction has been slow and impeded by lack of human resources.

Source: Adapted from UNICEF/Cambodia

Executive Summary

This review was commissioned by Oxfam/GB to assess the probability that Cambodia can reach gender equity goals in the educational system as laid out in its Education For All strategic plan by 2005. This assessment tried to infer future trends with respect to gender equity based on an examination of times-series analysis of educational patterns during the 1990s. Due to Cambodia's unique historical situation (such as the international foreign aid embargo until mid-decade), however, the researcher found it increasingly necessary to look at the closing years of the last decade and in particular on emergent trends since the inauguration of a major educational reform initiative by the government in 2000 on a pilot basis with nation-wide implementation in 2001.

Although universal access to basic education (defined as Grades 1 to 9) is guaranteed by Cambodia's Constitution and the country has ratified several international agreements with gender-related provisions (such as *Education for All*, the *Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW*) and the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child)*, the reality on the ground has not matched the legal framework. In general, attention to gender-specific issues in education has only achieved some level of ascendancy during the closing years of the 1990s (circa 1998).

The above notwithstanding, efforts targeted specifically at gender equity issues have been of a *stop and go* character with improved continuity and resourcing of activities only becoming apparent since the implementation of the government's new Education Sector Support Program or ESSP. In this respect, public financing of education has increased from 8.4% of total government spending in 1994 to 18% in 2002. Whereas previous educational development plans have focused primarily on supply-side factors to promote access, the ESSP includes many demand-side driven strategies such as the elimination of school fees. Recent developments to promote gender equity have included explicit setting of gender equity targets in national educational planning documents, the establishment of a Gender Working Group to advocate for gender issues within the Ministry, and numerous pilots to keep girls in school such as gender awareness training among communities, scholarship programs, breakfast programs, and life skills-vocational training initiatives. Several of these pilots are now on the verge of becoming national programs.

Progress towards universalization of primary education has been dramatic in the last couple of years, particularly for lower socio-economic quintiles. Increments in enrolment among the lower quintiles have been very high and higher still for girls. Net enrolment rate at primary level nationally is 87% with a male-female differential of 89.7% and 84.2%, respectively. GPI for total primary enrolment is currently estimated at 0.87 and is increasing. This positive assessment, however, is balanced by dismal NER levels at lower secondary level for both sexes of 20% or less. In addition, GPI for enrolment at lower secondary level has been increasing more slowly and stands at only 0.63. Thus, while there is the strong likelihood for the country to achieve gender parity goals at primary level, there is less optimism that 2005 targets can be achieved at secondary school level any time soon.

There are important differences among boys and girls with respect to dropout and repetition with girls exhibiting higher rates for the former and boys demonstrating higher levels for the latter. Dropout rates for girls accelerate sharply at upper primary and peak at Grade 7, particularly among rural girls. Research studies have found that direct educational costs

apply with equal frequency to depress the enrolment of boys and girls but that opportunity costs associated with education are found to apply more frequently to girls. Other studies suggest that attitudinal factors that mitigate against educational equity for girls are most dominant when financial factors come into play. This suggests that interventions addressing cost factors have great potential for bringing about behavioral change with respect to enrolment patterns among girls.

Significant progress has also been made with increasing literacy levels among adult women. In this respect, literacy rates among adult women have increased from 40% in 1990 to a reported 58% in 1998. However, public investment in Nonformal Education has been static over much of the 1990s and total NFE investment comprises less than 3% of total investment in the education sector. This compares with a need for total investment estimated by the EFA Secretariat to be $48,000,000 to achieve a 100% literacy rate by 2015.

Among some of the major issues in efforts to address gender equity is the need to improve stakeholder consensus with respect to the definition of gender equity. Stakeholder consensus on commitment to gender equity is currently fragile because many program designs rely on very different understandings of gender equity, much of which is imported and alien to local stakeholders. Of particular importance in this regard is the need to make sure that gender equity concepts address the causes of inequality and not just the symptoms.

Another important gender-related issue in the education sector relates to the need to design a more integrated educational investment strategy that leads to better balance between interventions that address the needs of girls and those of women. This refers in particular for more investment in nonformal education and educational alternatives for girls out of school.

One of the most important lessons in efforts to promote gender equity in Cambodia relates to the general acknowledgement that gender awareness raising interventions over the last several years have been largely ineffective. Promoting gender equity in the education sector can only be meaningful if it is sustained and coordinated with follow-up measures. In this respect, the sector has not yet demonstrated adequate and sustained coordination between interventions that focus on attitude change (e.g., gender awareness trainings) and those that try to provide concrete applications of gender equity concepts (scholarships, life skills, etc.).

Important recommendations made in the report include the following:

1. Need for more locally generated definitions of gender equity
2. Avoid stand-alone gender training interventions
3. Need for improved focus on integrated investment strategies that balance the needs of women and girls (e.g., increasing investment in NFE and educational alternatives for girls who have already left the educational system).
4. Improve focus on quality education (e.g., curricular relevance provisions) as a means to motivate parents to send their daughters to school
5. Institutionalization of gender equity sensitivities within MoEYS
6. Review some ESSP 2005 targets relating to improvements in gender equity
7. Increase the use of positive gender role models

1. Research Rationale and General Country Context

The present research paper was commissioned by Oxfam/GB as part of an assessment in several countries to determine the extent to which they have made progress towards fulfilling the Millenium Development Goal of gender equity by 2005. The intention of the present research on gender issues in Cambodia is to improve understanding of the primary trends in girls' education during the 1990s and the early part of the new decade with respect to participation and attainment in four main areas:

- Commitment of resources to education over the last 10 years
- Patterns in respect to enrolment, completion, dropout, etc.
- The extent to which government policies have affected girls/women's participation in formal and informal education systems
- The lessons learned during the initiatives undertaken by government and NGOs to promote gender equity

Although the general parameters of this research project are intended to assess trends during the 1990s as a barometer of change in the first decade of the new century, the Cambodian context demands looking more closely at the later years of the last decade and, in view of a major education reform initiative in 2000, the initial years of the present decade. Until 1991, Cambodia was under an international aid embargo. This ban was partially lifted when the Paris Peace Accords of October, 1991 were signed by all warring parties thereby ending the country's civil war. For much of the 20 years before this date, the country was embroiled in civil strife, genocide, and internal conflict. During the 1970s, the country's educational system was virtually destroyed. Throughout the reconstruction period that followed the country's liberation from the genocidal Khmer Rouge in 1979, most efforts in education focused on putting the pieces back together without the assistance of international development aid. Needless to say, gender was not and could not be a priority during these years.

For the period 1992-3, the country was under the stewardship of the United Nations Transitional Authority of Cambodia (UNTAC) until national elections could take place which would establish an internationally recognized government in 1994. It was not until after these elections that bilateral and multilateral aid once again began to flow into the education system after a hiatus of nearly two decades. One of the first activities supported by international donors was the establishment of an Education Management Information System (EMIS) so that educational trends could be properly monitored and analyzed. This system became operational in 1996. As a result, most data regarding change in the educational system only dates from this period. Data keeping records before this date are spotty, often unavailable, and rarely disaggregated by sex. Similarly, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RgoC) was only able to conduct a national census in 1998. The last census conducted in the country before this was in 1962 indicating a hiatus of over 30 years. The census was complemented by smaller scale socio-economic surveys conducted by the Ministry of Planning with United Nations support in 1994, 1997, and 1999.

In view of the above, it is clear that historical reviews of demographic and educational change in Cambodia before the mid-nineties are problematic due to the lack of systematic data collection. In addition, there has been such turmoil at all levels of society until the proclamation of a new constitution in 1993 that it is only very late in the last decade that Cambodia has even begun to think about gender equity. This background should help the reader better understand the chronology of the analysis in the following pages as well as the focus on more recent events.

2. Socio-economic and Demographic Background

2.1. Population Structure

Cambodia is a relatively small country of about 13,000,000 people. Its age structure, however, is rather unique stemming from nearly 2 decades of constant warfare and "class cleansing" (Table 2.1). The high mortality experienced among men and women who are now in their 40s during the 1970s and 1980s has led to a depressed birth rate among these individuals resulting in an unusually smaller age cohort of individuals in the 20 to 24 age range. Because this is a prime child bearing time for Cambodian women, the effects of war have in turn led to a smaller age cohort of children aged 0 to 4. This is expected to have serious consequences on primary and secondary school enrolment during the middle years of the current decade. In this respect, school enrolments are expected to continue to increase until 2004 and then begin to decline steadily until 2009 after which time they will again begin to rise until they reach 2004 levels in 2012.

Table 2.1. Age-Cohort Population Distribution

Age Group	Male (%)	Female (%)
80+	0.2	0.3
75-79	0.2	0.4
70-74	0.4	0.6
65-69	0.6	0.8
60-64	0.8	1.0
55-59	1.0	1.3
50-54	1.2	1.6
45-49	1.5	2.1
40-44*	1.8	2.6
35-39	2.8	3.2
30-34	3.2	3.6
25-29	3.7	4.0
20-24*	3.1	3.4
15-19	5.8	6.0
10-14	7.4	7.1
5-9	7.9	7.6
0-4*	6.5	6.3

*War affected age cohorts

Source: Cambodia Census, 1998

The expected decline in intake after 2004 presents important opportunities within the education system to shift focus from expanding physical capacity (e.g., investments in infrastructure) to more quality concerns. As will be seen in the discussion in later sections, exploding enrolments for both boys and girls in the early years of the current decade have required significant allocations of resources for infrastructure and increasing teacher allocations to rural areas.

Another important characteristic of the Cambodian population relates to the proportion of males and females in different age cohorts. For example, it can be observed that although the majority of the population is female (52% vs 48% for men), there are fewer girls than boys in the age cohorts 0 to 14 years old. Among the school going population (ages 5-14), the respective proportion of boys and girls in the population is 51% male and 49% female. As child infanticide among girls is not a practice among Cambodians as it is in some other East Asian cultures, this peculiarity has not been adequately explained and warrants further research. This sex difference requires care in the interpretation of gender parity indi-

ces for total enrolment and net enrolment ratios.

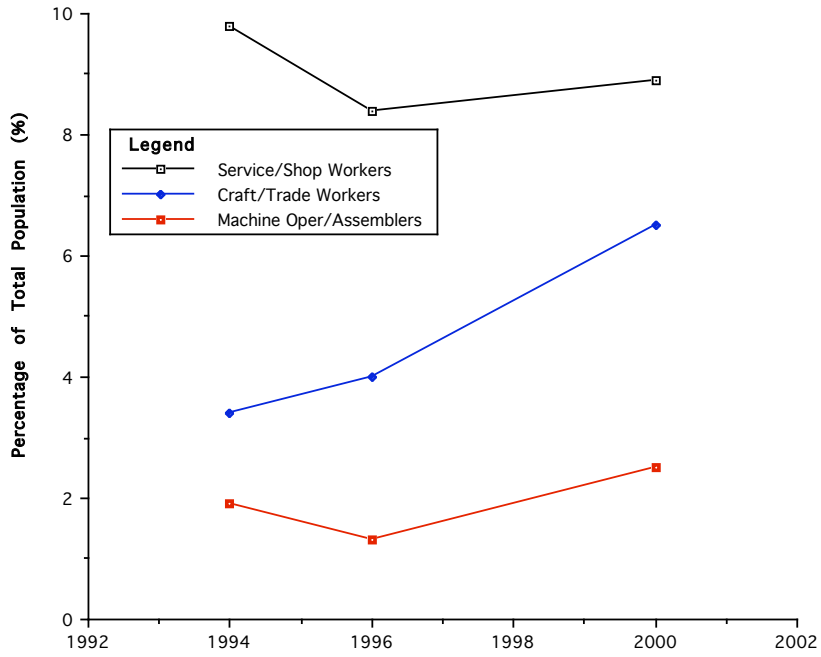
2.2. Employment

According to the 1998 census, about 84% of the population lives in rural areas. Men and women live in the countryside in about the same proportion with 84.0% of men doing so and about 84.5% of women (National Institute of Statistics, 2001). Nevertheless, it has been reported that about 52% of the rural work force is female (EFA Secretariat, 1999). It is believed that the shortage of male labor that this implies has increased reliance on child labor with attendant effects on school enrolment and dropout.

The overwhelmingly rural residence of the population is reflected in the distribution of the work force with between 74% and 76% of the population engaged in *agricultural or fishery* related occupations for selected survey years (Table 2.2.). The next largest occupational category is *service and shop sales workers* at between 8-9% of the population in selected years followed by *craft and related trade workers* and *machine operators/assemblers* at 6% or less.

Although there have not been significant changes in the occupational structure of the workforce over the last 5 years with the vast majority still engaged in agriculture or fisheries, some modest change has been in progress since foreign investment returned to the country in the early 1990s. Figure 2.1 shows that more and more workers are especially being drawn into craft/trade and industrial occupations. This reflects the large number of textile mills that have been built in the country in response to preferential textile import quotas provided by the US Government as well as an increase in tourism. In response to these changes, the percentage of workers engaged in agriculture or fisheries dropped from 76.5% of workers in 1996 to a reported 72.4% in the year 2000.

Figure 2.1: Change in Selected Occupations as a % of All Workers, 1994-2000



Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2001

Table 2.2. Number and % of Employed Persons 10 Years Old and Over by Sex, 1994-2000

Primary Occupation	1994					
	Total	*Male*	*Female*	*% Total*	*% Male*	*% Female*
Legislators, Sr Official, Mgrs	45,327	38,238	7,089	1.2%	2.0%	0.3%
Professionals	88,605	60,908	27,697	2.2%	3.2%	1.4%
Technicians and Associate Professionals	46,014	36,283	9,731	1.2%	1.9%	0.5%
Clerks	3,827	2,361	1,466	0.1%	0.1%	0.1%
Service and Shop Sales Workers	384,274	106,937	277,337	9.8%	5.6%	13.6%
Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Workers	2,938,066	1,333,031	1,605,035	74.6%	70.4%	78.5%
Craft and Related Trade Workers	134,478	89,343	45,135	3.4%	4.7%	2.2%
Plant and Machine Operators/Assemblers	75,987	67,056	8,931	1.9%	3.5%	0.4%
Elementary Occupations	152,794	90,609	62,185	3.9%	4.8%	3.0%
Other Occupation/Armed Forces	70,474	69,241	1,233	1.8%	3.7%	0.1%
Total	**3,939,846**	**1,894,007**	**2,045,839**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
	1996					
	Total	*Male*	*Female*	*Total %*	*% Male*	*% Female*
Legislators, Sr Official, Mgrs	17,434	16,316	1,118	0.4%	0.7%	0.0%
Professionals	96,756	68,951	27,805	2.0%	3.0%	1.1%
Technicians and Associate Professionals	99,692	76,120	23,572	2.1%	3.3%	0.9%
Clerks	2,962	1,868	1,094	0.1%	0.1%	0.0%
Service and Shop Sales Workers	407,236	111,030	296,206	8.4%	4.8%	11.6%
Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Workers	3,716,360	1,689,270	2,027,090	76.5%	73.6%	79.0%
Craft and Related Trade Workers	192,213	101,219	90,994	4.0%	4.4%	3.5%
Plant and Machine Operators/Assemblers	70,257	60,609	9,648	1.4%	2.6%	0.4%
Elementary Occupations	206,653	121,608	85,045	4.3%	5.3%	3.3%
Other Occupation/Armed Forces	49,207	47,378	1,829	1.0%	2.1%	0.1%
Total	**4,858,770**	**2,294,369**	**2,564,401**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**
	2000					
	Total	*Male*	*Female*	*% Total*	*% Male*	*% Female*
Legislators, Sr Official, Mgrs	27,150	23,738	3,412	0.5%	0.9%	0.1%
Professionals	66,335	43,911	22,424	1.3%	1.7%	0.8%
Technicians and Associate Professionals	103,254	74,638	28,616	2.0%	2.9%	1.0%
Clerks	28,238	20,565	7,673	0.5%	0.8%	0.3%
Service and Shop Sales Workers	469,054	151,110	317,944	8.9%	6.0%	11.6%
Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Workers	3,819,796	1,807,698	2,012,098	72.4%	71.2%	73.5%
Craft and Related Trade Workers	341,642	129,592	212,050	6.5%	5.1%	7.7%
Plant and Machine Operators/Assemblers	134,041	100,605	33,436	2.5%	4.0%	1.2%
Elementary Occupations	229,255	131,665	97,590	4.3%	5.2%	3.6%
Other Occupation/Armed Forces	56411	54,489	1,922	1.1%	2.1%	0.1%
Total	**5,275,177**	**2,538,011**	**2,737,166**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**	**100.0%**

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2001

An examination of gender distributions within different occupations indicates that women tend to be over represented among sales and shop workers by a margin of over 2 to 1 and to a lesser extent among agricultural and fishery workers (Table 2.3). This pattern has been historically constant during the period 1994-2000. Higher gender parity indices for women in agricultural and fisheries related occupations may suggest that rural migrants to

urban areas more often tend to be male than female though this is by no means certain.

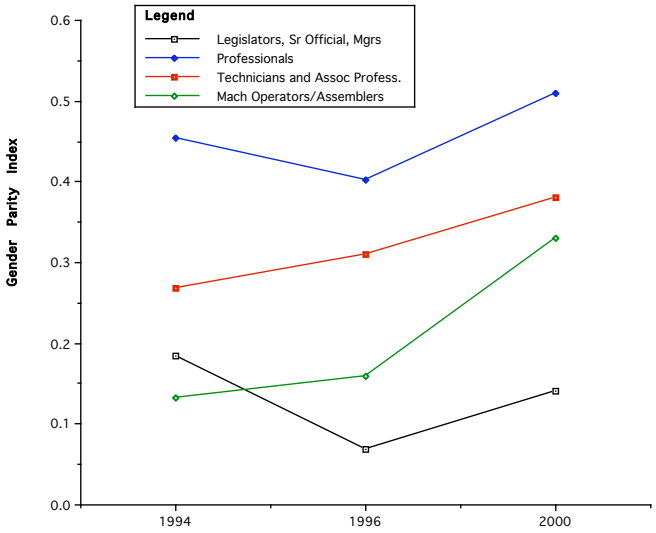
Although females are still underrepresented in many occupations, their numbers do seem to be increasing in several categories according to government statistics (Figure 2.2). For example, among factory workers, parity indices have almost tripled since 1994 (from 0.13 in 1994 to 0.33 in 2000). This is no doubt due to the overwhelming tendency for textile workers to be female simultaneous with the rapid expansion in the textile industry itself during the late 1990s. Similarly, female numbers are increasing as a proportion of the total among professionals and technicians/associate professionals suggesting that job opportunities for movement into nontraditional occupational categories are increasing. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the representation of women in management level occupations has not recovered to their levels in the immediate post-socialist era (though they do once again appear to be increasing).

Table 2.3: Gender Parity Indices for Major Occupational Categories, 1994-2000

Primary Occupation	*Gender Parity Index*			
	1994	*1996*	*1997*	*2000*
1. Legislators, Sr Official, Mgrs	0.185	0.069	0.087	0.14
2. Professionals	0.455	0.403	0.473	0.51
3. Technicians and Associate Professionals	0.268	0.310	0.324	0.38
4. Clerks	0.621	0.586	0.500	0.37
5. Service and Shop Sales Workers	2.593	2.668	2.562	2.10
6. Skilled Agricultural and Fishery Workers	1.204	1.200	1.230	1.11
7. Craft and Related Trade Workers	0.505	0.899	0.813	1.64
8. Plant and Machine Operators/Assemblers	0.133	0.159	0.127	0.33
9. Elementary Occupations	0.686	0.699	0.774	0.74
10. Other Occupations	0.018	0.039	0.061	0.04

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2001

Figure 2.2: Change in Gender Parity for Selected Occupations, 1994-2000



Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2001

Labor force participation and employment rates have been reported to be comparable for both males and females with a slight advantage for men in most years (Table 2.4). The

only exceptions appear to be a higher participation rate for females in 1995 and a higher employment rate in 1997. The average difference in favor of men for participation rate is 0.91% and 0.49% for employment rate.

Table 2.4: Labor Force Participation and Employment Rates, 1994-2000

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Participation Rates							
Female	55.4	59.4	65.1	65.4	65.9	65.9	64.4
Male	58.1	59.0	65.8	66.2	66.3	66.3	66.2
Employment Rates							
Female	97.3	97.2	98.8	99.3	94.1	99.4	97.2
Male	97.7	97.8	99.3	99.2	95.3	99.5	97.9

Source: National Institute of Statistics, 2001

Table 2.5: Gender Parity Indices for Status in Employment, 1994-2000

Status in Employment	Gender Parity Index			
	1994	1996	1997	2000
Whole Kingdom				
Employer	0.400	0.428	0.589	0.117
Own Account Worker	1.075	0.633	0.749	0.574
Employee	0.312	0.388	0.416	0.699
Unpaid Family Worker	3.336	2.598	2.862	2.391
Other	0.000	0.189	1.368	0.217
Phnom Penh				**(All Urban)**
Employer	0.132	0.548	0.847	0.396
Own Account Worker	1.227	1.478	1.234	0.962
Employee	0.329	0.433	0.434	0.489
Unpaid Family Worker	3.336	2.251	2.678	2.586
Other	0.000	0.000	0.959	0.333
Rural				
Employer	n/a	1.089	0.590	0.000
Own Account Worker	n/a	6.403	0.701	0.531
Employee	n/a	1.524	0.445	0.785
Unpaid Family Worker	n/a	36.550	2.896	2.380
Other	n/a	0.446	1.431	0.206

Census and Socio-economic survey data on status of employment is difficult to interpret due to certain anomalies in the data.[1] This fact notwithstanding, one of the disturbing trends in government data is the precipitous decline in the representation of women as employers (Table 2.5). In this respect, parity indices reportedly dropped from 0.40 in 1994 to only 0.117 in 2000. Since indices have actually increased in the capital city during the same time period, this decline is accounted for almost entirely by changes in employment status in rural areas.

Another data characteristic of some concern is the proportion of women and girls who are working as unpaid family workers. In 1994, more females were working at this status than males by a margin of about 3.4 to 1. Although parity indices have since declined to about 2.4 for the whole kingdom in 2000, this still represents a disturbing proportional difference. This characteristic of female employment helps to corroborate other research evidence (e.g., MoEYS-CARE, 1998) that a primary reason for school dropout among teenage girls are the opportunity costs associated with their continued study.

2.3. Poverty Alleviation

According to the World Food Program (WFP), about 38% of the population lives below

[1] This is particularly true of rural data which was not collected in the first Socio-economic Survey in 1994 and which suggests changes of an improbable magnitude in gender parity from 1996 to 2000.

the poverty line (2002). Although the country has recorded average GDP growth of about 5.5% during the period 1991-7, GDP per capita continues to be very low (Table 2.6). Indeed, GDP growth is just barely keeping ahead of population growth on average.

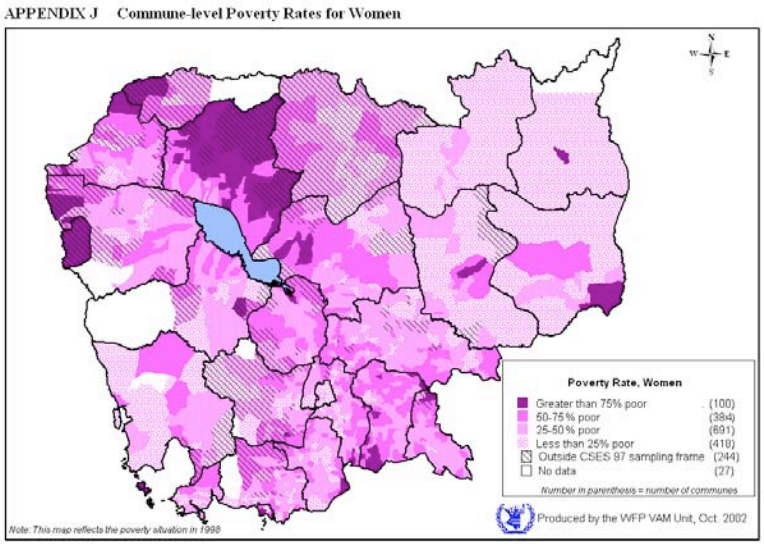
Table 2.6: Key Economic Indicators and Population, 1991-97

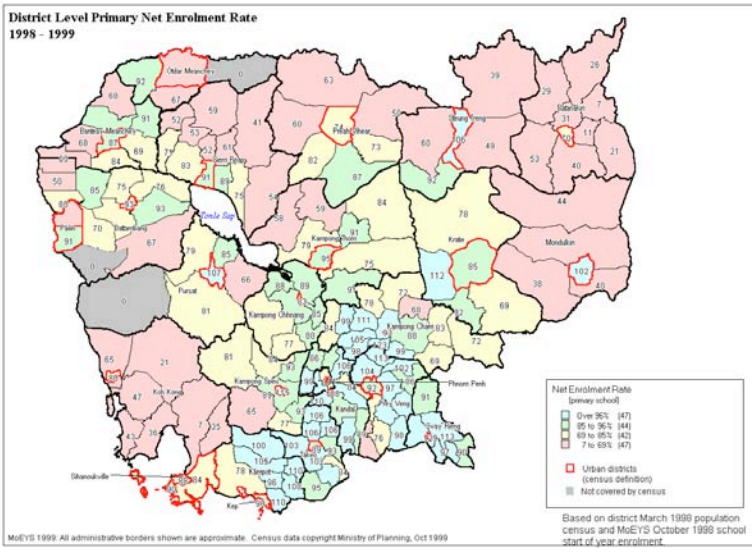
	1991	1994	1997
Gross Domestic Product	US$ 1.90 billion	US$ 2.41 billion	$US 3.04 billion
GDP Growth	7.6%	4.0%	1.0%
GDP per capita	US$ 216	US$ 244	US$ 294
Total Population	8,800,000	9,869,000	10,368,000
Population Growth	2.3%	6.1%	2.5% (1998)

Source: World Bank, 1994, 1999; National Institute of Statistics, 2001

The RGoC has formulated a Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP) to address the serious problem of poverty in Cambodian society. In developing the PRSP, each government ministry has indicated how it will achieve poverty reduction in its sector. The primary elements of the approach adopted by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sport (MoEYS) focus on increasing educational access and include the abolition of school fees, construction of physical facilities in remote areas to increase access, scholarships for the poor, girls and minorities, and reployment of teachers to rural areas.

Figure 2.3: Poverty Rate among Women and NER





As in other countries, there is a clear link between poverty and education. For example, the MoEYS' EFA Secretariat reports that about 81% of the poor live in households headed by individuals with little or no schooling (1999). Because 42.2% of women were reported to be illiterate in 1998 (compared with 21% of men), female headed households are, therefore, more prone to be poor than those

headed by men.

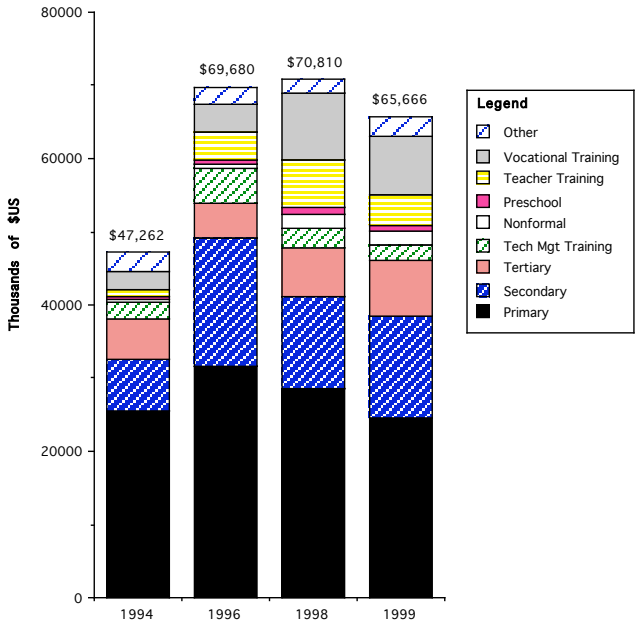
Poverty among women represents a major obstacle to long-term efforts to achieve equitable educational access among Cambodian children because of its observed link with net enrolment ratios. A comparison of the two maps in Figure 2.3 suggests a relationship between poverty rates among women and NER. With the exception of the Northeastern part of the country where low NER is strongly related to socio-cultural norms of minority populations who predominate in these areas, the dark purple areas in the first map seem to coincide with the red and yellow areas of the second map which indicate low net enrolment. As implied above, a key plank in the RGoC's strategy to reduce poverty is to increase participation rates in the formal education system thereby improving literacy rates in the long-term. It is believed that improved literacy among girls, while not eliminating poverty by itself, will reduce their vulnerability to poverty and increase their access to the same economic opportunities as boys.

2.4.Education System

Cambodia's education system is characterized by a structure of 6-3-3 with the first 9 years comprising the basic education cycle. All citizens are guaranteed free access to a basic education according to the 1993 National Constitution. Between the years 1979 and 1996 when the country was trying to put back together the educational system following its virtual destruction under the Khmer Rouge (1975-79), the structure of general education changed 3 times (4-3-3 to 5-3-3 to 6-3-3). Public education in Cambodia is co-educational with mixed sex groupings in most classrooms.

Education in Cambodia continues to be the primary realm of the public sector with only 2.5% of preschools operated privately and 2.2% of primary schools (EFA Secretariat, 1999). Many of the private primary schools are operated by minority groups within the population such as Chinese, Vietnamese, and Cham, or are designed to serve the international community. There has been greater progress in privatizing higher education where economic demand is greater. In this respect, the National Institute of Statistics reports that 27.7% of students engaged in higher studies are enrolled at private institutions. Of these, about 23.8% are women (2001).

Figure 2.4: Gov't and Donor Investment in Education by Subsector. 1994-99



Source: EFA Secretariat, 1999

Funding provisions of the educational system greatly favor primary education, which absorbed 54.0% of government and donor educational investment in 1994 declining to 37.4% in 1999 (Figure 2.4). This is followed by secondary education, vocational training, and tertiary edu-

cation. Of concern in this pattern is the under resourced nature of nonformal education (discussed in a later section).

The most important change in the education system in recent years has been the introduction of a broadly based reform program known as the Priority Action Program (or PAP). In nationwide implementation beginning in 2001, the PAP provided special funds for interventions designed to promote *equity, quality, and efficiency of education financing*. The reform program is implemented by government as an integrated, sector-wide program that is reviewed annually with stakeholders. The reforms have tried to move the education system away from fragmented project style interventions upon which the country has become very dependent. There are 12 discrete PAP program funded by the government including:

PAP 1: Education Service Efficiency and Performance
PAP 2: Primary Education Quality and Efficiency
PAP 3: Secondary Education Quality and Efficiency
PAP 4: TVET Quality and Efficiency Improvement
PAP 5: Improving the Quality and Efficiency of Higher Education
PAP 6: Continuous Teacher Development
PAP 7: Sustainable Provision of Core Instructional Materials
PAP 8: Expansion of Nonformal Education
PAP 9: In School AIDS Awareness
PAP 10: Out of School Youth AIDS Awareness and Sports Development
PAP 11: Strengthened Monitoring Systems
PAP 12:Scholarships/Inentives for Equitable Access

In spite of criticisms of PAP relating to late disbursement and low quality of interventions, the PAP initiative represents an important break with the past and a step in greater self-sufficiency for the Cambodian educational system.

3. Education Sector Situation Analysis[2]

3.1. Education Policy Matrix and Performance Targets

As part of its education reform program for the period 2001-05, the MoEYS has prepared a Ministry-Donor Policy Implementation Matrix. This Policy Matrix acts as an important link between the government's educational development plan and its EFA Plan. Unlike several countries in the region, Cambodia's education development and EFA plan are separate documents to promote government accountability for the realization of EFA targets. The policy matrix sets out policy areas, actions to be taken in selected implementation years, and targets within the Education Sector Support Program for 2005 and beyond. Targets relating to gender equity goals are summarized in Table 3.1 below (and also Annex 7).

Table 3.1: Summary of Gender Related Policy Areas and EFA/ESSP Targets

Policy Areas & Med Term Objective	Actions to be taken by 2003	2005Targets
1. Remove access barriers to basic education for all, especially the poorest, females, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities.	In cooperation with Ministry of Women's Affairs, prepare an implementation plan for FY 2003/5 for increased participation of the poorest, females, ethnic minorities, and persons with disabilities.	❑ Primary NER/Total: 95% ❑ Primary NER/Female: 94% ❑ Primary NER/Urban: 97% ❑ Primary NER/Urban Female: 96% ❑ Primary NER/Rural: 95% ❑ Primary NER/Rural Female: 94% ❑ LS NER/Total: 50 ❑ LS NER/Female: 49 ❑ LS NER/Urban: 60% ❑ LS NER/Urban Female: 59% ❑ LS NER/Rural: 45% ❑ LS NER/ Rural Female: 44% ❑ US NER/Total: 20% ❑ US NER/Female: 19%
2. Increase equity and efficiency in provision of pre- and in-service teacher development.	MoEYS prepares and implements affirmative actions to address gender and other equity related concerns in provision of pre- and in-service teacher development.	❑ GPI for students in Teacher Training: 0.58
3. Improve productivity of education service personnel	Satisfactory compliance of the Education Service Rationalization Plan and performance targets.	❑ Redeployment of administrative positions into teaching positions: minimum of 2,000 ❑ Staff Transfers: minimum of 3,000
4. Achieve universal primary education: ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling	❑ Abolition of school fees ❑ Physical facilities construction cum staff redeployment ❑ Scholarship programs for both boys and girls ❑ School breakfast programs ❑ school-based remedial interventions in summer vacation ❑ reception classes for Grade 1	❑ Completion rates for Grades 1-6 and Grades 7-9 respectively increase to 90% by 2005 (reported as national, male, female)
5. Promote gender equality and empower women: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and in all levels of education no later than 2015	See above	❑ Participation rates (primary level): 50% female; 50% male ❑ Participation rates (lower secondary level): 45% female; 55% male ❑ LS Female Transition Rate: 88% ❑ US Female Transition Rate: 67% ❑ GPI at Tertiary: 0.31 ❑ GPI at TVET: 0.54 ❑ Literacy rate among 15-24 yr old s: female 82%; male 82%

Source: MoEYS-EFA/ESSP Secretariats, 2002

[2] All statistical tables in this section are from EMIS, Dept. of Planning, MoEYS unless otherwise stated.

3.2. Total Enrolment and NER Targets

Cambodia hopes to achieve universal access to and completion of primary and lower secondary education by 2010. This defines the basic education cycle in Cambodia (Grades 1 to 9). In pursuit of increased access goals, total enrolments at primary level have been increasing rapidly. Total primary school enrolment in 1993 was 1,621,685 but by 2001, this had jumped to 2,705,453 or an increase of 66.8% (Table 3.2), well in excess of population growth. Comparable increases for boys and girls were 61.8% and 72.9%, respectively. The increase is in part due to a structural change in the education system to extend the primary cycle from 5 to 6 years in 1996. But mostly, it is due to propoor policies to increase enrolment through the abolition of school fees (for Grades 1-9) starting in 2000. At lower and upper secondary level, increases have also been impressive at 56.8% and 84.3%, respectively.

In spite of the promising effects of propoor educational reforms introduced in 2000, however, the Ministry's 2000 target of 86% NER at primary school level was not reached. NER in 2000 was 83.8% for the entire kingdom and 80.7% for girls. Nevertheless, national NER has increased steadily from 84.7% in 1996 to 87.0% in 2001 thereby surpassing the year 2000 target (Figure 3.1). Though Cambodia has made good progress in raising enrolment ratios at primary level, NER at lower and upper secondary remain dismal at all levels. In this respect, national NER levels in the year 2001 drop from 87% at primary to 18.9% and 7.4%, at lower and upper secondary level, respectively. These low enrolment levels are even worse at secondary schools in rural and remote areas.

Figure 3.1: Primary School NER, 1996-2001

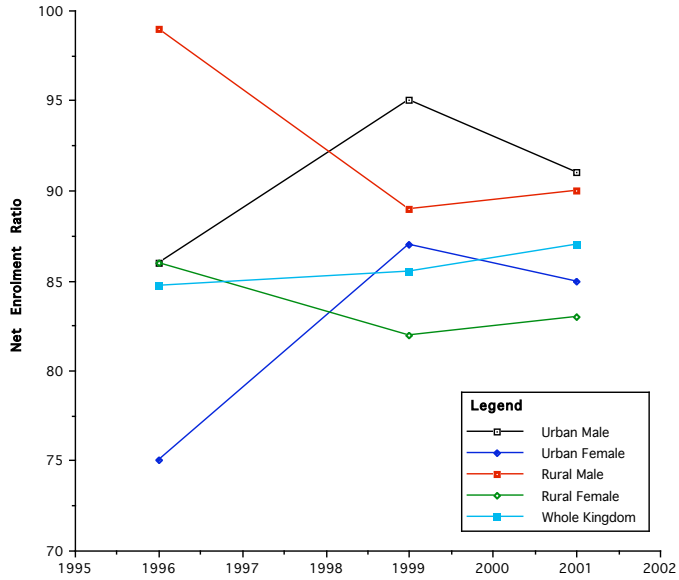
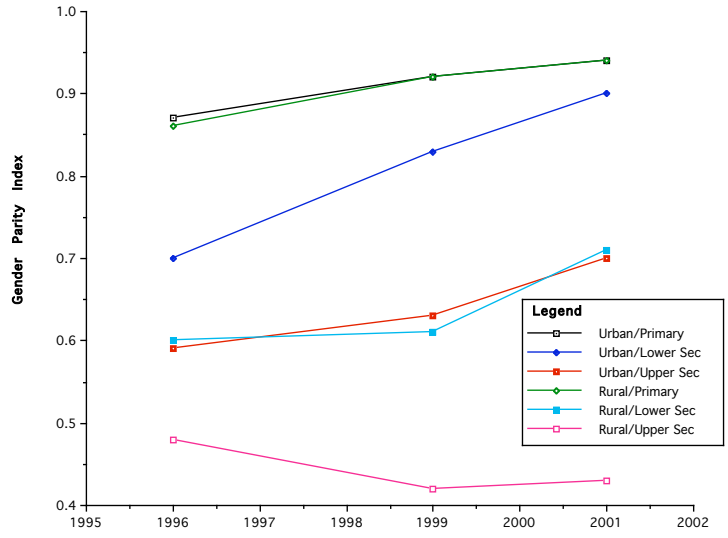


Figure 3.2: Gender Parity Change for NER, 1996-2001



Tracking NER historically is problematic due to structural changes in the Cambodian educational system in 1996. As noted above, Grade 6 was added to the primary school cycle in 1996, the same year that MoEYS established systematic data collection practices (EMIS). The combination of structural changes and the newness of the government's

new data recording procedures have likely resulted in unreliable data collection during the base comparison year 1996, particularly in rural areas where it is reported that NER has actually declined for both boys and girls (Figure 3.1). But comparisons in more recent years appear to be more accurate as EMIS becomes more experienced and as national census data became available after 1998.

Table 3.2: Total Enrolment, NER, and Gender Parity, 1993-2001

Primary Level	Demographic Category	Total Enrollment	Male	Female	Gender Parity for Enrolment	Gender Parity for NER	NER/ Total	NER/ Male	NER/ Female
1993-4	Whole Kingdom	*1,621,685*	*894,625*	*727,060*	*0.81*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*	*n/a*
1996-7	*Whole Kingdom*	*1,918,985*	*1,058,285*	*860,700*	*0.81*	*0.86*	*0.847*	*0.908*	*0.784*
	Urban	487,170	265,166	222,004	0.84	0.87	0.805	0.861	0.748
	Rural	1,289,836	713,992	575,844	0.81	0.86	0.930	0.997	0.860
	Remote	141,979	79,127	62,852	0.79	0.87	0.518	0.552	0.481
1999-00	*Whole Kingdom*	*2,211,738*	*1,198,604*	*1,013,134*	*0.85*	*0.92*	*0.855*	*0.892*	*0.817*
	Urban	408,499	220,075	188,424	0.86	0.92	0.910	0.948	0.871
	Rural	1,766,287	958,153	808,134	0.84	0.92	0.853	0.889	0.816
	Remote	36,952	20,376	16,576	0.81	0.87	0.529	0.564	0.493
2001-02	*Whole Kingdom*	*2,705,453*	*1,447,764*	*1,257,689*	*0.87*	*0.94*	*0.870*	*0.897*	*0.842*
	Urban	451,832	240,806	211,026	0.88	0.94	0.878	0.906	0.849
	Rural	2,187,560	1,170,994	1,016,566	0.87	0.94	0.875	0.902	0.847
	Remote	66,061	35,964	30,097	0.84	0.89	0.706	0.745	0.666
Lower Secondary									
1996-7	*Whole Kingdom*	*265,895*	*167,418*	*98,477*	*0.59*	*0.66*	*0.232*	*0.280*	*0.184*
	Urban	152,699	92,979	59,720	0.64	0.70	0.474	0.561	0.390
	Rural	111,143	72,996	38,147	0.52	0.60	0.160	0.200	0.119
	Remote	2,053	1,443	610	0.42	0.53	0.013	0.017	0.009
1999-00	*Whole Kingdom*	*233,278*	*150,792*	*82,486*	*0.55*	*0.68*	*0.144*	*0.171*	*0.116*
	Urban	74,351	44,637	29,714	0.67	0.83	0.257	0.281	0.233
	Rural	158,244	105,723	52,521	0.50	0.61	0.121	0.150	0.091
	Remote	683	432	251	0.58	0.69	0.011	0.013	0.009
2001-02	*Whole Kingdom*	*351,635*	*215,698*	*135,937*	*0.63*	*0.77*	*0.189*	*0.213*	*0.164*
	Urban	109,024	63,097	45,927	0.73	0.90	0.317	0.334	0.300
	Rural	241,483	151,881	89,602	0.59	0.71	0.166	0.194	0.137
	Remote	1,128	720	408	0.57	0.87	0.014	0.015	0.013
Upper *Secondary*									
1996-7	*Whole Kingdom*	*61,671*	*40,066*	*21,605*	*0.54*	*0.57*	*0.063*	*0.080*	*0.046*
	Urban	53,605	34,459	19,146	0.56	0.59	0.185	0.233	0.138
	Rural	8,066	5,607	2,459	0.44	0.48	0.014	0.019	0.009
	Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
1999-00	*Whole Kingdom*	*108,213*	*71,767*	*36,446*	*0.51*	*0.58*	*0.093*	*0.118*	*0.068*
	Urban	65,215	40,724	24,491	0.60	0.63	0.273	0.337	0.213
	Rural	42,998	31,043	11,955	0.39	0.42	0.047	0.066	0.028
	Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2001-02	*Whole Kingdom*	*113,404*	*76,993*	*36,411*	*0.47*	*0.57*	*0.074*	*0.094*	*0.054*
	Urban	60,174	38,145	22,029	0.58	0.70	0.201	0.237	0.165
	Rural	53,230	38,848	14,382	0.37	0.43	0.043	0.060	0.026
	Remote	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Gender parity analyses of NER show very encouraging changes in the composition of student populations in Grades 1-9. Between 1996 and 2001, parity levels increased from 0.86 to 0.94 at primary level and from 0.66 to 0.77 at lower secondary. These changes have been particularly robust in urban areas (Figure 2.2). Yet even in rural and remote areas, parity has increased at lower secondary level from 0.60 to 0.71 and from 0.53 to 0.87, respectively. Nevertheless, these parity gains must be balanced against the observation that total NER in such places continues to be marginal. In this respect, the most recent government statistics indicate that only 16.6% of children aged 12-14 residing in rural areas were enrolled in lower secondary school (compared with 31.7% in urban areas) and only 1.4% of those in remote areas. Even worse, NER parity levels have largely remained static at upper secondary school level. Indeed, national parity levels for general enrolment have actually dropped at upper secondary during the period 1996 to 2001 (from 0.54 to 0.47).

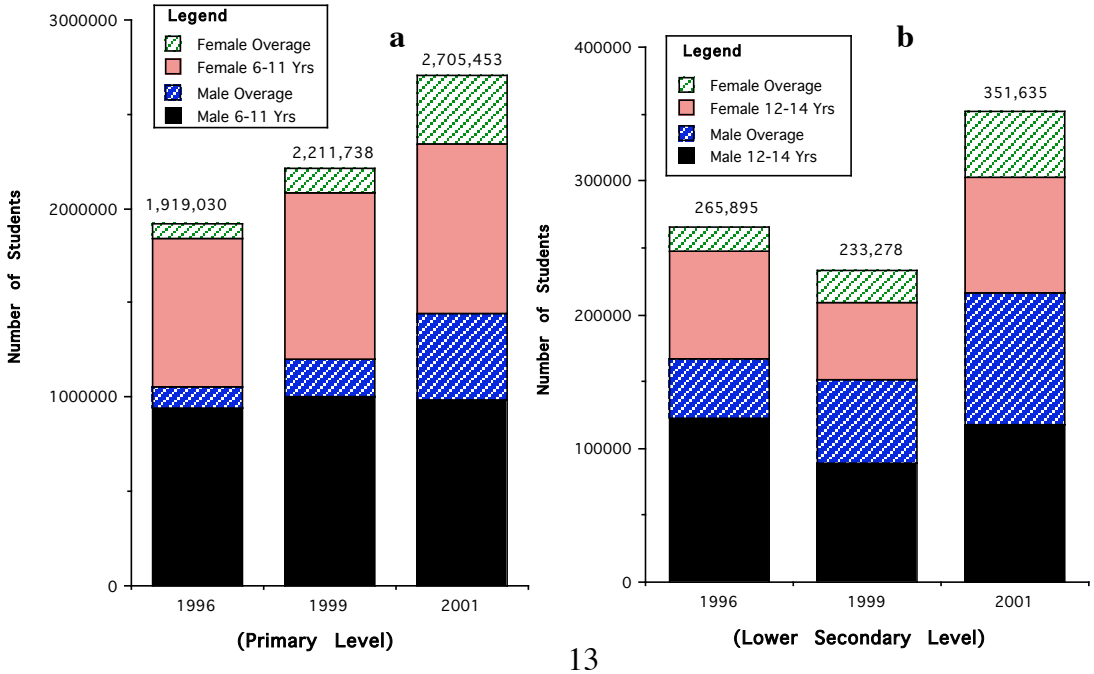
Based on the above observations, it seems likely that MoEYS will achieve enrolment parity for boys and girls at the basic education level (though not upper secondary) by 2005; it may even reach 2005 NER targets for total and female enrolment at primary. But it will be very difficult to realize either total or female NER targets for lower secondary by 2005.

3.3. Overage Enrolment and GER

Gross enrolment ratios at primary level have been increasing even more rapidly than NER during the period 1996-2001. EMIS reports that primary level GER has increased from 94.5% to 125.1% during this period; among girls, it has risen from 86.4% to 118.1%. At lower and upper secondary school level, however, GER levels continue to be very low with increases from 30.5% (22.7% for girls) to 32.7% (25.6% for girls) and 7.2% (5.0% for girls) to 11.5% (7.4% for girls), respectively.

An interesting characteristic of overage enrolment in Cambodia, however, is the large proportion of total enrolment that it comprises, particularly at secondary level (where the proportional total was always high), in rural and remote areas, and among boys (Table 3.3/Figure 3.3). These patterns have become even more pronounced over time. For example, the number of overage children enrolled in lower secondary school nearly doubled

Figure 3.3a and b: Overage Enrolment at Primary and Lower Secondary Level, 1996-2001



between 1996 and 2001, rising from 23.9% to 42%. In remote areas, over 62% of the enrolled students at lower secondary school are currently overage. While overage enrolment at primary has also increased greatly, it is a newer pattern and in any case still comprises a much smaller proportion of total enrolment in absolute terms (30.4% vs 42% at lower secondary level) (Figure 3.3). At upper secondary school level, overage enrolment tripled from 12.4% to 35.7% during the same time period. The fact that these magnitudes are almost always greater for boys than girls corroborates other research evidence that opportunity costs associated with secondary school among older children is always greater for girls. This factor helps depress enrolment of overage girls in comparison to boys.

Table 3.3: Overage Enrolment, 1996-2001

Primary Level	Demographic Category (Primary)	Total Children Overage	Male Children Overage	Female Children Overage	% Overage Enrollment	% Overage Enrolment Male	% Overage Enrolment Female
1996-7	*Whole Kingdom*	*199,574*	*119,529*	*80,045*	*10.4%*	*11.3%*	*9.3%*
	Urban	56,025	32,936	23,088	11.5%	12.4%	10.4%
	Rural	130,273	79,023	51,250	10.1%	11.1%	8.9%
	Remote	13,630	8,162	5,468	9.6%	10.3%	8.7%
1999-2000	*Whole Kingdom*	*322,914*	*198,298*	*124,615*	*14.6%*	*16.5%*	*12.3%*
	Urban	65,360	39,169	26,191	16.0%	17.8%	13.9%
	Rural	250,813	154,645	96,168	14.2%	16.1%	11.9%
	Remote	7,316	4,383	2,934	19.8%	21.5%	17.7%
2001-02	*Whole Kingdom*	*822,458*	*461,501*	*360,957*	*30.4%*	*31.9%*	*28.7%*
	Urban	125,609	70,109	55,500	27.8%	29.1%	26.3%
	Rural	680,331	382,477	297,854	31.1%	32.7%	29.3%
	Remote	18,167	10,372	7,795	27.5%	28.8%	25.9%
Lower Secondary							
1996-7	*Whole Kingdom*	*63,549*	*45,134*	*18,415*	*23.9%*	*27.0%*	*18.7%*
	Urban	35,732	24,863	10,869	23.4%	26.7%	18.2%
	Rural	27,119	19,718	7,401	24.4%	27.0%	19.4%
	Remote	727	578	149	35.4%	40.1%	24.4%
1999-2000	*Whole Kingdom*	*86,313*	*62,227*	*24,086*	*37.0%*	*41.3%*	*29.2%*
	Urban	25,651	17,866	7,785	34.5%	40.0%	26.2%
	Rural	60,133	44,009	16,124	38.0%	41.6%	30.7%
	Remote	426	282	144	62.4%	65.3%	57.4%
2001-02	*Whole Kingdom*	*147,687*	*98,478*	*49,209*	*42.0%*	*45.7%*	*36.2%*
	Urban	46,117	29,675	16,442	42.3%	47.0%	35.8%
	Rural	100,940	68,414	32,526	41.8%	45.0%	36.3%
	Remote	704	484	220	62.4%	67.2%	53.9%
Upper Secondary							
1996-7	*Whole Kingdom*	*7,647*	*5,984*	*1,664*	*12.4%*	*14.9%*	*7.7%*
	Urban	6,593	5,138	1,455	12.3%	14.9%	7.6%
	Rural	1,049	832	216	13.0%	14.8%	8.8%
	Remote	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
1999-2000	*Whole Kingdom*	*21,643*	*16,686*	*4,957*	*20.0%*	*23.3%*	*13.6%*
	Urban	11,934	8,897	3,037	18.3%	21.8%	12.4%
	Rural	9,632	7,731	1,901	22.4%	24.9%	15.9%
	Remote	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

2001-02	*Whole Kingdom*	*40,485*	*30,654*	*9,831*	*35.7%*	*39.8%*	*27.0%*
	Urban	19,857	14,460	5,397	33.0%	37.9%	24.5%
	Rural	20,653	16,224	4,430	38.8%	41.8%	30.8%
	Remote	0	0	0	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

3.4. Internal Efficiency and Wastage

3.4.1. Student Repetition

Student repetition has been a major problem in the educational system throughout the entire decade of the 1990s, particularly in the lower primary grades. Student repetition at Grade 1 averaged about 41.2% per year for the period 1992 to 1999. This was in spite of about $14 million of investment in the primary education system per year.

Table 3.4: Factors Found to Correlate with Student Attendance at School

Factor *(Significant at p<.05)*	**Correlation Coefficient**
1. School governance	**0.33**
2. Urban/Rural Residence	**0.28**
3. Teacher qualifications	**0.26**
4. Parent's socio-economic status	**0.22**
5. Mother's education level	**0.22**
6. Father's education level	**0.19**
7. Teacher's professional status	**0.17**
8. Kind of school attended	**0.10**
9. Family income	**0.09**
10. Secondary occupation of teacher	**0.10**
11. Distance to school	**-0.13**
12. Previous history of repetition	**-0.18**
13. Native tongue of parents	**-0.29**

Source: KAPE-UNICEF, 2000

A national study funded by UNICEF/Sida estimated that student repetition at primary level cost educational stakeholders about $40,388,000 per year or nearly 25% of all educational costs (KAPE-UNICEF, 2000). In a survey of 546 households in 6 provinces, the same study also found that repetition at primary level was most strongly correlated with low attendance at school, accounting for –0.47 of the variance. Attendance was in turn found to correlate with 13 other factors listed in Table 3.4. What these research results suggested was that the influence of these factors is mediated through student attendance at school. Thus, children with urban residence, mothers with high educational levels, etc. were more likely to have higher attendance and were, therefore, less likely to repeat. The results of these findings were significant as they suggested that repetition is best addressed through interventions that focus not only on in-school but also out-of-school factors.

Table 3.5: National Repetition Rates, 1993-2001

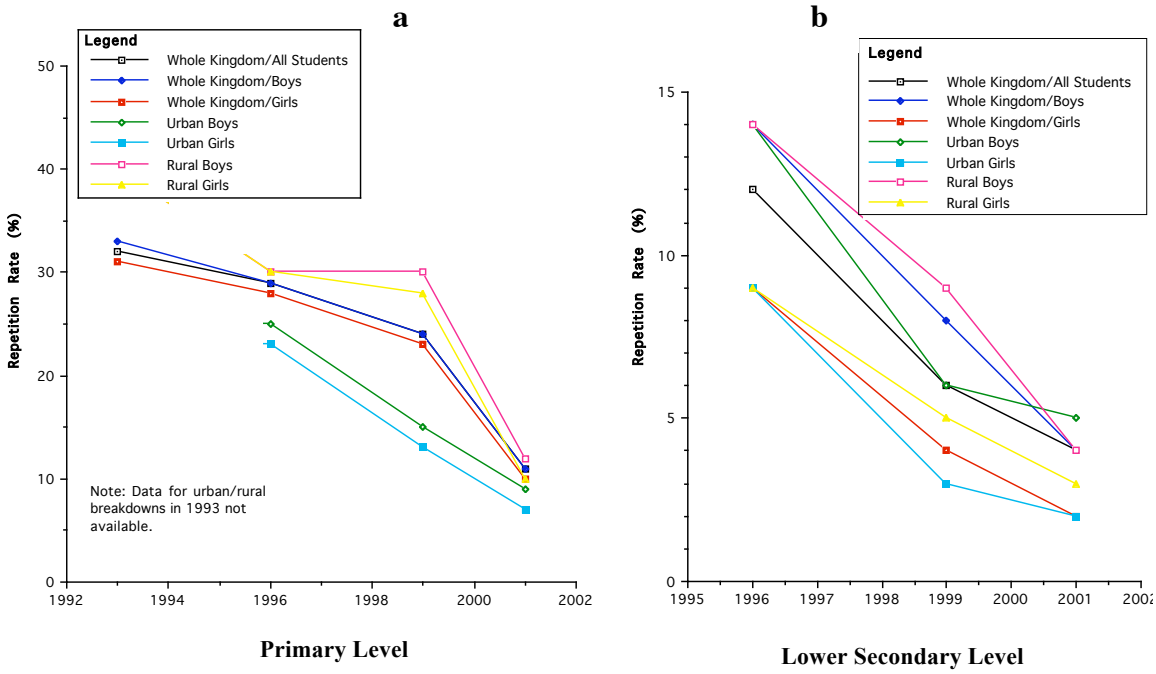
Primary Level	***Total Repetition Rate***	***Male Repetition Rate (est)***	***Female Repetition Rate***
1993-4	0.32	0.33	0.31
1996-7	0.29	0.29	0.28
1999-00	0.24	0.24	0.23
2001-02	0.11	0.11	0.10
Lower Secondary			
1996-7	0.12	0.14	0.09
1999-00	0.06	0.08	0.04
2001-02	0.04	0.04	0.02
Upper Secondary			
1996-7	0.106	0.118	0.084
1999-00	0.033	0.040	0.020
2001-02	0.042	0.048	0.030

Interestingly, the above study did not find a significant relationship between student repetition and sex though a cursory examination of national level data suggests that girls have consistently lower repetition rates than boys at all educational levels, albeit by a small margin (Table 3.5). Various explanations have been put forward for this observed phenomenon including greater screening of the girls who reach the upper grades, better discipline, and the ten-

dency of parents to allow their sons to roam but to keep their daughters at home for security reasons.

One of the important success stories of the recent educational reform initiative that took effect in 2000 was to make astonishing reductions in repetition rates among all demographic categories and at all educational levels. This is dramatically illustrated in Figure 3.4 below. The key intervention responsible for these rate declines was the introduction of remedial classes for all failing students during the summer vacation. Teachers were given special payments to motivate them to volunteer for these summer courses. With success rates of over 50%, many failing students were able to achieve promotion to the next grade. To be sure, there have been many criticisms of the quality of these remedial interventions or even whether teachers promoted students due to government payments. Nevertheless, they have succeeded in solving a major problem in internal educational efficiency, which bears directly on achieving gender equity in education. By decreasing the time required for a girl to move through the basic education cycle, reductions in repetition rate will reduce opportunity costs of attendance of school in the upper grades. These opportunity costs increase dramatically as girls get older and the value of their labor both in the home and workplace becomes greater.

Figure 3.4a and b: Student Repetition for Primary and Lower Secondary School, 1993-2001



3.4.2. Student Dropout

At primary level, student dropout has been more resistant to change even with the introduction of educational reforms in the current decade. This is especially true for both boys and girls residing in remote areas where rates have risen significantly (Figure 3.5a). In general, girls tend to have higher dropout levels than boys at all educational levels, manifesting a reverse pattern to that shown for student repetition. Nationally, dropout levels were reported to be 8.3% for boys and 13.9% for girls in 1993 rising slightly to 10.4% for boys and declining slightly to 13.0% among girls (Table 3.6) in 2001.

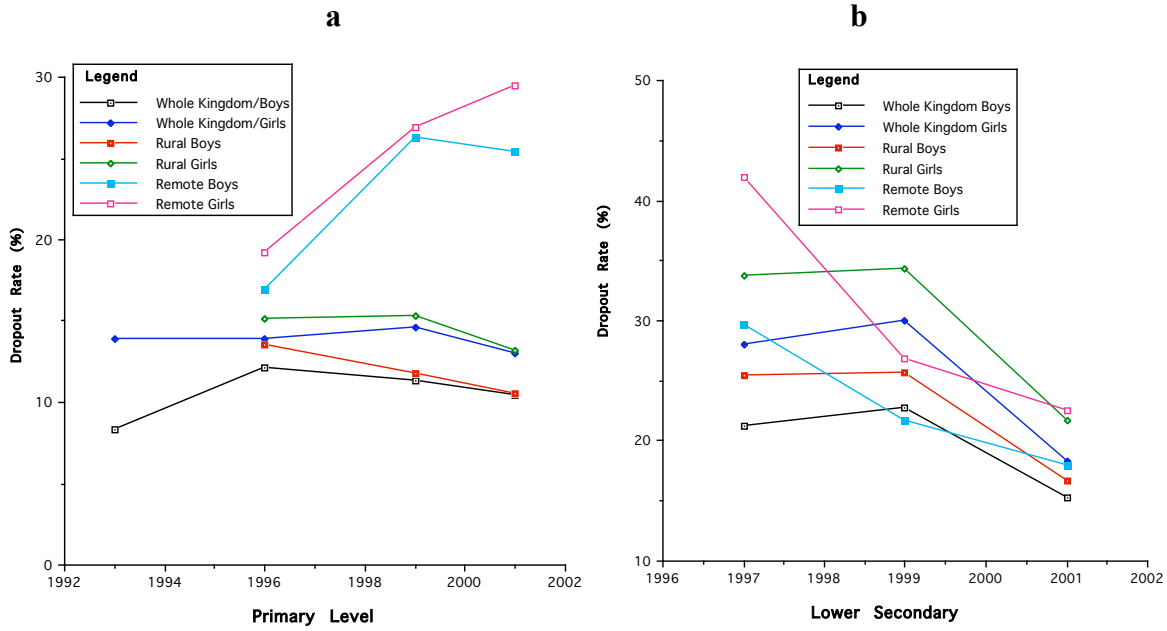
1993-4	0.108	0.083	0.139
1996-7	0.129	0.121	0.139
1999-2000	0.128	0.113	0.146
2001-02	0.116	0.104	0.130
Lower Secondary			
1997-8	0.237	0.212	0.280
1999-2000	0.253	0.228	0.300
2001-02	0.164	0.153	0.183
Upper Secondary			
1997-8	0.167	0.161	0.176
1999-2000	0.117	0.105	0.139
2001-02	0.127	0.129	0.121

Table 3.6: National Dropout Rates, 1993-2001

In contrast, dropout levels at both lower and upper secondary level have shown significant declines in the period 1997-2001. In this respect, rates have dropped at lower secondary level from 21.2% to 15.3% among boys and from 28.0% to 18.3% among girls. The comparable decrements at upper secondary level are 16.1% to 12.9% for boys and from 17.6% to 12.1% for girls. These patterns were true of all demographic categories: urban, rural, and remote (Figure 3.5b). A satisfactory explanation for the reported decline in dropout at secondary level where distances to school are greater and costs are higher has not yet been put forward.

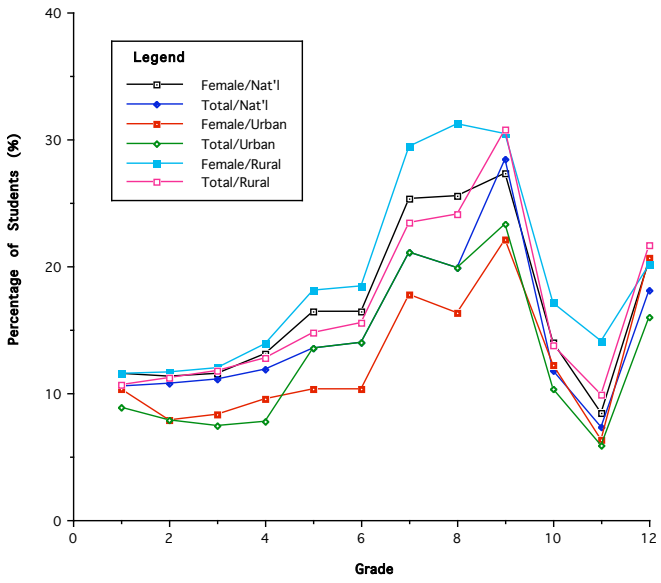
Research studies have indicated that supply-side factors (e.g., distance to school) tend to account more for dropout among very young children whereas demand-side factors are more important among older children (MoEYS-CARE, 1998). Among demand-side factors, direct educational costs seem to apply with equal frequency to both boys and girls but that indirect or opportunity costs apply more frequently to girls. In this respect, a national survey of 1,513 households in 5 provinces reported that financial factors such as lack of money were cited with comparable frequency by both boys and girls as a reason for dropping out of school (27.4% among boys vs 26.6% among girls). However, work in the household was cited more frequently among girls as a reason for dropout (8.1% for boys vs 20.7% for girls) (1998).

Figure 3.5a and b: Student Dropout for Primary and Lower Secondary School, 1993-2001



It should also be noted that there are major variations in the grade at which children drop-out and that these are masked by aggregated rates of dropout at education level. A study funded by the Asian Development Bank reported that dropout levels spike at Grade 7, Grade 9 and Grade 12, which not surprisingly are key entry/exit points for the various educational levels (KAPE-ADB, 2001). These spiking points are shown in Figure 3.6. This depiction of dropout levels in the selected year (2000-01) indicates that children begin leaving school in the upper primary grades (except for minority children who begin dropping out very early in the primary cycle) with a peak occurring at Grade 7. Although Cambodia no longer has a national terminal leaving examination at Grade 6, students eligible for Grade 7 (i.e., those passing internal examinations at Grade 6) continue to leave the formal system in large numbers.

Figure 3.6: Change in Dropout by Grade for Various Demographic Groupings, 2000-01



Girls are particularly prone to dropout at Grade 7 with a national average of about 25% in 2000. Rural girls have the highest dropout rate of any demographic grouping at this point in the educational cycle. In a feasibility study conducted for a pilot scholarship program for girls in eastern Cambodia, it was found that most girls drop out at this point in their schooling due to financial, distance-related, and attitudinal factors with economic considerations predominating (KAPE, 2000). Attitudinal factors came into play when parents needed to make a resource allocation decision regarding whether to send their son or daughter to school. In cases where financial resources were adequate for both to attend, attitudinal factors tend to become more latent.

3.4.3. Survival and Completion Rates

Primary level survival rates compiled in various in government and agency reports are not always consistent even if the source of the data is ultimately the same (i.e., EMIS). For example, the EFA Secretariat reported the national completion rate through to Grade 5 in 1996-7 was 53.5% for boys and 47.9% for girls rising in 2000-01 to 60.9% and 57.4%, respectively (Table 3.7). A different analysis by the MoEYS Gender Working Group found survival rates to Grade 5 that were only about half these reported magnitudes.

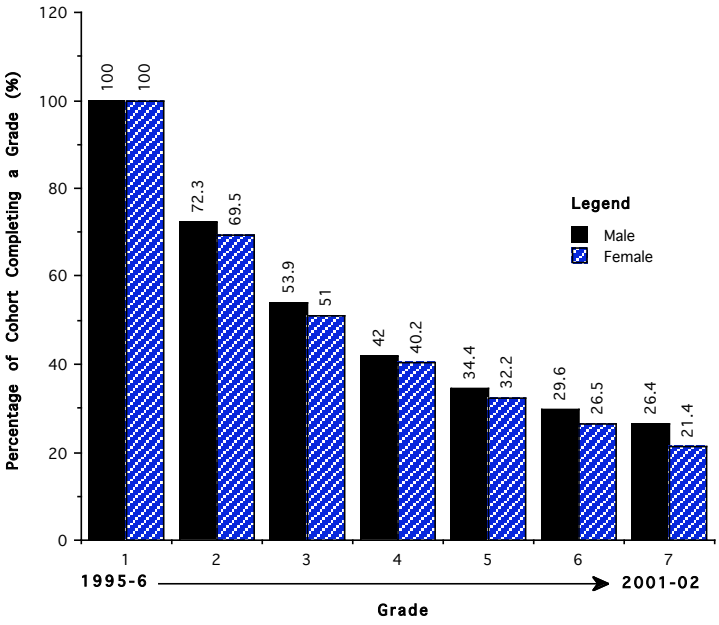
Similarly, coefficients of efficiency were reported to be 44% by UNESCO (1998) and 42% in an education flow rate analysis by MoEYS for the same year (1999). Coefficients of efficiency can be useful by helping one to determine the total number of years required for a child to complete an educational cycle of 5 years (through the formula 1/coefficient x the number of years in the cycle). For Cambodia, this yields a figure of 11.4 years using the figure reported by UNESCO or 11.9 years using data reported by MoEYS. These high time requirements for educational completion suggest a very high opportunity cost for older children should they decide to stay in the educational system for this long.

Table 3.7: Survival Rate at Primary Level through Grade 5, 1996-2000

	Urban		Rural		Whole Kingdom	
	Boys	*Girls*	*Boys*	*Girls*	*Boys*	Girls
1996-7	66.4	58.8	49.4	43.8	53.5	47.6
1997-8	62.1	58.4	43.3	37.8	47.7	42.6
2000-01	59.0	56.0	69.7	65.3	60.9	57.4

Source: EFA Secretariat, 1999, 2002

Figure 3.7: Male/Female Cohort Survival Rates, Grades 1-7



Source: MoEYS Gender Working Group, 2002

A cohort analysis prepared by the MoEYS Gender Working Group (2002) over a 7 year period starting in 1995-6 suggests even lower survival rates of 34.4% for boys and 32.2% for girls at Grade 5 dropping to 29.6%/26.5% in Grade 6 and 26.4%/21.4% in Grade 7 (Figure 3.7). What all these analyses share is the observation that girls have lower completion rates than boys, particularly those living in rural areas.

Future survival rates are likely to improve sharply, however, due to major improvements in internal efficiency stemming from reductions in student repetition at primary and lower secondary level. But as noted earlier, dropout remains a major problem in the education system that has so far not been responsive to efforts to reduce it. Achievement of universal completion of basic education will, therefore, hinge to a large extent on the degree to which government can develop effective interventions to reduce dropout. Given the 2005 target of 90% completion in Grades 1-6 for both boys and girls and a coefficient of efficiency of 60%, it remains to be seen whether more effective strategies can be found to increase completion rates by a factor of 3 and the coefficient of efficiency by a factor of 0.5, both daunting tasks.

3.4.4. Transition Rate to Lower and Upper Secondary School

It was already noted above that in the base comparison year for this analysis (1996), the MoEYS extended the primary cycle to Grade 6. At the same time, the secondary school cycle was extended from Grade 11 to Grade 12. During this transition year, students successfully completing Grade 5 went to Grade 7 (the old Grade 6 when it was in the lower secondary school cycle) while those failing Grade 5 went to the new Grade 6. As one might imagine, this created horrendous irregularities in reporting to EMIS. This helps to explain reported rates of transition to lower secondary school of over 100% in that aca-

demic year (Table 3.8).

In spite of the weakness of the data on which transition rates are based in the base comparison year, there are still some interesting observations to make with respect to transition to lower and upper secondary, particularly in later years. First, taken as a whole, the national transition rate tends to be reasonably high at lower secondary school level, ranging from 86.2% among boys and 77.9% among girls in the most current year for which data is available (2001). Rates tend to be highest in urban areas with 99.4% of boys going on to lower secondary (though they drop out at Grade 7 in *greater* numbers than girls once they get there) and about 91.4% of girls. Rates in rural areas are lower but still reasonably high at 82.6% of boys and 73.6% for girls. Transition in remote areas is very low at 50% or less for both boys and girls. These rates have shown improvement since 1999 as structural changes in the system have become more established.

Table 3.8: Transition Rate, 1996-2001

Lower Secondary	Demographic Category	Transition Rate	Transition Rate Male	Transition Rate Female	Gender Parity Index
1996-7	*Whole Kingdom*	*1.017*	*1.051*	*0.968*	*0.92*
	Urban	1.268	1.399	1.117	0.80
	Rural	0.824	1.141	0.554	0.49
	Remote	0.431	n/a	n/a	n/a
1999-00	*Whole Kingdom*	*0.767*	*0.813*	*0.704*	*0.87*
	Urban	0.902	0.940	0.856	0.91
	Rural	0.722	0.775	0.647	0.83
	Remote	0.411	0.441	0.369	0.84
2001-02	*Whole Kingdom*	*0.826*	*0.862*	*0.779*	*0.90*
	Urban	0.958	0.994	0.914	0.92
	Rural	0.787	0.826	0.736	0.89
	Remote	0.473	0.504	0.431	0.86
Upper Secondary					
1996-7	*Whole Kingdom*	*1.007*	*1.039*	*0.953*	*0.92*
	Urban	1.205	1.312	1.053	0.80
	Rural	0.820	1.001	0.580	0.58
	Remote	0.478	0.000	0	
1999-00	*Whole Kingdom*	*0.563*	*0.552*	*0.586*	*1.06*
	Urban	0.800	0.810	0.785	0.97
	Rural	0.410	0.410	0.410	1.00
	Remote	0	0.000	0.000	
2001-02	*Whole Kingdom*	*0.630*	*0.615*	*0.661*	*1.07*
	Urban	0.845	0.837	0.858	1.02
	Rural	0.500	0.498	0.506	1.02
	Remote	0	0.000	0.000	

Although transition to upper secondary school is worse than at lower secondary (about 63% in 2001), it is higher among girls than boys resulting in parity levels in excess of 1.0. This characteristic of the transition rate data is true of all demographic groups reported by EMIS (urban and rural).

Given the already high levels of transition, steady historical increments since 1999, and the imminent introduction of national scholarship programs in 2003, it seems likely that

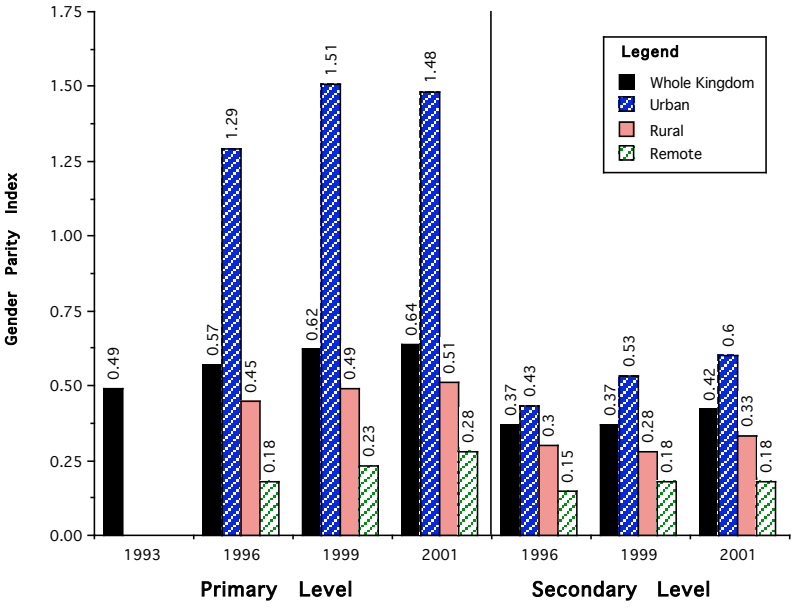
government will achieve 2005 targets to raise transition rates among females to 88% at lower secondary school level (from 77.9%) and marginally to 67% at upper secondary (from 66.1%).

In closing discussion of progression rates to secondary school, it should be noted that transition rate data can be very deceiving in assessing access to secondary school. For example, transition rates for boys and girls in Cambodia are high because they start from a very low base number. Thus, parity levels are high for transition because most children, particularly girls, have already dropped out by the time they reach Grade 6 or Grade 9 (the base enrolments on which transition levels are calculated). As noted in Figure 3.6, less than 30% of a student cohort who entered the educational system in 1995-6 ever reaches Grade 6. This also helps to explain why gender parity levels for transition are so high (e.g., 0.90 at lower secondary and 1.07 in 2001) when net enrolment for girls is only 16.4% and 5.4% for lower and upper secondary, respectively. Gender parity for enrolment is a much better indicator of gender equity at secondary level. In this respect, gender parity in excess of 0.90 for transition (as reported in 2001) appears a hollow prize when one realizes that parity levels for enrolment were only 0.63 for lower secondary and 0.47 for upper secondary in 2001.

3.5. Trends in Teacher Numbers, Deployment, and Gender Parity

The MoEYS is aware that an important strategy to increase gender equity for girls at the basic education level is to increase the proportion of female teachers in the teaching force and to provide suitable role models to young girls. All together, the number of primary school teachers has increased by 7.2% since 1993 with secondary school teachers increasing by 22.6% during the period 1996-2001. This compares with increases in enrolment of 66.8% and 124% at primary and secondary level, respectively. Given this pace of enrolment growth against the increase in teaching staff, Pupil Teacher Ratios (PTR) haveincreased significantly. For the latest year for which government statistics are available, PTR at primary level was 56:1 and 22:1 at secondary.

Figure 3.8: Change in Gender Parity among Teachers, 1993-2001



National PTR levels tend to mask the full range of class sizes throughout the country which in some cases reach as high as 95:1 in some provinces. Inefficient teacher deployment and severe teacher shortages in the countryside tend to overshadow efforts to achieve gender parity among teachers. For example, gender parity indices among students in Teacher Training Colleges are projected to decline from 0.67 in 1999 to a target of 0.58 in 2005

(MoEYS-ESSP Secretariat, 2002).

The teacher shortage problem became much worse in 1996 as a result of an agreement between the two power-sharing political parties to distribute political patronage in the form of teacher positions through an impartial procedure that did not favor either party. The procedure upon which the parties fell was mandatory retirement at the age of 55 regardless of political affiliation. Unfortunately, many of the positions in the countryside vacated by aging locally recruited teachers were not appealing to many prospective patronage recipients with the effect that PTR levels in the countryside began to skyrocket. The mandatory retirement policy has since 1998 been rescinded but combined with inefficient and often corrupt teacher deployment practices, PTR levels in rural and remote areas have not recovered to their previous levels. Indeed, with the explosion in enrolments caused by the education reform program, they have become even worse and are not expected to improve for several years.

Table 3.9: Teacher Numbers by Sex, Level of Deployment, and Gender Parity, 1993-2001

Primary Level	Demographic Category	Total Teaching Staff	Male Teachers	Female Teachers	% Male	% Female	Gender Parity Index
1993-4	*Whole Kingdom*	*44,454*	*29,784*	*14,670*	*0.67*	*0.33*	*0.49*
1996-7	Whole Kingdom	43,205	27,467	15,738	0.64	0.36	0.57
	Urban	11,256	4,917	6,339	0.44	0.56	1.29
	Rural	29,160	20,178	8,982	0.69	0.31	0.45
	Remote	2,789	2,372	417	0.85	0.15	0.18
1999-2000	*Whole Kingdom*	*43,751*	*26,977*	*16,774*	*0.62*	*0.38*	*0.62*
	Urban	9,207	3,663	5,544	0.40	0.60	1.51
	Rural	33,777	22,692	11,085	0.67	0.33	0.49
	Remote	767	622	145	0.81	0.19	0.23
2001-02	*Whole Kingdom*	*47,654*	*28,999*	*18,655*	*0.61*	*0.39*	*0.64*
	Urban	10,325	4,163	6,162	0.40	0.60	1.48
	Rural	36,343	24,067	12,276	0.66	0.34	0.51
	Remote	986	769	217	0.78	0.22	0.28
Secondary Level							
1996-7	Whole Kingdom	*16,971*	*12,394*	*4,577*	*0.73*	*0.27*	*0.37*
	Urban	9,687	6,761	2,926	0.70	0.30	0.43
	Rural	7,114	5,485	1,629	0.77	0.23	0.30
	Remote	170	148	22	0.87	0.13	0.15
1999-2000	*Whole Kingdom*	*17,909*	*13,115*	*4,794*	*0.73*	*0.27*	*0.37*
	Urban	6,754	4,412	2,342	0.65	0.35	0.53
	Rural	11,109	8,664	2,445	0.78	0.22	0.28
	Remote	46	39	7	0.85	0.15	0.18
2001-02	*Whole Kingdom*	*20,806*	*14,675*	*6,131*	*0.71*	*0.29*	*0.42*
	Urban	8,000	5,006	2,994	0.63	0.37	0.60
	Rural	12,748	9,620	3,128	0.75	0.25	0.33
	Remote	58	49	9	0.84	0.16	0.18

In spite of the difficult situation described above, national gender parity levels among teachers have increased slightly since the mid-nineties (Figure 3.8/Table 3.9). Among primary teachers, these have increased from 0.49 to 0.64 and from 0.37 to 0.42 among secondary school teachers. Nevertheless, they remain perilously low in rural and espe-

cially remote areas. Parity levels in urban areas exceed 1.0 for primary school teachers due in part to recruitment procedures that favor urban dwelling females since gender parity levels at secondary level tend to be much higher among urban students. In this respect, a policy introduced by the MoEYS in 1997 to raise educational standards at Teacher Training Colleges (TTC) from 10 to 12 years of basic education inadvertently had the effect of constricting the number of female candidates who could apply from rural and remote areas where there are few upper secondary schools. This, combined with inefficient teacher deployment practices and a tendency by society to see urban female teachers as "vulnerable" in insecure rural areas, has led to inflated numbers of women teachers in urban schools.

The gender parity constraint among teachers in rural and remote areas is a proverbially vicious circle. There are fewer female teachers in rural areas because the absence of female role models and restrictions on female travel to areas where secondary schools exist (due to security concerns) restrict the number of rural candidates for TTCs among women. This in turn means fewer female teachers in rural areas.

There are a number of policy options that the MoEYS has considered in addressing teacher shortage and gender parity constraints among teachers in rural areas. These are summarized in Table 3.10 below:

Table 3.10: Policy Options to Address Teacher Shortages and Gender Parity Constraints

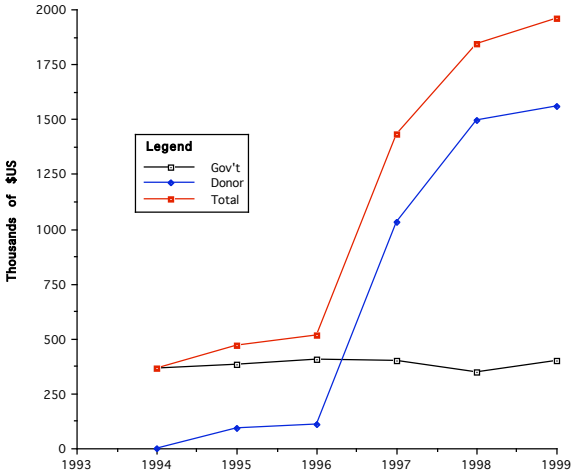
Policy Option	Positive Aspects	Negative Aspects
1. Build upper secondary schools in rural and remote areas	❑ Directly addresses gender parity constraint among rural and remote teachers	❑ Requires major investments in infrastructure whereas current plans focus primarily on lower secondary school infrastructure development. ❑ Staffing difficulties in rural and remote areas
2. Recruit female TTC candidates locally by lowering admission criteria	❑ Directly addresses gender parity constraints among teachers without expensive investments in infrastructure	❑ At odds with Ministry policy to increase educational standards.
3. Redeploy urban female staff to rural and remote areas through incentive pay	❑ Increases gender parity through raising administrative efficiency and using current human resources.	❑ Likely to encounter fierce resistance from teaching force that is already underpaid and overutilized. ❑ Is at odds with cultural norms ❑ Pilot redeployment activities using incentives have had low success rates
4. Multigrade teaching	❑ Helps to solve teacher shortages by increasing utilization of both male and female teachers	❑ Does not directly address gender parity constraints in rural areas ❑ Requires highly trained teachers to succeed of which there are few in rural areas.
5. Lower PTR in rural areas	❑ Helps to solve teacher shortages by increasing utilization of both male and female teachers	❑ Does not directly address gender parity constraints in rural areas

Currently, the Ministry has opted to employ strategies 3, 4, and 5. In addition, the Teacher Training Dept. has endorsed small-scale experimentation with strategy 2 in minority areas where teacher shortages are especially severe. It is unlikely, however, that gender parity indices among teachers in rural and remote areas will increase dramatically at this scale of intervention.

3.6. Nonformal Education and Gender Parity

Because so many educated people were killed during the Khmer Rouge period between the years 1975-79, the 1980s saw the largest adult literacy campaign in Cambodia's history. Literacy campaigns between 1980 and 1987 reached an estimated 1.2 million Cambodians (UN Working Group on Poverty Alleviation and Education, 1998). During the 1990s, however, investment trends have tended to favor the formal education system. In 1994, total investment in NFE was less than 1% of total educational investment (0.7%). This compared with 53.9% for primary education and 11.8% for tertiary education.

Figure 3.9: Investment in NFE, 1994-99



Source: EFA Secretariat, 1999

Since 1996, NFE investment levels have risen sharply due primarily to donor funding (Figure 3.9) but still only constituted 2.9% of total investment by 1999. Public investment in NFE, however, has been largely stagnant during the 1990s. Under the education reform program, investment in activities (as opposed to salaries and administrative costs) is expected to rise from 1 billion local currency units in 2001 (about US$250,000) to 5 billion in 2005. (ESSP Secretariat, 2001).

NFE needs in Cambodia nonetheless continue to be great even into the 21st century. The 1998 census estimates that 37% of the population over 15 is totally illiterate (66% including those semi-literate). Among females, only 67.2% between 15 and 24 years old could demonstrate basic literacy. This compares with 83.8% among males in the same age group. Data from the *Cambodian Human Development Report 1998* reveals that boys and girls have roughly similar school enrollment rates up to age 10, but girls' enrollment rates start falling behind that of boys after that age (UNDP, 1998). By age 15, male enrolment is 50% greater than that of girls, and by age 18 male enrollment rates are nearly three times as large as female enrollment rates.

In view of the above needs, it is important that the education system has a nonformal alternative to the 50% or more of children who drop out of the formal system by Grade 6 and particularly for the large number of girls who for economic and socio-cultural reasons tend to drop out of school in larger numbers in the upper primary grades. Helping the 15-24 year old population has some priority over older adults given the prospective role of these individuals in society as child rearers and productive workers. The EFA Secretariat estimates that about $48,000,000 will be required to educate the remaining illiterate population by 2015 (1999).

The primary response to adult illiteracy during the 1990s has been through support to community-based literacy programs. These programs are administered by the Ministry of Women's and Veteran's Affairs (MoWVA) with technical support from the MoEYS' Nonformal Education Dept. Because the program relies heavily on unpaid volunteer community teachers, classes tend to be erratic.[3] For whatever reason, the MoEYS has not been able to comply with MoWVA requests to provide contract teachers to help staff the adult literacy program. Program costs currently comprise mainly the salaries of public education officials, stationery costs, and textbooks.

An important achievement of the adult literacy program has been the development of a nonformal education curriculum with assistance from UNESCO based on translated materials from the Asia-Pacific Training in Literacy Program (ATLP). According to MoEYS (though not census) estimates, adult literacy programs have succeeded in raising literacy levels from 57.7% in 1990 to 68.0% in 1998 with gender parity improving from 0.53 to 0.73 (Table 3.11). Nevertheless, rural illiteracy rates remain high at 34% overall and 46.6% among rural women.

Table 3.11: Literacy Rates and Gender Parity, 1990-98

Demographic Category	*1990*			*1994*			*1996*			*1998*		
	Total	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**	**Total**	**Male**	**Female**
Whole Kingdom	*57.7*	*76.0*	*40.0*	*65.3*	*79.9*	*52.0*	*65.9*	*77.2*	*55.3*	*68.0*	*79.0*	*57.8*
Urban	70.5	83.5	58.5	72.7	84.2	62.1	73.5	86.5	61.4	78.7	88.0	70.1
Rural	55.3	75.6	36.5	63.9	78.8	50.1	64.4	75.5	54.2	66.0	79.0	53.9
	Gender Parity Index for Adult Literacy											
Whole Kingdom			*0.53*			*0.65*			*0.72*			*0.73*
Urban			0.70			0.74			0.71			0.80
Rural			0.48			0.64			0.72			0.68

Source: EFA Secretariat, 1999

Under its education reform initiative, MoEYS hopes to introduce several new innovative components to the NFE system including *re-entry programs* for out-of-school youth which use existing NGO pilots as demonstration models; *equivalency programs* with specialized curricula aimed at providing Grade 6 and Grade 9 certification for out-of-school youth aged 12 to 18; *community learning centers* linked to adult literacy programs to reinforce literacy skills; and expansion of NFE *vocational training* to more rural centers to increase access (EFA Secretariat, 2002). The Ministry will also soon expand systematized data collection by EMIS to the nonformal system to improve monitoring and assessment of improvements in literacy.

[3] Based on personal communication with UNICEF adult literacy Program Officer, December, 2002.

3.7. Gender Parity at Tertiary Level

The 1998 Census estimates that only 0.2% of the Cambodian population engages in study beyond the secondary school level. Given the lower levels of gender parity in enrolment at secondary school level, it is no surprise that university enrolments have been skewed towards a male predominance. This situation has shown some slight change with gender parity for enrolment among all institutions increasing from 0.129 in 1993 to 0.297 (or a change of 130%) in 2001. The greatest change has been witnessed at the Royal University of Phnom Penh (RUPP) and the Faculty of Law and Economics where GPI levels have increased by 50.0% and 382%, respectively. The University of Health Sciences has shown only slight improvement though this institution has historically always had relatively high GPI levels and indeed has the highest GPI of any tertiary institution (0.394). Institutions showing the least change in the composition of their enrolment include the Royal University of Agriculture (GPI = 0.061) and the Institute of Technology (GPI = 0.073). The fact that men continue to dominate at the former institution is not congruent with the observation that most Cambodian women (73.2%) are engaged in agricultural and fisheries related occupations (Table 2.2).

Table 3.12: Composition of University Level Enrolment by Sex and Gender Parity, 1993-2001

Year	Univ of Health Sciences			Royal Univ of Fine Arts			Instit of Technology			Faculty of Law/Econ		
	GPI	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female
1993-4	0.336	74.8%	25.2%	0.197	83.5%	16.5%	0.006	99.4%	0.6%	0.062	94.2%	5.8%
1996-7	0.245	80.3%	19.7%	0.135	88.1%	11.9%	0.019	98.1%	1.9%	0.114	89.8%	10.2%
1999-00	0.291	77.4%	22.6%	0.235	81.0%	19.0%	0.070	93.5%	6.5%	0.253	79.8%	20.2%
2001-02	0.394	71.8%	28.2%	0.295	77.2%	22.8%	0.073	93.2%	6.8%	0.299	77.0%	23.0%
	Royal Univer of Agriculture			**Royal Univ of Phnom Penh**			**Norton Univ (Private)**			**All Institutions**		
	GPI	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female	GPI	Male	Female
1993-4	0.026	97.5%	2.5%	0.149	87.0%	13.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.129	88.6%	11.4%
1996-7	0.109	90.1%	9.9%	0.284	77.9%	22.1%	n/a	n/a	n/a	0.201	83.3%	16.7%
1999-00	0.126	88.8%	11.2%	0.382	72.4%	27.6%	0.310	76.3%	23.7%	0.268	78.9%	21.1%
2001-02	0.061	94.2%	5.8%	0.347	74.2%	25.8%	0.291	77.5%	22.5%	0.297	77.1%	22.9%

Source: Dept. of Higher Education, MoEYS, 2002

Without significant change in NER among girls at lower and upper secondary schools, the increase in gender parity for enrolment at institutions of higher education is likely to be constrained for well into the future. Nevertheless, the proliferation of private universities during the last several years both in Phnom Penh and in the provinces has helped to break a monopoly on tertiary educational provisions held by state institutions in the capital city. This is certain to contribute to steady though small increases in female representation among higher education students by tapping into pockets of urban females in other provinces who are currently constrained by security and travel concerns from province to Phnom Penh. This, combined with public support for selected students, is expected to help reach a GPI target of 0.31 (from 0.297) among all tertiary institutions by 2005 (MoEYS-ESSP Secretariat, 2002).

3.8. TVET and Gender Parity

Data on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) has not been systematically compiled and analyzed in a way that facilitates seeing historical trends. The EFA Secretariat makes the observation that participation in TVET has been low due to outdated curricula and poor management (EFA Secretariat, 1999). Oversight and administration tends to be somewhat fragmented and occurs through collaboration between an assortment of different Ministries and private/public partners. The Dept of TVET of the MoEYS is responsible for formal education programs while nonformal activities are the joint responsibility of the MoEYS as well as the Minsitry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Social Affairs, and other Ministries.

During the period 1993-96, it is estimated that 5,506 students received training in 305 training courses scattered throughout the country of which 47% were provided in Phnom Penh (Table 3.13). 46.7% of those completing these courses were female. Nevertheless, this represents only the smallest fraction of the total student population at basic education level.

In 1996, RGoC introduced reforms to upgrade curricula, improve management, and link TVET programs more explicitly with the government's poverty alleviation program. In the strategic plan developed at this time, out-of-school youth (boys and girls) and women who are heads of households are explicitly identified as target groups. These provisions have helped to increase GPI for enrolment from 0.83 for the period 1993-96 to 1.12 for 1991-98. They have also helped increase total TVET enrolment by a large margin.

Table 3.13: TVET Activities and Corresponding Gender Parity Assessments, 1991-98

	No of Courses	*% of Courses offered in Provincial Areas*	*Total Enrolment*	*Male Enrolment*	*Female Enrolment*	*GPI*	*Completion Rate*	*Percentage of Female Graduates*
All Programs 1993-96	305	53%	5,506	3,012	2,494	0.83	94.3%	46.7%
Poverty Alleviation Program 1996-8	35	n/a	2,751	1,340	1,411	1.05	99.0%	51.5%
All Programs 1991-98	n/a	n/a	80,555	38,017	42,538	1.12	92.3%	52.6%

Source: EFA Secretariat, 1999; UNDP, 1998

In order to accommodate new target groups among women and out-of-school youth, requirements for 9 basic years of basic education were relaxed in many courses and government opened 7 provincial training centers in provincial towns with assistance from the International Labor Organization (ILO). In addition, several of the programs associated with poverty alleviation were linked with a new agency known as the Association of Cambodia Local Economic Development Agency (ACLEDA), a semi-private agency with public funding which provided small loans to TVET graduates. Although a report by UNDP claims that employment generation TVET schemes linked with ACLEDA contrib-

uted 8% to GDP in 1998, the credit provisions of TVET programs have been criticized as not propoor and resulted in a controversial incident in 2001 in which several ACELEDA officials were imprisoned by Prime Ministerial decree for extortionary loan practices.

3.9. Learning Achievement and Male-Female Differences

Cambodia possesses two national leaving examinations for the formal education system. One of these marks passage from lower to upper secondary school (the Grade 9 Exam) while the other marks successful completion of upper secondary (the Grade 12 Exam). At the request of the MoEYS Gender Working Group, the Office of Examinations has only begun collecting sex disaggregated data since 2001; thus, no time series comparisons are possible. This notwithstanding, the results of the most recent administration of the national leaving examination at Grade 12 do show some pronounced male-female differences (Table 3.14). Although fewer girls sat for the Grade 12 examination due to lower proportional enrolment, a greater proportion passed than boys (74.7% versus 66.6% for boys). In addition, within sex comparisons indicate a higher level of achievement among girls with 19.4% receiving B-level passes (compared with 12.8% for boys) (Table 3.15). Although girls also outnumber boys both proportionally and absolutely for A-level passes, it must be remembered that only 13 students in total achieved this pass level out of over 19,000 passing candidates.

Table 3.14: Passing and Failing Grade 12 Students by Sex, 2001

	Males	***%***	***Females***	***%***	***Total Candidates***	***%***
Students Passing	12,518	62.7	7,231	74.7	19,749	66.6
Students Failing	7,450	37.3	2,446	25.3	9,896	33.4
Total Candidates	**19,968**	**100.0**	**9,677**	**100.0**	**29,645**	**100.0**

Source: Examinations Office, Secondary Education Dept, MoEYS, 2001

Table 3.15: Passing Grade 12 Students by Sex and Pass Category, 2001

	Pass Categories							
	A Level Pass		***B Level Pass***		***C Level Pass***		***Total***	***%***
	Number	*%*	*Number*	*%*	*Number*	*%*		
Male	5	0.04	1,602	12.8	10,912	87.1	***12,518***	***100.0***
Female	9	0.1	1,404	19.4	5,818	80.5	***7,231***	***100.0***

Source: Examinations Office, Secondary Education Dept, MoEYS, 2001

At primary level, achievement testing has only recently seen national level administrations in connection with field testing the government's new curriculum. In this respect, the Ministry's Basic Education Textbook Project (BETP) administered achievement tests to Grades 3, 4, and 5 in a broad national sample in 2001. Although there were score advantages among girls in Reading and among boys in Mathematics at Grade 3, these were not statistically significant (MoEYS-BETP, 2001). At Grades 4 and 5, however, differences in Reading (favoring girls) and Mathematics (favoring boys) were found to be significant mirroring an international pattern. Science scores showed no advantage for either sex in any grade. These tests also indicated that students in urban areas with female teachers did better than those taught by men but it is not clear whether this is due to a genuine gender influence or whether it is due to fact that there are simply more female teachers in urban areas than men (see discussion above of gender parity levels among urban primary teach-

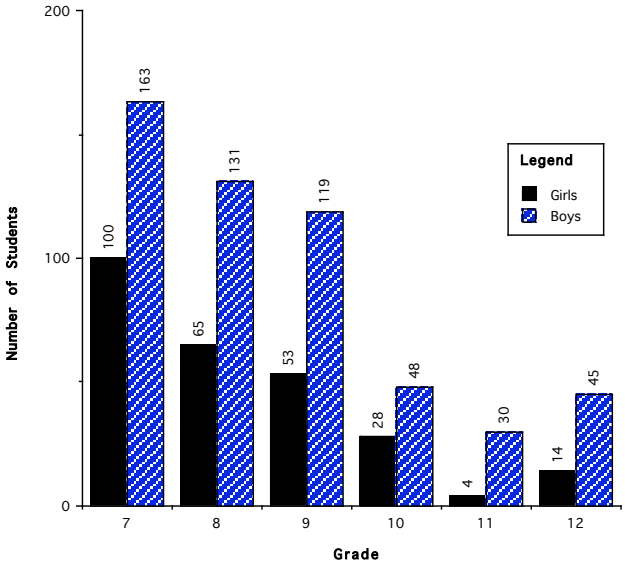
ers).

3.10. Access to Education among Minority Populations

The majority of indigenous minorities in Cambodia are clustered in 3 or 4 mountainous provinces in the Northeast. Although the Northeastern provinces comprise a large part of Cambodia's total landmass, they comprise less than 3% of its population indicating very sparse population density. Minority groups in general consist of indigenous hill tribes and highland Lao speakers. Though hill tribes are not monolithic in make-up and take in many different language groups, collectively they form the largest demographic group in these provinces. Minority provinces, however, are quickly being overrun by migration from the majority Khmer who tend to dominate the local economy, local government, and even the educational system. For example, Forrester has found that in one large minority province called Ratanakiri, Khmer students comprise only 19% of the provincial population but yet make up about 87% of the high school population (2000). In contrast, hill tribe groups that comprise approximately 66% of the provincial population make up less than 10% of the students enrolled at the province's only secondary school.

Children in minority areas face huge access barriers after Grade 3 (when they have to move to a primary school based in the district town) and again at Grade 7 (when they have to move to an urban-based high school. Yet it must be stressed that under representation of minorities goes far beyond distance concerns and lack of school facilities. In focus group discussions with minority parents, KAPE reported that parents and teachers in the province highlighted opportunity costs as the major impediment (2001). This is linked with late enrolment patterns at around age 10 (when children's labor is more valuable), social norms that encourage early marriage (reportedly 14 for girls and 15 or 16 for boys), and antipathy to the mainstream curriculum. A number of agencies such as ICC are currently trying a number of innovative interventions that provide bi-lingual education programs using local teachers.[4] Classes are held at night (using solar batteries charged during the day) when children are free and do not have to engage in plantation work with their families. These agencies have reported that many parents view academic success for their children as a threat that drains human capital away from villages. This perception clashes with the assimilationist approach of those who operate the formal education system.

Figure 3.10: Male-Female Enrolment Patterns at Ratanakiri High School, 2000-01



Source: Provincial Office of Education, Ratanakiri, 2001

Factors that depress access to education in minority areas seem to hit girls particularly hard, especially at secondary level. For example, a review of enrolment patterns in a large minority province called Ratanakiri found gender

[4] ICC (Int'l Cooperation for Cambodia) has led the way in bi-lingual education in the area. Through its Highland Children's Education Project, CARE will soon be extending the ICC model to the formal education system in the 2002-03 academic year.

parity levels to be very low in the province's only high school (Figure 3.10). Girls among both Khmer and hilltribe families in the Northeast are highly prone to dropout but those from minority families seem to face a double jeopardy status. During focus group discussions with researchers, Khmer parents expressed opinions that corroborated project feasibility studies for educational access programs that found attitudinal factors linked strongly to financial concerns for the direct costs of education (KAPE-ADB, 2001). Constraints in income often necessitate a choice between allowing either one's son or daughter to continue their education. In such situations, attitudinal factors about gender roles tend to be very strong. When direct educational costs are mitigated, parents' attitudes to keeping their daughters in school were likely to be highly flexible. Discussions with minority parents, however, indicated that social attitudes about girls' access to education were more rigid, particularly in respect to the desire for daughters to marry at an early age.

4. Educational Development, Reform, and Gender Equity

4.1. Establishing the Legal Basis for Gender Equity

The legal framework for addressing gender equity issues in education was first laid out in the Cambodian Constitution proclaimed in 1993. Article 68 of the constitution states that the "state shall provide free primary and secondary education to all citizens in public schools." In addition, Article 45 of the constitution enabled Cambodia to legally commit itself to ensuring equal rights for women and led to the ratification of the UN *Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)*. Similarly, the RGoC has also ratified the *International Convention on the Rights of the Child (ICRC)* as stipulated under Article 48 of the constitution; it also participated in the World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in 1990 and has agreed to abide by the resolutions of the conference. Finally, the government has also committed itself to the *Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA)* formulated at the World Conference on Women.

Although the proclamations and legal framework established by the government to ensure equitable access to education were an important step for Cambodia, they did not match the reality on the ground. With a crumbling educational infrastructure, inefficient resource distribution, low quality educational delivery, and a poorly as well as irregularly paid teaching force, the education system was in critical need of comprehensive support. These problems demanded the lion's share of government and donor support as educational development got under way in the mid and late 1990s.

4.2 Educational Development and Gender Equity: The Early Years

The Education Sector Study supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB) in 1994 was a major landmark in efforts to make a comprehensive policy and strategic review of the education system. The Sector Study led to the development of the *Medium-Term Education Plan 1995-2000,* the *Public Investment Plan 1996-2000,* and the *Basic Education Investment Plan: Recurrent Cost Implications 2000-05.* The ADB Sector Study focused on broad strategies that would have a positive impact on female participation rates in the education system. The strategies suggested included selective expansion of community-based preschools to promote girls' enrolment at Grade 1, public awareness campaigns, reducing the distance to school, abolishing public school fees, curriculum reform to eliminate gender bias, and expanding nonformal education options for women are among many of the report's recommendations.

Unfortunately, many of the development efforts that followed in the 1996-2000 planning period did not focus specifically on girls' education due to the many competing educational needs identified by the ADB study. Indeed, some policy initiatives during this time such as the one to increase the entry requirement for admission to primary teacher training colleges from 10 to 12 years of basic education were criticized by some as slowing efforts to achieve parity between male and female teachers. The lack of attention to girls' education issues was not helped by a general paucity of research on girls and education. A study funded by USAID in 1997 identified only 6 sources of information relating to girls' education in Cambodia at that time and only one of these was focused wholly on girls (Beecham, 1997). These studies included the ADB Sector Study, a study entitled *Using both Hands* by Edward Fiske, UNICEF studies on student competency-based achievement, a UNICEF publication on *Situation of Women and Children in Cambodia*, a *Remote*

Areas Survey Report, and the first statistical publication of the Ministry's EMIS section in 1997. The establishment of EMIS at the MoEYS's Department of Planning has been an especially significant achievement of the RGoC in that all annual educational data is now systematically compiled, disaggregated by sex, and disseminated widely.

The study by Edward Fiske (1995) was the first educational study in Cambodia that focused exclusively on girls. Although the study consisted primarily of interviews with a small sample of 40 girls, it identified 7 major factors that limited female participation in the education system. These included

- A preference for the education of sons
- Opportunity labor costs that keep girls at home
- Direct educational costs
- Distance to school
- Corruption
- Lack of latrines in schools
- Absence of female teachers and role models

In order to address the lack of systematic of information on girls' participation in the education system, the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports (MoEYS) undertook in collaboration with CARE International a large national survey to assess the constraints to girls' education (1998). The survey studied 1,530 randomly selected households in 6 provinces and interviewed over 100 primary school teachers on their attitudes towards girls' education. Some of the highlights of the survey's findings are listed below:

- Demand related causes were the most important factors accounting for nonenrolment and dropout among both girls and boys.
- Opportunity costs were given as the most important reason for dropout among girls.
- Direct educational costs were found to be the most important factors accounting for nonenrolment of boys.
- A higher percentage of children (both boys and girls) aged 12 to 15 years old and those living in rural areas were found to be working at the time of the survey.
- 62% of caretakers said they worried about their daughter's security when traveling to school and that this percentage was higher in urban than in rural areas (57% versus 38%).
- 46% of caretakers said they agreed with the statement that boys were more intelligent than girls.
- 61% of caretakers said they felt that education was more important for boys than for girls.

This was perhaps the most seminal survey ever conducted on girls' education in Cambodia and has set the tone to the present day.

4.3. Educational Development and Gender Equity: Recent Developments

4.3.1. NGO and IO Interventions

4.3.1.1. Gender Awareness Initiatives: Following the completion of the MoEYS-CARE study, a number of pilot projects focused specifically on women and girls began to emerge. One of the first was CARE's Girls' Education Assistance Pilot (or GAP), which sought to improve access, retention, and educational security of girls aged 6 to 15 years old. The project was implemented in one district on 3 levels including that of the girl-child, village level, and the primary school. Interventions included mainly awareness rais-

ing among beneficiaries and communities as well as classroom-based activities.

At about the same time, numerous other activities were initiated by NGOs/IOs such as Khmer Women's Voice Center (KWVC) and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to promote gender awareness seminars for government decision-makers, teachers, and communities.

4.3.1.2. Girls' Scholarship Programs: In 2000, the first program to pilot a girls' scholarship program at lower secondary level was undertaken by a local NGO called Kampuchean Action for Primary Education (KAPE). This program, funded by USAID through The Asia Foundation, provided multiple support packages for poor girls finishing Grade 6 to continue their studies through to the end of the lower secondary school cycle (Grade 9) in 4 districts (1,000+ beneficiaries). One of the support packages provides assistance for room and board for those girls who live more than 15 km from a secondary school. An important characteristic of this provision is that it does not rely on institutional arrangements such as expensive and management intensive dormitories but rather on placing girls with foster families in which the mother is a teacher. Not only are these arrangements more conducive to healthy social development but they also provide a positive female role model for girls. In keeping with government policy to promote propoor interventions that increase educational access, program beneficiaries are selected primarily on the basis of their socio-economic status.

An important assumption tested by this pilot was whether subsidies for direct educational costs would be enough to not only help girls enroll in lower secondary school but to keep them there as well. With success rates at between 90 and 95%, the pilot was soon expanded into other provinces by CARE and UNICEF to determine whether the pilot's basic assumption could be validated in other localities. Another important knock on effect of this pilot was the decision by the Asian Development Bank, in collaboration with the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction, to help the MoEYS fund a national expansion of the girls' scholarship program to 75 high schools (implementation pending).

4.3.1.3. Skills Training for Out-of-School Youth: CARE has developed a very comprehensive program to provide basic and functional literacy to out-of-school adolescent girls linked to post-literacy skills training courses. The literacy courses use the MoEYS adult literacy curriculum and are community-based in their implementation. A unique characteristic of the literacy program is that it is followed by skills training options as an incentive for girls to improve their literacy levels.

Although not explicitly targeted at women, the International Labor Organization, in collaboration government, has also set up vocational training centers in 7 provincial centers with women household heads as one of several target groups (see Section 3.8 above).

4.3.1.4. Curricular Relevance Programs: The last several years have seen greater interest in developing incentive programs that focus on increasing the relevance of the basic educational curriculum as a means to keep children in school. Although the MoEYS has already included some life skills provisions in the national curriculum, these have tended to be under resourced both in terms of material support and especially in the provision of teachers. Particularly at secondary school level, there is a need for such curricular provisions where opportunity costs for girls increase dramatically and rural parents frequently ask why they should bear these costs to have their daughters study academic subjects such

as chemistry and biology (usually through "talk and chalk" methods).

Several recent initiatives have focused on both boys and girls as a means to reduce dropout and increase the relevance of the curriculum for children. The assumption is that if parents feel that their children are getting something very useful from the education system, this will help to counterbalance other pressures that lead to dropout. Integrated Pest Management programs (IPM) have been developed by World Education in collaboration with MoEYS and the Ministry of Agriculture to teach children about improved methods to grow rice that are environmentally safe. Though not targeted at girls exclusively, the program requires equal sex ratios among students. The program has been exceedingly popular among rural parents.

Another curriculum enhancement program was developed by KAPE and is linked with its Girls' Scholarship Program. Girls at risk of repeating in the upper primary grades are identified and given the opportunity to participate in extracurricular life skills training courses in sewing and cooking. Girls learn in participatory, activity-based environments filled with games and energizers that stimulate motivation and interest. In addition to teaching prevocational skills, classes focus on empowerment skills such as teamwork, budgeting (such as buying food for cooking), problem solving, project work, and decision-making. Topics such as health and nutrition are also included in the curriculum. In this way, traditional skills desired by parents are tempered with life skills that will help young girls make decisions, calculate family budgets, and in general be much better equipped to survive in society. By reducing dropout among high-risk girls, curriculum enhancement activities nicely complement the scholarship program, thereby maximizing the effectiveness of both. Pairing the programs together in this way also transforms the scholarship program from one of meeting the needs of the available "supply" of potential candidates to one focusing on meeting maximum "demand."

4.3.1.5. Child Friendly and Gender Sensitive Schools: This program has been developed through a tripartite agreement between UNICEF, MoEYS, and KAPE, a local NGO partner. The program is designed to promote educational innovation in Cambodia's state school system addressing both access and quality concerns. Though targeted at both boys and girls, the program aims to make the school environment sensitive to gender concerns. The program is characterized by a *child rights approach* and includes activities in 4 major components:

- Gender Sensitive and Inclusive Education
- Psychosocial Learning Environments
- Health and Nutrition
- Parental Engagement

Program activities begin with local planning exercises that include a child sensitization workshop in which boys and girls indicate through pictures, skits, and other devices what they would like to see happen in their school. Schools then develop improvement plans based on a menu of activities provided by KAPE to help meet the needs stated by children. Selection of activities is totally voluntary and stakeholder driven. Sample activities include gender liaison officers, action research by teachers relating to gender issues, model classrooms, student associations, breakfast programs, life skills, creative writing, debate clubs, and others.

4.3.1.6: Multi-sectoral and Synthesis Programs: Several recent programs of limited geo-

graphical scope have been developed that are hybridized versions of the earlier programs described above. World Education undertook one such pilot focusing exclusively on girls' education in 2002 in collaboration with KAPE and CARE. This pilot, supported by UNICEF and the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), is known as the Education as a Preventive Strategy against Sexual Exploitation of Girls (EPSSEG) program. EPSSEG is currently being piloted in one province of eastern Cambodia with a high incidence of trafficking. The significance of the program lays in its *synthesis* of several approaches used in other girls' education programs. In this respect, the program seeks to keep girls at risk in the formal education system and re-integrate those who have already dropped out. For those too old to re-enroll in the formal education system, the program will provide vocational training options in its NFE program package. Some of the interventions employed by the program include scholarships, curriculum enhancement programs, village based remediation, re-integration NFE programs, prevocational training, and *Village Life Schools* (VLS).

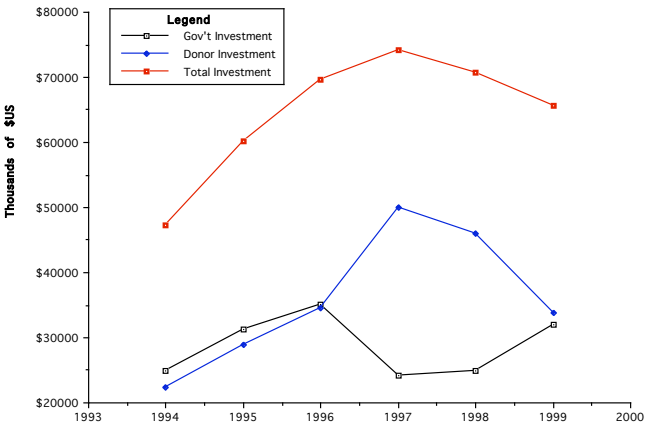
The Village Life Schools program is of particular interest as a unique intervention to promote gender equity. In this program implemented jointly by World Education and CARE, girls who have gone through a functional literacy program are brought together to identify challenges facing their communities such as HIV/AIDS, sexual exploitation, domestic abuse, etc.. They are assisted by a VLS facilitator who helps them analyze these problems through a process called Human Ecosystem Analysis (HESA). The HESA exercise teaches participants how to think critically about problems, collect information, and identify interventions to solve specific problems. Indirectly, the VLS program helps to build confidence in dealing with communities and in general provides important life skills or every day living.

Another project that provides an important multisectoral model for promoting gender equity is UNICEF's Expanded Basic Education Program (implemented over 5 provinces). One of the important strengths of the UNICEF approach to educational development is convergence between its various programs in Education, Health, Children in Need of Special Protection and Community Action for Child Rights. While education program interventions are not focused specifically on girls, they coordinate closely with the other programs that do (adult literacy for women, community learning centers, reproductive health, etc.). The EPSSEG program described above, for example, fits within the framework of the larger program and coordinates specific interventions targeted at girls and women. Thus, interventions reach beyond the formal education system to affect children's development in the home, community, and society in general.

4.3.2. Government's Education Reform Program

During the implementation of the government's 1996-2000 Educational Development Plan, efforts to improve gender equity in the formal education system have depended on generalized interventions intended to improve access, retention, and quality. Accordingly, major investments were made in infrastructure, teacher training, curriculum development and textbook distribution, and other common elements of educational development programs. Much of this investment came from the international development banks and bilateral donors. Donor funding peaked in 1997 at $50,015,000 but then began a decline with government share of investment rising accordingly (Figure 4.1). The major assumption underlying government/donor investment strategy at this time was that *supply-side* interventions would have significant impacts on participation rates and efficiency. But as noted above, several studies in the late 1990s (Fiske, 1995; Beecham, 1997; MoEYS-CARE, 1998) indicated that dropout among girls was due primarily to *demand factors* such as poverty combined with socio-cultural value systems.

Figure 4.1: Investment in Education, 1994-99



Source: EFA Secretariat, 1999

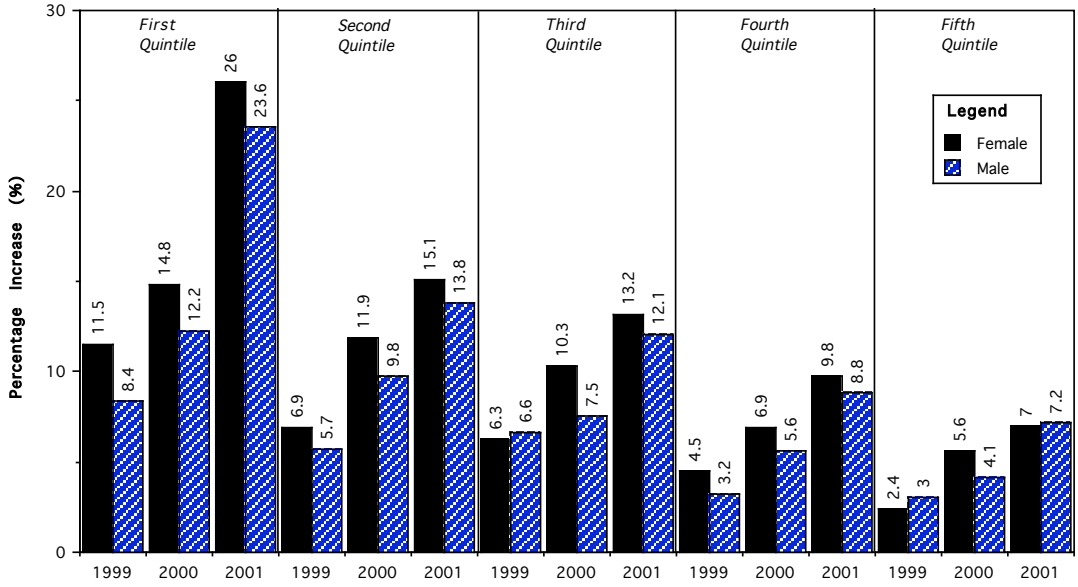
In spite of $121,467,000 investments in the primary education system by both government and donors during the period 1996-99, however, repetition and dropout rates at primary level remained static or changed only marginally due mainly to structural changes within the system such as the abolition of the Grade 5 Primary Leaving Examination. In addition, net enrolment rates were actually reported to have dropped from 84.7% (78.4% for girls) in 1996-7 to 78.3% (74.1% for girls) in 1998 before recovering to 85.5% (81.7% for girls) in 1999. As in the period before, gender equity was not a discrete component within educational development plans.

When the MoEYS developed its second educational development plan (known as the Education Sector Support Program or ESSP) for the period 2001-05, there was a sea change in both approach and content. In addition to more participatory planning with broad stakeholder involvement, the MoEYS shifted the focus of its activities from exclusively supply-side interventions to those tempered by demand-side considerations. These considerations have been highly *propoor* in focus. The formulation of propoor provisions within the ESSP corresponds with the government's commitment to reduce poverty in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Plan (PRSP). In this respect, the MoEYS has moved to abolish student fees for the entire basic education cycle (Grades 1 to 9) by instituting the provision of educational budgets to schools from the central government.[5] This initiative, known as the Priority Action Program or PAP, was first instituted in 10 provinces in 2000

[5] Up until this time, primary and secondary schools received no budget from central government other than for staff salaries.

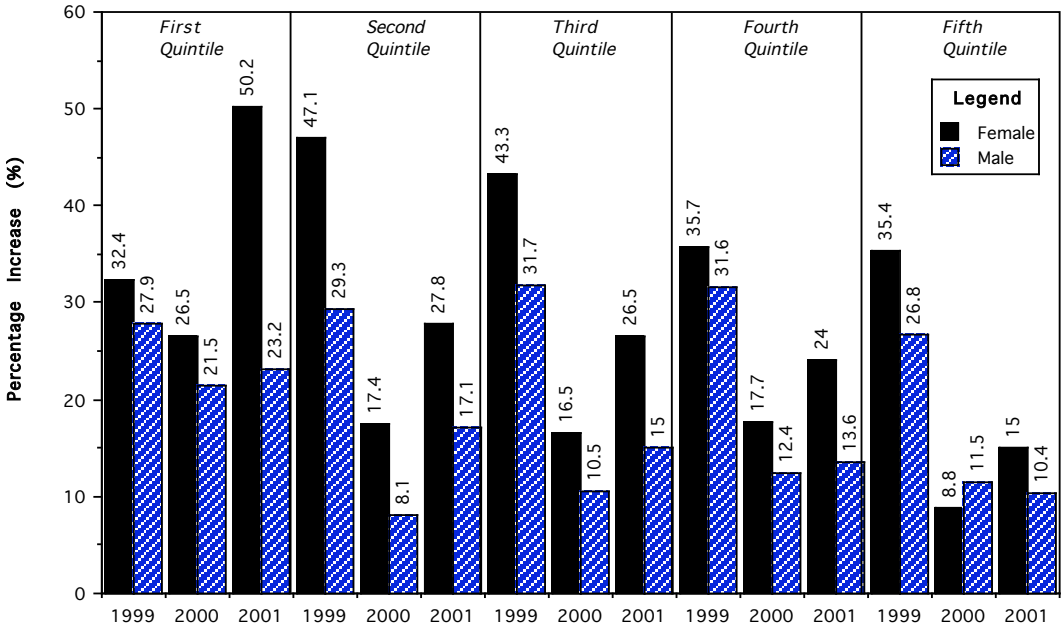
and eventually expanded to the entire country in 2001. Other propoor provisions in the government's ESSP included scholarship programs (PAP 12) for both boys and girls (implementation still in design stages), school breakfast programs targeted in food insecure areas (with support from World Food Program and partner NGOs), school-based remedial interventions during summer vacation for primary school students, and reception classes for Grade 1 (PAP 3).

Figure 4.2: Change in Primary Enrolment for Different SES Quintiles, 1999-2001



Source: ESSP Secretariat, 2002

Figure 4.3: Change in Grade 7 Intake by SES Quintile, 1999-2001



Source: ESSP Secretariat, 2002

Though not without problems, the ESSP has had dramatic effects on primary school enrolments for the poorest quintiles of the population (Figure 4.2). This was particularly

true for girls. In this respect, enrolment increases leaped from 11.5% for girls in the poorest quintile of the population in 1999 to 26.0% by 2001. In addition, the EFA Secretariat reported that the enrolment share from the poorest communes in the country had risen from 14.4% in 1999 to 16.7% in 2001. In contrast, enrolment share in the richest communes had declined from 22% to 20.2% during the same time period. A similar picture was found for enrolment at lower secondary school level (Figure 4.3) where Grade 7 new intake for the poorest communes in 2001 was 32.0% (50.2% for girls) but only 12.3% for the richest communes (15.0% for girls).

To be sure, there have been major problems in the implementation of the ESSP, the most serious of which has been the lack of rationalized budgeting within the RGoC and resultant late disbursement of funds to schools. In this regard, disbursements to schools have been known to be 6 to 10 months late on average during the 2001-02 academic year. Late disbursement has had major implications for timely planning and implementation of annual school plans. The issue of timely disbursement has been one of the major sticking points in deliberations to mount a government operated scholarship program targeted at girls based on NGO pilots. NGO partners working with the government have indicated that if scholarship subsidies can not be provided to poor girls promptly at the beginning of the year and at prescribed points during the year, impact on low progression rates and dropout is likely to be highly muted.

The other major criticism of ESSP implementation has been its failure to address quality issues. While the government's reform program has so far had major impacts on access and efficiency, particularly among girls and the poor, it has not yet met expectations relating to instructional quality and improved learning conditions. Indeed, by dramatically raising enrolments faster than increases in teacher numbers and infrastructure, class sizes have become very overcrowded with attendant consequences on learning.

Although most reform provisions under the ESSP for the period 2001-05 continue to take a general approach to access concerns with few specific programs especially for girls (scholarship programs being an important exception), the MoEYS has taken an important step in setting up a Gender Working Group (GWG) to address gender equity issues within the education system. *The Ministry's approach in this regard is to treat gender as a cross-cutting issue in all subsectors with close linkages with the country's EFA Plan.*

The GWG was set up late in 2001 and has only been in operation for about a year at the time of the writing of this report. Though the Working Group's Secretariat is comprised primarily of Ministry officials, it works in close collaboration with donors and NGO partners. Through a process with broad stakeholder involvement, the GWG has developed a gender mainstreaming strategy that embraces three major components:

1. Girls' equal access to education
2. Enhancing gender equity in education management and service delivery
3. Strengthening gender technical capacity in education programming and policy-making

These objectives are reflected in a work plan document entitled, *Five-Year Gender Mainstreaming Strategy: 2002-06.* With strong financial backing by donors such as UNICEF and support from top managers within the Ministry, the GWG hopes to promote gender equity through an advocacy role that promotes the advancement of the 3 objectives cited above. To this end, the secretariat's activities focus on reviewing all departmental plans

within the Ministry for integration of gender related issues, disaggregation of data by sex, etc., sponsoring gender awareness trainings, and in general promoting measures that increase the representation of women in management positions within the Ministry and girls in the education system.

Another important structural step taken by MoEYS to address gender equity concerns was the creation in 2001 of the Office of Special Education (OSE) within the Department of Primary and Pre-schools. This office is delegated with promoting equal access to education for the poor, girls, minorities, and the disabled. The office is intended to act as a point of contact between Ministry and NGOs/IOs in promoting activities to help these target groups. Although not yet properly resourced, the OSE is another demonstration of government commitment to addressing gender equity concerns.

4.3.3. Education Reform Financing Provisions

The huge growth in government spending to finance the educational investments described above has been reflected in the increasing budget share of the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports in the national budget (Table 4.1). This budget share has moved from a largely static amount ranging from 8.4% to 11.3% during the 1990s to 18.2% by 2002. This represents an increase of 117% since 1994 and is only 2.3% short of the EFA 2005 target.

Table 4.1. Education Budget Allocations as a % of the National Budget and GDP, 1994-2002[6]

Year	MoEYS	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary	Other	Defense	% GDP
1994	8.4	4.7	2.4	0.2	1.1	52.8	0.95
1995	9.6	5.1	3.2	0.5	0.8	54.3	0.82
1996	9.6	4.9	3.1	0.3	1.3	47.8	0.84
1997	9.3	7.4	--	--	--	47.6	0.89
1998	10.9	7.9	--	--	--	--	0.94
1999	11.3	10.0	--	--	--	--	0.89
2000	13.9	--	--	--	--	37.0	--
2001	15.0	--	--	--	--	--	--
2002	18.2	--	--	--	--	--	--
EFA Target							
2005	20.5	17.4	--	--	--	--	3.40

Source:1994-6 reported in World Bank *Public Expenditure Review, 1999;* 1997-2002 reported by EFA Secretariat, 1999, 2002

In order to ensure a sound basis for educational planning with respect to EFA targets, the MoEYS and the Ministry of Economy and Finance have established a Medium Term Expenditure Plan (MTEP) that outlines budget availability over the period 2003-05. This plan is designed to address serious problems in tardy disbursement of educational funds under ESSP mentioned earlier. Past and projected increases in education spending, however, have been financed mainly through World Bank credits, which raises serious questions about long-term government borrowing and debt servicing in the years to come. For the time being, however, debt servicing remains low at about 1% of exports (World Bank,

[6] The World Bank Public Expenditure Review for the period since1997 has been completed but the RGoC has not yet agreed to release the document until final details have been worked out. MoEYS data for the period since 1997 has been provided by the EFA Secretariat.

1999).

Table 4.2: Change in Education Reform Funding Provisions as a % of Recurrent Budget, 2000-02 (in billions of local currency units/4,000 units = $US 1)

Budget Chapter	2000		2001		2002	
	Currency Units	%	Currency Units	%	Currency Units	%
Personnel	126.2	68.9	136.1	60.9	154.8	53.0
Operations	47.0	25.7	59.0	26.4	62.2	21.3
PAP	10.0	5.4	28.4	12.7	75.0	25.7
Total	***183.2***	***100.0***	***223.5***	***100.0***	***292.0***	***100.0***

Source: MoEYS-ESSP Secreetariat, 2002

In keeping with the intention to adequately resource the reform program, the MoEYS has succeeded in its efforts to increase the proportion of total budget for Priority Action Programs and reduce that for operations and salary (Table 4.2). In this respect, funding for PAP programs has increased five fold from 5.4% in 2000 to 25.7% of the recurrent budget in 2002.

5. Key Gender-related Issues in Educational Development

5.1. Defining Gender Equity among Stakeholders

At a surface level, there seems to be wide consensus among all relevant stakeholders that gender equity in education is a good thing. Girls and boys should have equal opportunity to receive a basic education as guaranteed in the Constitution. Problems have arisen, however, because stakeholders often find they have very different notions of what gender equity really means when they start working together. At a very basic level, gender equity in education to many simply means ensuring equal numbers of boys and girls at all levels of education. Thus, gender equity is simply achieving parity in enrolment, transition, and any number of other aspects of education.

Going along with this simple definition of gender equity assures few problems in getting government commitment to gender equity-based policies at management level where there are few women. To be sure, the leadership in government has bought into gender equity policies, albeit narrowly defined, not only out of concerns for "fairness," but also because of the many social returns associated with these policies. These returns have been amply demonstrated by international research. That is to say, more educational opportunities for girls and women will ensure smaller families, better health for children, and higher levels of literacy in the future. All of these will in turn provide necessary (though not sufficient) conditions for economic growth and prosperity.

For many stakeholders, however, particularly those working outside the government sector, equating educational parity with gender equity obscures the causality of gender inequity and the need for social change. Another way of saying this is that these stakeholders, primarily NGOs, see narrowly defined concepts of gender equity as leading to educational interventions that address *symptoms* but not the causes of gender inequity. For example, if many girls do not attend more distant secondary schools because their parents feel that girls are more *vulnerable* and cannot be allowed to go due to a security concern, then this belief may demonstrate an important need for social change in the way parents see their daughters. Where do these attitudes come from? Clearly, they are embedded in the culture, traditions, and customs of Cambodians. Changing these customs has strong implications for redefining power relationships between men and women and between daughters and their parents that are sure to cause cracks in the current stakeholder consensus regarding gender equity policies.

Part of the problem in defining gender equity in a way that is both consensual as well as appropriate to the design of practical interventions is that too much in the way of a gender equity model has been borrowed from abroad, particularly Western countries. This feature, combined with a decidedly top-down complexion to gender equity initiatives in a social setting with weak civil society institutions, ensures that gender concerns are often seen as alien by many Cambodians. As one individual observed, "concepts of gender must come from Cambodians themselves rather than imposed from without, taking a more analytical approach and relating the traditional gender roles with the world today in a way that re-affirms custom but at the same time adapts custom to meet new realities and demands."[7] Until Cambodians can achieve this, more narrowly defined concepts of gender equity are likely to hold sway.

[7] Personal communication with Bob MacLaughlin, ProgramOfficer, World Food Program-Cambodia.

5.2. Women, Girls, and Setting Priorities

In an environment with limited resources, setting priorities for support to various interventions and target groups is difficult. Previous analyses have demonstrated that within the education sector, most resources seem to be flowing towards the formal system with NFE receiving among the lowest proportions of the total education budget (see Figure 2.4/Annex 3). In 1999, it was reported that NFE activities received 3.0% of total educational investment (both government and donor) and that public investment has remained static throughout the decade. This situation has prevailed for much of the last 10 years in spite of the observation that literacy rates among women remain perilously low (though previous investments in adult literacy have brought about improvements). In this respect, it was reported that 42% of the adult women population in Cambodia are functionally illiterate and that among rural dwellers, the proportion rises to 46.1% (Table 3.14).

In Cambodia, there seems to be a latent tension between the MoEYS and Ministry of Women's Affairs with respect to prioritization of women versus girls as target groups and within the MoEYS between the formal and nonformal education systems with respect to who gets what resources. Because the vast majority of NFE activities are focused on women, the scope and breadth of the NFE budget has become a gender related issue within the sector. Although the NFE Dept. within MoEYS does have a PAP support budget and the MoEYS EFA Plan provides a thoughtful elaboration of new programs and strategies, these have not yet been reflected in actual practice.

It will be essential for the Cambodian education system to achieve a more integrated investment strategy that balances the needs of women and girls more equitably. The imbalance in emphasis is highly apparent when one considers that donors and government are contemplating investments in girls' scholarship programs of over US$ 1 million per year starting in 2003 compared with about $US 250,000 allocated annually for the entire NFE Dept. A number of research studies demonstrate that it is critically important to design development strategies that adequately support development of both women and girls simultaneously (e.g., Burchfield, undated). This position is based on 4 key factors:

1. The strong correlation between a mother's education level and that of her children, especially girls;
2. The strong relationship between a mother's education and the health of their children;
3. A large number of households in the developing world are headed by women;
4. Adult education programs can have a major impact on decision-making by adolescent girls at a time when they are getting married or having children. (Burchfield, undated)

The EFA 2005 Plan provides a sound basis or more balanced investment in both women and girls. The challenge will be for government (and donors) to resource the plan effectively.

5.3. Scope and Nature of Interventions

It was earlier pointed out that many of the initial activities to address gender inequity in Cambodia consisted of gender awareness-raising sessions for government officials, teachers, and communities. Many of these activities, however, have been roundly criticized for being uncoordinated with more concrete measures to increase equitable access to education for girls as well as lacking follow-up. Some have gone so far as to argue that changing attitudes as a first line intervention are pointless without the social prerequisites for social change in place first. This view echoes a deterministic model of social change that looks to macro socio-economic forces rather than pointless training interventions. For example, the rapid expansion of the textile industry and its predilection to use female workers has probably done more to empower women than any other development in recent years. It breaks every social convention by leading to a situation where women live away from home, live and work independently, and earn their own money. This deterministic viewpoint is also validated by the experience of Western countries where the movement of women into the industrial workforce during the two world wars was perhaps the single most important event that changed women's roles in society. Between the views that gender training is essential for social change and that it is pointless is a middle ground. This point of view argues that while such activities cannot stand alone, they are nevertheless important as a complementary intervention.

At another level, some gender advocates have questioned the conventional view that interventions designed to achieve parity between boys and girls in the education system will lead to "gender justice." This point of view relates to concerns expressed earlier that gender parity interventions address only the symptoms of inequity (e.g., low access and retention) and not its root causes. While not arguing for yet more stand alone gender-awareness training, these concerns suggest the need for more process and less product in the approach to gender equity (see below). As an example, gender-based programs could increase their focus on true life skills approaches in which girls critically examine the world around them and the role they play in it. Such activities would then provide firm ground for gender equity concepts to take root.

A further design concern in current and proposed interventions to achieve gender equity relates to the scope of scholarship programs. These concerns currently occupy a place of prominence, as Cambodia gets ready to mount national scholarship programs targeted at girls. Indeed, such interventions may turn out to be the most resource intensive gender-based activity mounted in the next several years. Because scholarship programs are generally designed to meet direct educational costs only, there have been concerns whether they will be enough to deter girls with the highest risk of drop out from doing so. As noted earlier, opportunity costs are a major cause for dropout among girls. Scholarship programs in their current form (focusing on direct costs only) may help girls at less risk but may miss the poorest of the poor. At issue is whether scholarship programs, which are usually implemented by agents with a narrow mandate within the area of education, should have an expanded scope in order to deal with social welfare issues such as general poverty. While such an expansion would surely help these programs to address the problem of opportunity costs, they are also certain to increase implementation costs and overall complexity. In general, the trend so far seems to be going with a less complex model. For example, a $US 3 million scholarship program to be funded under the Japan Fund for Poverty Reduction was shorn of a complex provision to give loans to the poor parents of scholarship beneficiaries at the request of both MoEYS and NGO stakeholders.

5.4. Product versus Process

Trends in development lean more and more towards emphasizing objective-based planning and measurement of terminal products. This has not always lent itself well to developing a social sense of gender equity and has made it difficult to meet recommendations to approach gender equity as a long-term *process.* For example, gender-awareness training activities are really intended to be a means towards an end. Yet, they are frequently described and even undertaken as terminal activities. Not only have such activities been implemented as stand alone interventions with little follow up as noted above, but stakeholders sometimes describe them as something to be done once as an external requirement of some higher authority. Once completed, one can move on to other things.

The above state of affairs argues strongly for linking the process of gender equity, of which training, human development, and awareness-raising are integral parts, with other concrete activities (scholarships, skills training, advocacy, planning reviews, etc) as follow-up interventions. If a complete series of interventions cannot be included in one single program, then they should be coordinated with other programs that will provide suitable complementarity. The MoEYS-UNICEF-NGO education partnership that led to the development of the EPESSEG program described earlier is a good example of process activities linked with terminal outputs. Approaching the gender equity process as a series of interventions that emphasize both process and product will also provide more opportunities for stakeholders to buy into the process, particularly where it involves tangible benefits for communities like skills training or scholarships.

5.5. Gender Specific versus Multi-dimensional Approaches

During the development of programs to better serve girls, the issue arose among NGOs/IOs as to whether girls should be targeted as a discrete group or whether programs should adopt a more inclusive, cross-cutting approach in line with the mandate of the Office of Special Education of the MoEYS. As explained earlier, the mandate of this office was to increase access and retention among children of the poor, girls, the disabled, and minorities. The primary rationale for a more cross-cutting approach was that target groups are not mutually exclusive of one another. There are female minority children, disabled poor children, poor girls, etc. Designing interventions that focus on only one aspect of a child's social ascription (i.e., being female, disabled, etc.) would be incomplete in their scope and effectiveness. The argument for discrete programs targeting each of these groups individually relates to the need for specialization in understanding the needs of each set of beneficiaries. It is also true that the resource persons who assist in program design have specializations that are not often multi-dimensional in nature.

Trends in Cambodia so far seem to be moving in the direction of *gender-specific* rather than multi-dimensional program design. This approach puts a cap on the complexity of interventions, which tend to spiral out of control in any case. In addition, the funding environment also reinforces the development of programs focused on discrete beneficiary groupings as most donors prefer to provide funds for specific target groups such as girls, minorities, or the disabled. To be sure, program development does not completely ignore the diverse backgrounds of beneficiaries but rather approaches it through interprogram coordination and service referral. In addition, *gender mainstreaming* strategies currently employed by the MoEYS Gender Working Group are another means through to balance over compartmentalizing gender issues.

5.6. Assumptions regarding Efforts to Increase Gender Equity through Gender Parity in Education

Many of the efforts to increase gender equity in the education sector are underpinned by the belief that such equity will have long term impact on the well-being of women specifically and society in general in the future. There are a number of different views as to whether these assumptions are completely justified or not. The belief of some that equitable access to education will not by itself be sufficient to bring about change has already been discussed. Others have taken a more minimalist view arguing that it may not be *sufficient* but that it is certainly a *necessary* condition for gender equity to occur.

Another uncertainty regarding the above assumptions relates to the continued role of certain economic prerequisites that are linked to changing social roles among women. These concerns are based on the view that education will lead to change primarily by expanding economic opportunities for women. Should economic development stall, it is likely that the gender equity effects of greater educational opportunity will be greatly muted. A disturbing case in point that manifests this view well concerns the future of the textile industry in Cambodia. What would happen, for example, should Cambodia's textile industry collapse as is likely when worldwide WTO agreements regarding textiles come into force in the next couple of years.[8] As was noted earlier, the gender parity index among machine operators and assemblers tripled between 1994 and 2000 due largely to the expansion of this industry. For those who place great credence in an economy-linked model of social change, it is believed that the effects of these changes are already rippling through society. Where, however, would the opportunities for gainful employment from which these changes derive come from should such industries disappear? It is believed that education by itself will not lead to such change.

Finally, there are those who believe that better access to education will only strengthen general gender equity in society if that education is of quality. It has already been pointed out that there have been many criticisms of the government's reform program as focusing too heavily on numerical gains in access and efficiency without adequate concern for the quality of the education received. These concerns underlie the focus of many gender advocacy programs on life skills and prevocational elements in the curriculum as an important means to ensure gender equity. Such programs would provide practical skills in critical thinking, which would promote the re-assessment of gender roles among young girls. Without such elements in the curriculum, the assumption that improved access to education for girls will lead to gender equity seems very vulnerable.

[8] Personal communication with Toby Glucksman (US Embassy) regarding the continuation of USG favorable textile quota allocations.

6. Lessons Learned/Recommendations

There have been numerous lessons learned during recent efforts to implement educational development plans that improve gender equity. These can be translated into recommendations as follows:

8. Need for more locally generated definitions of gender equity: There is a need to rely more on locally defined concepts of gender equity to ensure that there is more consensus on what the concept means and greater effectiveness in reconciling it with traditional gender roles. Stakeholder consensus on commitment to gender equity is currently fragile because program designs rely on very different understandings of gender equity much of which is imported and alien to local stakeholders.

9. Avoid stand-alone gender training interventions: Promoting gender equity in the education sector can only be meaningful if it is sustained and coordinated with follow-up measures. The sector has not yet demonstrated adequate and sustained coordination between interventions that focus on attitude change (e.g., gender awareness trainings) and those that try to provide concrete applications of gender equity concepts (scholarships, life skills, etc.). Many stand-alone interventions in the past have not been characterized by a commitment to gender equity as a *process*. Interventions to promote gender equity should seek to be more comprehensive in approach incorporating a range of complimentary interventions in one package or if this is not possible building in measures that ensure coordination with other programs that can provide suitable complimentarity and follow-up.

10. Need for improved focus on integrated investment strategies that balance the needs of women and girls: The education sector has exhibited an investment imbalance that has placed considerable emphasis and resources on improving the education of girls who are still in the formal education system. Interventions focused on women and out-of-school girls, particularly in the NFE subector, have been under resourced. It is recommended that government and donors address this imbalance by acknowledging the comprehensive planning ideas put forth in the MoEYS EFA 2005 Plan and resourcing it accordingly.

11. Improve focus on quality education as a means to motivate parents to send their daughters to school: Overcrowded classrooms, talk and chalk teaching methods, and an irrelevant curriculum will undermine efforts to convince parents to send their daughters to school. It is strongly recommended that immediate steps be taken to introduce measures that will help upgrade teaching methodologies and improve curricular relevance, particularly through the development of life skills and prevocational provisions within the basic education system.

12. Institutionalization of gender equity sensitivities within MoEYS: A promising start has been made in MoEYS to institutionalize gender advocacy not only through the establishment of a Gender Working Group but also by properly resourcing this office. The Ministry needs to move further to demonstrate that its commitment to gender issues is not tokenism but real and sustained. An important place to start in demonstrating this commitment would be to move to accelerate the movement of women into management level positions at both headquarters and provincial level.

13. Review some ESSP 2005 targets relating to improvements in gender equity: MoEYS 2005 gender equity targets at primary level are not only laudable but, with extensive reforms in the educational system, also seem within reach. However, some official targets indicate no change in current access to education by girls/women or in some cases like the balance of male and female teacher training students a decline in gender parity (from a GPI of 0.67 in 1999 to a projected 0.58 in 2005). Similarly, little change is expected in GPI levels at tertiary institutions (currently 0.297 projected to increase to only 0.31 by 2005) and transition rates among girls to upper secondary school (currently 66.1% projected to improve to only 67% in 2005). These targets should be reviewed and revised to reflect more modest improvement.

14. Increase the use of positive gender role models: Using educated Cambodian women as a positive role model can be a powerful tool to provide motivation and stamina to young girls to improve themselves. The utilization of this strategy should be increasingly incorporated in the program designs seeking to promote gender equity in the education sector.

7. Conclusions and the Way Forward

There is no doubt that gender equity has improved in Cambodia in the last 5 years. Not only have participation rates at primary education level increased sharply among girls but there are now more gender-specific approaches integrated into national level educational plans (e.g., incentive programs, gender-specific EFA targets, sex disaggregated data collection to improve monitoring, etc.). This contrasts sharply with the environment in the early and mid-nineties when major problems relating to general enrolment, internal efficiency, and quality had essentially crowded out gender specific concerns. In addition, there are now many more resources available from donors to address gender inequality in the education system resulting in a greater preponderance of girl-focused interventions among NGOs and IOs in collaboration with government.

The road to this point, however, has not been smooth. Continuity has in particular been lacking with a stop and go approach in strong evidence. When gender-focused activities first began with the ground breaking MoEYS-CARE survey in 1998, nothing happened immediately afterwards due to a lack of funding. The support of important donors has also been "piecemeal" and lacking in continuous and comprehensive backing. A classic example relates to the massive stand-alone gender awareness-training activities supported by JICA and others that have not really led to any measurable outcomes or consistent follow-up. After attending the trainings, participants essentially returned to their communities and jobs and continued with their lives much as before.

Nevertheless, it should be stressed that more consistent planning and coordination among all stakeholders have characterized the last two years. The arrival of more concrete interventions such as skills training, scholarship programs, and prevention of sexual exploitation initiatives has been welcome. These help to complement gender-awareness raising activities and ensure better coordination of interventions (whereas in the past, the lack of interventions meant there was little to coordinate). The EFA Secretariat in particular has done an impressive job in addressing gender concerns and integrating such concerns into medium and long-term planning using a cross-cutting approach. Similarly, the establishment of a properly resourced Gender Working Group within the Ministry itself has heightened the visibility of Ministry commitment to gender-focused interventions and planning (even if this means different things to different people). The existence of a GWG greatly facilitates advocacy activities both within the Ministry and among donors and helps to move the education sector into a position where gender concerns have moved from tokenism to real institutionalization.

The focus in the future should be to continue with these trends looking in particular at reviewing performance targets and working out in better detail the national programs described in the EFA Forward Plan for 2005. Points of vulnerability in continued progress towards gender equity include cracks in stakeholder consensus as to the meaning of gender equity as well as the need to diversify reform targets from improving "numbers" to ensuring a quality product. Quality concerns are of particular importance if programs are to convince parents of the usefulness of sending their daughters to school. These vulnerabilities can be addressed by developing local definitions of gender equity that can be reconciled with traditional gender roles, teacher upgrading, and improving curricular relevance.

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