

**WHITHER POLICY REFORMS IN EDUCATION  
LESSONS AND CHALLENGES**

## Content

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## PREFACE

An educational divide reigns supreme in Bangladesh giving way to socio-economic inequality, reflecting the nature of the statecraft, the contestations within the socio-economic fabric, and the level of exercise of rights by the populace. Thus, the present anthology investigates into role of education in nation building and linkages with knowledge and empowerment. Given the current socio-economic and political transition in Bangladesh, such a publication of collections is timely and fundamental.

As global capitalism acts as the driving force for rapid transformation in education sectors, the process of globalization and the policy divide have impeded creation of a complete and comprehensive education system in the country. These rapid neo liberal reforms presents a weak linkage between knowledge and empowerment making education inaccessible and dearly. The educational divide has given rise to an inward, concentric and conformist pattern of knowledge generation and dissemination, where diversity and inclusiveness of education remains reclusive and empowerment and socio economic growth becomes a far cry.

It is evident that global capitalism has been instrumental to enforce our education system undergo successive reforms combining neo-liberal policies and classical approaches to achieve conformity in educational system. Over the last two decades, these neo-liberal reforms have been spearheaded by a range of multilateral and supranational organizations tied into the system of global regime - namely the World Bank, the IMF, the WTO with participation of national and international nongovernmental agencies. These unabated neo-liberal reforms in our education system have not taken due cognizance of the prevailing economic, financial and market compulsion of the country thereby exacerbating to reduce state intervention, promote deregulation of markets and make steady socio-economic progress of the country. On the other hand, the pace of commercialization of education has diverted our education goals, motivations, methods and standards of excellence and even freedom of expression to further consolidate education a fortress of capital, not enriching the elements of education. The unique pace of neo liberal reforms in our education sectors has accounted for digital information divide in Bangladesh, creating a dysfunctional capital-based education system.

Challenges from capitalization and commercialization of education system is a direct manifestation of diminishing role of state in education sectors and emergence of corporate and supra-national bodies as new boss of educational infrastructure. The correlation between politics and capital has become increasingly interdependent, making educationist and reformist standing at odds over the ongoing educational reforms. Government failure to initiate wholesale de-legitimization process of the full fledged government schools under the Common School System has made free and compulsory elementary education a far reality. That is why primary education of Bangladesh has been moving towards private sector management mostly where public primary education sector has been experimented according to the demand of World Bank's sector wise approach to adjust the structural adjustment policy.

The anthology has rightly identified some of the major changes linked to primary and technical education, reduction of state involvement in education services, privatization of higher education, initiation of non-formal education, NGOs' intervention in education services, contrasting Madrassa educations system and prescription of donor agencies in decision making and implementation. In fine, the present-day educational system in Bangladesh tells a grim picture of the concentricity, inconformity and lack of comprehensive adaptability of the existing educational reforms.

A diverse school system makes it ever exclusive, but comprehensive. A return from the present state of education system into a universal state of education incorporating inclusiveness of the needs and genre of our populace is definitely challenging. Unfortunately public investment on education in Bangladesh is minimal and so-called return from the investment on education at this level does not augur well for an inclusive and conforming education system in our country. Madrassa studies never opened up research and motivation for regeneration and reformation of this system into a modern education. There is a certain level of impact of the "Brain Drain" on education and development in the country.

There is no denying of the fact that education excels to yield return effectively if education sectors are professionally nurtured with capital investment and human resources. The public institutions should take the lead in this circumstances as evinced from all major developed countries. The contributors have rightly suggested expanding public spending in our education sector to address the adverse impacts of neo-liberal reforms in our education sectors.

It is true that education directly influences politics, culture and economy in the realm of a liberal statecraft as we continue to strive for appropriate reforms in our education sectors. Ideological influence has played a crucial role in shaping our educational framework that has blocked the adaptability and receptivity of our education system. Detailing a resourceful teaching force and working out an ever-adaptive education

curricula could be a way out from this transgression of our educational system. A good many papers has stressed on the need to have political willingness, pragmatic planning and adequate funding in public education including appropriate training, research and chronological educational reforms to further advance modernism and effectiveness in our education.

Education is not necessarily a merchandized product, though present day commercialization has proved it that way. Needs and requirement of education are though semantic in nature but has to be understood by the policy makers. Cognizance of basic education as right is to be addressed without being misconstrued with the rights to specialized quality education meant for the specific relevant people. To promote inclusive education (IE) for that matter by the government requires long trodden values, attitude and resources to be nurtured in the education system. No doubt IE system is a modern way of promoting education; the stagnation prevalent in terms of implementation has posed as a hindrance in achieving IE in our education systems.

The Education for All (EFA) programme of the government in this respect did make an important headway but resulting a low quality education. The EFA did not take consideration of the fact that education is not a commodity, rather it is considered as an asset and a factor of production.

In consequence to this, higher education system in Bangladesh presents enormous structural and technical inadequacy given the preponderance of inward, inefficient and inaccessible higher education scene in Bangladesh. Visionary policies are required to address the present level of stratagem in our higher educational progress in the country which would travel beyond the current system of disseminating knowledge to that of generating knowledge, for which the university system has been built.

Basic understanding of educational knowledge begins at the primary level, where learners must be accustomed with the universality of the educational aspects. However, it is important to move ahead of racial domination and immature transformation caused by misled educational vision. That is where language and linguistic interpretation of the education needs to be calibrated on the universality of educational philosophy and presented in the language best suited for the individual. Making education vital for cohesion among societies and cultures could prove phenomenal for integration of views and values, ethos and experiences making propagation of education easier and less costly.

Since 1990, World Bank review of education defines it in terms of human capital theory and viewed it more of a sub-sector of economic policy than of social policy. In this light, government is under consideration of implementing a Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh 2006-2026 which will discharge the autonomy of higher education. This would further privatize and commercialize the higher education sector making it out of reach for the poor. These policy shifts will instill neo-liberal reforms in education replacing the colonized educational reforms that will keep pace with the ever changing western order of development needs. The ongoing changes in our educational sectors do not reflect the people's experiences and aspirations.

Here we need to rethink the neo-liberal reforms of education and look for an alternative reform compliant to serve our own educational and social needs creating a bridge between modern and traditional system for gradual liberalization of education sectors. We have to unmask the politics behind and within education regarding all kinds of domination and control of educational exchanges. This anthology is a prelude to attempt the large project of education structure meant for the people who should embrace new thoughts and vision but reject byproducts of educational indoctrination and come as free human being.

This anthology has brought together researchers, specialists, scholars, education activists and all concerned in this educational excellence alike and revisited the kind of reforms taken place over the period and its impacts on education sectors of Bangladesh. The authors and translators of these ingenious works deserve special acclaim for their wonderful insight into the core issues and pragmatic values of our education system.

I thank the contributors wholeheartedly and pledge to carry forward further investigation into the deeper realms of our education system for its ever flourishing excellence. We gratefully acknowledge for the support received from ActionAid Bangladesh and thoughtful suggestions received from S A Hasan Al Farooque, ActionAid Bangladesh.

A special tribute goes to Sarwar Basher, who has combined his courage, patience and hard endeavour behind editing to generate such an important resource for education sector of Bangladesh.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the staff of the Unnayan Onneshan who have devoted their untiring efforts and energy in making the conference successful as the papers are output of that conference.

**Rashed Al Mahmud Titumir**  
Chair  
Unnayan Onneshan

### **Editor's Note**

In Bangladesh, discussion and thought on education are limited in an apolitical discourse. In popular thinking and practice, education is assumed as a neutral phenomenon. It is not analyzed in relation to colonialism, globalization, cultural imperialism, nationalism and other political issues alone. It is though campaigns and educational initiatives are enough to establish a people oriented educational system. That's why our educational system is not encountering any criticism and resistance and thus, is being used as a tool of post colonial neo-liberal power. During 1990s when primary education was liberalized and as a result of this, privatization in primary education was increased on one hand while quality of public primary education was deteriorating on the other, no serious attempt was taken to unearth the underlying politics behind this. As a result, private provision increased drastically and primary education reduced to NGO activities; furthermore, to a commercial product. As a part of this process, public primary education system had turned into a guinea pig for WB and IMF, which has resulted into an inefficient, inactive educational system. On the other hand, since 1990s, privatization in higher education has been initiated and as a result, private sector has become dominating in the field of higher education for the last few years. The issues of public welfare and state responsibility remained out of analysis too. This is due to our misunderstanding to the approach of education. What is education? What is its relation with the state, politics, power and people? We don't have any appropriate analysis of education as we don't relate these political questions with our educational analysis. This is why, our education policy has failed to be mass oriented; in contrast, it has been working as a discrimination producing tool, keeping the discrimination politics active. Considering this context, Unnayan Onneshan has organized a two day conference on education in March 2008. The present Anthology of a total of 19 articles is a subsequent product of the conference. Topics of the anthology relate to colonial and post colonial political issues. It also aims to convert education into a discourse. Policy related issues are also selected to represent a critical analysis of the education policies from the point of proper implementation to meet desirable success. All areas could not be covered due to the limitation of content. On the other hand, though there were discussions on many important topics in the conference, due to the unavailability of proposed articles while compiling the anthology, it was not possible to include those topics.

I am grateful to all the authors and a young group of translators whose contribution has made the anthology possible. The present anthology targets to rethink our education policies. The discussion of our education policy is not limited to the increase of enrollment, gender parity or quality of education alone. In contrast, it is related to that reality in which it is constructed and practiced. It is not possible to establish a people oriented education policy unless we unmask this reality. The present Anthology is the analysis of this reality. I believe that it will contribute to analyze the ever taken reforms in our educational system, as well as to build a people oriented education policy.

**Sarwar Basher**

## The Politics, Economy and Culture of 'Education'<sup>1</sup> Some Brief Theses

Arup Rahee

“আপনি আচরি ধর্ম পরেই শিখায়...”  
-চৈতন্যচরিতামৃত  
“পাথরেতে অগ্নি থাকে  
বের করতে হয় ঠুকনি ঠুকে  
সিরাজ সাঁই দেয় তেমনি শিক্ষে  
বোকা লালন সঙ নাচায়।”  
-লালন ফকির

You are listening to the following theses from a 'non-academic' who is ever repugnant to the existing education system, a university-dropout, and presently a freelance researcher. Many of you who consider education as 'praxis' may have been familiar with these in different ways. These are the products of my experiences and presented the way I like. If it seems coarse and rough, I expect you forgive this uncouth speaker.

### 1. Education Problems

Is education an unmixed blessing? Why are we so emotional with and reverent to education? Why have we been deeply convinced by maxims like "Education is the backbone of a nation"? How does it happen that 'education' makes one elite and the other outcast? Who have fixed the system of education as transaction, and as give and take? Well, I here argue that education has three major forms in existing capitalist society.

One: Labour or Commodity.

Two: Ideology.

Three: Dominance or Hegemony.

We will discuss all these greatness and significances of 'education' in the present paper. You may have frowned: isn't there other type of 'education' outside these three categories. We will be inquiring that. Furthermore we will search what will be done with 'education'.

### 2. The Culture of Education

We 'learn' always. We adapt suitable education determined by the 'education' about life knowingly or unknowingly and consciously or unconsciously. The adjustment is for living a better life and for 'earning the livelihood'. If seen from a different perspective, anyone can understand that the current social system, the system of production and distribution, the definitions of 'enjoyment' and 'happiness', the standard of 'modernity' and 'civility' - all are based on the system of our social, cultural and vocational 'education'. For instance, we learn what is 'smartness' or 'dexterity', sign of 'skill' and 'promptness' or the sample of elegance or culturing 'modernity', 'femininity' or 'masculinity' from the advertisement or 'mass media' dominated by the multinational companies, don't we? Do we not learn those from their MDs, salespeople, intellectuals, cultural activists and daalals? A large number of people anticipate their nominated social, cultural and vocational institutes to be the school for their children. Education is, therefore, a political procedure; hence its process and aim can be changed, right?

**Some more problems are triggered here:**

1. Political Ontology of Education.
2. Location of Education.
3. Culture of Education.

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Shahriar Kabir from original article written in Bengali

The queries centre round basic questions: where, how and why is education? Who gives it approval? That means the interrogations are centred on its situation in the infrastructure of power and its function.

Then queries of this sort are queries of culture as well. Determining this, that, this is, that is not... creates the culture of education. One determines this stability keeping the economic and political condition over one historical and social perspective in mind. To take an example, Lalou Fakir is 'uneducated', 'uncivilized' and 'un-modern' to many while many revere him as a 'Guru,' devotee, imitable; to many, he is a 'good person.'

### **3. Politics and Economy of Education**

#### **Education as an accumulated labour**

What do men learn at an 'educational' institute? If I argue, why, we learn to think about the world; we learn philosophy, history, and sociology too! It has serviceability like science and vocational education; moreover is itself an accumulated endeavour as well. For example, I absorbed a book on history written by Mr. Herodotus. I might absorb either information or education, which is a form of labour. Labour of mine or others or of both. The acquired form of labour is reinvested and creates new values. Particularly that is granted as education in a 'society' which has usage or competency, means its potency to perpetuate the current production system. In easy terms division of labour is the evidence of educational labour.

#### **Education as Ideology**

Any kind of ideology gradually assumes the form of social ideology catering to the division of labour. 'Education is emancipation.' 'Education is a solution.' Aren't we familiar with these? As an ideology and as synonymous to a certain labour division and a special production system, education acquires the ideological form. As a result, those who interrogate the what-ness, for-whom-ness and why-ness of education are marginalised and suppressed.

#### **Education as a means of Dominance**

Education system is thus used as a criterion for establishing and protecting dominance. It keeps up the capitalist, patriarchal production relation and eventually reproduces...

#### **Location of Education**

Location of education means if there are any other places of it outside our flesh and blood or any detachment between these two. Our head or body functions at the first place within certain social body and history. Schools for Sanskrit, gurugrihos, palaces, 'modern' schools or academic buildings of a university, therefore, add dimension but produce no extra conditions. The location of education is everywhere. Shopping malls. Jails. Vegetable markets. City buses. Garment factories. Our body itself is the most delicate and targeted location of education.

#### **Political Ontology of Education**

Division of labour, production system, and relation and arrangement of power are responsible for the specific presence of education in society. Education, moreover, cannot have other significant appearances outside this political ontology.

### **4. The Future of Education**

We see how the culture of education is changed according to its realistic necessity in capitalistic societies all the time. University education moreover the baseless grandeur of 'education' is getting insipid by its merchandised form and it will be continued. But concern lies elsewhere. The capitalist, patriarchal dominance within the culture will definitely be in jeopardy. Republication of education will be increased. The culture of centred certification, centralized capital and market control will be in crisis, which is not of a kind that can solve its problems itself. The road to solution is the road to 'exercise.' It is all about praxis and exercise rather reaching to a baseless absolute destination. That culture of education is the culture of exercise, culture of praxis. The democratic, social and collective flow of education has to be advanced for doing so.

## Education without a language Some observations on the question of medium of instruction

Salimullah Khan

*So you have a situation in which you have higher education without a language. You can't impart higher education without a consistent language policy. That contributed to a decline in education. Eqbal Ahmad'*

The political agitation that led to the foundation of the state of Bangladesh as a people's republic is generally called a nationalist enterprise hanging on claims of the mother tongue (Bangla in the case of the ethnic group called the Bengali) in all spheres of state and civil society. These claims included its use as medium of instruction at all stages of public instruction.

Wasn't the language question a prime mover in the nationalist ideology of East Bengal, 1947-1971, in the state of Pakistan? Didn't as many as five out of the twenty one demands charted out by the United Front, the combine that defeated the Muslim League in 1954, relate to this question? Didn't one of these demands clearly spell out the demand for imparting education in the mother tongue?

Isn't it that what we observe here today, in contemporary Bangladesh, a trend towards reversing this popular democratic demand? The ruling classes in this country are increasingly adopting English as medium of instruction in not only higher studies but also in elementary and secondary schools.

The question, then, is why are they switching over to a foreign language as a medium of instruction not only for those classes of the people who have the means of pursuing higher studies? Why are they also switching over to English in even elementary stages of instruction? My remarks, in these notes, will remain confined to an analysis of this symptom.

### **Abjection: a foreign medium of instruction**

Bangladesh, not unlike many other postcolonial nations, started out really badly. In the eighteenth century she had, by contemporary standards, a fairly widely based system of popular, elementary education in place. The system had many weaknesses indeed but it had one virtue, it was popular and it worked.

It was, however, allowed to decay in the colonial era by at least a measure of benign neglect by the colonial state. What replaced it was a new system fairly restricted, as a British official said, to 'those classes of the people who have the means to pursue higher studies.' This was only in accord with the political objectives of the new colonial regime. Education as an ideological state apparatus was a Johnny came lately to the colonial administration. It responded to two perceptions: first, securing an economy of expenditure in drafting lower grade state and business employees and secondly, winning over the upper classes of the colony which lost political power to a new ruling class. Besides, as Christian missionaries working in the colonial territories imagined, the spread of English education was likely to help spread their gospel among the natives.

Why didn't the colonial authorities adopt any education policy at all before the 1820s, more than half a century after the coup d' état of 1757? A simple question as this goes a long way to help find out why the English instated English as medium of instruction in their colonial possession when they did. It followed from the objective of education policy.

By the time the Company mutated into a political power it sought to educate only the upper classes with a view to create a subordinate governing class in the colonial possessions. Not only the old aristocratic classes but also the new middle classes too came forward to take advantage of the favour. This rather restrictive education policy commonly goes by name as the downward filtration theory. It may be seen as a form of the infamous *laissez-faire* policy.

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<sup>1</sup> Eqbal Ahmad, *Confronting Empire: Interviews with David Barsamian*, ed. David Barsamian (Cambridge, Mass.: South End Press, 2000), p.19.



It was also assumed that educational opportunities made available to the upper classes would percolate down to the lower middle classes after a short time lag. What the Court of Directors of the Company wrote in a despatch to the Government of Madras in September 1830 bears witness to this policy stand.<sup>2</sup> It wrote:

The improvements in education, however, which most effectually contribute to elevate the moral and intellectual condition of a people are those which concern the education of the higher classes of the persons-possessing leisure and natural influence over the minds of their countrymen. By raising the standard of instruction among these classes you would eventually produce a much greater and more beneficial change in the ideas and feelings of the community than you can hope to produce by acting directly on the more numerous class.

Thirdly, it is clear that the Government did not take the education of the people as its responsibility. Such a responsibility would have meant educating the people in their own languages. The substance of the colonial education policy amounted to a policy of educating a few in a foreign language as a means of educating the masses in their native languages. It is this policy that found its tersest expression in Thomas Babington Macaulay's famous Minutes of 1835, where he admits, 'it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people.'<sup>3</sup> He continues:

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern? a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.

Final results of this policy, as is well known, still look like prospects. The policy did work out in the desired way. Education as a good commodity remained limited throughout the colonial period to the few. Bengal became the field of a classical experiment in this policy tack.

#### **Public instruction as a national question**

A different tack in British policy, however, was proposed in the Bombay Presidency. Mountstuart Elphinstone, Governor of Bombay 1819-1827, enunciated the idea of promoting public education by means of indigenous institutions. Elphinstone, who stood for mass education through the medium of the mother tongue, suggested the teaching of English as a classical language. His proposals were not eventually adopted due to opposition in his council.

The Bombay Native Education Society which adopted similar views, circa 1822, held that the study of English was 'of secondary importance in effecting the mental and moral improvement' of the Indian people. It conducted four English schools at Bombay, Thana, Panvel and Poona in order to 'render those few scholars, who evince an inclination and have leisure to continue their studies in English language, capable of understanding all kinds of works on literature and science.' But the bulk of its efforts were devoted, circa 1822-1840, to indigenous schools, counting as many as 115 by 1840, teaching through the medium of mother tongue. The Society held on to the opinion that western knowledge could never be spread to the people through the medium of the English language alone.<sup>4</sup> An exemplar of its ideas can be had in its report for 1825-26:

These ideas (i.e., the new ideas in western literature in science) will be most easily rendered comprehensible to them by means of the mother-tongue of each scholar. It will, therefore, no doubt be admitted that the time and labour both of the master and the scholar would be materially saved, were these indispensable explanations previously embodied in works written in the native languages; and thus it again appears that English can never become the most facile and successful medium of communicating to the natives, as a body, the literature, science and morality of Europe.

<sup>2</sup> W. H. Sharp, *Selections from Educational Records*, vol. 1, p.179; cited in S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik, *A students' history of education in India*, 3rd revised ed. (Bombay, Macmillan, 1962), pp.83-4.

<sup>3</sup> W. H. Sharp, *ibid.*, p.116; cited in S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik, *ibid.*, p.84.

<sup>4</sup> See, S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik, *ibid.*, p.68.

A report of the Bombay Board of Education, attributed to one Captain Candy, explains the principles underlying the right policy of encouraging the national languages as the medium of instruction, and rendering unto Sanskrit and English what was due to them.<sup>5</sup> What Candy writes is inestimable today as it was yesterday.

It seems to me that too much encouragement cannot be given to the study of English, nor too much value upon it, in its proper place and connection, in a plan for the intellectual and moral improvement of India. This place I conceive to be that of supplying ideas and the matter of instruction, not that of being the medium of instruction. The medium through which the mass of the population must be instructed, I humbly conceive, must be their Vernacular Tongues, and neither English nor Sanskrit.

'Sanskrit,' continues Candy, 'I conceive to be the grand storehouse from which strength and beauty may be drawn for the Vernacular languages, and it is, therefore, highly deserving of cultivation, but it cannot furnish- from its stores the matter of instruction, nor can it ever be the medium of instruction to more than a few.' He, accordingly, concludes:

In a word, knowledge must be drawn from the stores of the English language, the Vernaculars must be employed as the media of communicating it, and Sanskrit must be largely used to improve the Vernaculars and make them suitable for the purpose. I look on every Native who possesses a good knowledge of his mother-tongue, of Sanskrit, and of English, to possess the power of rendering incalculable benefit to his countrymen.

The Bombay argument on the medium of instruction is doubly instructive, both as regards to the problem as well as the outcome of it all. In Bengal, they pitted the classical languages of India (Sanskrit and Arabic) against English, a modern language of Europe, but in Bombay the choice was posited between a modern language of India and a modern language of Europe. In the case of Bengal, as remark two popular text editors, 'it is surprising that the champions of neither party said anything in favour of the mother-tongue of the people.'<sup>6</sup>

In Bombay, as the editors Nurullah and Naik note, the conflict between the classical and the modern languages 'was settled years ago by the medieval saints who wrote in the language spoken and understood by the masses.' In Bombay, therefore, a contrary opinion came to prevail. It may be recalled that Macaulay does not care to disguise his racist arrogance in saying that 'the dialects commonly spoken among the natives of this part of India' (Bengali for instance) 'contain neither literary nor scientific information'. He also holds that these dialects 'are moreover so poor and rude that until they are enriched from some other quarter, it will not be easy to translate any valuable work into them.' This he frames a staged controversy between the classical Indian languages and English. His pick is waiting there for him to pocket it. In Bombay, no one even suggested the adoption of classical language as the medium of instruction. So the choice as formulated in Bombay was between a national language and a foreign language, and not between a classical language and English, as it happened in Bengal.

In Bengal a road, similar to the one taken in Bombay but not taken up, was proposed by William Adam.<sup>7</sup> Against the grain of 'education for the few' theory Adam argued forcefully. These theorists advocated the case of education 'for the higher classes on the principle that the tendency of knowledge is to descend, not to ascend'. Their plan was to seek 'to establish a school at the head-station of every Zillah, afterwards pergunnah schools, and last of all village schools, gradually acquiring in the process more numerous and better qualified instruments for the diffusion of education.' Adam objected to this:

The primary objection to this plan is that it overlooks entire systems of native educational institutions, Hindu and Muhammadan, which existed long before our rule, and which continue to exist under our rule, independent of us and of our projects, forming and moulding the native character in successive generations. ... Again, if the maxim that the tendency of knowledge is to descend, not to ascend, requires us to have first Zillah, next pergunnah, and then village

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<sup>5</sup> Report of the Board of Education, 1840-41, p.35, as cited in S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik, *ibid.*, p.69.

<sup>6</sup> S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik, *ibid.*, p.70.

<sup>7</sup> William Adam's Three Reports on the State of Education in Bengal, 1835-38, ed. A.N. Basu (Calcutta: Calcutta University, 1940), pp.357-8; as cited in S. Nurullah and J.P. Naik, *ibid.*, p.89.

schools, it follows that we ought not to have even Zillah schools till we have provincial colleges, nor the latter till we have national universities; nor these till we have a cosmopolitan one. But this is an application of the maxim foreign to its spirit.

The measures adopted, Adam argued, did not need to have reference first to large and then to small localities in progressive descent. 'On the contrary the efficiency of every successive higher grade of institution cannot be secured except by drawing instructed pupils from the next lower grade which consequently by the necessity of the case, demands prior attention. Children should not go to colleges to learn the alphabet.'

Adam eloquently defended the national languages as media of instruction in colonial India for continuing the broad and deep foundations of popular education and where possible to further develop them. However, the course of events took a different direction. All the three Presidencies and two Provinces in course of time converged to the policy adopted in Bengal. Indigenous institutions did not receive, up until 1854, any encouragement from the Company and its officers concentrated their efforts on giving 'a good education' to a few rather than undertaking any direct responsibility for the education of the masses.

#### **Return to the Source: no colonial road to modernity**

Today more than a half century after it changed, or decolonized the situation in Bangladesh as elsewhere in the subcontinent of India 'the education sector' remains all the more the same. The functions of education, to produce a subordinate governing class, as then envisaged by Lord Macaulay, remain unchanged. 'It was all meant,' as Eqbal Ahmad remarked sometime in the 1990s, 'to produce servants of the empire. This we have continued to do to this day.'<sup>8</sup> Expectations, however, would not remain in the same place. The masses mobilized, under necessity no doubt, by some of the few in their struggle against colonial rule, would not yield easily either, thus resulting in what Ahmad calls an 'increasing disjunction between expectation and reality.'

Imperialism today, as reflected in for instance the World Bank guidelines, defines policies or preferences for semi-colonial states. As its policies are 'aimed at producing a relatively more skilled pool of workers and not people who can govern themselves,' it need not worry about the medium of instruction. Since our ruling classes in their power struggle depend more critically on imperial resources than on their own national-popular bases nothing suits them better than English as a medium of instruction. More or less literacy in the English language sells for a higher value in the world market than a more or less higher education in nation formation, a sine qua non for hegemony on the nation.

The historical house that our ruling classes, as partners in empire, have built out of love for imperialism is yet to face its real trial. What it is facing today and what it pleases imperialism to name it as 'fundamentalism,' is only an inadequately radical, and patently wrong kind of national reaction.

The challenge for us, for any exploited people on a world scale, is not only to become modern but to realize that the greatest obstacle to our transition to modernity is posed by imperialism. Our passage to modernity cannot afford to bypass the historical links to our traditions. In founding Khaldunia, a new university in Pakistan's capital of Islamabad, Eqbal Ahmad explains why he invoked a fourteenth century Arab thinker's name. I will for now take a break here with some words of Eqbal's:

'The reason I have picked to name this university after him is my belief that the Muslim people, or for that matter any people in the world, will not make a passage from a pre-industrial traditional culture to a modern culture and economy without finding a linkage between modernity and inherited traditions...'

The subordinate governing classes in Bangladesh once, in its efforts at getting even with another subordinate governing class, found it necessary to mobilize the masses. The Bengali language as a symbol of nationalism came handy. In 1953, a 21 points charter was adopted by the United Front of three Bengali political parties, with which it defeated the Muslim League, Pakistan's founder party in the 1954 general elections of East Bengal.

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<sup>8</sup> Eqbal Ahmad, *ibid.*, p.20.

As everyone in Bangladesh knows, of these twenty-one points, as many as five points relates to Bengali, one point specifically stipulates Bengali as the medium of instruction in higher education. The ruling class's volte-face speaks more than volumes today. The independence attained by a blood bath could not alter the nature of the colonial nature of the national independence. Links with the imperial metropolis, with more than one now, are not only not snapped at all but, on the contrary, strengthened far more. Hence the paradox of two meanings of state language: one real, which is called Bengali, or 'Bangla' pace the Constitution of the Republic, but it means English in practice; the other imaginary. It is called Bangla and even means so.

The disjunction between modernity and tradition in our parts, both inner and outer, is articulated as a disjunction between the signifier and the signified. It however has no clothes on. But there apparently is nobody around to tell the truth. The only hope is that the show is perhaps not yet over.

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## **Education is Light Idealisation of Education and The Hegemony of the Dominant**

**Nasrin Khandoker and Md. Nabil Zuberi**

### **1. Introduction**

"Education is light" - the sentence made up of these three words expresses the idealised aura of education, where education is the symbol of progress, freedom, civilisation and modernity. Consequently, the absence of this idealised education turns into "darkness", i.e. into the obvious, rational explanation of all economical, political, social problems, and ideal education becomes an unquestionable aspiration, an inevitable solution. In this article, this ideal aura of education has been problematic and it has been tried to illustrate how this idealised image of education represents reality as apolitical, impartial and objective, thus carrying the baggage of dominant values, practice and interests by creating de rigueur citizens for neo-liberal state and requisite labour for capitalist system. That is, all the real problems of human life are considered as the problem of not instigating or neglecting this idealised version of education while in truth the problems are residual of this very idealised education. Thus, the subject matter of our present discussion is not only the identification of the shortcomings and problems of the existing education system in a certain reality, but the historical analysis of idealised education as a means of domination. With this intention, this article will revolve around three main issues - in the first part of this article, the discourse of ideal education with its philosophical base in the western, modern thoughts has been analysed to sketch the ways in which this 'enlightened' discourse of western modern education has always been constructed according to the needs of dominant social order and thus has reproduced hegemonic relations. In the second part of the article we will illustrate the role of this idealised education as the triumphant flag-bearer of the dominant order by analysing the evolution of educational system in the context of the political history of this region through the colonial time to the present. And in the last part we will examine that this deconstruction of idealised education can open up some ways ahead for us or not.

### **2. The philosophical base of the modern education**

To the exponents of modern western education the word 'education' is exhibited as a system providing enlightenment. The role of enlightenment that the modern education has undertaken is indicative that the concept embodies all the modernist dualisms that remain active throughout the social, political and economic history.

#### **2.1. Education: means of maintaining order in a hierarchical society**

The basis of idealised education, which seek the universal truth, and good of the society has its roots in the philosophy of Socrates that has been advanced and institutionalised by Plato (Curtis and Boulwood, 1953). In platonic ideas, education has been used as the appropriate means to create the proper citizens of the ideal state and in the very root of this education system, stands the stratified system of separate education for the guardians and the citizens of the state. The trend to discourage ordinary citizens or contenders of the ideal state from critical, dialectical education was established in the foundation of western civilisation by the philosophy of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. Thus, state was endowed with the indispensable and legitimate control of education from the very moment it has been perceived in the origin of western philosophy. But, the Socratic education searching for the truth and good did not emphasise on gender difference in education which turned obvious in the philosophy of Aristotle, who emphasised not only on class difference but also on gender difference to establish and maintain control over the state and thus provided the state with the intellectual legitimacy to essentialise class and gender differences.

Later on, Jacque Rousseau's philosophy of education, although apparently offering a revolutionary criticism of state-controlled regulatory education system, actually brought forward modernist ideas like individualism and experientialism. Rousseau's Emile, in one respect, is an

entity derived from his own experiences, on the other hand, equally establishes himself as an enlightened individual and an ideal European male. In an attempt to establish a successful individual male, Rousseau proposed an education system where he unified nature, educator and material world through which the student could become the representative of an ideal society. The state controlled education system had been criticised by him for failing to recognise and consider the individual as an independent entity. Though individual experience was important to him, he did not consider differences of experience derived from class, race and gender. An affluent and aristocrat family can only provide the environment necessary for Rousseau's ideal education system, and the importance of class in his work became evident here. On the other hand to be a worthy companion for Emile, he tried to educate Sophie as an ideal woman by practising all her 'natural' female characteristics like mildness, weakness, and emotionality (Curtis and Boulton, 1953:15). Thus, through the modernist educational theory of the pathfinders of western enlightenment, class and gender differences became naturalised and normalised, which ideologically contemplated to the economic and political backdrop of capitalism and industrial evaluation.

## **2.2. Education: means of exploitation**

By terming the exploitive reality as an oppressive system, Marxist theorist Paulo Freire's "Pedagogy of the Oppressed" associated education with the concept of class. He considered the banking system of education as the agent of the existing oppressive system and asked to root it out. From the existentialist and revolutionary position, he classified the society in two classes - the oppressors and the oppressed, and considered gaining freedom from dehumanisation process as the true objective of education. In spite of the differences, some essential modernist attributes like progressiveness, liberating, search for universal truths can be discerned in the theories of education these theorists proposed. Even then, important differences exist in the type of society they wanted to build through this ideal education system. It is apparent that class based society is very 'normal' to everybody except Freire. He analysed how the existing education system augments the oppressive reality, and right here his uniqueness from the other theorists becomes clear. But the postmodernist critics of Freire accused his idea of education of obscuring gender, race, and other identities and masking the dynamism of the relationships of dominance and power with it, which will be discussed later in the article.

Thus, throughout the modern times, the institutionalisation process of education remained under the grips of the rulers, tuned with the economic and political hegemony of every era. But, all the modernist theorists of education identified education, as the pathfinder of light, through which will come the freedom of humankind. Contrarily, this very education system, on one hand, reproduced hegemonic relationships in the disguise of enlightenment discourse, and, on the other hand, identified this reproduction as the failure of instigating the ideal education. Although building the ideal society has always been identified as the real aim of education by the modernist theorists of education, but all the time the education system remained engaged in the strengthening and sustaining the exploitive social system. In capitalist economical and political context this role of education has become even more fortified and significant, of which an example is the history of education policy of this region.

## **3. Education in Bangladesh: dominance of the rulers**

One of the most effective mean of the ruling class in sustaining and reproducing the dominant order is education policy. In this section, how education policies have worked as the weapon of the rulers by aligning with the changing political situations has been analysed in the context of Bangladesh.

The three main aims and objectives of the education policy of Bangladesh 2000 as suggested are:

1. To create inspiration in the intellect, activities, and political life of the students for establishing moral, humanist, religious, cultural, and social value system in individual and national life.
2. To encourage students in the spirit of the war of liberation, and to develop patriotism, nationalism, and the virtues of good citizen (such as justice, dutifulness, civility, awareness about human rights, discipline, diligence etc.) in their thoughts and consciousness.

3. To develop an applied, productive, and creative education system and turn students into trained, responsible, and dutiful work force with scientific attitude to bring a change in socio-economic condition of the country.

After its initiation in the colonial period, this central position of education policy, i.e. these ideal aims and objectives of education - is to produce humans of certain/ true values, citizens with certain/ true virtues and manpower with certain/ true skills have not changed or questioned much. That is, the aim of education policy has always been to produce human with certain predetermined values, virtues and skills, not to produce human beings capable of analysing, criticising or protesting the reality. The aim, as reflected in education policy, creates the ideal, apolitical image of education, and reproduction and representation of the reality as impartial, becomes the objective of education that excludes any space for alternative ideas, resistance or change from the part of the students. Thus, education meets the need of existing system, consolidates it and guards the interest of the ruling class.

This part of the article attempts to analyse the education policy of Bangladesh, its historical background, its language, its aim, controversies surrounding it, and the politics of its transformation and reconstruction. In the first part, there will be a brief account of the colonial history of the education policy and in so doing it will be demonstrated that how education policy has turned into the battle ground of the rulers; in the next part it will be shown that how it works as a means to establish dominance and to legitimise and normalise it.

### **3.1. History of education policy in Bangladesh**

The role education policy had played in the diffusion of ideal education in Bangladesh and rulers struggle to maintain control over it have its roots in the influence of colonial policy had over the education of this subcontinent and in blind pursuing them by the rulers. The colonial era can be marked of as the period of rise and expansion of the dominant ruling class and as the time of the rise of education as the mean of consolidating hegemony. During this period, colonial rulers found education as the best mean for protecting their interests and for consolidating and legitimising the British rule, and created an education system in line with their interests that formed the Bengali middle class.

The British ruling class and the native 'gentlemen' class both felt the need of shaping education in order to fulfil their interest and to consolidate their power, in consequence of which emerged the colonial education policy. The British rulers had appointed six education commissions in between 1772 to 1944 whose proposed education policy gradually replaced the decentralised, traditional education system of this region with centralised, state-controlled system. These initial education policies took the pedagogic authority away from the teachers to the textbook, from society to the state and deposed the critical and discussion based enquiry centric education system by memory oriented, repetitive, and examination oriented system. On the other hand, in guise of civilising mission of the natives, the ideal image of education was established, through the techniques like filtration theory or the divide and rule policy, it helped to establish the political interest of the rulers. By creating a subservient class of intellectuals and establishing the supremacy of the British rule, this education system legalises it, obscured their role of rulers and exploiters. The political character of this education policy became apparent from its changing character with the shifts in political situation. In the beginning, the colonial education policy was influenced by the Orientalist drift, and in order to neutralise any possibility of native resistance and the unwillingness to take the responsibility of educating the natives, the British rulers decided to continue with the traditional religion-centric education system. It was maintained by the followers of this doctrine that to aware Indians by teaching them English and western knowledge would be risky, thereby they backed up Sanskrit and Persian as the medium and madrasahs, tolls, makhtabs and pathsalas as the institutions of education. The dominance of this doctrine weakened during the nineteenth century, and anglicists like Grant established the stance that teaching English and science to the natives would be helpful for the British rule as it will prove their supremacy in front of the Indians and create the sense of obligation and respect towards colonial rule in their mind. The materialisation of Grant's ideas took place in the 1913 act, when education of the native became the responsibility of the ruling class. Although, during this period, the curricula, institutions, medium and target of the education came under heated

debate, yet, in the education policy of Macaulay in 1835, the interest and needs of the ruling class prevailed again. Consequently, instead of science, philosophy, and religion, literature recurred prominence as the subject matter of education. Similarly, in determining the recipients of education the filtration theory gained the authoritative position, which provided few rich and high class citizens with the opportunity of education, and English was established as the medium of education instead of Bangla, Persian, or Sanskrit. The political aim of this education policy was reflected in the words of Macaulay - "We need a class of Indians who will work as a medium between the us and the innumerable ruled, a class who will be Indian by blood and colour, but be English in thought, opinion, choice and morality."

In 1853, after the renewal of the charter of the East India Company, it wanted to consolidate its power over India, and intention was reflected in Wood's education policy in 1854. By opposing the filtration theory of Macaulay, Wood proposed to bring common people under the purview of primary education and increase government's control over it, along with introducing higher education with minimal government control and support. But this education policy, which arguably, is the corner stone of the current education system, was deemed to be spawning nationalistic and rebellious feelings with the spreading of higher education among the native Indians. Subsequently, the British rulers felt the necessity of a new education policy and in 1882, the Hunter Commission proposed investment of all state efforts in the spreading of primary education and in 1904, the education policy of Lord Curzon established the control of the state in all stages of primary education. As per these education policies, the main yardstick for the local schools to receive government aid had become the adoption of government prescribed curricula and textbooks. In addition to this, the rigid structure of the curricula and the examination system, the indispensability of textbooks, and the ever-increasing bureaucratisation of schools together ensured a strong state-centric education system at the end of the British rule, which in turn, ensured the control of ruling class on it. Thus, throughout the period, education was controlled and determined by the western liberal trend, the medium of instruction remained English and most of the subject matter came from the western liberal art and literature, which protected the value system, practice and interests of the ruling class.

The post-colonial rulers also incorporated the attitude and practices of the colonial ruling class regarding the education system. In 1947, the provincial government of the East Bengal constituted an education commission headed by Moulana Akram Khan, proposed to give primary education in mother tongue and make religious education compulsory. Furthermore, four more education commissions were formed in this period. Each and every of these commissions had given more emphasis on higher education over the primary and secondary education and on the quantitative aspect or the expansion of education over the qualitative aspects of it than ever, which resulted in a discriminatory and class-divided education system.

In the case of education policy, two aspects subsidised the post-independence period of Bangladesh with its uniqueness; firstly, the internal feud among the different factions of the ruling class over the control of education system, and secondly, the interference of the international donor agencies and states and in the national scale of the non-government organisations. As a result, the education system was continuously transformed particularly in the field of conflicts of opposing interests.

During the post-independence period, education was assigned to central role in building state and national identity, and the aim of the first education policy was set to rectify the faults and shortcomings of the existing education system and to build the country through nationalistic and scientific education. In the first chapter of the report, education had been termed as the weapon for social transformation, for wiping out superstition and corruption for building the character, values and life of an individual. For this aim, education had been proposed to be pro-people, universal and tailored according to the needs of the society. Furthermore, secularism was incorporated in the education policy and assimilation of madrasah system had been proposed. Besides, unification of the different strands of primary system was recommended. Other than this, a few more commissions were formed among which Moffizuddin Commission and Shamsul Haq Commission were the foremost ones. As these education policies were the product of the conflicts of interest among the rulers, the education system and the sect of



national history, religion in it became the subject of conflict and controversy. For example, during the post-independence periods, the issues of gaining independence and the history of building the nation became the centre place of controversy and as the perfect mean to carry the demands, the education policy entered in the political arena. Thus, the description of national history in the textbooks became the topic of political conflict too, and the transformation of textbooks became synonymous with the change in the government. Every government wanted to shape national identity in its own ways, and the education system has got itself confined in the trap of true/fabricated history.

Moreover, the place of religion in the education system also turned in another burning issue of debate, which also got reflected in the way of transforming education policy. The rulers along with other interest groups suffered from 'identity crisis' between liberal, secular identity at one side and the majority or Muslim identity on the other hand, and this dilemma was clear in the role religion played in the education policy. After the independence, during the Mujib era, although the assimilation of madrasah and secularisation of education were proposed, during Zia and Ershad regimes, state centric patronisation of Islam spread madrasah education. At the same time, the liberal elements of the education also survived and education policy became the field of getting the equilibrium between these opposing lines of thoughts. Similarly, different threads (English medium with British curricula, Bengali medium with national curricula, and Arabic medium strongly leaning on religious curricula) in primary education were examples of this conflict of interest between the ruling classes. Although different education policies suggested unifying these into a unidirectional system of education, they were refrained from providing necessary suggestions for doing these.

Therefore, the historical account of this region's education system was filled with instances of considering education as the medium of development, civilisation and progress and of being used to realise the interests of the ruling class. At one hand, by glorifying education, the ruling class was successful in spreading its political and ideological dominance. Education was seen as light, power and as the essence of humanity. On the other, education was established as the panacea of all the problems, and was assumed to play the main role in determining the fate of the nation. In this rhetoric, the backwardness, superstition and repealing of the poor was liable for the curse of the poverty of nation, and the only way left for development is compulsory education for all. Under the disguise the education system carried the baggage of the ruling class, establishes the control of the state and thus, the flag bearer of equity reproduces social and political inequality.

### **3.2. The aims and objectives of education in the current education policy**

As in its predecessors, the idealised image of education is functional in the current policy too, and lays beneath it the interest of the rulers. This idealised image of education represents reality as apolitical and impartial, where the causes and solutions of various social, political and economical problems derive respectively from the absence or the realisation of this 'ideal education'. Consequently, the rhetoric of education as 'compulsory', 'universal' 'right' excludes or hides unequal, discriminatory reality and the role of education in reproducing these and thus protects the interest of the ruler by protecting the status quo.

Accordingly, the current education policy reflects an apolitical image of reality, by emphasising on similarities and by reducing discrimination and differences. Clause 11 of the policy stated the aim of education as to create discrimination-free society by giving every citizen the equal opportunity of education irrespective of locality, social, and economic status; and clause no 12 expresses the need to eliminate gender biases from education. The issue of inequality and discrimination was addressed in these two articles only, where equal opportunity and meritocracy was sought as the solution without referring to the dynamism of inequality and discrimination behind it. On the other hand instead of articulating any actual depiction of inequality, reduced and partial picture, which emphasises on similarity, was presented.

Correspondingly, in addition to reducing discrimination, this education policy obscures the real reasons behind the social, political and economic problem of the country, and maintains education as the only solution of all these problems. In the national plan for education for 2003-2015, the lack of education has been identified as the cause of poverty. Poverty and illiteracy

have been identified as the twin curse of the nation and the cause and effect of one another, freedom from which cycle is not possible without education. On the other hand, the social ties were assumed to be at risk because of the erosion of the value system, and again solution here is the spreading of proper education. Similarly, this lack of education was held responsible for rising levels of crime, violence and teaching democratic values, tolerance through proper education was judged as the solution. Thus, the greater picture of discrimination and inequality and the role of education in reproducing these were excluded in the education policy and conversely, ideal education was projected as the panacea for these problems.

Besides, behind this apolitical projection of reality in the education policy, the ruling classes attempted to realise their interests through it and transforming it into the arena of conflicting interests. In the second clause of the policy, to aware the students in protecting the sovereignty and solidarity of Bangladesh were projected as one of the aims and objectives of education. Similarly, the third clause stated the aim to inspire the students in the ideals of the liberation war and cultivate the qualities of good citizenship in their character, and thoughts and the ninth clause included the aim to develop moral values and sense of national history and cultural heritage in the minds of the pupils. Thus, the national identity, history and the image of ideal citizen offered in the education policy provides the leeway for rulers to control these, consequently carrying their political ideologies and turning in battleground of their interests.

#### **4. Postmodern analysis: knowledge, education and power**

In context of Bangladesh, how the dominant hegemony has been established and how the marginal identity has been excluded and become 'other' under the dominant ideology is comprehensible. But as a result of that analysis, if we try to exclude that hegemony in order to create an ideal education, the endeavour becomes sceptical by the postmodern discursive context. The deconstruction of education acting the role of dominant hegemony may become abortive, as its theoretical pessimism will be discussed now.

Postmodernist arguments dismantle the 'enlightenment' project by attacking the modernist metanarratives and liberalism of positivist knowledge. This attack spreads towards enlightening project of ideal education (McLaren 1994:196). Postmodernist Foucauldian analysis of power that interrelated with knowledge makes it easy to analyse the malfunction of enlightenment project of knowledge. He drug out the 'truth' of knowledge and place it in a discursive context, where specific knowledge becomes 'truth' in a specific situation (Hall; 1997:49).

The concept of 'cultural capital' of postmodernist theorist, Pierre Bourdieu, rejects the monopolized idea of economic capital and proposes dialectic and dynamic notion of capital. Notion of cultural capital can explain the forehand position of higher class pupil in education. In this manner his concept of 'habitus' can analyse the problem more clearly. Bourdieu shows that a child can gain cultural capital being raised in a specific altruistic situation and use that capital for easy inclusion to get other forms of capital. In this manner, Bourdieu explores the concept of social capital that also creates advantages which refers mainly social networks and status. He thinks that each form of capital is transformable to other though he rejects the deterministic relation between those. His analysis endorses the strong theoretical back up to understand the failure of pupil of marginal class in education sector in the context of Bangladesh.

But, these postmodernist analyses befits problematic. The flaws of institutionalised education projects can be understood by deconstruction, though it has been difficult to identify the control of the dominant by the postmodernist power analysis. The relation between education and power can be well identified by the postmodern Power analysis but to locate power in dynamic/interacting context, the dominant power can be invisible.

Second, by using different forms of capital as an analytical tool to understand educational enlightening project, it has become easier to see or treat education in a buyable product of capitalism which to some extent create space for neo-liberal thinking that fits with capitalist structure.

#### **4.1. Beyond postmodern pessimism in search of direction**

Postmodernist analysis vanquished all metanarratives to allow differences and plurality to thrive. It has voiced the unvoiced but then it made Problematic their voices and indeed, the notion of voice. (Kenway; 1995:50). Thus to reject the idea of categorised dominant-subordinate relation,

inequality becomes invisible and leaves no space to resist.

In that perplexing context, pedagogical research problematises postmodern thinking as monolithic and differences in that theoretical position becomes considerable. Peter McLaren (1994:194) distinguishes between two theoretical strands in postmodernism. The first is 'ludic postmodernism' (e.g. Lyotard, Derrida, Baudrillard) that focuses on the combinatory potentials of signs in the production of meaning and occupies itself with a reality that is constituted by the continual playfulness of the signifier and the heterogeneity of difference (McLaren; 1994:524). On the other hand, to McLaren, Resistance postmodernism is not solely based on a textual theory of differences but rather on one that is social and historical. Resistance or critical postmodernism does not abandon the undecidability or contingency of the social altogether; rather, the undecidability of history is understood as related to class struggle, the institutionalisation of asymmetrical relations of power are contested by different groups (Zavarzadeh and Morton 1991; Girox 1992; McLaren and Hammer 1989; Kenway 1995). This approach can identify or at least search pedagogical aim for educational policy in an aimless post-modern world. According to Girox, the aims of post-modern pedagogy are -

1. Education must be understood as the production of identities in a relation to the ordering, representation, and legitimation of specific forms of knowledge and power.
2. Education must consider ethics that is not a matter of individual choice or relativism but a social discourse that refuses to accept needless human sufferings and exploitation.
3. Critical pedagogy needs to focus on the issue of differences in an ethically challenging and politically transformative way.
4. Critical pedagogy needs a language that allows for competing solidarities and political vocabularies that does not reduce the issues of power, justice, struggle, and inequality to a single script, a master narrative that suppresses the contingent, the historical, and the everyday as serious objects of study.
5. This pedagogy must be reclaimed as a cultural politics and a form of social-memory.
6. The enlightenment notion of reason needs to be reformulated within a critical pedagogy where reason implicates and is implicated in the intersection of power.
7. Critical pedagogy needs to regain a sense of alternatives by combining a language of critique and possibility, notion of differences of postmodernism and notion of politics in feminism. Within this combination identity can be analysed in the context of sexism, racism and class exploitation. (Girox;1992:44).

The notion of critical pedagogy proposed by Girox inspires us to look back to the 'pedagogy of oppressed' of Freire. He proposed a pedagogy that ensures freedom of all mankind. His pedagogy does not help us to include differences but by overemphasise of differences in post-modern analysis when became ineffective to understand discrimination than determination of pedagogical objectives becomes difficult. In that situation the notion of critical pedagogy helps us to find a way to redefine educational objectives within the postmodern analytical strength.

## 5. Conclusion

At this moment, analysing education policy of Bangladesh, in the context of making 'other', exclusion of marginal, and in the sphere of identity politics we want to make clear our position toward redefining the objectives of education policy, these are -

1. We propose to deconstruct of enlightening image of education in the sphere of all kinds of dominant power relation. And this must be located within the educational policy.
2. Not only to problematise idealisation of education, but to keep the path open to deal the risk of treating education as capital only can be helpful to the hegemony of the dominant. Thus, in the education policy, the relation between 'other' and 'marginals' with the dominant will be emphasised. And the main objectives of educational policy will be the struggle to create an ideology of just society.

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## **Amar Boi; Whose Book? Whose educational right?? A marginal View on the dominating education system and educational right\***

**Pavel Partha**

আমার যেতে ইচ্ছে করে  
নদীটির ওই পারে  
যেথায় ধারে ধারে  
বাঁশের খোঁটায় ডিঙি নৌকো  
বাঁধা সারে সারে।  
মা, যদি হও রাজি,  
বড় হলে আমি হব খেয়াঘাটের মাঝি<sup>1</sup>।

### **Let today's talk start with a question, impudent.**

Do we want to be a boatman after we have finished our study?

Do our educational institutes have us dreamt of a boatman (whom Tagore mentions in a folk-rhyme)? Do (our) families, society and the state, belonging to the existing educational structure, consider being a boatman to be an 'educated/schooled one'? Can one, studying within the conventional educational system, somehow, imagine becoming a boatman? Does the existing structure encourage becoming a boatman? If not, then why, at the very beginning of our existing structural educational surroundings, have we been manifesting the realm of that conventional structured study, whispering an 'illusive' and 'seemingly wrong' musing? This manifestation exposes the inevitable masterly/ dominating/discourse like character of our existing education system where, in fact, a boatman, by any means, is not considered to be an 'educated/schooled one' or even our educational surroundings dares not to be demonstrated through the world of psychic realization of a boatman. This (not) daring elucidates the power practice/domination of the existing education structure where domain of the perception of the mass and their circumference of structural study get perpetually marginalized.

Our today's talk is likely to initially introduce how the existing education system approaches the becoming or not becoming a boatman and how it conceals the becoming of a boatman; or to say more directly, we mean to talk about the form of the marginalization of folk perception and folk life-scope. We have selected 'Amar Bangla Boi: Tritio Bhag' (My Bengali Book: Book three), the textbook for class three approved by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board of The Republic of Bangladesh as the concern of our field of investigation. We are considering the state's first-ever National Education Policy 2000 as the central concern of the entire discussion. The discussion proceeds through the traditional soiree narrative style of this folk settlement.

Among the 68000 villages, we are getting to the village, namely 'Hatkhola'<sup>2</sup>. We are concerned of the diversity of the life style of plain and mountain. The Chakmas' 'adam', the Shaontals' 'ato', the Mandis' 'sang', the Kasias' 'punji', the Lemangs' 'nong', the Bedes' 'fleet' or the Bengalis' 'village' are different. We are conscious about the non-uniformity of the life style of the settlements and the people. We also assert without any hesitation that, no national educational exertion has been executed regarding the entire range of surroundings and the variation of life style. According to the governmental survey, Bangladesh contains 2,82,806 educational institutes<sup>3</sup>. In such a school, belonging to the village Hatkhola, studies Meghna<sup>4</sup> in class three. We are not willing to keep back the class-order-family-genus-species or racial/sexual identity of

\* Translated by Achintya Das from original article written in Bengali

1 See: 'Majhi': Rabindranth Tagore, p10: Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008.

2 Brishtir Choda', Farrukh Ahmed, p17, Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008. Suppose, the name of the village is from the text.

3 The 'Dailiy Prothom Alo'. Dhaka, 21 February 2008

4 see: 'Meghna', pp37-39, Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008. In this story, there is a conversation between a class three girl named Meghna and her mother. Here a form of oral lessoning is exposed through this conversation.

hers. We are keeping in consideration of the entire variation of the range of the races through the state along with Bengali and "koch-Hajong-Dalu-Vishnupriya Manipuri-Moi Toi Monipuri-Laleng-Chakma-Tripura-Rakhain-Mrainma-Kasi-Mandi-Banai-Khadia-Mahali-Lusai-Mro-Pankho-Bom-Munda-Lengam-Saontal-Onraon-Bhumij-Deshwali-Karmokar-Hodi-Rajbangshi-Kshatriobarman-Pangan-Khumi-Khiang-Kando". Lulling to sleep her daughter and picking lice from her hair, mother of Meghna describes the long river channel Meghna. The description of the river emerges through this chat. Our education system has never considered this folk oral style of giving lesson under its policy. Meghna is the 'sareng' (boatswain) of our present talk, just as a boatswain who steers a boat in an unfathomable sea (it does not necessarily mean that we are claiming the form of the talk to be an extreme and unique one).

গাঁয়ের নামটি হাটখোলা,  
বিষটি বাদল দেয় দোলা,  
রাখাল ছেলে মেঘ দেখে,  
যায় দাঁড়িয়ে পথ-ভোলা।  
মেঘের আঁধার মন টানে,  
যায় সে ছুটে কোনখানে,  
আউশ ধানের মাঠ ছেড়ে,  
আমন ধানের দেশ পানে<sup>5</sup>।

লাঙল কাঁধে ফেলে,  
জাল টেনে যায় জেলে,  
গরু মহিষ সাঁতরে নিয়ে  
যায় রাখালের ছেলে<sup>6</sup>।

Honorable readers, viewers and audience! Now we are getting prepared to throw another direct question. Can you say what the son of the cowherd does<sup>7</sup>? The textbook for class three approved by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board of The Republic of Bangladesh lets us know that the son of the cowherd, (We acknowledge that our texts retain the masculine shock and construct the curriculum male shaped. Nevertheless, as it is Meghna who guides the talk, let us seemingly say the surroundings of a boy and a girl is unique; at least in contrast to a cowboy) the cowboy loses his way and gets stopped by the sight of the cloud, and leads the cattle cross the river. Are we keen to study the influence of place on the psychology of 'a cowboy' here? Can we consider this stopping by the sight the cloud or leading the cattle cross the river to be part of our education system? We mean, can we include the everyday experience of the local folk to our text and education media with recognition and importance?

We know that, our existing education system ignores the folk experience and perception; it does not treat it as a continuation of any branch of knowledge. This very unquestioned process of our existing education system tends to have the masterly principle of the state shape that of individuals. Psychologically we are made a distinct 'learned' and 'educated' ones by the exposure of the 'sympathetic screams' like 'education for all' or 'education is not facility, its your right', and by the imposition of the unequal text and study of the power structure on us. It is impossible for our educational surroundings; belonging to the masterly system, to be described through the psychic domain of 'a cowboy', for the unquestioned curriculum of the power structure stops the chance as it creates a continuous controlled-state-inducement for our thoughts and neural process. Here, the psychic realization and the lifestyle of a cowboy, as well as folk perception get concealed very clearly.

The importance of including the folk experience to education activities and to development projects, and constructing the foundation of education system have been a matter of dispute for long. Conventional history is merely of power, blood shed-gun powder-weapons-records, and of

5 Brishtir Choda', Farrukh Ahmed, p17, Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008.

6 See: 'Majhi': Rabindranth Tagore, p10: Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008.

7 See: 'Majhi': Rabindranth Tagore, p10: Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008. In the question no. 6 of the exercise part of this rhyme, it is asked what the son of the cowherd does. We are presenting that question from the psychology of Meghna.

category where the spontaneous intonation and style of the mass remain obscure. Stability of no sort can reign until the authentic historical representation of the mass gets included to the systemic study structure; nor any political passant-revolt or a spontaneous local resistance can bring that stability. Even, when 'stable development', 'advanced education', 'partnership plan' or affairs of that sort get included to the progressive trend or current structure of a state, the attachment of folk perception deserves a free access to the zone. Various arguments do exist in different levels of knowledge regarding the acceptance and rejection of folk experience. But it is extremely exposed and proved that, mass' domestic life-sketch that is historical non-commercial and flexible in response to the change of place, is oppressed without being questioned and it is constantly tried to be suppressed under the existing system shaped by power structure. Besides, another kind of corporate oppression is kept active by kidnapping and looting that very folk experience. Somehow, one or another company approaches a commercial offer to the mass of the very property looted from them. Thus, the worldwide kidnapping of folk experience is going on; the perception of the mass is becoming some 'business secret' of some company. State is legitimating the process of corporate looting through the structured policy. But what a pity! There is no recognition of this folk perception by the state, nor is any entry to the domain of education. While talking about the marginalization of the folk perception by the existing education system, we are conscious about the inter-linkage of knowledge, power and the existing education system. Many a man thinks that, at on one hand, 'native label' makes the knowledge a respect-worthy one, but at the same time, it causes a moral mistake as well, because it facilitates a threat to say, 'it is not a science'<sup>8</sup>. If the main concern is the development of the poor, then, why to fight with folk or scientific knowledge? The way the cultures, through the world, are losing variety by the inspiration of globalization and of the construction of modern state-nation, has been a threat for the folk mass and their remote lifestyle and cultural habitation. And this will sufficiently cause the decay of folk perception. Those who are eagerly to restore the variety of the means of knowledge, are supposed to repair the national policy that the local folk itself can determine its consequence. This is the genuine method of preserving the folk perception<sup>9</sup>.

Now, our Meghna, of class three, is let to know by the mandatory study determined by the state (does 'compulsory primary education', at the same time, impels us accept the existing study!), what village and agriculture-life mean. But she does fail to assimilate the study to her family, locality or the state. If someone wants to be 'learned and schooled' by the very text we are supposed to go through, the existing system resists in that case; it becomes the master then. The existing state-policy strengthens and legitimates that forcing. At this stage of our talk, we are going right to National Education Policy 2000. We are willing to examine the National Education Policy through the text of Meghna; to scan it by the study-surrounding of the historical folk life-sketch of Meghna.

In the year of 1974, Qudrat-E-Khuda Education Commission was built. It was the first organized national endeavor regarding the education policy. Afterwards, the government builds another committee imposing the responsibility of making the recommendation for education policy, in 1997. Through an office order regarding the education policy (adm: 1/mis-5/96/155-edu), on 14 January 1997, Education Ministry of the Republic of Bangladesh announces the education policy committee to submit the complete education policy to the government by 30 April 1997. Electing the former adviser professor M. Samsul Haq as the chairman, the education committee of 56 members, submits a draft of education policy to the government in September 1997. In order to make the draft of education policy and to demonstrate it, an education committee is built once again in 1998. This committee makes the final draft of education policy adding and erasing the previous proposals and arguments, and by this very draft, for the first time, 'National Education Policy 2000' gets accepted and allowed by the state<sup>10</sup>.

In the introduction to the education policy, it is mentioned that, the current world is swift and rapid changing, the motion of it is rushing, and its economic and other conventions are extremely competitive. Current process of globalization and the unbelievable revolutionary exposure of

<sup>8</sup> Siloto Paul.1408, Indegenous Knowledge, Science and Poor People. Translation,; Mahbub Alam, Trinomul Uddog;VI-2, Issue-4, editor-Sukanta Senw, BARCIK

<sup>9</sup> Agaroal Arun. 2001, Indegenous Knowledge, Scientific Knowledge: Some Analtical Comment, Translation,; Sumon Rahman, Trinomul Uddog;VI-3, Issue-1, editor-Sukanta Senw, BARCIK.

<sup>10</sup> National Education Policy 2000, Education Ministry, The Republic of Bangladesh.

science and technology have made the world more challenging to a developing country like Bangladesh. In a world of that sort, 'survival of the fittest' is not merely the imagination of a scientist, rather a crucial fact. Not only to keep pace with this rushing world, but also to reign with a bold position, we have to be powerful in education and construct a strong backbone. But where will that strength, that ability and that determination come from? Surely our mass will be the source of that power. That mass has been the pioneer of every battle, sacrifice and movement. They have to be made active in the challenge of building a nation<sup>11</sup>.

National Education Policy 2000, consisting of 5 attachments, 28 chapters and 60 pages, in spite of having talked of various existing education structures and forms, does not tend to consider the folk experience<sup>12</sup>. Though it has had talk in separate chapters about pre-primary, primary, public and semi-conventional education, secondary, vocational and technical, 'madrasa', religious and moral, higher, engineering, medical service and health, science, computer science and information technology, business, agriculture, art, law, women study, special courses, health and physical, scout and girls' guide, library science, it has not mentioned a single speech concerning the folk knowledge. Even there is no entry of this folk trend of knowledge in the paragraphs on curriculum, syllabus and text. Nevertheless, it is mentioned in the education policy that, the mass people is the source of power. But we can see the flavor of mastery, the credit of gunpowder and the intelligible forcing in the patterns that the existing structure inspire concealing the mass' domain of own perception.

On the basis of agricultural environment, Bangladesh has been divided into 30 main agricultural zones, 88 sub-agricultural zones and 535 local agricultural zones<sup>13</sup>. Lifestyle of the people of Bangladesh gets circled within this local environment and surroundings. We have not so far seen such an education effort that has made the curriculum, syllabus and text that attempt a considerable consideration of the agricultural environment of the country. Existing education policy has not acknowledged the colorful existence and response of the mass' lifestyle as well. But how is it possible that a 'mro child' of Bandarban or some 'saontal' of Varendra or some 'rakhain' of coastal belt, or some Bengali of marshland, or a child of Madhupur forest will get learned and literate through the same text and study determined by the state, ignoring the variety of their lifestyle and landscape?

Will the knowledge of 'listening to the arrival of harvest' not get its place in our education structure?

*Bangladesh is our country. Bangladesh is the country for all; for the Hindu, the Muslim, the Bouddha, and the Christian. The land of Bangladesh is more pure than gold. Poets and artists have called this land 'kajol mati'. This land is so much fertile. This soil gets muddy and thick as is wet with rainwater. And then the land invites the harvest. By the time, the farmers get overjoyed with sowing seeds. Most of the people of Bangladesh live in village. They live an uncomplicated life in the open air of nature. The majority live in plain land between the sea and the hill. In the hilly zone, there live the 'pahari'<sup>14</sup>.*

Honorable readers, viewers and audience! Come on. At this stage of our talk, you too read the Bengali textbook for class three and National Education Policy 2000. Keep in mind of the reality of Bangladesh, corporate market, masculine mastery, forcible occupation and eviction in guise of development, armed exposure, and our country girl Meghna who prolongs our today's talk so far. We want to throw the question directly-why has this text been selected for us which says that our soil is 'kajol mati', here the soil invites the harvest? We are eagerly to present the person who can listen to that invitation. If our farmers can hear the invitation through their own perception, then why are we making the un/necessary texts in our educational institutions to make the invitation intelligible? Can these texts make one prepared for listening to and understanding the invitation for the harvest? We are claiming directly that those cannot. Yes those cannot. Existing education system does not teach how to listen to the invitation for the harvest; rather it teaches how to pour the exact degree of

11 National Education Policy 2000, Education Ministry, The Republic of Bangladesh.

12 National Education Policy 2000, Education Ministry, The Republic of Bangladesh.

13 Brammer, H; Antoine, J; Kassam, A.h & Velthuisen, H.T. 1988, Land resources appraisal of Bangladesh for Agricultural Development: Agroecological regions of Bangladesh, Report-2, United nations development program & Food and agriculture organization of the United Nations.

14 See: 'Bangladesh'. Pp6-8: Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008.



chemicals into the soil, which soil is to be dug for deep watering, and how to pour the massive quantity of poison into the soil. Existing education system has us accustomed to the farming of the commercial crops like the corporate hybrid gm harvest. And it gets clear that, existing education system, without making us prepared for listening to the invitation for the harvest, gradually has us grow a loyal slave to an unquestioned corporate market. The meaning of the acceptance of this corporate forcing in the 'compulsory' fashion is getting 'learned and schooled' through the conventional process belonging to the existing system.

*Jhuma, there are many kinds of 'pitha' in Bangladesh, and your mother knows every one. The rice of 'Aman' is harvested by the end of the month of 'Agrahayana' or at the beginning of the month of 'Poush'. During this time, new rice is got to the homage. The rice of 'Atap' has to be powdered to make 'pitha'. 'Pithas' of different tastes are made of this powder. Some 'pithas' are made from the heat of vapor; some are to be fried into soil. Bangladesh is a land of 'pitha-puli'. The 'pithas' are named different in different places. In Bangladesh, the 'pithas' are made all the year round<sup>15</sup>.*

Meghna, the 'sareng' of our today's talk, now claims to have enjoyed 'pitha'. She has read about the 'chitui piha', 'patisapta', 'dudhpuli', 'chandrapuli', 'kshirpuli', 'narkelpuli', 'nakshipuli', 'sajnepata', 'padmadighee', 'morgjhuti', and the 'semaipitha' in books<sup>16</sup>. We are presenting a reality with a consciousness of the corporate effort of the state tempting to hide the food variety of the country. Our Meghna, while growing up, finds herself surrounded by pizza from pizza hut, moovenpick's ice cream, kfc's fried chicken, mcdonald's potato French fry, Coca-Cola, Pepsi and the summon of their market. Then, why don't we inspire Meghna to study herself through that very reality? Here, we are not extending our talk; just willing to say directly that, the education activity we have continuously been retaining for our new generation concealing the existing reality and market, perhaps, somehow grows a tormentor. Haven't the texts we have been upholding for our children hiding the vast difference between the systemic study and the real life situation, been 'torturing' for long? Let us question without any hesitation if we have any text with a harmony with the institution and the real life-sketch. Then why are we having our children deceived and bound with an entirely vacuumed and worthless (we have used the word deliberately with much thinking, we know how to compose 'worth', it derives and get demonstrated from the profound essence of life) compulsory text and study? And so this compulsory distinctive study system and policy operate a differential psycho-domain; retain the class discrimination and conflict. So we teach Meghna, in fact, we force her to learn that, 'pahadi'<sup>17</sup> means the person living in hill or the 'hargila' bird looks ugly<sup>18</sup>. The psychology gets built up by the existing education system can never treat the folk perception to be an important one. So it remains impossible for someone 'schooled' through the existing system to include the folk perception to the education policy, because this is the very unquestioned process of our existing education system and method.

এক হয়ে সব শমিক কিষাণ  
ওড়ায় যাদের বিজয় নিশান  
ইতিহাসের সোনার পাতায়  
ওরাই আগে গণ্য<sup>19</sup>।

We have learnt the rhyme from Meghna; it belongs to her Bengali textbook. Now next to the end of our talk, we are throwing another question to give a shock to our drowsiness. Once again that old question: should we memorize or acquire? National Education Policy 2000 describes, at the very beginning, the necessity of creating enthusiasm in students' intellect, activity and practical

15 See: 'chithi', a letter to her father from Jahanara from Rangpur. P13, Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008.

16 See: 'chithi', a letter to her father from Jahanara from Rangpur. P13, Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008.

17 See: 'Bangladesh'. Pp6-8: Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008. We know that, the meaning of the term 'pahadi', within the term between the primitive objects and the out corner settlers of the hill tracks of Chittagong is being taught in class three, can inspire the existing conflict in that area or can create the legal base of conflict. Today, many a Bengali settles in hill tracks. Does it suggest them to be 'pahadi'? Our texts and study should be more authentic and tolerant to have the ability to touch the vast variety of arguments.

18 See: 'chithi', a letter to her father from Jahanara. P13, Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008. Here, after having watched the zoo, Jahanara writes to her father that the 'hadgila' bird looks ugly and the 'madantak' bird has not been pleasant at all to her.

19 See 'Muktisena, Sukumar Barua, p25, Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008.

life to establish the moral, human, cultural, social and religious values in the national and personal life as the aim of education<sup>20</sup>. If we want to create the real 'enthusiasm', is it ever possible ignoring the folk intellectual perseverance? It's impossible. Then why are we repeatedly taught through the persuasive language like that of an insisting advertisement that, the peasants will be counted with preference in the pages of history? Could we so far be able to create that space for the peasants? Then is there really any mentality of counting the peasants within our education system? It will not be mistaken to negate the possibility directly, for it has no structural evidence. How can the education system, which cannot include the experience of the peasants acquired through the years, speak for 'values'? This 'value', in guise of the term 'value', retains the class discrimination and constant masterly forcing. When the ceaseless resistance of the mass questions or resists against that masterly system, the principle of our oppressive education system says, 'education does not concern politics'.

We are very close to the end. Meghna also is not available for so long. We are optimistic that, state will change its attitude; it will build the education system through the base of the mass' own intellectual world where the mass themselves, creating the text and study from the historical assessment of their daily life, will make the education really public. In the last paragraph of the introduction to the National Education Policy, it is mentioned that, in this rapid changing world, no policy is considered to be forever, constant, and fixed, nor should be. Like other policies, the education policy also will deserve the chance to be modified in accordance with the necessity of time and situation; the management for analyzing will be afforded to lead the greater and entire aim step forward<sup>21</sup>. The family of Meghna, her village, state, the people and their unique intellectual variety of knowledge will be included to the education policy of the state, we dream. The body of the existing education system reminds repeatedly of the colonial discourse started by the loud exposure of education. We believe that the mass' collective resistance shall make this inevitable masterly institutional colony meet its decay, and will construct the real 'education for all'.

বাবুই পাখিরে ডাকি, বলিছে চড়াই,  
“কুঁড়ে ঘরে থাকি কর শিল্পের বড়াই,  
আমি থাকি মহাসুখে অট্টালিকা পরে  
তুমি কত কষ্ট পাও রোদ, বৃষ্টি, ঝড়ে।”  
বাবুই হাসিয়া কহে, ‘সন্দেহ কি তায়?  
কষ্ট পাই, তবু থাকি নিজের বাসায়।  
পাকা হোক, তবু ভাই, পরেরও বাসা,  
নিজ হাতে গড়া মোর কাঁচা ঘর, খাসা<sup>22</sup>।

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20 National Education Policy 2000, Introduction, Education Ministry, The Republic of Bangladesh

21 National Education Policy 2000, Introduction, Education Ministry, The Republic of Bangladesh

22 See Shadhinatar Shukh, Rajanikanta Sen, p25, Amar Bangla Boi, Tritio Bhag, National Textbook Board, Dhaka, for the education year of 2006, this addition continues till now in 2008.

## **It is both ways a danger; to be educated and not to be educated: education, racial domination and transformation<sup>1</sup>**

**Shashwati Dewan and Syeed Ferdous**

### **1. Education, its detrimental and beneficiary effects**

Education has both its detrimental and beneficiary effects for the ethnic community. There are several reasons for saying that illiteracy is dangerous. The first reason is quiet obvious. In our contemporary world education is directly related to earning a living. Even if the second reason is comparatively complicated, it is quiet comprehensible. Also in materialist term, education has immense symbolic significance. Related terms like progress, modernism, and civilization are now interchangeable with education. In our world education, in other words knowledge and institutional practice of knowledge are natural and desirable. It thought to be a ladder to success. Therefore it is impossible for one to even think of not educating oneself. First of all, one will always fear that s/he can never be successful without education. Secondly, education is also a cultural capital, which is a sign of a modern man's honor, it signifies his taste, and symbolically represents his enlightenment. It is still a matter of regret that the Indian Muslims did not accept the English education system during the English colonial period, which is the main reason for them to lag behind. For similar reasons the ethnic community of Bangladesh find themselves lagging behind because of illiteracy. This becomes evident from the research done on education system in the hill tracts of Chittagong. The obstacles and problems related to education was the main concern of the researchers (Khisha .1979, Khisha 2007). Besides this, some steps were taken to improve the education facilities there (Chakma 1998, Chakma 2007). In most cases the lack of education is the main reason behind a society's rearward development. Thus, it can be said that the ethnic people are well aware of the disadvantages of not being educated. With a little financial sufficiency everyone tries his or her best to continue schooling. That is why, in our understanding, illiteracy or regression of education is not the real danger for the ethnic community; rather learning is the major problem. Most people fail to see what they risk losing through education. And even if one recognizes this fact, s/he has no other alternative but to submit or merge with the trend. That is why I feel that most researchers are less concerned about how inclusion of the hill tracts within the traditional education system of Bangladeshis can destroy their thought process and practices.

This writing is based on interviews with university students, school teachers and guardians from ethnic communities. from this interview we have concentrated on two important issues. First, how the ethnic students experience domination through education. Second, how the education system is related to their social transformation and what will be its ultimate consequence. We can see that, through our learning process the ethnic community is subjected to domination. So, we have asked ourselves if there is a way for the ethnic community to retreat from this education system; or is this floating existence the ultimate situation for these people who have no other option.

### **2. Domination in Education System**

French Marxist - Anthropologist Morris Godlier spoke about the expansion of western education in the colonial societies. According to him the spread of western education through the expansion of missionary- schools tended to undermine the local festivals and believes as primitive and negative, which was part of the education system. As a result the ethnic community was obstructed from gaining knowledge through their own traditional education process. There are numerous examples of how these ethnic communities face obstacles in every sphere of their education. The university students pointed out how domination is practiced in every layer of the education system. Several other issues have also surfaced from this interview as well as the influence of dominant language and cultural practices in the education system and how this influence results into the gradual erosion of

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Arpana Awwal from original article written in Bengali.

their own education system; the mocked representation of the ethnic communities and the diversity of their experiences of discrimination in class rooms due to their ethnic identity.

### **2.1 The domination of language and culture in Education Curriculum and Medium**

Once the Bengalis had fought for the right of their mother-language. Other racial languages become marginalized as Bangla become the mother-tongue of Bangladesh. Gradually Bangla is replacing English in offices, courts, bureaucracies; but there is no acceptance of the ethnic languages there. Similarly; even though different international constitutions had already given recognition to the right of education through one's own mother tongue even before 21<sup>st</sup> February 1999, when the day was declared 'International Language Day' (Mourom, 2006); there is no place for racial languages in schools, colleges, or universities. Despite the fact that it was proposed, that every ethnic community should be given the right to at least complete their primary education in their respective mother tongues, this proposal has never been implemented. Through our education system the ethnic communities have become entangled with Bangla language. Leaving the familiar world of their mother tongue, it becomes difficult for the ethnic students to adapt themselves to their education system in Bangla language.

This is only a matter of language learning. Other things, like the contexts of topics presented in the books and communicating with the teachers are also related. Sometimes the ethnic students have to study things they have no experience or idea of. One of the ethnic students told us that during childhood, he memorized the whole book without being able to understand the subject matter. Either they would clarify certain things they didn't understand from private tutors or by looking at the illustrations in the book. For example 'আমাদের ছোট নদী চলে বাঁকে বাঁকে' is a very well-known verse in Bangla language. But since the student was unfamiliar with certain Bangla phrases, he had to understand the phrase 'বাঁকে বাঁকে' by looking at the picture. In the same way the student was unable to understand the verse. 'বিশ বাগানের মাথার উপর চাঁদ উঠেছে এ' and 'বাপুরাম সাপুরে'. He said, "I wondered, what 'সাপুরে' meant. Despite the fact that there were ethnic teacher in the school, I did not feel like inquiring about these meanings, because, we had to communicate in Bangla with the teachers, and any mistake we made would make us the laughing stock of the class. We felt ashamed, inertia, fear, and ect. due to all this. Therefore we did not communicate much with the teachers." We were informed that the case was similar for students in higher level education as well; "We had to first arrange our thoughts before actually talking to the teachers. Despite the efforts, we often made mistakes. For this reason, the ethnic students remain distant from the teachers." The ethnic students believe that the proper development of their mind and intellect does not take place due to their education in Bangla, which is a second language. In reference to this context another student said, "I remember getting less grades while studying in sixth standard. I jokingly told my Bengali friend 'If we could also give our exams in our mother tongue like you do, then we would have scored better grades than you.'"

### **2.2. Gradual Erosion of own Lessons or Education system**

In pre-colonial period, for self-refinement, most ethnic people studied their own alphabets and language either at home or at a teacher's place. But after the British colonization their traditional education system completely collapsed. The researched ethnic communities have their own language, their own learning system. But as time passes, due to disregard and carelessness their language and learning system is either lost or on its way to extinction. On one hand there is the pressure of studying under the national curriculum in Bangla, then on the other hand there is the necessity of studying English books for the language's international significance, then again there is the compulsion of religious books, but no steps have been taken to include the study of ethnic language for these ethnic communities. Due to our nation's neglects and inattention, the researched communities are not familiar with their own alphabets and their own learning system. When the ethnic student studying in universities is questioned by his fellow classmates on this regard, he doesn't have an answer which makes him more embarrassed. During school years many students did not even know that there is a subject in ethnic language. Others have realized this after a long time. Some have taken their ethnic education from the local elders. The local physicians always use their mother tongue in medical practice. Then again there are families where the grandmother always encourages the children to learn their own alphabets. Being inspired many had learnt these alphabets during school lives and had also

written down their names on books is their own mother tongue. But due to the lack of practice in later life, this initiation goes in vain.

### **2.3. Mocking Representation in Books**

Probably racial marginalization is most evident through the mocking representation in primary level education books. But the strangest thing is that, it adds to the confusion when ethnic students read these degrading and false descriptions about themselves. Later on during higher education they have to face embracing questions from their Bengali friends like, "Do you eat snakes and frogs? " Do you live in caves?". Then they learn that their friends have gathered these ideas from books.

But the matter is different for the ethnic students growing up in the urban locations. One such person told us "I still remember facing these type of questions from the Bengali class mates in fourth standard." Instantly, he went home to his mother and inquired about the matter. Some already have an idea all this from school life because of an association with political originations. They try to relate themselves with the description about themselves portrayed in the books and wonder, 'We are not filthy, we do not wear minimal clothes, nor do we live in caves! Then why are we represented like this?

Others try to detect the politics behind such representation. They say that the motive at the dominant Bengalis is to prove their 'superiority' against the Bangladeshi ethnic communities by presenting them in a degrading manner. They believe that the ethnic communities can be presented in a different light by reflecting on their cultivation process, hand loom practice, traditional sports, and cultural festivals; rather than highlighting on demeaning false information like, "Ethnic people feed on snakes and frogs." Others feel that their ethnic identity can be depicted through the beauty of their region and the diversity of their cultural practice, instead of the degrading descriptions.

### **2.4. Subject to regular Discrimination in Institutions and classrooms**

Besides hilly regions, ethnic students studying in other parts of the country are subject to discrimination by people engaged in administrative jobs in educational institutes. At the same time majority of the Bengali students nurture aggressive feelings of various levels, against the ethnic students. One individual, who was the only ethnic student in a school situated in Dhaka, had experienced similar aggressions; the school head master could not stand him. The school head master would not accept the student's greetings and avoid his answers in the class. Some teachers would comment "From where did this hilly creature come to pollute our environment?"

But, of course, not all the teachers were like this. At one stage the head - master decided to expel the student on baseless illogical ground. The reason shown behind the decision was that the student hung a poster of Bangobondhu in his hostel room and had also thrown paper from the window. The head-master screamed at the child's parents; who had come to talk on this matter; saying "Where did this savage, filthy hilly person come from? What does he want? Throw him out!" With great regrets the student said, "It is a matter of great pain that, in an educational institute like school, not only me but also my parent is humiliated for belonging to an ethnic tribe." Ethnic students have to face similar discriminations even in higher educational institutes like the university. "Did you get into the university through the quota" is a question the ethnic students have to face very often from the teachers. These questions are asked on baseless, pre-existing doubt about ethnic student's ability. Some ethnic student's feel that their scores are determined by their identity and name an exam sheet. The teachers already have a presumption like, "How is it possible for an ethnic student to do well?" Similar attitudes are expressed by Bengali students against the ethnic students, "Many Bengali students behave as if we are not the citizens of this country." Besides these, there are complains that even the school employees discriminate the ethnic students. The ethnic students complain that their work is not given the same significance by the employees which is given to the same work of a Bengali student.

First, there is the obstacle of language, and on top that, to make matters worse, there are these regular discriminating behaviors. Gradually the marginalized ethnic students lose the inspiration and will power to study. Even the ethnic teachers complain that the ethnic students always sit in the back bench; they flee at the sight of the teachers, let alone make any question. Such

suppressive realities lead to low esteem about the 'self'. The ethnic teachers comment, 'Fear, inertia are hereditary qualities of ethnic students'

To introduce the issue of 'power' within the education system, we have discussed education related thoughts and theories of contemporary theorists which are relevant to this research work. For example, according to the Structuralist-Marxists, education is an ideological weapon which controls how we look at the world, and conditions us to see particular things as 'natural' and 'normal' (Kemmis, 1989). School is a place where servitude to principals are created. Rather than questioning the right to domination, schools actually reproduce the unequal relationships (ethnic-bengali) (Scrace, 1993). According to the contemporary anthropologist Bourdieu (1977), we are given the idea that school education is neutral to scholarly achievements, equal rights, etc. But since education is an application of the dominant cultural system, one's intellect and excellence is judged through the lens of the dominant culture. That is why the difference in talent is directly related to cultural capital, not intellect, industry and the like. A student recollects one of his childhood memories when he came to Rangamati from his village and got admitted in standard six. There all the teachers and students addressed him as 'stupid'. Why he failed to score a good result is based on his talent, excellence and industry. But in fact the education system is based according to the dominant culture, where the ethnic students are situated in the margin and fail to score a good result. In this way the school system reproduces discrimination through legal procedures (Bourdieu, 1977). For these reasons, the 'power' related ideas of contemporary theorists are relevant to the learning experiences of the interviewees.

### **3. Education, Socio-culture and Transformation**

Till now we have spoken about how ethnic students are subjected to domination within the education system itself. Now we will discuss the wider social aspect of all this. We will try to understand the changes that parallel due to the adoption of education in the ethnic lives. Of course, it does not mean that we take education to be the only and major determinant behind all these change. Rather we want to say that in the ever changing socio-economic situation, after a certain period of time, education becomes a compulsory component in the earning process for the ethnic people. Then again, with education comes the desire of modernization and professionalism, through which the commercial life, practices and associations gradually get rearranged. We have tried to analyze the pros and cons of these changes. It cannot be forgotten that the ethnic lives are led under the major racial domination. The life long subjugation transforms the whole structure of their ethnic existence. Because education is only a part of the ideological hegemony, it would be wrong to directly connect education with this transformation.

In Bangladesh the aim, curriculum, system of education is based according to the necessity of the dominant society. The prevalent method of learning and curriculum creates such knowledge which is irrelevant with the ethnic culture, tradition, belief and life style. Then again, the knowledge generated from this education system creates standards of justification and evaluation. It means that on the basis of knowledge, we learn to choose and assess social beliefs, practices and habits. Through this evaluation process Bengali culture stands out as a standard cultural community. While on the other hand the overall ethnic cultural communities are labeled as underdevelopment, backward and superstitious. Because of this kind of educational conditioning, at times, even the ethnic communities begin to see their own culture, values and various practices as insufficient and begin to accept the Bengali culture as the epitome of a 'modern' and 'standard' way of life. Thus, very often their way of perceiving their own self and the world around is constructed by the dominant Bengali ideologies.

#### **3.1 The change of Economical- Political Scenario and the compulsion of Education**

In the past, due to traditional and geographical reason, the inhabitants of the hilly regions were dependent on 'jhum' agriculture for their livelihood. Since they met their daily needs by cultivating on both steep and plain lands, they were self-sufficient and independent. Their only target was to fulfill their everyday needs through cultivation of crops. Things like education, job, business were considered as superfluity. Education was not considered a necessity but left to one's desire. Unlike today's parents, then the parents did not pressurize their children to be educated. For the ethnics, it was considered a disgrace to be a job holder. Job holders were

compared to laborers, workers, day laborers and unpaid workers. Most ethnic people's dreams centered around agriculture. But the construction of Kaptai Dam in this region in 1960, then the rehabilitation of Bengalis in the plains in '76 and the unstable political situation in the '80s, there was a rapid change of values.

In 1960 the agricultural lands and homesteads were flooded by the Kaptai Dam, people were forced to think of other surviving alternatives. In 1976, when the plains were rehabbed by the Bengalis, the socio- political scenario took a heating turn. This led to harsh economic effects on the ethnic lives. Gradually, the lives of the ethnic people were reconstructed with new values and goals. In this way, from superfluity education becomes a necessity. For a living the ethnic people were forced to take up jobs and this led them to experience the compulsion of education. In the past, marriages were fixed on the basis of race and physical beauty. But today, education tops the criteria for marriage eligibility. It is a matter of competition for today's ethnic parents that their children go to better schools than others. Education has opened up the job market for the ethnic communities, for which, now they are engaged in diverse professions. According to their competence the ethnic people have taken up different local, national and international non-government jobs. Once people believed in holding honorable and respected jobs. But in today's competitive, consumerist society, earning has become the ultimate target, not the honor of the job. This is how the issues of value changes are inseparably related to the expansion of education.

### 3.2 Education and detachment from the community

"Education is the death sentence for the nation." One of the principal men (Karbari) of one of the villages in Rangamati said this in an educational programme. Instead of saying "Education is the backbone (Merudanda) of the nation" by mistake he said 'Education is the death sentence (mritya danda) for the nation". Later on villagers got a lot of fun from this, but the ready witted 'Karbari' was not a man to be restrained so easily. He said, "It is a fact that education is the death sentence for the nation". He gave his explanations in this manner; if education was really the backbone, why did then so many highly education people have become detached from this own community? In 1960, one highly educated person of this village had joined the managerial position of a bank after passing M. Com. But neither he nor his two highly educated sons have ever returned to the village again. Moreover his sons married outside the sect; one married a 'Rakhain' woman and the other a Bengali woman. A Marma young man after achieving his M.A. degree from Chittagong University married a Chakma girl from the city and forever remained there. There are two other boys of the village- one became a Buddhist monk and lives in America, the other works in an international organization. Karbari points out that after getting their degrees these educated people have completely detached themselves from their own community, but the village remained as it was. That is why, Karbari believes that villages do not have slightest light of hope from the educated students and education is not really the backbone but is the death sentence for the nation. Before receiving the light of education, the ethnic groups of the hilly Chittagong area had lived in a closed community, but after their inclusion to education system they have scattered all around.

For this fear of segregation from the village and community, Mro (ꯃꯩꯂꯩ) Community have deprived Iracham Mro from deserving reverence after he had passed his Matriculation examination (Khisha 1979). All had even declined to give their daughters' hands in marriage to Mro, as he would move to the town with a job. Today, these fears have been proved to be right. Many believe that this inter-communal marriage is one of the negative side of education. As an instance an ethnic woman painter was mentioned, who had married a Bengali man. It is said about her, that men marry and create a bridge among other sects but women marry and get secluded. One parent complaint that he has been going through a lot of trouble to provide for his son's education; if the child forgets his parents, relatives and the village after achieving the degrees then he exclaimed that he is actually building the bridge for segregation. The students too admit the fact that education creates a gap. Some think that, in the capitalist society most of the educated people grow to be selfish and self centered. Issues like community and society never cross their minds. Now-a-days every scholars studying in educational institutions for higher degrees only think of going abroad or getting a job at any government or non-government

organization in the city. Thus, for their relationship with education, their band with their own community is becoming lax.

### **3.3 Education and domination of Bangla language and like above**

The official language of office, college, universities, markets and various others organizations is Bangla. For this reason, many parents want their children to learn Bangla proficiently before their mother tongue, so that, they may use Bangla efficiently for future communication. In this relation the one said, importance of Bangla is undeniable but he does not want to teach Bangla before his mother tongue. Moreover, some families practice speaking Bangla at home to become modern and up-to-date. For such a way of thinking and inclusion of learning process, many local words have become extinct and many are now built on the contour of Bangla words. They have started to use the words like the Bangla speakers. The modified words, changed in contact of Bangla, are used by the people of the community and have found recognition in the printed materials like- legal papers, books etc. One example can be this line from a textbook which say "chin gin is a river of Khagrachari." But the word 'chingin' is not only modified but is factually wrong. The right word is 'chenge'. As textbooks have used the wrong word, so the correct version is becoming obsolete. The future scholars would learn from the textbooks that the name of the river is 'chengin'. Similarly, many local names have changed- Rangamate is Rangamati, Solokdor is Shuvlong, Kajlong is Kachalong, Hudukchori is Kutubchori, Nunnechori is Narichor, Mengoni is Maine, Chenge is Chengi etc. It is noticeable, that the changes occurred according to the pronunciation of the Bangla speakers Even in printing materials like textbooks the modification of the established local names on influenced by the pronunciations are influenced by the pronunciation of the Bengali speakers. In time, these inaccurate words would pervade and the local words would erode away.

### **3.4 Education, an inclination to the modern Urban life**

These was habitual practice of some traditions in every ethnic culture. At present, the ethnic people are more leaned towards the modern urban life and for this, advertantly or inadvertantly they are becoming habituated to dominant Bangla cultural practices and tradition. Education along with other factors like improvement in communication system and technology, expansion of national boundaries, changes in nature and surrounding-all these together as a related system play an important role in shaping and reshaping differnet stages of socio-cultural life.

In the past, ethnic people living in hilly areas, to save themselves from ferocious animals and to get enough light and air, used to build their houses on bamboo poles called 'manrcha' house (Chakma 2000). People of lueai, Pankho and Baum community used to build their villages on top of the hill and surround it with timbers for safety (Lin 1912). But in the contemporary era, in the high tide of national development of-roads, communication system, gardens, parks and expansion of farming lands-many trees have been cut down from these forests. So this is a scarcity of the raw materials to build this kind of houses. In the past houses in the cities were also built of wood and bamboo, but now with the abundance of the brick houses, the houses made of bamboo and wood are almost invisible. Simultaneously this has been a change in the family structure too. The ethnic people used to live in joint families but at present people have scattered to earn their living. Moreover for privacy and independency combined families have now split into unitary structured families. These used to be communal and fellow feeling among the people because of joint family structure, but as the unitary families expanded these feelings faded away from their culture and society. People hold education responsible for this demoralization of values. Though there are differences in food habit among the ethnic groups living in chittagong hill tracts but the main foods are: rice, fish, meat, different types of fruits and vegetables. Besides these the ethnic groups collect different types of leaves, stems and roots from the forest and farmlands. In the past, people used to cook in bamboo cylinders without oil (Lampra 2000). In the past even the city dwellers avoided oil. Now there has been a drastic change in the system of cooking. Specially the methods of cooking of the urban ethnic people have become same as the Bangalee food habit and culture. With the change of the daily food habit of these urbanized ethnic people, the menu of different functions and festivals have also changed. In the past, traditional cakes (Pitha), payesh, alcohol etc were made at home in Boishabi, but at present educated urban families usually serve sweets, jilapi, nimki, and differnet



juice bought from the market and still modern families serve paratha and meat at Boishabi. Many believe that influence of the city as well as the laws of time and necessity both are equally important for this departure from cultural heritages, cooking in the bamboo cylinders requires a lot of time and bamboo. And involvement in other works than farming has made time invaluable to all.

One other identifying and demarcating characteristic of the hill tract ethnic communities is their traditional clothes. Ethnic women of every sect contain and sustain these traditional clothes. In the past, women used to make clothes for themselves and the men with 'komar' loom. Ethnic communities did not have to depend on market for these clothes. It is mentionable that these areas used to produce a lot of cotton and ethnic women used to make threads out of the cotton in the weaving wheel. Then the threads were colored with the pigments of leaves stems and roots from different trees. Afterwards they used to make clothes as necessary by weaving the thread into 'komor' handmade loom. Today, instead of handmade clothes, various textiles meet with their demand of clothes. In the past, different sects (Specially women) could be identified by their clothes. Like chakma's could be identified by Risa and Pinon, Khadi; by Rinai Tripura sect; by Tham, and Anjees clothes Marma women. Any ordinary person could have identified the different communities by mere glance at their clothes. But now regular use of saree, shalwar kameez at home and work, has merged their individual identities. Traditional Bangalee clothes have much influence the educated ethnic people living in urban areas. Now-a-days even in a traditional ceremony like wedding the bride wears Benarasee, not any traditional clothe. These clothes have set the standard of modernity. For the ethnic women, at one hand saree and shalwar kameez have become clothes for regular use and at the other the traditional clothes have become fashion. In the chittagong hill tracts only the Marma women have managed to sustain their heritage by wearing 'Thanni' 'Anjoree' at home and work. In spite of being educated urban people, this community was successful to sustain the cultural diversity of their individual sect.

It is said that the changes brought about in the socio-cultural world is the combined result of such elements like urbanization, cohabitation with the Bangalee people, education and so. Traditional livelihood is still found among the people living in rural areas where these elements have not found their way. But in the modern urban educated societies the traditional cultural trends have got a place in the "Ethnic cultural Institute." For them culture has become a subject of institutional training and practice.

#### **4. The relationship between education and power is not invented, unilinear or predetermined**

It should not be concluded from the preceding discussion that all ethnic people think about the fundamental characteristics of education or at the very beginning they could detect or wanted to detect the power of education. Rather it is the opposite, in most cases; this research work was obstructed in the beginning when one after another ethnic students, parents and teacher started to talk only about the naturalism, utility and positive point of view of education. Either they were connecting education with life and livelihood or with keeping account of daily groceries. Or else they have obtained a very different moral view connecting education with mankind, fight for freedom, humanity and values. Some have been moved beyond the narrow boundaries to the depth of education, education for life, education for nature etc. Though differently but all of them were actually talking about necessity of education or on the other hand about the dangers of illiteracy. Like always, it didn't occur to them all at a sudden that even learning might have some disadvantages. After facing the obstacles it was clear that this was also the result of the power of naturalization of education. As most people consider development and modernization to be something great and worth worshipped, like wise education is thought to be something to be worshipped by everyone from the ordinary informers to the education researchers.

It can be perceived, that the ethnic people would only locate the visible and forceful illusions of the 'power or domination. The dominating system applied by the Bangalee ruling community through the educational structure is not clear to many ethnic people. For this reason, maximum ethnic people inspite of having their own language and alphabetic system, consider Bangla as learning medium to be natural. If asked, same answers with indifference that "We knew it all

along that we have to study in Bangla" It is very natural for them because all are learning in Bangla. Some discuss in forehand the ill progress of the ethnic learners in Bangla medium. It is noticeable that no body questions why they should learn through a second or foreign language. On the contrary the victim focuses more on his/her own limitations.

The same thing happens when they talk about cultural transformation. For this change, they identify the cohabitation with the dominant for so long; they can also see the relation between education and change. Despite all these, ethnic people take the process of transformation to be natural. When they say it is due to cohabitation for a long time and not domination; and that is has grown out of the demand of time or sheer necessity-it becomes clear from this that can't or refuse to see the domination factor. Many have said that in accepting the wind of change one should not think about differences like whether it is western culture, Bangalee culture and about the difference between people, but accept it as it comes. Again, there are some others who feel that since these changes have occurred due to a cause as noble as education, therefore these cultural changes might have a positive turn. If reminded of the of individual disentiiling then the reply comes "change is natural but it should come with the accordance with our cultural tradition"; they also mention that culture should not drift away from the root matters. On the whole, it can be said they have failed to see the racial dominancy in the education system. So they have failed to see the racial dominance behind cultural changes and relationship of education with these changes.

But we would not say this is the failure of the people. As first of all these are the very same people who have searched through their childhood memories and through the discomforts and of the old age have brought in front the dominating characteristics of education. How education changes life though they could not say it to the point but they have identified certain elements of the changed life and have parallely exclaimed the changing tendencies is of the educated people. From this we take it for granted that the thoughts, analogy do not follow a straight line. At this level, from the naturalization quality of education we can guess how dangerous education is for the ethnic people.

But what are the benefits of all these finding?The point from were we have started submission in the education system is a very visible problem, but is there any alternative for the marginalized people or is there any alternative at all? We really do not know the reality in this regard. But by bringing in examples from historical facts, we have come to this decision and can have care that the relationship between education and racial dominance is neither invented nor is unilinear or predetermined. Partho showed that Indians took the modernizing agenda of the British colonialist but have become modern in a different way. It is tru that there is a change for colonial suppression but this change did not follow the absolute colonial plan. Roy and Azim drawing from Bishwanathan's work, say that Indians responded to the English learning too a very different reason than what English people wanted the English teachers of Birsar did not know how in future birsar is going to use their teachings against them in the future revolutionary acts. So colonialism necessarily does not refer to everything transformed and determined by the colonialist, it is not that simple. We need to still find out what visions the ethnics have in their mind. Colonized life for the conformation to a dominant power colonized lives standing at the opposite faces gets rearranged but not tumult, in accordance to the plans of the rulers. Studying in Bangla may have changed the cultural components and may be this change is not absolutely in accordance with what the dominant nation or race expected. We need to see how the ethnic people rearrange and search individual ways of living.

## The Hidden Pedagogy: Development as a Discourse of Corporatization

Manosh Chowdhury

### Abstract

This paper seeks to examine the discursive formation of 'private' in regards to the higher education scenario in contemporary Bangladesh. Although the influential donor agencies like World Bank had always been keen to compel Bangladeshi government for grossly privatizing the higher education system, but it was never a willing attitude from the government until the early phase of 90s. From the policy agents' point of view, the urge had its own assertion compatible to what they had long been propagated around the world, and especially on the onset of apparently the populist policies in some of the developing nations. On the other hand, the government's denial had much to do with the general attitudes towards privatization, and accordingly, the basic principles that Bangladeshi state upheld right from the beginning. But the implications of the state denial to the external recommendations need to be read critically than its apparent meaning whatsoever. Even the general attitudes towards the privatization, as it is believed to be an antagonistic one, should not be taken for granted. Within less than a decade, the emergence of private universities as a space of materializing undergraduate and graduate education marked the success of the ventures. Apart from its credibility as a viable business venture, these institutions are relishing the shift in the discussion level - from merely an alternative for the disqualified candidates in the public universities' admission to vividly an avenue for the competitive and modern educational package. The utmost characteristics of the private universities' education are being told as to be its international standard, an undefined perception of arguably a life-style statement around the world. It appears as to be conformist appreciation of the categories and concepts of contemporary modernization, namely 'development'. In the educational sector, the discourse of development can be seen as a justifying logic of corporatization. And thus the pedagogical transformation is a paradigmatic shift - from what can be said as a liberal project of nurturing 'intellectuality', dubious though, towards a militaristic project of implanting 'manageriality'

### Introduction

Although the influential donor agencies like World Bank had always been keen to compel Bangladeshi government for grossly, but it was never a willing attitude from the government until the early phase of 90s. From the policy agents' point of view, the urge had its own assertion compatible to what they had long been propagated around the world, and especially on the onset of apparently the populist policies in some of the developing nations. On the other hand, the government's denial had much to do with the general attitudes towards privatization, and accordingly, the basic principles that Bangladeshi state upheld right from the beginning. But the implications of the state denial to the external recommendations need to be read critically than its apparent meaning whatsoever. Even the general attitudes towards the privatization, as it is believed to be an antagonistic one, should not be taken for granted. Within less than a decade, the emergence of private universities as a space of materializing undergraduate and graduate education marked the success of the ventures. Apart from its credibility as a viable business venture, these institutions are relishing the shift in the discussion level - from merely an alternative for the disqualified candidates in the public universities' admission to vividly an avenue for the competitive and modern educational package. The utmost characteristics of the private universities' education are being told as to be its international standard, an undefined perception of arguably a life-style statement around the world. It appears as to be conformist appreciation of the categories and concepts of contemporary modernization. This paper seeks to examine the discursive formation of 'private' in regards to the higher education scenario in contemporary Bangladesh.

### **In Search of a Background**

It is utmost important to note that the Private University Act<sup>1</sup> that accredited the private universities as a useful and desired venture took place in a time when Bangladesh arguably was passing the transition towards democracy. The military dictatorship of Lt. Gen. H. M. Ershad (1981-1990) was over through a popular urbanite uprising just nearly two years before. And the elected government in 1991 took over the responsibility to maintain Bangladesh in what the Western and local press defined as democratic process. Whatever merits or demerits this move entailed should be treated in a deeper understanding of the educational policies and objectives in a typically southern nation like Bangladesh and in accordance to the external influences along with its local agents. I hope to explore the concept of translation, as it was illustrated by Talal Asad<sup>2</sup>, in the later phase of this discussion which would provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between the policy agents and its recipients. This is not to say, however, that the changes in attitudes of the state organs to privatization of higher education were a sudden event and manifested without any prior groundwork. Instead, what I like to say is that the groundwork had long been done. Further I like to maintain that the government supposedly entitled as a democratic one had an extensive space to execute it comparing to its predecessor.

Given the fact that the admission-seekers have been huge in numbers, the state financed universities, what I would call as public universities from now on, were a place of extensive competition. Although there were some visible attempts to increase the number of public universities and the affiliated college with similar provision to offer distinct undergraduate and graduate programs<sup>3</sup>, they were far behind the actual need. While I am arguing this, this must be clear that the question of need also demands to be explored further. Here some factual points could be useful. Higher education system in Bangladesh, typically, includes the universities along with the university-affiliated colleges that provide education after higher-secondary (up to grade XII) education. As already mentioned, the universities used to be public, i.e. government owned and monitored, until 1992. Facts and figures often are misleading to assess an approximate account of the education system in Bangladesh. It starts with the defending tendency of the literacy rate. For example, 2001 census shows that the rate is now about 48%. But this type of representations is from the actual scenario and provides only a very little for comprehending it. Instead, this is kind of action responding to the policies of the big agencies like World Bank. According to recent data (2003) of BANBEIS [Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics], there are 22 public universities in Bangladesh in comparison to 52 private universities. In both cases, these are the official figures, can hardly be measured on real ground. Out of 22 public universities at least 12 were declared within last three years and still are defined in the papers.

On the other hand, some initiators just filed an application and managed to receive an approval for their private university. Further, there appeared a little criticism about the failure of government in monitoring the quality and essential facilities for a university. So, apparently government has been trying to discard some of the private universities already appeared, at least on the papers. Yet again, the UGC [University Grants Commission] record is yet to show any sign of discarding. In the recent years, almost 1, 50,000 students are mentioned to get enrolled in the higher education. The number is increasing every year. Still, public universities (along with the affiliated colleges) are covering more than two third of the total students, a fact demands to get noticed in the hype of private university. So one can look back into the question of 'need' and give a rethink. Actuality of the 'need' should be seen as grounded on the fact that state has been believed, in the popular mind-set, as the sole responsible for expenditure of education.<sup>4</sup> This very approach, from the people's point of view, has to do a lot with the onset of the emergence of Bangladesh through a kind of populist uprising and in turn its adoption, as a state, of socialism as one of the columns in the first constitution after independence. The government of Bangladesh, regardless its inclination needed an overt attempt to maintain the demand. Despite the differences among the political parties and the turmoil that emerged right after the independence, state authority has been officially inclined to manifest education as a people's right, hence a subject of government subsidy.

Contrary to the situation, it should also be clear that the upper-middleclass people in the city area started long back advocating the idea of purchasing higher educational facilities. The fact is revealed, subtly and indirectly, in their continuous venture of sending offspring to the Northern universities. Apart from the little financial aid and support, this drift meant to cause a crucial level of investment from the respective families. How this specific kind of investment in their children's education is structurally a part of the domestic budget and reflection of the aspiration is a crucial issue embedded that into the history of class formation and nuclearization of family. With an overriding influence of Bilati<sup>5</sup> education since the colonial period, desire for the foreign education is an inevitable feature of the upper-middleclass people. Surely this should be seen only a part of many manifestation of their mobility. And the self-motivated expenditure for higher education by an influential sect of the society only gives us a sense of justification towards the later official move. More often than not, before private universities were established in Bangladesh, common excuse became evident among the well-off people's daily discussion about the pointlessness to pay the overseas universities the money they had been spending for their children. One must notice the obvious provocation of this assertion in the domain of what tentatively could be defined as patriotism in the era of investment and economic growth. My intention is to perceive this discursive field as a strong lead towards the privatization in the later years. It is, however, interesting to note that there is no such evidence available that private universities caused any decrease in the numbers of overseas students from Bangladesh. It is mainly because the target groups for private universities vary in their objectives. A portion of the students are enrolling in the undergraduate programs of private universities to make an avenue for the universities abroad at the graduate level. On the other hand, there are other students who are into it just because they were not able to secure any place in the public universities. At the end, the well-off families are having more options to switch between the top-rated private universities and the universities abroad. It can also be noted here that some of the capable private universities maintain administrative and business links with a handful of Western universities - i.e., Victoria University in Melbourne or London Metropolitan University etc.

#### **Crises and Scopes for Approaching Education as an Area**

Among others, the major methodological crisis for research on education is its discontinuous nature, especially in Bangladesh. The kind of work only considered as the genre of research belongs to the high profile donor agencies who schematically conduct either what they define as the base line studies, or the evaluations. Hardly these stuffs deal with the social consequences or engage with the historical processes. In other words, these research projects are grounded on the macro framework of development, and run, pathologically, to meet the prior figures set long before by some transnational development agent. Further, it is almost impossible to locate any such research that supposedly is trying to unpack the critical nature of the classed society with a remarkable affect on the educational policy in a given time and site. Also it is a crisis that researches based on discourse analysis are very limited in number. Research that roughly could deal with the public discussions ends up as a pathetic example of 'perception study.' This is not something exclusive for research on education, but it is a generic tendency in development research of the contemporary Bangladesh. So it is utmost a hard attempt to anticipate a critical research on higher education in Bangladesh.

Another problem, I anticipate, lies in the fact that the privatization drive has long been associated in the educational ventures other than categorical higher education which cannot be taken within the scope of the current exploration. First of all, primary (from grade I to V), secondary (from grade VI to X) and higher secondary (grade XI and XII) education had been a subject of privatization long before the private universities began to flourish - a fact that claims to have relevance in the current search. Besides, numerous posh elementary schools of different kinds - namely kindergarten, nursery, pre-cadet, preparatory and so on - are firmly established for at least last two decades. These are targeting, nonetheless, the middle and upper-middle class people in the city areas. For secondary and higher secondary schooling, the initiatives were mostly from the private sectors. Yet sector should not be a right word to use here. On the backdrop of British colonial administration in Indian subcontinent, urge for modern education became apparent. People in the countryside with well-off peasant background and willing to do charity activities were the first ones who established the schools. While this had been a general

trend in the rural areas of colonial Bengal, the urban space was covered by the migrated-jamindars and emerging traders - both in Kolkata (then Calcutta) and in Dhaka. Long before a formal state-controlled system was set, historically, these have been the ways to substantiate a modern desire. But the university-education was always a different issue. What for years had been providing a foundation to claim the merits of privatization in higher-education is necessarily of significance in the current investigation.

To be precise, once again I would like underline that this paper is a modest attempt to analyze the huge shift in the perception of private universities, as well as in their representations, over a period of roughly a decade. Eventually, the work is to unpack the public discussions, hence to realize the discourses on a certain context. Instead of what a dominant educational system is actually providing towards its recipients, the main concern is to problematize how it is being portrayed, manifested and constructed in the public mind; how its features are being asserted as norm; and how the construction of private universities in its process is discarding the credibility of public universities, eventually, diminishes its potentials as a source of knowledge, whatever that means. This is utmost important since it is the space where the concrete authority of this business venture lies.

#### **Translation as a Conceptual Tool**

To proceed on to my argument, the concept of translation is very important. Unlike the conventional meaning of the concept in the genre of literature and linguistics, Talal Asad illustrated it in entirely a different way. Engaged with some of the early anthropological works, Asad and Dixon (1985) went beyond its apparent meaning. Asad argued that the process of translation, when it takes place in the colonized people, went far beyond the simple act of translating of the words or concepts, specifically when the source of translation is the colonizer itself.<sup>6</sup> Instead, he furthered, it had been a process of translating the historical structures, a concept he explored for investigating translation as a social process. In other words, it is a series of systems - like parliaments, families, police, bank, insurance even values and norms - along with the concepts and categories that are being translated towards the recipients' location. Even when a typically linguistic translation is concerned, it is not the colonizer's language that needs to make the adjustments and to accommodate at the end, but the colonized people's language, as Asad contends, that has to accommodate necessary changes within it to meet the requirements of translation process. In this paper, Asad's concept of translation is relevant to the extent that the establishment of the private universities has been embedded into the meaning of desired international education, within the categories and concepts that are overriding a local situation.

The concept of 'ideological state apparatus', introduced and illustrated by the renowned French Marxist scholar Althusser is another relevant insight to explore the current issue. According to Althusser<sup>7</sup>, the modern state not only does rely on the RSA [repressive state apparatus] like police, criminal justice and prison those force the people physically, but also on the ISA [ideological state apparatus] like educational institutions, legal systems, religions, politics, arts, sports etc. These are the institutions, as he argues, generate ideologies which the individuals internalize and act accordingly. Grounded on the Gramsci's concept of civil society<sup>8</sup>, Althusser's work underlined, unlike the dogmatic Marxist, the importance of ideology as a structure that would discipline the individuals.

#### **The Early Formation: Discourse of 'Scarcity'**

Establishment of private universities in Bangladesh founded on the logic of lack in the educational institutions. This particular stance marked the impression of private universities in the early years of emergence of private universities, in the early 90s. Sudden rise of the numbers of private universities in the very recent years was not even seen as a possibility at that point. To be precise, there are more than 50 private universities currently registered under the UGC [University Grants Commission, a governmental establishment to administering the universities], most of which came out in the last 4/5 years. Reverse to that, it took almost five years to increase the number to five after the first ever private university in Bangladesh started on 1992. Initiated with the North South University, arguably the most influential among all, there were Independent University and Gono Vishyabidyalaya in the first three years. It seems that the Public University Act came out as a hurried adjustment to the necessity of issuing release

for the North South University authority to launch as a venture. The governmental document is also a testimony of how they felt inclined to react to the initiative as an act to 'meet the increasing demand'. As it states in the clause:

*Whereas it is necessary to establish private universities in order to meet the increasing demand of, and to extend pervasively, higher education in the country, to facilitate the access of the general public to higher education and to create in this way a class of skilled persons; and whereas several well-wishing persons, associations, charitable funds and institutions of the country are eager to establish and manage private universities; and whereas it is expedient to provide for the establishment of private universities (Private University Act, 1992, italics added).*

The above passage is self-evident of how the state repulsed to the question of privatization, on the economic or business ground, while it comes to education. 'Increasing demand' is a phrase here to refer to the inadequacy of the higher educational institutions, though in a vague manner. Urgency that is manifested here never reveals the cost of education in the private universities, no matter if there are a number of people who can afford this. Generally, only tuition fees in any of the prominent private universities is around 1 lac taka (roughly 1500 USD) per year which surpasses the total amount a class-one government official could income in the whole year. On the other hand, public universities charge a token amount of money as tuition fees and add some more fees for examination etc. Nonetheless, the most striking phrase in the document is 'general public'. On one hand, it is apparent that the phrase juxtaposes the capability of the marginal middle class people with the affluent upper middle class ones which inevitably seems to be absurd. But on the other hand, a close examination of the situation could reveal that it was founded on the fact that the private universities were still to achieve any academic credentials by their name. It meant to be the secondary choice for the probable consumers of private universities with the prime choice of any of the public universities including the technical ones (medical or engineering). In other words, off-springs of the well-off background who failed to secure a place in the public universities might have decided to go to the private universities, as a viable alternative to the overseas universities.

More often than not, failure in securing a place in the state-financed university, even after being backed up by a place in any of the private universities with a huge tuition fees<sup>9</sup>, was considered as a disappointment. It was actually expressed in such a manner. Though it needed a critical examination of the public discussion to notice, yet the sense of insecurity was very much there. Getting admitted into a private university necessarily meant a clear deprivation - of not being able to have the 'best' educational institutions, hence the public universities. The only possible compensation could reveal in the form of majoring in a suitable discipline. Interestingly enough, there was hardly any variety in the disciplines and the list would entail - business studies, economics, communication, environmental studies and very soon medical studies. Shortage in the available subjects only indicates the inner mechanism of the big agencies about how they had foreseen the changes in professionalism. With the exception of environmental studies, all of these subjects were already believed to be professionally lucrative including those of business studies or administration, economics, engineering and technology and medicine.<sup>10</sup>

Despite the early struggling phase, the private universities - both as an administrative system and as a knowledge production house - gained enormous authority in the coming years. Indeed, within a very short period, the idea of private university set the standard of imagination in the public mind about higher education. The transformation necessarily had an intermediate phase engaged with its public counterparts. Within a sharply constructed dichotomy, the public university got pathetically driven away.

### **The Take-over Phase: Undermining the Public University System**

The discontinuity in the research literature causes serious problem in comprehending the situation. The phase that I like to name as the 'take-over phase' largely characterized by its deliberate and series of activities to undermine the public university as a system of education-provider. While it is a critical task to explore the responsible events in an absorbed fashion, it is really hard to distinguish the actors of this undermining process. They are subtle and incidental in the nature. Actualities in the public university campuses were surely of concern. But at the

same time, media activities severely affected the public perception about the public universities, obviously in a negative manner. Roughly, the period of this phase could be determined as the mid-90s to the end of the decade. I would like to identify and propose three features that came into the gross middle class mindset as evil about the public universities during the period. Those are: a) student politics, b) medium of instruction, c) inefficiency. Despite the fact that the public universities still are the major place for seeking higher education for the broader middle class people, I would like to argue them as the decisive ones for demolishing the image of it. These are the crucial threads, I maintain, for generating and perceiving an indefinite idea of international standard in higher education, eventually the international education, as it appeared as an advertising strategy for the private university initiatives in the later years.

a) Student politics got to be portrayed as anonymous to the concept of terrorism and destruction. It is very interesting to notice that its credibility marked score even until the recent past when it was considered as one of the major force to combat the military regime. All of a sudden, just after the democratic electoral process initiated in Bangladesh, it was pointed as the most evil part of public university campuses. With a few exceptions, the press media became the most vocal advocate of this. A party neutral president<sup>11</sup>, along with his civil society masterminds, played a crucial role in this issue with campaign against student politics. Very typical to the subcontinental situation, the student organizations have long been subject of state manipulation and sabotage. During the 50s, the then Pakistani ruler formed NSF to destroy the democratic and anti-government students' movement in the universities. The trend, by and large, is still on. Regarding the manipulative power game the state nurtures, the simplistic charge against anything named student politics seems uncritical, and helps to demoralize the spirit of public universities.

b) Medium of instruction, contrary to the previous one, never was a point of criticism in the press overtly. Rather, it was initiated within the desire of the affluent middle class people to get into the global arena. Along with the previous one, it generated a serious dissatisfaction among the guardians. Right from the beginning, the independent Bangladesh urged for the importance of Bengali language instruction in the universities. The 1973 University Act underlined its priority clearly whereas public universities are believed to be nurturing place for Bengali language as the medium of instruction. Keeping in mind the linguistic basis of Bengali nationalist movement, this article meant a lot to the sentiment of the vanguard people that time. Accordingly, the dissatisfaction that I am talking about seems to be obscure and undefined. Further, a number of disciplines including business studies, computer sciences, economics and so on already started kind of English instruction in different universities. This can be clearly defined as the transgression of the act. But actually the course of action is praised and is point of the initiator's pride.

c) Inefficiency is another point of accusing the public universities. It seems to entail both the administrative and academic capabilities. With a close investigation, first as a public university teacher for more than ten years, and then purposively engaging with the teachers and students of private universities, and again being in specific field investigation from February to August in 2004, I could find the complex nature of the claim. At one hand, it indicates the systematic lethargy that the public university administrations gained due to a number of reasons - the lack of monitoring, the manipulative employment and direct influence by the governmental agencies. While at the other hand, it points out the overt nature of state intervened teachers' grouping that affects the process of teachers' employment and selection of vice chancellors. Last but not least, the claim puts finger at the incapability of checking students' violence in the campus.

This is not to say that any of the claims is an unjust given the contemporary public university situations. In fact, these claims could gather a series of evidences from the recent past of the universities. My intention, by any means, is not to defend the public universities as they are in present. Instead what I like to insist is the very nature of the representation of the public universities is necessarily conditional to the representation of the private universities. While the portrayals of the state-financed institutions entail all the negative connotations, it certainly leaves space for the private ones to get authorized of the positive connotations. Further, the process of representation is not an unconscious act, nor is it an incidental one. Accordingly this is a dichotomy neatly executed no matter if it had been a prior conspiracy. In this line, my arguments



do not intend to defend an imaginary ideal of the public universities, or to defy the allegedly set accusations against them. I at best am trying to unpack the styles of representation of the public universities, and the aftermath of this formulaic representation as a justification of, and a subscription to, the private universities.

Ironically, till the present days, major portion of the teaching staff are being recruited from the public university teachers - mainly on part-time basis. Further to this fact, it is also interesting to notice that the administrators are also coming from the same origin - mainly the retired teachers and/or administrators along with the retired civil and military bureaucrats. While the major daily newspapers are full of contributions and commentaries from the same kind of academics, paradoxically, they tend to show a little confidence in the public universities as a system. Earlier I mentioned that the media played a crucial role in negative portrayals of the public universities. I think the audio-visual media, namely TV, should be considered as crucial in this line. Given the huge popularity of this media and a hyped urge to exhibit campus life in the popular genres of TV productions, it appeared to be merely an influential process to undermine the public universities. Understandably, not all the projects deliberately meant to be the instrument against public university images. At the same time, shallow emotionality and intellectuality that embedded into the construction of the campuses failed to regenerate any serious implications of the universities, especially in the era of privatization ideology.

### **An Interesting Case**

Apparently a discrete one, this event could be an interesting lead towards understanding of the mass-media's crude role in depicting the public universities. The funny part of the story actually made me think over it again while I am engaging the issue here. It was sometime in 1997. I was working at my university office in the dusk. My colleagues were gone. Some two old familiar faces appeared at my door. They were senior to me while I was a student in the university. Both they were then TV program makers for drama. They came to shoot a play that demanded some classroom scene and looking for some place for the casts for costume change. Soon I found two TV stars and a team of crews behind them. I decided to quit my room as their greenroom. After a few minutes, while I was reading book sitting at the corridor, the producers came to me asking if I was ready for an on spot shooting in the classroom since they were lacking a cast in the team. Well, I was ready to the extent that I loved acting for years. But I asked for the role. That was of a university teacher lecturing his students including the 'hero' and 'heroine'. They were supposed to communicate some pranks, believed to be gesture of their affection and romance hiding the teacher's eye - a scene not very uncommon. The teacher was expected to be tight-lipped, and with kind of dumb personality. I refused to take the shoot. "What's wrong? You're already a teacher" the producers asked. My position was clear: "That's the main reason. First, I have never been a tight-lipped teacher. Well I can portray it only the story has enough reasons to promote this which is not the case. And although I have no serious problem with my students doing romance, hardly is it possible in my class to communicate among themselves in this way. Again I have no problem to characterize a teacher like this if I find the story strong. And finally, though I believe that there are plenty of dull-headed teachers in the universities, I find no reason to portray one of them." My senior university-mates found me arrogant. Actually we had a bitter argument with the last point. They tried hard but could not see my point that why I found the teacher unimpressive since he was delivering the proper lecture and they were not trying to make fun of him. I offered them to be in my class, of course arrogantly. Finally, the resolution came from a theatre-loving boy around. He happily played the role according to the director. Before leaving the campus, the director-producer pair suggested me to be more practical.

I do not mean to assert too much with this case. This case only refers to the series of casual representations of university campuses and agents in the more popular forms of cultural products which, I argue, not only weakened the credibility of them but helped the private universities to secure authority in the commonsense level.

### **Discourses of 'International Education' and 'Competence'**

With a huge number of private universities in the very recent times, it is now evident that they are doing good business. The level of financial investment is really high. It is now far beyond any general observation that how they manage to make it a profitable venture. Critical investigation

could reveal that the accounts of a private university are not a straight matter as it seems to be. There are diverse partnership and exchange programs that secure the income of apparently a risky establishment like this. Also a major shift took place in terms of the specialization they are offering. A range of liberal arts and social sciences are being offered. However, though these developments are of significance, the scope of this study conceals furthering on these issues. What my main concern here is the vast shift in the credibility of these institutions. Unlike the previous years, no one has to feel pressure for not being able to find a place in the public university. Instead, the situation is just the opposite. Getting admitted in the private university grossly is referred to status and the well-off family quite often deliberately allocate budget for their children.

How an undefined and ambiguous conceptualization of 'international education' took place is an interesting query to explore. It is not a simple process of qualifying a specific educational package only, but a process of dismissing the state-backed educational institutions at the end. At the same time, it is not a fight between two distinct pedagogical schools. Instead, one must be aware of the fact that the contemporary public universities hardly could be defined as a sad mimicry of bunches of ideas. And they are not being able to manifest the objective of education on a populist level. However, it seems most unlikely that active challenge might come in near future.

The agents for portraying private university as a system are various and complex in nature and exclusively intermingled. In the previous section, I attempted to briefly sketch the style of representations of public universities which, I contend, played crucial role in idealizing the 'quality' of private university. Discourses of 'international education' and 'competence' could be identified as crucial to this huge shift. Grounded on the same discursive formation, these discourses largely overlap each other. Roughly illustrating, the commonsense is that the main aim of education is to make the students 'competent' and that is what an 'international education' does mean. The concepts like 'skill', 'quality' could best be seen as codes of a specific life style far away from that of in the public university campuses and are deployed to substantiate the main thesis of 'competence.' Competence is crudely perceived through the jobs and financial returns.

While the private universities, transnational development agents, business groups across the national border have a close tie - officially and beyond - the myth of competence through international education must be challenged. What I would like to propose, briefly, is to see the question as a translation of global system towards Bangladeshi locale. And the mighty system is named development. Private universities are being ideological apparatus not as such of the state, as Althusser (1971) argued, but for the global system of development and trade, and most probably for the trade of development.

#### **Author's Note**

First version of this paper was presented at a seminar conducted by the Japan Society for International Development, Hiroshima Branch. I thank them for giving me the opportunity to present this paper at their seminar on 09 July 2005. The paper, independently, was published in the Journal of Social Studies. This paper was also included as a part of my doctoral dissertation, being carried out at IDEC, Hiroshima University. I recall Dr. Masahiko Togawa for being there as my academic supervisor. Finally, I thank Unnoyon Onneshon for showing interest to my ongoing research and publishing it in the compilation.

#### **End-Notes**

1. 'Private University Act', Act No.34 of 1992, Published in Bangladesh Gazette Extraordinary, Dated 9th August, 1992. Could be seen at:  
<http://www.sai.uni-heidelberg.de/workgroups/bdlaw/1992-a34.htm>
2. Talal Asad and John Dixon provided a different conceptualization of translation that went beyond the conventional literary meaning of it (Asad and Dixon 1985). Another document by Asad is equally, if not more, relevant. See Asad 1996.
3. In Bangladeshi context, on the onset of British colonial education policies, it meant until very

recently Bachelor Honors course for three years and Master for one year. The recent readjustment is to add one more year in the Bachelor Honors program. This is an ongoing process. Eventually, the Master program appeared to be a subject of much confusion. Hypothetically, public institutions are still running one-year Master program and they are having the potentials of heading towards no where at the end. The level of confusion and lack of guideline is just too high in the current phase.

4. By and large, the expectation of the mass has been largely ignored in the conventional research projects, mainly conducted by the donor agencies and within their project framework when they had to deal with the Bangladeshi educational policies. But that is altogether a different issue.

5. Comparable to 'foreign', Bilati is an adjective of the word Bilat referred mainly for the then Great Britain, the colonizer of Indian subcontinent. Having been awarded a degree from Britain, especially in law, literature and natural science, was regarded as a fundamental trait both to assure the elitist life style and to secure the avant-guard progressivist position. Emerged in the colonial era, the term later referred not only to Britain but as a generic one to anything related to the West. But the linguistic shift is an interesting fact to notice. That is, the affluent people hardly use this term these days, rather prefer an English word for this.

6. Asad (1996) op. cit.

7. See Althusser 1978.

8. See Gramsci 1973.

9. No meaningful comparison is possible. Whereas a public university charges a token amount of tuition and examination fees, a private university charges from 50000 to 200000 BDT per annum for covering tuition and materials.

10. This is an area needs separate attention to unveil the interconnectivity of the different actors. A tentative list could entail transnational donor agencies, local policy makers, international consultants and their local counterparts, financiers and industrialists and other masterminds of a particular time. Interesting enough, the transnational NGOs started looking for the environmental experts these days. It cannot be seen as an increasing consciousness about environment, rather an insistence from the donors to incorporate these experts for what they define 'proper' research. In this line, the private universities were able to foresee the consequences in the development field.

11. During the Awami League ruling from 1996 to 2001, ex-chief justice Shahabuddin Ahmed was elected as the president. He was considered as a non-bias person to the political parties and was one of the major architects of civil society - a forum of vanguard middle class intellectuals and professionals propagated for what they perceived as human rights and democracy.

## **de-, or re-colonizing? contextualizing the teaching of English literature in Bangladeshi universities**

**Mashrur Shahid Hossain**

*Today, children, I am going to tell you about the history of Mr Blackman in three sentences. In the beginning he had the land and the mind and the soul together. On the second day, they took the body away to barter it for silver coins. On the third day, seeing that he was still fighting back, they brought priests and educators to bind his mind and soul so that these foreigners could more easily take his land and its produce.*

*(Ngugi Petals of Blood 236)*

This paper is part of a larger paper investigating the nature and function of English literary studies in Bangladeshi universities. The present paper, in its limited range, attempts to investigate how the syllabuses, staff-psychograph, and teaching practices in Bangladeshi English departments have maintained distinct and definitive colonial legacy. Against this scenario, the paper argues that English literature - because of its being British/English - can/should no more be taught and learnt as self-referential aesthetic episteme; it has to be (re-)positioned socio-historically and culturally in academic researches and, more importantly, in teaching. Also the time is ripe to consider thoroughly the exigency - and the urgency - of introducing and/or expanding postcolonial studies in English departments. It appears that the university teaching of English, instead of interrogating and dismantling Briticentrism and binary myths, tends to overlook the necessity of decolonization and in a way entertains re-colonization. It then may not sound shocking to propose that the Departments of English (Literature) be baptized into Departments of Literature in English.

### **Slicing of the mind and the soul**

"Why do you want to study English?" Being the Chair of the Admission Committee at my department, this was the question I asked the applicants and found two answers both or one of which most of the students gave (have been giving from time immemorial, actually): ONE. "I have a childhood dream of reading in English, because it's a prestigious subject; my parents and my English teachers have encouraged me to opt for it" and TWO. "English is an international language; if I study English, I can manage a good job." I was not surprised not because I have been accustomed with these attitudes to English studies, rather because these are the attitudes that the scholars and the teachers and the media, with some exceptions, darlingly cherish, cash in on, and inculcate in students. These attitudes, arguably essentialist, strongly hegemonic, are the colonial legacies.

Now, let me step back a little - temporally - to relive the colonial experiences to understand the politics of colonial education policy and study of English literature.

We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect.

(Macaulay in Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin Reader 430)

The citadel of Hinduism is the religion of the country. Attack, capture that citadel, the system of Hinduism lies a conquered territory. And it is the science and religio of Christendom which have now encompassed round about that citadel. Several of its walls are beaten down, but still it is not surrendered: but we hope ere long the faith and science of Christendom shall fully be established in India. ... But, alas, alas our countrymen are still asleep-still sleeping the sleep of death. Rise up, ye sons of India, arise, see the glory of the Sun of Righteousness! ... And we who have drunk in that beauty, we who have seen that life-shall we not awake our poor countrymen?

(quoted in Loomba 89)

I quote rather at length these two statements - the first one made by Thomas Macaulay in his notorious "Minute on Indian Education" in 1835, and the second by an Indian student at Hindu College, Kolkata, in his award-winning essay entitled "The Influence of Sound General Knowledge on Hinduism" in 1841 - because they metonymize two major factors contributing to the development and dissemination of imperial hegemonic determinants and binaries: the one is pedagogical, and the other socio-cultural.

Along with religion, education has been the most effective means to pave a surer way to colonization, to slicing apart the minds and the souls of the colonized people, thus to perpetuate colonial domination. Military power works best when taking possession of land is concerned; but possession of land never confirms colonization coming full circle. In order to maintain the hegemony and administer the 'natives,' and also to quell rebellion, what is more important is to systematically detour the colonized people's self-dignity and subjectivity. It is at this point that education enters the arena of colonization and plays through two roles, often overlapping, always definitive: language and literature.

Language is the means to 'know' and to 'speak', to 'name' and to 'identify'. And the acts of NAMING and KNOWING, as Lacan, Foucault and Said showed in different contexts, are efficient means to subjectivize and to exert power. The British Empire never failed to use this political potential of language: English has either displaced "native languages, by installing itself as a 'standard' against other variants which are constituted as 'impurities' or been planted "in a new place" (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin Reader 283). As every language carries defining and distinct values and assumptions of its native users, the spread of English in colonized countries ensures the installing and maintaining of western/hegemonic ideologies, situating indigenous people and culture as an/other - inferior, marginal, odd. At the same time, English is established as a dominant means of discourse, both in administrative and imaginative realms. And a standard and accepted form of written and spoken English is established: if you want to write in English, you must follow this standard, and the goodness of your English depends on how much it conforms to the standard version. This practice reduces the colonized people either to mere mimic men - always imperfect and striving for excellence, or *block-headed mules*<sup>1</sup> - their bad or no knowledge of good English affects their career and social status. Language thus adds new layers to the socio-political hierarchy and pushes the margin community to a further edge.

Literature is, however, a surer means to ensure hegemony. Gauri Vishwanathan in her pathbreaking study of the institution and ideology of English studies in India under the British Raj - *Masks of Conquest* (1990) - rightly observes that long before English literature was institutionalized as an academic subject in England<sup>2</sup>, English as the study of literature and the study of culture "appeared as a subject in the curriculum of the colonies" as early as the 1820s (Vishwanathan 3). In the name of dispersing the values of enlightenment, humanism, ethics, and civilizing mores for "a high degree of mental and moral cultivation" (Vishwanathan "Beginnings" 433), the study of literature instills western/'universal' codes and assumptions in the minds of the colonized. In his poem "Civilization Aha", the South African Spho Sepamla "exposes the discursive politics of colonial education - the rechannelling of mythopoeic and imaginative consciousness - to maintain knowledge/power" (Hossain 95):

i thought of eden  
     the first time i ate a fig  
 i thought of a whiteman  
     the first time i saw a god's portrait  
 i thought of a blackman  
     the first time I met a satan on earth  
 i must be honest  
     it wasn't only bantu education  
 it was all part of what they say is western civilization

(Beier and Moore 266)

To encapsulate, the hidden intention of introducing English literary studies - as illustrated in Macaulay's utterance - has been to saturate collective imagination of the colonized with Eurocentric assumptions, thus to erase or mutilate local cultural nucleus and to suffocate

creative/intellectual potential. In "Where the Roots Lie," the Caribbean Roger Mais rightly identifies that the chief obstruction on the development of rich local literature + local consciousness is colonial education: "our developing mind stopped growing" from the moment they came into contact with "the school syllabus" - stuffed with Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton, Dickens ... and "when you stop growing you become stagnant!" (Donnell and Welsh 183) The colonized subjects too have contributed to their becoming stagnant. "The fault is with us ... We are soft. We have sat back and allowed ourselves to get soft. We have allowed the heat to get us" (ibid. 182). Some of us, curiously, are/were more than soft, like sponge, that goes near the water, gets soaked, and swells. The student-writer of the essay the extract of which is quoted at the beginning belonged to this sponge community consisting of (a huge portion of) the aristocratic community, the academics, the intellectuals, the administrators, and the sycophants. It is this group that was slow to move "from an unthinking acceptance of a British heritage to a more critical awareness of our origins and a greater willingness to acknowledge [indigenous] elements of our past as part of our national identity" (ibid. 194).

In this way, colonialist education, unlike religion, survives political colonization. English literary studies in particular assumes a discursive regime, a regime of knowledge: a politicized regime through which it thrives equally (or more) powerfully in postcolonial situations and assumes neo-colonial configurations; a regime of moral and imaginative consciousness in which it distances the subject from the things of its own (e.g. the coolie and the crow) while keeping the unfamiliar, the foreign, in focus (e.g. the knight and the daffodils) (Hossain 95).

It is then a pertinent question to ask: Whose interests have our studying and teaching of English literature in Bangladesh served? Some may have already frowned: Are you questioning the study of any language that is not our own? Can't we study literature in 'alien' languages in a postcolonial situation? Isn't it itself an essentialist position? In response, let me assert rather strongly that this is not an essentialist position, but political it surely is. First, language is not only an "agent" of communication but also "the carrier of the history and the culture built into the process of that communication" (Ngugi quoted in Mohanram and Rajan 3). Therefore, teaching and learning of English, along with Arabic and Urdu, in Bangladesh have to be approached with caution, reservation, and alertness, snake's alertness, quiet but ready to strike. I am not reacting against the teaching and learning of 'alien' languages. I am rather pushing it to the point that A-E-U, or Arabic-English-Urdu languages, in the context of Bangladesh, may not be apolitical; they carry definite colonial legacy and have strong potential as definitive neocolonial agency.

Second, English literary discourses must be read and interpreted against the historico-cultural situation in which they were produced and the historico-cultural situation in which they are consumed. Because of being conditioned by a number of spatial and temporal phenomena, the teaching of English literature in Bangladesh has to be dynamic. Situation may become different after 50 years, but my present concern is the present, the this moment, when our subjective identity has been being salvaged and crafted out of historico-cultural concoction, that shares the history of gain and loss, suffering and survival, wisdom and knowledge.

### **Is Shakespeare = Indian Literature in English?**

This section outlines some practices relating to the syllabuses of the English departments which somehow maintain the centrality of British literatures and marginalize other literatures in English, for example, American Literature and Indian Literature.

In "The Beginnings of English Literary Study in British India", Gauri Vishwanathan critiques C. E. Trevelyan's averment that the natives' "greatest desire" has been to "raise themselves to the level of moral and intellectual refinement of their masters; their most driving ambition, to acquire the intellectual skills that confirmed their rulers as lords of the earth" (Vishwanathan 436). Trevelyan expressed this view as far back as 1838; it became prophetic, because 170 years passed, and the natives - we the Bangladeshis, for example - have still maintained this view: we GO WEST when 'going' means not merely 'moving to' but 'becoming.'

Legacies of colonialism - the superior/inferior, knowledge/ignorance, progress/stasis binaries - can thus be traced in our collective psychograph which has moulded our ideas of enlightenment and progress, of university and education, impacting upon the curricula and syllabuses of

English departments. English departments' syllabuses throughout the world have assumed what Slemon calls "maniacal Anglocentrism" (Slemon 185). It was the introduction of 'Commonwealth Literary Studies' in the 1960s, the brain child of a number of writers and critics from 'Commonwealth' (?) nations, that broke fresh space for the study of literature produced outside the UK and the USA. The term 'Commonwealth' is, however, offensive and has gradually fallen out of favour, but the attempt, like the Negritude movement, gave Briticentrism a root-wrenching shake and heralded postcolonial studies. Scenario has been changing since then, but the basic backdrop stays almost the same: English departments remain British departments, and English departments retain Britishness, the self-complacent assumption that the rich tradition of English literature is the 'standard,' the parash pathar and the koshti pathar alike, a philosopher's stone which can enrich us with a higher kind of intellectual and civilizing consciousness, and the touchstone against which the values and merits of other literatures can be judged. I am questioning the validity of such assumption, because the chief objective of a literature department is to provide students literary and theoretical tools which they may apply to interpret different types of discourses that go into the making of human consciousness ('consciousness' here is NOT a space- or time-neutral universal phenomenon) with a view to energize them to meet new challenges and "to investigate possible areas of development and involvement" (Ngugi "Abolition" 439). As we the Bangladeshis are history-specific humans conditioned by a number of politico-cultural paradigms and phenomena, the Briticentric syllabuses of English departments have had explicit potential for detouring and de-routeing.

Following are some observations relating to English departments' syllabuses:

1. First a question: Have our English departments specified what they 'mean' by the word ENGLISH: English (i.e. of England) literature, British literature, or Literature in English?
2. The answer is univocal: 'British literature.' And British literature remains as the CORE or foundation of English department syllabuses. One reason is the essentialist assumption that 'English literature' refers mainly to 'British literature' while the other literatures, from American to Caribbean, in English are designated as its extension (e.g. American literature) or offshoot (e.g. African literature). This is a spatial positioning, according to which logic Rabindranath Thakur has to be placed under the title 'Indian Literature in Bangla' in Bangla departments' syllabus. It is this insular assumption because of which there are 'American Literature' or 'Postcolonial Literature' courses in English departments' syllabuses, but no 'British Literature' course.
3. English literatures of countries other than the UK have thus been MARGINALIZED. An 'American Literature' or a 'Comparative Literature' course appears to smuggle into an English syllabus leaving the syllabus-producers quite content for giving the syllabus a transnational look while the syllabus stays explicitly Briticentric. Thus, as Helen Tiffin observes, "this increasing pluralism has not displaced the emphasis on British literature" (155) nor has it contributed to refurbish native subjectivity.
4. There is in it a dangerous paradox that often passes unnoticed. Courses or studies offered to destabilize the old canon have often reinforced "the status and fetishization of the Anglo-canonical" (Tiffin 155). In the 3rd-year syllabus of a department of English, for example, there is a 100-mark course entitled "Shakespeare". In that very year, students take another 100-mark course called "American Literature" which includes 7 authors, and there is another 100-mark course named "Postcolonial Literature" which includes 11 authors from Africa, the Caribbean and India. The equation seems to be simple (or stupid?): Shakespeare = American Literature = African+Caribbean+Indian Literatures. Shakespeare<sup>3</sup> is the FETISH of the assumption of the supremacy of English aka British literature, and it is accepted and attested.
5. The perversity of Briticentric logic goes further. While Plath is recognized as an American, T S Eliot is often placed unequivocally as British. More problematic is the inclusion of Jonathan Swift, Walter Scott, W B Yeats, Samuel Beckett and Seamus Heaney, for example. We may think seriously if it is politically correct to use a strongly colonial rubric 'British' to designate the works of the Irish and Scottish writers. Students have found it paradoxical that Swift's "Modest Proposal" and Yeats' "Easter 1916" is taught as BRITISH literature!
6. Another question: Have our English departments specified what they understand by the word 'literature': does it designate only written discourses? Does it include oral literature and folk literature as well? Does it give way to screenplays and song lyrics? Rarely do our English

departments' syllabuses include anything oral, even when it is in English, let alone Robert Burns' very Scottish "To a Mouse" or the very rich African-American Spirituals or the counter-discursive Caribbean Dub poetry. Reasons behind this indifference or negligence could be three; one, the assumption that oral literature lacks the 'standard' (which standard?) that could make it subject to critical education; second, the euro-originated dis-ease regarding the nature of oral literature: it is aggregative, homeostatic, spontaneous, and public; and third, the refusal to academically acknowledge orality as origin of written literature which, in its extension, ignores the vitality and counter-canonical potential of orature as well as gives 'literature' (written literature) a distinct mark of educated elitism. Syllabuses of English departments are then not simply Briticentric, they also maintain and proffer a hierarchical demarcation between high and low literature/culture.

7. Introducing and multiplying postcolonial courses in the English departments is a necessity. The courses should integrate two postcolonial streams: postcolonial literary discourse and colonial discourse theory. The objective is two-fold: it gives students exposure to the ways postcolonial writers have attended the questions of colonization, identity and indigeneity; it also provides students with tools by which to critically approach English canonical texts and scrutiny colonialist/racist/ assumptions they are invested with. In the post-9/11 world, the exigency of employing postcolonial apparatus gets stronger not only for re-reading English literature but also for understanding our place and space in the international geo-political schema.

**Coolie: Knight:: Crow: Daffodils:: Local: Universal**

*While ELT is dominating the English studies scenario in Bangladesh, there is little or no interest in English Literature Teaching. This is not to mean that another ELT-like trade-space is to be created. What I suggest is to investigate the ways English literature has been being taught in Bangladeshi classrooms. This section argues in favour of contextualizing the teaching of literature in English in class.*

The 'hauntology'<sup>4</sup> of universalism has long been dominating English literature studies. This approach views humanity as homogenous and considers all human experiences and actions subject to unitary evaluation mechanism. The dominating(!) European literary criticism labels a literary work 'great' and 'serious' on the ground of its being universal: how extensively and truthfully it reflects universal human condition. The question that for long passed unanswered is: What makes an experience universal? It is at the end of the 20th century that postcolonial studies gave the answer: literary or cultural universality is a pose, a myth, an effective tool used by the colonial power to neutralize the local and naturalize the western, "because the 'universal' features of humanity are the characteristics of those who occupy positions of political dominance" (Ashcroft, Griffith and Tiffin Reader 55). Perverting rationalizing, the west, on the one hand, has transformed the western into the human, the subjective, historical phenomena into the natural while, on the other hand, it has labeled the non-western at best the local, at worst inhuman. Dismantling such mythologizing, postcolonial studies asserts that "even the most apparently 'essential' features of human life become provisional and contingent" (ibid.). Charles Larson, for example, in "Heroic Ethnocentrism" narrates his experience in an African classroom teaching Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd* to show that even the so-called "natural" acts like kissing is "not natural at all, but learned, that is, cultural" (ibid. 62).

Bangladeshi English teachers, with exceptions, are rather indifferent to it. In most cases, English literature studies in Bangladeshi classrooms have still relied heavily on aesthetic and stylistic evaluation, ignoring numerous politico-cultural aspects that contributed to its production and circulation and the colonial legacies that the very language carries. The difference between pedagogy and practice is even greater with the teachers who write scholarly researches investigating colonial assumptions in literary studies and re-reading indigenous or other post-colonial literatures. While they voice against imperial assumptions, they remain curiously anglocentric in the actual teaching, accepting that "English literature is central and necessary to a student's critical education" (Docker 445). Foregrounding this paradox, this paper argues that English literature, in the context of Bangladesh, should be given a historico-cultural dynamic reading.



Let me clarify here that I do not sidetrack the aesthetic and stylistic aspects of literature nor am I talking in favour of critical theorizing. I understand that theory totalizes and it has an inherent hegemonic character, privileging the academics and the critics. What I argue is that being placed in a recently independent country and reading literature written in the language of the colonizers, it is important that we contextualize the teaching of English literature.

1. English (or British) literature is assumed as universal and here lies its presumed greatness: thus Hardy may tell the story of Wessex but his novels reflect essential human conditions; Shakespeare is 'greater' and more enriching because his plays include characters of different nationalities, thus more universal. The epithet 'greatness', therefore, goes to those literary pieces which are taken to transcend the spatial and temporal particularities, incorporate a sort of "metaphysical" vision of human experiences which is "superior to history, the world of divisions and disharmony" (Docker 444), and thus appeal to people of any time and at any place. Vis-à-vis is postcolonial literature, for example, which is, to a great extent, local or contextual and, therefore, may not pass the 'greatness' test and is dispensable. Against this scenario dominated by European literary criticism, Bangladeshi teachers should read and teach a British discourse - ranging from poems to legal documents - not simply literarily but also politically and culturally. In the world of decolonization, media control, and representational politics, literature can no longer remain a self-referential aesthetic phenomenon. History- and discourse-neutral study of literature is no more pertinent or important. Literature has to be studied as being situated POLITICO-HISTORICALLY in a wide discursive regime as a means of constructing knowledge.

2. Bangladeshi English departments put special emphasis, for example, on understanding British culture (e.g. the legend of King Arthur), Social History of England (e.g. Chaucer's England) and English Literary Periods (e.g. Victorian period). There is no doubt that cultural and historical knowledge of England/Britain enriches one's reading of British literature, but the approach should be critical and dynamic. More than that, an equal emphasis must be given to POLITICAL HISTORY that conditioned literary production and distribution. By 'politics' I do not only refer to 'The Glorious Revolution' or 'Puritan Interregnum' or 'Industrial Revolution,' rather in my mind loom large those realities that relate to me - I, reading British literature in Bangladesh in the 21st century - and which, unfortunately, do not have much access to English departments' syllabuses: Empire, imperialism, colonialism, philosophy of education and enlightenment, means and technologies of colonization, oppression of the peasants, the making of the subaltern, the 'Minute on Indian Education,' the beginning of English Literary Study in the Indian subcontinent, and so on.

3. A piece of literature has to be CONTEXTUALIZED. It is reactionary to assume that racism, oppression, gender discrimination, power politics, and the subaltern's struggle for survival are political notions or theoretical stances, and better stay on the periphery of literary studies. It is as if Miranda's 'love,' Prospero's 'pride' and Caliban's 'sensuality' are conceivable universal phenomenon - these are human characteristics - but the mechanism through which Prospero assumed power and Caliban is made 'monster' is subject to postcolonial interpretation; aren't oppression and otherness human experiences? When we read Marlowe's Doctor Faustus, we are busy with fathoming Faustus' overreaching vision or arguing if the play is a morality play or an inverted morality play. We tend to ignore the power politics and the good/bad, master/servant binaries: we may not notice that Faustus entertains the emperors and plays mischievous pranks on the poor or the less powerful, especially those like the Pope or Benvolio who attempt to defy authority. In "Ideology in the Classroom," Arun P Mukherjee expresses his frustration with his Canadian students who, despite his critical reading of Margaret Laurence's "The Perfumed Sea" in class, interpreted the story after the universalist framework. Ignoring the spatial (two whites in the post-independence Ghana) and temporal (the postcolonial situation) dimensions, the students -evaluated solely on the basis of their emotional relationship with each other. ... I realized that these generalizations were ideological. They enabled my students to efface the differences between British bureaucrats and British traders, between colonizing whites and colonized blacks, and between rich blacks and poor blacks. They enabled them to believe that all human beings faced dilemmas similar to the ones faced by the two main characters in the story. (Mukherjee 449)

4. I found a teacher teaching Seamus Heaney's "Digging" without making reference to English-Irish crisis. The poem is placed typically universally: how a man's rich past is invoked, how he is haunted and encouraged by nostalgia, how his grandfather and father animate the creative spirit of the poet which leads him to write about his past, his soil. Eventually, when I as third-examiner (another questionable system) was evaluating some exam scripts, I found no one even casually referring to English colonization, to the Irish mission to establish distinct national identity, and to Heaney's attempt at giving voice to the silenced. Apolitical and uncritical stances like this have vitiated the spirit and import of, for example, IRISH AND SCOTTISH LITERATURES taught in English literature classes.

5. What about two English classics - COLONIALIST CLASSICS - Shakespeare's The Tempest and Conrad's Heart of Darkness? While we are usually antagonistic towards Kipling, we are somehow anxious to defend Shakespeare and Conrad though their texts betray strong colonial assumptions and vulgar power relations based on Manichean binaries. For example, most of the criticism and notes, that are available in Bangladeshi markets, see Heart of Darkness as a journey towards inner darkness - the Freudian id, and a criticism of colonization. Good! But it goes uncritical about the facts that the darkness imagery gets its force from western racism that perversely rationalized that dark skin is an expression of dark psyche, thus equating darkness (evil and savage) with the dark complexion of the Africans of the Dark Continent. The narrative, with a number of patches of colonial atrocities, tells how Kurtz - an energetic, potential European - was turned to a monster for being exposed to the unspeakable savagery of the Africans. On the other hand, Marlow the narrator in his journey through Congo manages to maintain his sanity and civilizing mores only because he has strong fidelity to his commitment. The savagery of the Africans - indisputable and contaminating - has thus been naturalized. I argue that English colonial or colonialist texts like these have to be approached politically and culturally, encouraging the students to investigate and interrogate the issues of colonizing, oppression, racism, hierarchy, and cultural discrimination.

6. A typical category of question in English literature exam is: EXPLANATION. This is but a modified version of the colonialist practice of 'learning by heart.' The students here are expected to identify the speaker or the context and to interpret the extract contextually; the 'contextually' here refers to 'intra-textually', not the socio-historical scenario against which the statement is made or the text was produced. I suggest replacing 'Explanation' with 'Close Reading' which opens a broader space to read the extract dynamically contextually. Some may call this approach imposing, suffocating students' spontaneity and channeling it through a route defined by the teacher. The approach is, however, the reverse: the questions set in the 'Close Reading' section will not intend to lead students to a certain direction but to provide them a space in which they can see a thing from different - more specifically, socio-political - perspectives. A guru guides a shishya but it is the shishya who chooses.

#### **English dis-eased**

The teaching of English literature - because of its being English and in English - has to be approached critically and contrapuntally in Bangladesh. English canonical discourses carry colonial legacies - moral and universal in nature - and the language they are written in has become, ironically, 'prestige language' and 'service language.' The academic study of English literature - if goes uncritical and history-neutral - has then every potential to be denigrated into an agency of re-colonizing. Very understandably, the syllabuses and the teaching of English literature in Bangladeshi universities need to be contextualized. The first major job is to decolonize or de-Britishize English syllabuses. During the preparation of the content of English literature syllabus, focus should be put significantly, if not equally, on British (English+Irish+Scottish) literature, American literature, and Postcolonial literature in English. It is also important to acknowledge that the phrase 'English literature' designates 'Literature in English.' Let me, therefore, propose that all Departments of English Literature be baptized into Departments of Literature in English. The most important job is, however, to decolonize the reading and teaching of English literature. This can be achieved in three ways: uninstalling the perception that 'great' English works uphold universal and moral values; investigating the content, production, distribution, consumption and institutionalization of English canonical texts; and situating English 'classics' historico-politically with a view to, in Helen Tiffin's words,

"demystifying (while still acknowledging) their power in the contemporary world" (Tiffin 163).

This paper intends to interrogate Briticentrism nestled in Bangladeshi English departments and to mobilize the praxis of dialogue between English canon and Bangladeshi minds with a view to make anglocentrism dis-easy, to differentiate between what Barthes calls Nature and History, to drive new generations' intellectual spirit and creative energy more towards the contingent and the local which is unsettling but not ungrounded.

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**Notes**

1. From "Dan is the Van" by the Caribbean dub poet The Mighty Sparrow: "According to the education you get when you small/You'll grow up with true ambition and respect from one an all/But in days in school they teach me like a fool/The things they teach me I should be a block-headed mule" (quoted in Hossain 95); the "mimic men" refers to V S Naipaul's 1967 novel *The Mimic Men*.

2. Referring to Richard Altick's *The English Common Reader* (1957), Vishwanathan writes: "The new subject of 'English literature' was introduced in 1871, and it consisted of memorizing of passages of poetry and testing knowledge of meaning and allusion" (1990: 171).

3. I am not questioning the greatness of Shakespeare as I may not strongly object the inclusion of a 100-mark course on Rabindranath Thakur in Bangla department's syllabus.

4. In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida invents a word "hauntology", a kind of logic of the ghost, which sounds the same in French as "ontology" as the "h" is silent.

## The Impact of EFA on Education System in Bangladesh

Gazi Mahabubul Alam and Sarwar Basher

### Abstract

The research for this paper, the first of its nature in Bangladesh, aimed to explore the impact of Education for All (EFA) on Education System in Bangladesh. The study has been carried out by desk study, interviews, questionnaires, secondary analysis and observation. Findings reveal that in order to meet the target of Education for All (EFA), education policy has been changed rapidly and dramatically. This has both positive and negative impact on Bangladeshi education system. The changes somehow make an achievement in increasing enrollment at primary and secondary level. The increase of enrollment at primary and secondary level creates a market for tertiary education. As little public funding has been set aside for higher education resulting the privatization of tertiary education in Bangladesh. This paper identifies that the rapid expansion of private education resulted from EFA creates a market approach in education policy which is a constraint to ensure better quality education as a whole.

**Keywords:** Education for All (EFA), Capacity Building (CAP), Privatization of Higher Education.

### 1. Introduction

Explanation is rarely needed for the acronym EFA. The team of donor agencies working for the development of developing nations especially UNESCO should be congratulated for their hard work in contextualizing the EFA and making the term popular (Brock-Utne, 2000). Many countries (i.e. Nepal, Maldives, Sri-lanka, Lesotho) have achieved universal primary education; other countries targeted are about to achieve the target.

The term EFA itself explains its mission and vision. The main concentration of EFA is to educate the children whose life is covered by the extreme poverty (Yamada, 2007; Naseem and Arshad-Ayaz, 2007). The first phase of EFA was mainly concentrated on increasing the enrolment rate of disadvantaged children into primary education. Mid-phases were not only concentrated on increasing net enrolment of disadvantaged children but also provided an especial attention in order to increase the enrolment of girls. The initiatives of EFA enjoyed a greater success. Later, the team working in favor of EFA realized that only increases of enrollment does not bring good promises, unless children are provided a high quality of education. It was also noticed in many cases that the speedy process of EFA in increasing enrollment also dented the education quality of many countries (Chowdhury et al., 2000). This was caused because of insufficient fund to accommodate the increased demand. It was also not possible to hurriedly build the proper school infrastructure and atmosphere to meet the oversize market. This circumstance motivates UNESCO and other donor agencies to work not only increasing enrollment for all but also improving education quality for all. Thus the EFA team of UNESCO has recently determined two main targets. One is to increase the enrollment of disadvantaged into education especially in primary and secondary provisions and the other is to ensure a better quality primary education for the group targeted (UNESCO, 2004).

EFA realizes a number of constraints that are causing sluggish progression on those two targets. One of the fundamental constraints is the family background of the children targeted under EFA goal (UNESCO, 2004). Therefore, initiatives were taken to educate the elderly and adolescent members of the family who are considered as disadvantaged. UNESCO provides an especial priority to an extra-budgetary programme to support capacity building activities for EFA in selected Member States. In order to do this, they considered a project named CAP (Capacity Building). CAP has its own mission and vision, however, its goal is also to subsidize the EFA through informal provision of education (UNESCO, 2008).

As stated earlier, developing countries and their people whose lives are dominated by the extreme poverty are the main consumers of EFA. This has provided us an increased primary school graduate community in an overnight, thus the unexpected pressure is overwhelming

secondary and higher education system. Secondary education receives second preference in investing fund by the government and donors, while higher education receives less or almost no priority (Brock-Utne, 1996, 2000; Colclough 1995). Secondary education is thus ineffectively covering the increased demand mainly by public provision. On the other hand, higher education provision becomes a commodity (Yang, 2003). Considering education as commodity is often judged as reverse philosophy of education.

Privatization of higher education opened a door for academically inept but having sound economic graduates to access to higher education. Higher education and research are interrelated which shape the primary and secondary education of a country in order to achieve a sustainable national development. Research requires more academically able candidates (genius). Privatization of Higher Education has narrowed down the access of higher education for genius, thus it is time to think does EFA have only positive impact or is there any affect caused by rapid action of EFA and globalization of education. A deeper investigation will be able to inform us the answer of this question, however to rationalize the research project, this paper aims to answer the following research questions.

- What is the impact of EFA at primary level?
- What is the impact of EFA at secondary level?
- How does it influence the tertiary education system?
- Can primary system work in isolation or are both provisions (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary) interlinked?

We believe that the answers of these questions will be able to provide some suggestions and guidelines for legislators to understand the way of implementing EFA and other agendas prescribed by international donors.

## **2. Research Context**

### **2.1. Education provision and management towards EFA in Bangladesh**

The education system mainly primary provision in Bangladesh is characterised by co-existence of three separate streams. The mainstream is a vernacular-based secular education system carried over from the country's colonial past. There also exists a separate religious system of education. Finally, based on the use of English as the medium of instruction, a third stream of education modeled following the British Education System (and using the same curriculum as in Britain) has grown mainly in the country's metropolitan cities.

However, diverse the three streams may appear, there are common elements. Scope also exists for the reintegration of graduates from one stream to another at different levels.

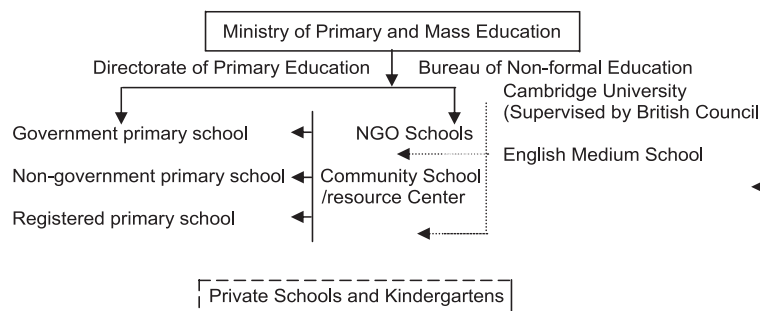
The mainstream education system in Bangladesh is structured as follows:

One or two-year pre-primary education in private schools or kindergartens, and one year informal education in government primary schools. A five-year compulsory primary education is an 'official agenda' for the 6-10 year age group, imparted mainly in government and registered non-government primary schools. In metropolitan cities, however, government and non-government primary schools cater mainly for the educational needs of the comparatively poorer sections of the population, as the better-off families usually send their children to private English medium schools and primary attached secondary. There exists, however, a substantial number of NGO-run non-formal schools catering different level of primary education mainly for opt-outs from the government and non-government primary schools. It is worth to note that the scale of non-formal education is quite big. Non-formal education is also considered as a strong provision to achieve EFA thus a separate division named Bureau of Non-formal Education closely works under the ministry of primary and mass education (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2008).

Though many NGOs are providing primary education in Bangladesh, few of those impart the full five-year primary education cycle. Because of this, on completion of their 2-3 year non-formal primary education in NGO schools, students normally re-enter government/non-government primary schools at higher classes. NGO schools differ from other non-government private schools. While the private schools operate like private enterprises, often guided by commercial interests, NGO schools operate mainly in areas not served by either government or non-

government schools, essentially to meet the educational needs of the vulnerable groups of society (BRAC, 2007). They usually follow a non-formal approach to suit the special needs of children from such groups.

On completion of primary education, students (11+) enroll for secondary education. Junior secondary education, lasting over three years, is the first phase of secondary education. At the end of this phase, some students branch out to join the vocational stream offered at Vocational Training Institutions (VTI) and Technical Training Centres (TTC), run by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Employment respectively, while students in mainstream education continue in government and non-government secondary schools for a two-year secondary education in their respective areas of specialisation e.g. humanities, science, commerce, etc. At the end of their secondary education, the students sit for their first public examination named Secondary School Certificate (SSC) under the supervision of seven education boards known as Boards of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE). Students of religious education and English medium streams also sit for their respective public examinations, Dakhil and 'O' level, conducted by the Madrasah Education Board and London/Cambridge University respectively, facilitated by the British Council in case of the later. After completion of such education, students enroll in mainly three types of higher secondary education - Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC), polytechnic and HSC-British Model (HSC-BM) system. Upon completion of this HSC or equivalent qualifications, candidates try to follow higher education from the university. Three degrees are offered by the universities or affiliated university level institutions, from Bachelor to PhD level. Diagram 1 represents the details of the different types of primary education and their respective authorities/management.



## 2.2. Genesis of Education and its expansion

### 2.2.1. Guru-Shishsho provision

The introduction of education in South Asia was implemented through a process known as 'Guru-Shishsho'. An individual with a good analytical knowledge was considered as 'Guru' and his or her followers were known as 'Shishsho'. Exercising knowledge through Guru-Shishsho had always been a fundamental part of education in Bangladesh. With the gradual increase of demand for education in contemporary Bangladesh, there has been an increase in formal education provision as most acknowledge that education should be the fundamental concern of public policy. However, before introduction of the formal provision of education, education was a trade limited with the house of privileged group which was known as lodging master provision.

### 2.2.2. Tutor/Lodging-master

Altbach (1999) and Alam (2007) claim that this style of education is the first stage in the history of education. They assert that before the introduction of a formal school system in many British colonies and similar regions, privileged parents (for example, a landlord, the district commissioner, the district clerk) would employ private tutors (known as a lodging-master in some countries) to educate their children.

A research by Tooley (1999) hints that this type of education has remained in many developing countries despite introduction of a formal schooling system. However, the prime purpose of this kind of private education is to help the economically elite primary and secondary students to make better progress with their school performance. This will help them complete further education where access is limited.

### **2.2.3. Formal Schooling**

Practice of education and knowledge through 'Guru-Shishsho' and tutor or lodging-master provision has become very popular, therefore, community realized the importance of education. This motivates the sage members of the community to establish the school through community participation. Although some researches state that community participation is a new concept in education, Alam (2007) and Narayan (1995) proves that community participation in education had a long history and heritage. According to Alam (2007), community collectively collected a various forms of subscriptions (i.e. money, rice, bamboo and other materials in building infrastructure) in order to establish school. Once school was established, government shouldered the responsibility in running the schools through a public policy and administration. Government also ensures some kind of participation of community in school management via the involvement of managing community (SMC). These days, education is considered as the weapon of development thus public and private initiatives are being involved in every level of education (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary).

### **2.3. Expansion of Education and its marketing practice**

Marketing in education is not new concept (Bartlett et al., 2008). State, partners for development, controlling agencies (i.e. UGC, BISE, MO) and providers (School, College, University both public and private provision) involve in education market since long (Alam, 2007). The commitment of state and partners for development is to distribute the beam of education to every household thus to make education popular, different types of marketing of education have been taken place. The purpose of this marketing is to make the education product popular so this kind of marketing approach towards education can be identified as product marketing. Product marketing concept undertaken by the development partners, state and providers makes education much popular to the community thus communities having different kind of economic, social, cultural and religious background are procuring education according to their interests and needs (Alam, 2007).

Product marketing in education introduced at the early stage of education history, which make education popular amongst the communities. Thereafter marketing attempts were taken to make different types of education (i.e. science, commerce, arts and vocational) popular (Tabb, 2001). Success of such kinds marketing creates a huge diversified market for education. These days, a significant number of customers are ready to procure different types and level of education. This also results the expansion of education through private provision. Private provision is available at very level (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary). However, the entrance of private provision is extreme at tertiary level, training courses and admission aid provisions as little public fund is allocated for these particular provisions of education. The rapid expansion of education through privatization has introduced the brand marketing provision in education. Considering these, it can be noted that within the current climate of expansion of education and its marketing, three main types of approaches are practiced, these are 'product', 'category' and 'brand' marketing (Alam, 2007).

State and donor agencies are rigorously involve in 'product marketing' of education, however in order to bring gender and others types of equalities (i.e. economic, privileged and underprivileged) in education, 'demographic segmentation concept' of marketing in education is also introduced in education marketing. While religious groups are involved in product marketing, they are also introducing the 'psychographic segmentation' of marketing in education in order to reflect their outlooks. Introduction and rapid expansion of education through private provision opens the horizon of 'geographic segmentation of marketing' in education in order to provide the service to targeted elite group (Bartlett, et al., 2008).

Different segmentations of marketing in education provide services to different groups and communities that should untimely bring a number of advantages and disadvantages. However, EFA focuses on overall education 'product marketing'. Furthermore, EFA's concentration is on rural population paying an especial attention on girl therefore within the EFA approaches, both demographic and geographic as well, as psycho graphic segmentations are practiced. This research will mainly investigate the impact of EFA on education system in Bangladesh adopting following research design.



### 3. Methodological approach

#### 3.1. Methods

Primarily a qualitative approach was carried out to collect the data throughout the project. This was considered to be the most appropriate approach, given the nature of the query and the circumstances of the research, which was limited both in terms of small size of the sample of faculty members and students, and of the time available. Triangulation was required to promote the objectivity of the research. As researchers with a background in educational management, we were aware of our own cultural baggage and ability to be entirely objective. We tried to be aware of the possible positional power issues that might arise within the research process, where perceived power differences might affect data collection or the way it was analysed.

#### 3.2. Techniques for collecting data

The private and public provisions of Education in Bangladesh were selected for the research. The data used in this paper was collected through an empirical survey conducted by questionnaires. Qualitative methods were used that allowed interviewees to express their views in a free and personal way, giving as much prominence as possible to their thematic associations.

##### 3.2.1 Semi-structured interviews adopting qualitative approach were held with

- \* Key personnel at the Ministry of Education in Bangladesh
- \* Key personnel at the University Grants Commission of Bangladesh
- \* Key personnel at different BISEs
- \* Key personnel at public and private provisions of education (at all levels)
- \* Teachers at public and private provisions of education (at all levels)
- \* Social elites with reputations as educators
- \* The guardians of students in both public and private provisions of education (at all levels)
- \* Students of public and private universities

Other data was collected by an empirical data survey approach. This approach was considered the most appropriate for people who were easily accessible.

##### 3.2.2. Questionnaires were used for-

- \* Teachers selected at random from provisions of education (at all levels)
- \* Staff at provisions of education (at all levels), selected at random
- \* Students at provisions of education (at all levels), selected at random
- \* Students facing an admission test to provisions of education (at all levels), selected at random.

The opportunity to ask relevant questions of the policymakers, legislators and stakeholders was available in an interview session. Non-participatory observation was also deemed important.

For this research, a number of official and/or unpublished documents and newspaper articles were studied<sup>1</sup>

##### 3.2.3. Document reviews:

- \* Different Education Commission Reports (i.e. Moniruzzaman, Asaduzzaman etc.)<sup>2</sup>
- \* Bangladesh Bureau of Educational Information and Statistics - BANBEIS annual statistics books, 1990-2006 (sponsored by UNESCO and organised by the Ministry of Education, Bangladesh)
- \* University Grants Commission Annual Report, 1994-2006. (The Annual Report contains particulars of every university in Bangladesh, whether public or private, and general information such as new development, strategy proposals, etc.)
- \* Provisional Population Census Report 2001

<sup>1</sup> Since no academic research has been conducted, news paper articles and policy/official documents would be secondary source of the data collection

<sup>2</sup> Prof Asaduzzaman is the chairman of the University Grants Commission, under his supervision, a team was formed to explore the current situations of HE and to discover more effective ways so that the quality of HE can be higher

- \* Students' Results sheets of public and private provisions of education (at all levels)
- \* Newspaper articles

### 3.2.4. Observation

Facilities for lectures were observed. The paper concentrated on the use of data collected from document review and observation. In addition, experience of working for eleven years alongside education system in Bangladesh allows for some of the arguments to reflect personal observation during that time. Before analysing the findings, it should be noted that this is the first study to be conducted on the impact of EFA in Bangladeshi context.

## 4. Findings

### 4.1. Increase of enrollment

Donor agencies mainly UNESCO instigated the EFA. Government, other agencies and providers made a significant response in achieving the goal of EFA. The data below presents the achievement in primary level by the government of Bangladesh in connection to EFA through formal provision.

**Table 1: Enrollment in education and traditionalism**

| Year | Enrolment (All ages) | Official Age Group Population (6-10 years) for Primary Education | Enrolled Official Age Group Population (6-10 years) in Primary Education | Gross Enrolment Rate (GER) | Net Enrolment Rate (NER) |
|------|----------------------|--|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1997 | 18 031 673           | 18 861 583   | 15 113 783   | 95.60                      | 80.13                    |
| 1998 | 18 360 642           | 19 079 888   | 15 538 661   | 96.23                      | 81.44                    |
| 1999 | 17 621 731           | 18 307 265   | 15 229 814   | 96.23                      | 83.19                    |
| 2000 | 17 667 985           | 18 296 312   | 15 667 538   | 96.56                      | 85.63                    |
| 2001 | 17 659 220           | 18 114 198   | 15 680 666   | 97.49                      | 86.57                    |
| 2002 | 17 561 828           | 18 040 023   | 15 637 110   | 97.35                      | 86.68                    |
| 2003 | 18 431 320           | 17 592 292   | 16 116 934   | 104.77                     | 91.61                    |
| 2004 | 17 953 300           | 17 557 820   | 16 153 194   | 102.95                     | 92.00                    |
| 2005 | 16 225 658           | 17 315 296   | 15 098 938   | 93.71                      | 87.20                    |

Source: BANBEIS annual reports

Before analysing Table 1, it is important to note that the data is presented from 'primary education' level, since both dropouts and the number of graduates with the prerequisite qualifications control the enrolments at the 'secondary' and 'tertiary' levels.

Table 1 shows that, in 1998, the total enrolment in primary education is highest (between the years from 1997 to 2005) when the age group population for primary education is also the highest. However, the net enrolment column shows that net enrolment in 1998 is higher than in 1997, but lower in the years that follow. The net enrolment in 2002 is higher than the previous years, where the total enrolment is lower. The net enrolment rate has increased in 2003 and 2004 but surprisingly decreased in 2005. Besides, total enrolment is in a decreasing trend from 2003 to onwards. This is simply because birth control is increasing and has an impact on total enrolment but, ultimately, has no impact on net enrolment. The data confirms that education in Bangladesh is definitely becoming an issue of increasing importance. The following Table illustrates the pattern of employment regarding educated and non-educated work force (WF) with the increase of enrollment at all the levels of education.

Table 2: Education and Employment

| Year | Total Population (Age 15+ to 65) | Total Employed Population | Total Unemployed Population | Educated Workforce (grade IX to onwards) | Educated WF Employed    | Educated WF Unemployed  | Non-educated WF (No education to VIII) | Non-educated WF Employed | Non-educated WF Unemployed |
|------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|--|-------------------------|-------------------------|--|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1990 | 7 50 65 000<br>(100%)            | 4 32 20 000<br>(57.58%)   | 3 18 45 000<br>(42.42%)     | 1 68 29 573<br>(100%)                    | 78 87 000<br>(58.75%)   | 69 42 573<br>(41.25%)   | 5 82 35 427<br>(100%)                  | 3 24 57 000<br>(55.73)   | 2 57 78 427<br>(44.27%)    |
| 1995 | 7 65 00 000<br>(100%)            | 4 32 25 000<br>(56.50%)   | 3 32 75 000<br>(43.50%)     | 2 83 05 000<br>(100%)                    | 1 27 35 000<br>(44.96%) | 1 55 80 000<br>(55.04%) | 4 81 95 000<br>(100%)                  | 3 05 00 000<br>(63.28%)  | 1 76 95 000<br>(36.72)     |
| 2000 | 8 08 43 000<br>(100%)            | 4 50 00 000<br>(55.66%)   | 3,58 43 000<br>(44.44%)     | 3 83 43 000<br>(100%)                    | 1 32 45 000<br>(34.54%) | 2 50 98 000<br>(65.46%) | 4 25 00 000<br>(100%)                  | 2 92 00 000<br>(68.71%)  | 1 33 00 000<br>(31.29%)    |

Source: Personal communication

Before commenting on the data presented in Table 2, we will explain the reason for personal communication in collecting data. For political reasons,<sup>3</sup> the government of Bangladesh does not wish to reveal the number of huge unemployment amongst educated people. As there are no official documents available, we therefore had to collect data via personal communication. A few important factors are noted:

\* Women involved in household jobs are shown as unemployed. However, their work has a significant contribution to development. Many women with household jobs are part of a non-educated group. If they were included in the Table 2 as an employed non-educated workforce, the percentage of employed non-educated workforce would be higher. Moreover, educated women working as housewives (These women are wives in a privileged group. They do not work, either inside or outside the house) are not contributing to development as they employ servants to do their work (servants are also not considered as an employed workforce).

\* Though many students are engaged in part-time jobs, students are considered as an unemployed group. There is no data available on the total student population. If they were not included as an unemployed workforce, the total unemployed population would be lower. However, this has no impact on the non-educated employed workforce.

Table 2 shows that the unemployment rate amongst educated people<sup>4</sup> is much higher and is increasing more rapidly than that of employment amongst uneducated people. This generates the following questions: can education create jobs? Is education provided in accordance with If any government shows that there is a large number of unemployed educated people, they may not be able to gain the public vote in a general election. There is also a threat from donor agencies. To receive funding, the government shows that the education system is working well and contributing significantly to development. We contacted a Statistics Officer working with the Bangladesh Bureau Of Statistics. He provided us within the information in compiling the primary data collected for the census. We also need to consider that educated people are employed in underpaid work which has a negative impact on return to investment in education. For example, if a Masters' degree holder works as a receptionist, his/her earnings is not an actual return for the investment in the education. To work as a receptionist, a candidate needs to have a basic education and some training. The production cost for a Masters' degree holder is considerably more than that of a receptionist. Job market demand in Bangladesh? Do we need to provide education according to job market demand? We feel that, if education was provided according to job market demand, this would bring development and create more employment for more people.

Despite the unemployment rate amongst educated people being higher (and increasing) than that of employment amongst uneducated people, education is rising in Bangladesh. People

<sup>3</sup> If any government shows that there is a large number of unemployed educated people, they may not be able to gain the public vote in a general election. There is also a threat from donor agencies. To receive funding, the government shows that the education system is working well and contributing significantly to development.

<sup>4</sup> We contacted a Statistics Officer working with the Bangladesh Bureau Of Statistics. He provided us within the information in compiling the primary data collected for the census.

consider education to be a tradition that they should pursue; education is thought of as a 'traditional right'. Pursuing education in order to obtain a job or to fulfill a thirst for knowledge confirms the need for balanced courses and curricula delivered through a significant academic atmosphere. In contrast, pursuing education as a 'traditional right' could be a threat to development. If the people of Bangladesh pursue education as just an heritable tradition, and not to meet a perceived need, it will impact negatively upon national development.

#### 4.2. Prerequisite qualifications and further study

Although a significant number of graduates are unemployed (Table 2), the ultimate goal of most students is to achieve good employment. To achieve a desirable job, candidates need to have a higher 'diploma' for competing in the employment market. Consequently, further education is an increasing feature in overcoming the obstacles of dropout rate and prerequisite qualifications. The following data demonstrates that increasing numbers of students holding prerequisite qualifications influences the expansion of the number of students gaining further studies.

**Table 3: Prerequisite qualification influencing further study**

| Number of students passing SSC | Year | Number of students appeared HSC | Year |
|--------------------------------|------|---------------------------------|------|
| 1 38 317                       | 1990 | 2 47 663                        | 1992 |
| 3 08 676                       | 1991 | 3 18 312                        | 1993 |
| 3 21 675                       | 1992 | 3 98 540                        | 1994 |
| 4 04 402                       | 1993 | 4 68 801                        | 1995 |
| 4 90 099                       | 1994 | 5 14 668                        | 1996 |
| 5 60 114                       | 1995 | 5 84 962                        | 1997 |
| 197 811                        | 1996 | 4 79 028                        | 1998 |
| 3 68 803                       | 1997 | 5 18 648                        | 1999 |
| 3 46 435                       | 1998 | 4 70 541                        | 2000 |
| 4 57 252                       | 1999 | 5 25 755                        | 2001 |
| 3 81 762                       | 2000 | 5 38 296                        | 2002 |
| 2 76 903                       | 2001 | 5 01 507                        | 2003 |
| 4 08 969                       | 2002 | 4 83 481                        | 2004 |
| 3 30 762                       | 2003 | 4 15 088                        | 2005 |
| 3 63 270                       | 2004 | 4 12 024                        | 2006 |

Source: BANBEIS Annual Report 2008

SSC is the first official prerequisite qualification in Bangladesh, by which students can select from a variety of different study programmes at further level education (i.e. HSC, Diploma, Teacher Education, Pre-BBA) leading to an HSC and Diploma level qualifications. There had been a trend that, once achieving an SSC, almost all students joined an HSC. Recently, however, a fair number of students have been pursuing Diploma level education and Pre-BBA, although this cannot be compared with the number of students studying at HSC level. Moreover, it is evident that academically able students are following the HSC. The HSC is a two-year programme - students who pass the SSC can appear in the HSC examination at least two years after their SSC graduation. However, the number of students studying for the HSC is greater than the number of students who passed the SSC (Table 3). This is simply because, every year, many students fail the HSC and re-sit within the following two years. However, figures from 1990 to 1995 show that SSC graduates are a growing feature in Bangladesh; the numbers of candidates appearing in-the HSC examination have increased in the time period 1992 to 1997. In 1996, the total number of SSC graduates was extremely low; may be for two principal reasons:

\* The Government took massive measures to control the birth rate during 1980 and 1981. Children in Bangladesh could attend school at the age of 5 to 6 years. After ten academic years, students can sit the SSC examination, and in 1996 the total number of candidates in SSC was low.

\* The Government imposed a new examination system in SSC to ensure a high quality education, so less-able students no longer appeared at the SSC which may reduce the total

number of SSC examinees in 1996. A major portion of SSC<sup>5</sup> examinees also failed the SSC exam. Due to the low total number of SSC graduates in 1996, the number of HSC candidates in 1998 was lower than in other years. However, the number of HSC candidates in 1998 was not very low in comparison with the SSC graduates of 1996. This is because a large number of students who failed to pass HSC in 1997 re-sat in 1998. The SSC years of 1997, 1998 and 1999 illustrate the view very clearly. The year 1997 shows that the total number of SSC graduates had once again increased, simultaneously influencing the number of HSC examinees in 1999. Conversely, in 1998, the total number of SSC graduates decreased, so the number of HSC candidates in 2000 reduced. The increase of SSC graduates in 1999 contributed significantly to the increase in HSC candidates in 2001. Finally, in 2001, the total number of SSC graduates decreased, and the candidates of HSC in 2003 followed this trend of decrease. After 2001 and onwards, both number of students passing SSC and number of students enroll in HSC is decreasing. May be, the impact of birth control is now in effect.

#### 4.3. Rising enrolment and expansion of the school

Rising enrolments always result in the establishment of new schools, or in an increase of the enrolment capacity of schools already established. Conversely, decreasing enrolment results in the collapse of established schools. This correlation is not usually evident from a very short observation period. However, this situation can be seen in Bangladesh in a very short space of time. To exemplify this issue, we will again present the data from primary level, as this level is the first indicator to government and donor agencies.

**Table 4: Enrolment and expansion of school**

| Year | Total number of primary students | Total number of primary schools |
|------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1997 | 18 031 673                       | 77 685                          |
| 1998 | 18 360 642                       | 79 803                          |
| 1999 | 17 621 731                       | 78 840                          |
| 2000 | 17 667 985                       | 76 809                          |
| 2001 | 17 659 220                       | 78 126                          |
| 2002 | 17 561 828                       | 78 363                          |
| 2003 | 18 431 320                       | 86 737                          |
| 2004 | 17 953 300                       | 82 868                          |
| 2005 | 16 225 658                       | 80 401                          |

Source: BANBEIS Annual Reports - 2003, 2006

Table 4 shows that 'primary education' in Bangladesh is increasing. Due to 'birth control', the primary school population is decreasing, thus the total enrolment in primary education is falling, even though the country is about to achieve 100% enrolment in primary education. This situation results in no expansion of new schools and sometimes forces the closure of schools already established.

Table 4 shows that the total number of primary schools was highest in 1998 and decreased in the following four years as total enrolment in primary education declined. However, the impact is only slightly noticeable at primary level because of huge funds received from international donor agencies.

The increase and decrease of enrolment at primary level must have an impact on enrolment at secondary and tertiary levels. Birth control may enormously reduce the total enrolment at every level (primary to tertiary) in future, albeit achievement of desired net enrolment (100%) will force the country to close some established schools. This, in turn, must have a negative impact in relation to the employment market and the educational expenditure required in order to establish schools.

A question should be asked about what then happens to the person, and their family, who has settled their life according to the job in which they are employed. It is quite obvious; they must seek alternative employment in order-to meet family demands. However, lack of jobs may force many to involve to crime. Thus, a long-term vision is needed to identify the needs of the populace accurately.

<sup>5</sup> We also need to consider that educated people are employed in underpaid work which has a negative impact on return to investment in education. For example, if a Masters' degree holder works as a receptionist, his/her earnings is not an actual return for the investment in the education. To work as a receptionist, a candidate needs to have a basic education and some training. The production cost for a Masters' degree holder is considerably more than that of a receptionist.

Following this brief illustration of the context of the expansion of education, the principal focus of the following sections will be the rationale for the development of the private higher education (HE) sector in Bangladesh.

**Table 5: Dramatic Change of Education Policy**

| Year | Number of candidates appeared in SSC | Number of Successful SSC Candidates | Pass rate % | Number of HSC colleges (% increase) |
|------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1990 | 4 35 918                             | 1 38 317                            | 31.73       | *                                   |
| 1991 | 4 75 261                             | 3 08 676                            | 64.95       | *                                   |
| 1992 | 5 22 174                             | 3 21 675                            | 61.60       | *                                   |
| 1993 | 6 61 908                             | 4 90 099                            | 61.09       | *                                   |
| 1994 | 5 68 831                             | 4 06 487                            | 71.46       | *                                   |
| 1995 | 7 65 135                             | 5 60 114                            | 73.20       | *                                   |
| 1996 | 4 64 267                             | 1 97 811                            | 42.61       | *                                   |
| 1997 | 7 16 865                             | 3 68 803                            | 51.45       | 901                                 |
| 1998 | 7 22 300                             | 3 46 435                            | 47.96       | 1 041 (14.54)                       |
| 1999 | 8 37 220                             | 4 57 252                            | 54.62       | 1 422 (30.55)                       |
| 2000 | 9 18 045                             | 3 81 762                            | 41.58       | 1 466 (3.09)                        |
| 2001 | 7 86 220                             | 2 76 903                            | 35.22       | 1 485 (1.29)                        |
| 2002 | 10 05 937                            | 4 08 969                            | 40.66       | 1 559 (4.98)                        |
| 2003 | 9 21 024                             | 3 30 762                            | 35.91       | 1 579 (1.28)                        |
| 2004 | 7 56 387                             | 3 63 270                            | 48.03       | 1 548 (-1.96)                       |
| 2005 | 7 51 421                             | 3 94 993                            | 52.57       | 1 813 (17.11)                       |
| 2006 | 7 84 815                             | 4 66 732                            | 59.47       |                                     |

Data unavailable = \*

Source: BANBEIS Reports, 2003 and 2006

Analysis of the Table 5 intends to claim that education policy changes in Bangladesh dramatically. Before analyzing the table, let us state the reasons for choosing the data from secondary perspective. Secondary School Certificate is the first official qualification in Bangladesh which is guided by the EFA. Legislators and politicians often use the data of secondary and primary education to receive donation as these sectors are highly prioritized by the donors. And the increase and decrease of successful examinees at SSC<sup>6</sup> level always have an impact on higher levels (such as higher secondary and tertiary).

Table 5 shows that the number of successful SSC examinees has increased dramatically in 1991 compared to 1990. This increase is either a result of good education provided that particular year or of a dramatic policy change. However, it is assumable that providing good quality education requires regular practice. So in order to achieve greater success through quality education needs a certain time to develop the whole system, therefore, the success should be steady. It is therefore concluded that this greater success has been facilitated by a dramatic policy change. The year 1995, 1996 and 2001 show this view more clearly. In 1995, the number of candidates appeared in SSC were 7 65 135 whereas in 1994 and 1996, the candidates were respectively 5 68 831 and 4 64 267. It is also observed that there was not an unusual or dramatic success<sup>7</sup> rate in 1994. So this sudden increase of SSC candidates in 1995 might be a result of huge school age population in 1985 as pupil attends SSC examination after a ten year of schooling. However, censuses report of 1991 shows that there was almost no difference of school age population among 1984, 1985<sup>8</sup> and 1986. Table 5 also shows that there was a huge decline of number of candidates appeared in SSC in 1996 and the rate of pass was also very low. Since 2002 and onwards, number of SSC candidates is decreasing and this might be an impact of birth control. As it is stated earlier, if increases and decrease are a result of quality education, it should be steady rather than dramatic.

<sup>6</sup> If we had had an opportunity to analyze the data of Madrasa education, it would have generated more grave concern.

<sup>7</sup> If a huge number of students failed to pass SSC in 1994, they might re-sit the SSC in 1995 which would increase the number of candidates for the SSC in 1995

<sup>8</sup> In addition, one particular year can not suddenly create huge school population. So this increase was resulted by decreasing the quality of education. Students need to attend test-examination in order appeared SSC examination and an artificial grade was given in test-examinations in order to increases the total number of SSC candidate.

In conclusion, in twenty first century, when education is an increasing phenomenon, we must expect to have more SSC graduates in 2001<sup>9</sup> than that in 1991. In fact, though the number of candidates appeared SSC examination in 2001 is more than in 1991, the students passed SSC are less in 2001 than that of 1991. Above analysis and data can claim that educational policy change in Bangladesh is dramatic than steady. Following section will snappily illuminate the possible impact of dramatic policy change on quality education and development.

The impact of dramatic policy change is manifolds. Alam (2005) made following observation

*"Policy is an insecticide which is used to kill all insects of education preventing development. However, if the policy is virus attracted or any insect kills the policy, what is the hope to gain effective education sector"*

The above section clearly illustrates the increasing feature in primary level institutions of Bangladesh which has an impact on secondary and tertiary level education. Out of the impacts, we observed that because of the increased number of primary graduates, education policies are changing frequently. The discussion that follows illuminates some impacts of dramatic policy change.

#### **4.4. Impact of sudden increase**

The sudden increase of successful SSC examinees must deteriorate the quality of education if the number of teachers and other facilities do not increase accordingly. In addition, to accommodate these greater increases, either more colleges should be established rapidly or existing colleges would be overwhelmed which certainly degrades education quality. In addition, an overnight expansion does not result effective schooling system. However, if new colleges were not established, there would be a potential threat of high drop out and derailment of students.

This sudden increase is not a result of good education, so the products should be incompetent to do their jobs albeit having necessary qualifications. This will also result a greater unemployment rate amongst educated people.<sup>10</sup> However, degradation of quality education has many impacts such as underemployment or non-professional<sup>11</sup> employment. So this also provides miscalculation of 'rate of return' to investment in education. In addition, it results budget deficit and its miss-utilization (Alam, 2006)

#### **4.5. Impact of sudden decrease**

The sudden decrease results low enrolment. Many colleges are therefore operating without students or with a very few students. Operation of more colleges rather than the need leads to have a miscalculation of 'rate of return' to investment in education. However, if the colleges were not funded by government exchequer, they would close. And if they were closed, unemployed people would bring social decadence by involving abominable practice.

The above discussion generates four major questions. Firstly, is there any guideline for the policy change in order to achieve the goal of education? Secondly, do the legislators follow guideline or are the rules weak, allowing legislators to take advantage of them. Thirdly, is there any long term vision and mission in designing and implementing policy? And finally, is there any political commitment for policy change?

<sup>9</sup> If there is no unusual decline of school age population

<sup>10</sup> For the greater success in SSC, students aim to study higher education rather concentrate to study VET education. This also results greater number of high educated society than skilled workforce.

<sup>11</sup> Earlier a clerical job was occupied by an HSC Graduate, but these days the job is occupied by a university graduate. Most of the researches find that secondary graduate performs the jobs better than university graduate. However, without calculating the contributions of twenty first century's technological moderation and cultural change, some of the researchers argue that the university graduate performs the job better than secondary graduate. We argue that in order to evaluate the job performance of two graduates, it is important to identify the contribution of technological, cultural and globalization moderation in doing the jobs and this contributions should not be counted in favour of university graduate as this knowledge and skills have been provided by the world of 21st century not essentially from the university.

**Table 6: Number of qualified students for procuring HE by year**

| Year | Number of students officially qualified to pursue HE (especially Bachelor-Hon) with HSC |
|------|---|
| 1990 | 60 583  |
| 1991 | 65 007  |
| 1992 | 84 632  |
| 1993 | 91 786  |
| 1994 | 1 29 834  |
| 1995 | 1 78 985  |
| 1996 | <b>1 07 332</b>   |
| 1997 | 1 97 835  |
| 1998 | <b>1 92 959</b>   |
| 1999 | 2 48 628  |

Before analysing the Table 6, it is important to clarify why data from 1990 to 1999 has been considered. Although thirteen public universities were established after 1990, they do not significantly contribute to an increase in enrolment, as the public universities established after 1990 were already operating as Higher Learning Institutes (HLI) before 1990. For instance, the Bangladesh Institute of Engineering and Technology, Khulna (BIET, Khulna), was a HLI but has been recently renamed as Khulna University of Engineering and Technology (KUET), whilst retaining the same structure. Moreover, the preface of the National University of Bangladesh (NUB) and Bangladesh Open University (BOU) (both established in 1992) is analogous. Before establishment of the NUB, activities, now carried out by the NUB, were conducted by three other public universities (Dhaka, Chittagong and Rajshahi). The BOU is also unable to significantly increase enrolment at tertiary level because of its main operation at secondary, higher secondary and language education levels through distance mode for school leavers. It is also noted that no special new infrastructure was established for these two universities (NUB and BOU). They were established on the abandoned campus of the Islamic University.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, literature shows that development of the private HE sector began in the developing world from the early 1990s due to the influence of donor agencies (e.g. World Bank, International Monetary Fund - IMF). Furthermore, the period (a 10 year segment) was considered, as literature argues that rising student enrolment is an initial indicator in the expansion of private education. Indeed, once expansion begins as a result of rising enrolment, further expansion is biased by a number of issues (i.e. politics, market situations, national characteristics of the people, globalisation).

Table 6 shows that officially qualified students at HE level are an increasing feature for every year, with the exception of 1996. A small decrease is also noted in 1998. Thus, it can be advised that, by reviewing a ten-year segment initially, the growth in the number of students having the official prerequisite to study at HE level forces the country to expand the private HE sector. The following discussion aims to clarify further, interrelated reasons for private HE expansion.

Government budgetary constraint is of concern in the privatisation of HE. Being an underdeveloped country means a dependence on foreign aid or international donations. The donor agencies accept development in the area of primary education, literacy and adult education, and consequently HE lacks necessary financing. As is evidenced by research, providing technical subjects in HE demands a high budget, but data available shows that the budget for HE and Diploma level Technical Education is extremely low (Table 7 and Table 8).

**Table 7: Government Revenue Budget on Education by Sub-Sector, 2005-06 and 2006-07 (BE) (Taka in million)**

| Type of education                                      | 2005-06 (RB) |       | 2006-07 (BE) |       |
|--|--------------|-------|--------------|-------|
|  | Budget       | %     | Budget       | %     |
| Primary Education                                      | 20 714.2     | 34.00 | 22 782.5     | 33.71 |
| Secondary Education                                    | 11 970.5     | 23.26 | 15 437.9     | 23.44 |
| College (General) Education                            | 7 259.5      | 13.69 | 9 141.6      | 13.82 |
| Madrasah Education                                     | 5 916.7      | 11.45 | 7 754.6      | 11.59 |
| Technical Education                                    | 4 45.3       | 0.85  | 700.7        | 0.88  |
| University Education                                   | 4 043.5      | 7.98  | 4 919.0      | 8.24  |
| Teachers Training                                      | 256.2        | 0.46  | 300.5        | 0.45  |
| Others Administrative & Subsidiary Services Department | 12 865.5     | 8.31  | 10168.0      | 7.87  |
| Total (Education)                                      | 63 471.4     | 100   | 71 204.8     | 100   |

Source: BANBEIS 2008

<sup>12</sup> Establishing an Islamic university was a dream of ex-President Mr Ziaur Rahman. He committed to its establishment in Kustia. After his death, his successor Hossain Mohammed Ershad established the Islamic University in Gazipur. In 1991, BNP (a political party formed by Mr. Ziaur Rahman) regained power. Mrs. Ziaur Rahman was selected as the state chief, and she shifted the Islamic University to Kustia



**Table 8: Government Development Budget on Education by Sub-Sector and Source, 2005-06 (RB) and 2006-07 (BE) (Taka in million)**

| Sub-sector                   | 2005-06 (RB)      |        | 2006-07 (BE)      |       |
|------------------------------|-------------------|--------|-------------------|-------|
|                              | Budget Allocation | %      | Budget Allocation | %     |
| Primary & Mass Education     | 16 947.5          | 61.51  | 19 927.8          | 52.65 |
| Secondary & Higher Education | 7 459.6           | 27.07  | 9 234.1           | 24.39 |
| Technical Education          | 1 252.3           | 4.55   | 1 882.5           | 4.97  |
| University Education         | 1 878.2           | 6.82   | 1 271.8           | 3.36  |
| Own Project (MOPME)          | -                 | -      | 2 679.2           | 7.08  |
| Own Project (MOE)            | 13.7              | 0.05   | 2 857.6           | 7.55  |
| Total                        | 27551.3           | 100.00 |                   |       |

Source: BANBEIS 2008

The above Tables (7 and 8) present the education revenue and development budgets for the fiscal years 2005-06 and 2006-07. The data showed no significant development of the budgetary allocation in favour of university and technical education provisions. Practically no public universities were established after 1991, apart from some HE institutions or enterprises that converted into universities whilst retaining their original structure. Thus no completely new investments have been involved. Since there are no changes to the infrastructure, apart from being newly named as a university, the size and shape of the public universities remains unchanged. Such circumstances have resulted the expansion of private HE in order to cover the flow of students caused by succeeding the EFA target.

**4.6. Student of Private HE sector**

The following discussion is divided into two parts: the first will answer two questions concerning private HE overall. These are: What is the academic quality of students targeted? What is the family background of students targeted?

**4.6.1. Academic quality of students targeted by Private HE**

The literature suggests that economically well-off students choose private HE when rejected by public institutions (Alam, 2008). The question, "Is public Higher Education the first preference for students?" was asked to the three groups: Public HE Teachers (PUHT), Private HE Teachers (PVHT) and Private HE Support staffs (PVHST). The findings are presented below:

The results indicate that public HE is indeed the first choice for students, according to the

Figure 1  
Answer of the question, 'Is public Higher Education the first preference for students?' by the teachers of HE

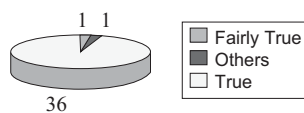


Figure 2  
Answer of the question, 'Is public Higher Education the first preference for students?' by PVHT

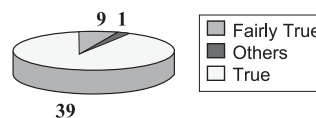
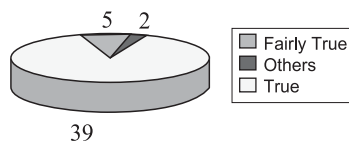


Figure 3  
Answer of the question, 'Is public Higher Education the first preference for students?' by PVHST



perception of the academics. This fact was critically examined by the questionnaires given to Public HE Student (PUHS) and Private HE Student (PVHS).

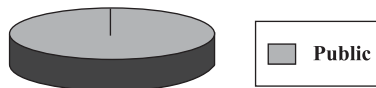
Of PUHS, 100% said that they were more interested in studying in a public university (Figure 4). Of these, 19.14% were studying their preferred subject (Figure 5), 41.30%

were studying at their preferred public university (Figure 6), whereas less than 1% were studying both at their preferred university and their preferred subject. However, a reasonable number of economically well-off students had not considered private HE to study their preferred subject, even they preferred to study a less popular subject at a non-preferred public institution. To understand the influence of tuition when choosing a university, students were asked that, if they had been financed by an organisation, would private HE be their first preference? No one opted for private university; rather, 84.21% expressed opinions in favor of the public institutions, while

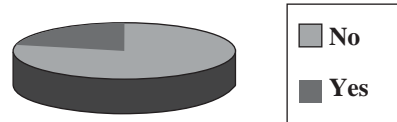
the rest expressed no preference. However, 71.79% of PUHS might consider the private sector if, after being rejected by a public university, they were financed by an organisation to study private HE. According to this analysis, it is understood that students are more inclined to study in the public university.

To explore this issue further, we examined data gathered from PVHS, where 54.13% completed

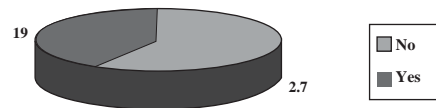
**Figure 4**  
Interest of the PUHS to the public universities



**Figure 5**  
Interest of the PUHS to the public universities

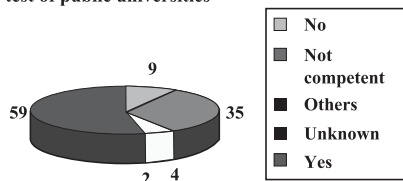


**Figure 6**  
Percentage of the PUHS studying their preferred public university

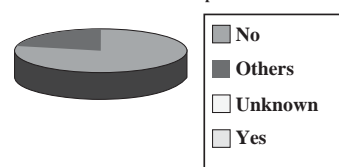


the admission test of public universities, (see: Figure 7), but none received an offer for their preferred subject. Only 1.21% had an offer from their preferred public university, while 10.14% received an offer of a place from a public university other than their preference. The others (45.87%) were not competent (did not feel competent) to face the admission test conducted by the public universities (see: Figure 7). 74.75% of PVHS said that they would not consider private HE if they had an offer from public universities (see: Figure 8). 100% that, if they had an offer for their preferred subject at any of the public universities, they would not consider a private counterpart.

**Figure 7**  
Competency of the PVHS regarding the admission test of public universities

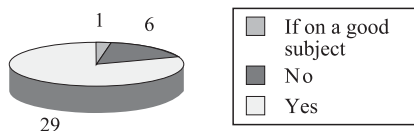


**Figure 8**  
Percentage of the PVHE who would not consider Private HE if offered from public universities

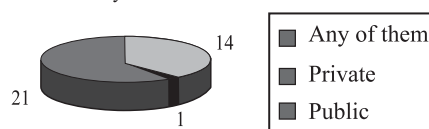


76.31% of Public HE Admission test Student (PUHAS) preferred to study any subject at a public university (see: Figure 9). However, the situation changes if donors finance the students. Results indicate that 58.33% would prefer to study in public HE; 38.88% would not mind going to any university, whilst very few (0.0277%) would wish to go to a private institution (see: Figure 10). 53.48% of Private HE Admission test Student (PVHAS) completed the admission test conducted

**Figure 9**  
Percentage of PULHAS prefer to study any subject at any public university



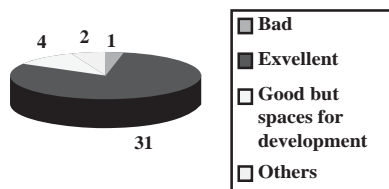
**Figure 10**  
Preferred of the PUHAS in selecting universities if financed by donors



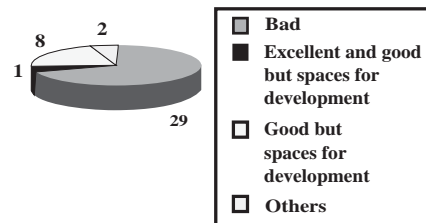
by the public universities. Only 0.34% received an offer from their preferred public university and none received an offer to study their first choice of subject in any public university. Triangulated data confirms that public HE is obviously the first preference of students. Many of the less-able, under-qualified students, or those disqualified by a public university, consider private HE. Typically, students receiving an offer to study a less popular subject at a public university are studying in the private sector. However, no students were found to be studying in the private sector if they had been offered a place at a public university to study their preferred subject.

The situation described previously generates the question: "Are students studying in the private HE sector academically capable of pursuing HE?" Their lack of ability may result in poor performance of the private HE sector and generates a negative impact on HE. Considering this, respondents of each group (PVHT, PUHT and Private HE Support staff - PVHST) were requested to review the level of competence of their students (see: Figures 11, 12 and 13). The previous figures illustrate that almost all PUHT consider the competence of their students

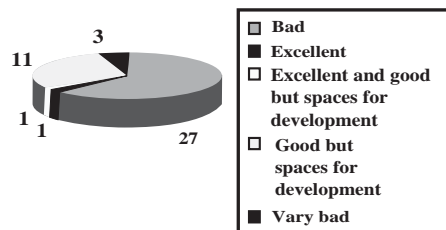
**Figure 11**  
Comments of the PVHT regarding the academic capability of the students studying at private universities



**Figure 12**  
Comments of the PUHT regarding the academic capability of the students studying at private universities



**Figure 13**  
Comments of the PVHST regarding the academic capability of the students studying at private universities



to be 'excellent'. Conversely, many PVHT and PVHST consider the competence level of their students to be 'bad' ('bad' is used here to denote 'poor', as local respondents may misunderstand the meaning of the word 'poor').

#### 4.6.2. Family background of the students targeted by Private HE

"If you want to run a private university, your location must be in the most urban area especially in Dhaka, not in Comilla."

The above statement was made by an ex-VC of Dhaka University, presently the VC of a private university in Comilla. Documents review shows that of the 54 private universities, 47 are located in Dhaka and the rest, apart from one in Comilla, are in Chittagong and Sylhet, (although the universities in Chittagong and Sylhet have Dhaka campuses). A few universities (Southeast, Northern) have recently opened very small campuses in divisional and district towns. Private universities have positioned themselves in these areas purely because these are the places where the wealthy people live. It is easy to hire a 'luxurious place' to accommodate students from a privileged background.

PVHS shows that many students studying in private universities are children of high-ranking officials of public enterprises (bureaucrats, academics, army, police and customs officers), and business executives. Generally, public officers in Bangladesh receive low salaries but enjoy a considerable amount of illegal income (for example, bribes, corruption when spending official

budgets, consultancy fees, private coaching fees). As a result, their children fail to supply full and accurate information relating to parental income. According to PVHS, PVHT and PVHST private HE students come not only from an economically privileged background, but also from families with a higher level of education.

Scholarships within the private HE sector are a difficult area, as they are offered simply as a means of attracting more students, but not necessarily more able students. It is interesting to note that the entrepreneurs of private universities and institutions do not provide scholarships from their own funds, nor from other sponsor bodies or research funds. The scholarships offered are funded from tuition fees.

Many of the private universities claim that students with GPA 5 or Grade A at HSC are welcome to study with them without paying tuition fees. However, it is important to note that, by possessing this qualification, students may study with the public counterparts where virtually no tuition fees need to be paid.

Private universities use a business technique known as 'sale tuition'. A careful investigation shows that a non-elite private university charges a minimum of BDT 80 000 per academic year for tuition fees, in addition to other necessary charges such as examination fees, library charges, and charges for accommodation and transport. In Bangladesh, only the wealthy can afford this for the education of their children. To examine this more closely, data given below represents the views of three groups: PVHT, PUHT and PVHST, concerning the family background of students studying in private universities. The figures 14, 15 and 16 show that, on the whole, students from a higher class of family background were in receipt of private HE.

**Table 9: On the issue of 'economically solvent but academically poor' students admitted to the private HE sector**

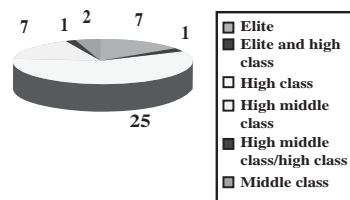
|       | Academically poor but economically solvent students |             |       |
|-------|---|-------------|-------|
|       | True  | Fairly True | False |
| PVHST | 75%   | 20%         | 0     |
| PUHT  | 89.47%  | 7.89%       | 0     |
| PVHT  | 83.72%  | 16.27%      | 0     |

**Table 10: On the issue of 'meritorious but economically poor students not capable of being**

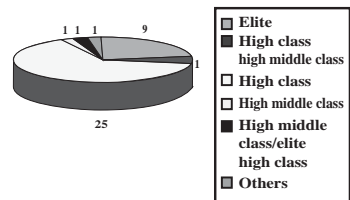
|       | Meritorious but economically poor students not capable? |             |       |
|-------|---|-------------|-------|
|       | True  | Fairly True | False |
| PVHST | 75%   | 21%         | 0     |
| PUHT  | 92.10%  | 5.26%       | 0     |
| PVHT  | 76.74%  | 18.60%      | 4     |

In this context, it is worth noting that a considerable number of students in private universities do not have the necessary qualifications<sup>13</sup> for the programme of study (PVHS, IPVHS, IPVHT). It is also important to note that students studying in private HE are sponsored by one or both parents (IPVHS, PVHS). There are cases where students aiming for MBAs or other professional degrees are financed from their own funds. Conversely, a considerable number of students in public HE are financed by relatives other than their parents (PUHS, IPUHS).

**Figure 14**  
Opinion of the PUHT on the comment, 'Only the wealthy can afford private HE for their children'



**Figure 15**  
Opinion of the PUHT on the comment, 'Only the wealthy can afford private HE for their children'



<sup>13</sup> Few respondents studying for a Bachelor (Hon) degree in the private HE sector, especially university provision, pass SSC and 'O' level but to study a Bachelor course, students have to have at least HSC or 'A' level.

Figure 16  
Opinion of the PVHT on the comment, 'Only the wealthy can afford private HE for their children'

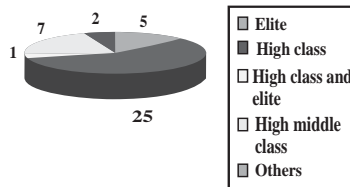


Table 11: Teacher of Private HE sector

| Total number of Universities | Total number of Academics | Average number of Academics | Full-time Academics | Average number of Full-time Academics | Guest Speakers | %age of Guest Speakers |
|------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|------------------------|
| 52                           | 4462                      | 85.80                       | 2762                | 53.11                                 | 1700           | 38.00                  |

Source: UGC Annual Report 2003

Table 11 confirms that the average number of the private HE sector's academic staff is small when compared with standard universities. It also indicates that 38.00% of teachers at private universities are 'guest speakers'. In addition, a considerable number of public university's academics are working with the private universities (included in the Table 11) as full-time faculty members taking paid or unpaid leave. Furthermore, retired academics from the public universities work as full-time faculty members at the private universities. A large number of public university academics are involved in the private HE sector.

Many of the guest speakers invited are from two particular universities located in Dhaka, as this is where many of the private universities are located. Academics of public universities, specialising in market-driven subjects (Business, IT, Computing, Law), work as guest speakers at several private universities. An important point is illustrated by a full-time academic at a public university:

*"Before I became a guest speaker at private universities, I was experiencing hardship. I used to commute by bus - life was miserable. I had been thinking that, if I were a professor, I would have a better life, as consultancies are offered to professors. In order to publish more articles, I could gain promotion to professorship; I often had to walk to collect the data as I didn't have the money to spend on transport. These days, I have a house and cars for myself and for my family. However, I have to work hard. I need to deliver just one lecture for one hour in Dhaka University every week. For the rest of the week, I lecture in different private universities starting at 10 am and finishing at 9 pm. Now, I don't bother with the job of consultancy."*

Although this statement expresses the academic's satisfaction, it raises a few major concerns:

1. If the employment market of the private HE sector is occupied by the public university academics, what are the prospects for unemployed new graduates?
2. If public university academics are widely engaged with the private HE sector, who is to meet the demands of students in the public HE sector?
3. Increasing the income of particular academics will bring dissatisfaction to other teaching staff at public universities (e.g. in the areas of Geography, Bangla, Education or Chemistry).

Interviews with Private HE student (IPVHS) and Interviews with Public HE student (IPUHS) demonstrate that guest speakers are very 'erratic' in taking classes. Interviews with Private HE Teacher (IPVHT) also shows that most of the workload is given to their own faculties, who are poorly paid. They point out that public university academics are employed for the purpose of advancing the university's prestige. We argue that there is a huge shortage of experienced, competent academics in market-driven subjects, since the offering of these subjects is a recent occurrence. We believe that this shortage of academics leads to the employment of teachers from their counterparts. However, if the academics of public universities can shoulder the workload of the private universities, why do the public universities themselves not increase their enrolment, as they have an excellent infrastructure? We again stress that public universities can offer various shifts (morning, afternoon, evening, weekend) as their teaching staff are lecturing in various shifts

at private universities to meet the needs of different groups of students.

We argue that the job market within the private HE sector remains small when compared to the number of universities. The sector does not extensively provide jobs for new scholars - the newly-graduated - and its contribution towards addressing unemployment is slight.

#### **4.7. Major impact of Privatization of HE**

In Bangladesh, education is considered as the weapon of development and it is important to ensure the equal right of every individual to have access to education. A number of advantages and disadvantages caused by the private HE sector can be noted but two factors are important to create a real academic atmosphere. One of them is student and academic as they create a real academic atmosphere with the help of proper infrastructure. Once targeted students and academics are not capable or interested, it is merely impossible to create a decent academic atmosphere rather both of the groups act as buyer and seller. Thus, a diploma will be a product of market rather than be a product of a decent academy.

However, with the advantage of a sound financial background, privileged individuals are not only accessing better quality education, but also gain a better quality of life through improved access to better quality fundamental goods and rights. The recent expansion of private higher education in Bangladesh has thus not only opened the door for the privileged to access better quality education, but it has helped those within the elite that would not normally get access to higher education the means by which to enter this form of provision. This has had significant impact on the quality of HE and research in Bangladesh. Research plays the most vital role for the development of total education system (primary, secondary, VET, tertiary and others) and national development. If the research environment can be destroyed from the higher education system of Bangladesh, no international policy or target (i.e. EFA, Millennium Development Goal - MDG) will bring the development of Bangladesh as the country's own scholars have to understand the development of process of their country.

#### **5. Concluding remarks**

Tendency of legislators of Bangladesh is to receive fund from donors at any cost. Moreover, country lacks substantial research environment depending on researches carried out by the Western academics. Being outsiders, findings and recommendations made by the Western Scholars are also biased by the researchers' own culture, or by their country's bureaucracy (Alam, 2008). These may not always be applicable in the context of the developing country due to cultural, political, educational and economical differences. EFA is not free from these problems. Thus rapid response made by government, NGOs and donors in the execution of EFA targets causes a number of negative impacts on the education system of Bangladesh. Quantitative achievement is being made sacrificing the qualitative progress. Quick quantitative achievement is always a hindrance in building solid foundation. Solid foundation should not be the product of overnight. It requires time in order to cope with all circumstances.

Speedy expansion of EFA and its fever present us low quality education. It provides a commercialization and marketing approach in education. Education is not a commodity rather it should be considered as social value and asset. Considering this, it is recommended not to progress with a high spread but to with decent steadiness. Providing education in calculation of nature of economic and social development of country rather than taking market approach. In order to do so following suggestions are noted:

- Bangladesh needs to accommodate the increased number of children in the schools resulted through the EFA programme by arranging necessary facilities in the schools.
- The success of EFA has been deemed to a large extent because of the high drop out rate at both primary and secondary levels. Low or no rate of return from primary level education might be a reason for high drop out. Steps should be taken to reduce drop out.
- Legislators need to calculate the number of employed individuals sector by sector. It is also important to understand the probable job fields for primary and secondary graduates. Keeping these views, skills required for jobs should be thought from the skills system.

- Need to identify how many higher educated and professional graduates are required in respective to different field. Accordingly, a portion of students will be prepared for higher education by selecting their merits and interests. No economical and social privilege in selecting the students aiming to catering for certain purpose.
- Country shall not produce huge number of higher educated individuals than its need as it consumes a large proportion of budget.
- Country should explore the potential employment market within national and offshore and manpower will be developed with the view to the projection.
- Rules should be restricted for the professional to work in their receptive field explicitly.
- It is important to make aware the employers and individuals not to suffer in diploma disease rather they need to understand the concept of job, ready for the graduates.
- Increasing budget for in-service training is required. Undertaking in-service training should be obligatory for the officials and workers. Saving budget from non-required higher education should be invested on VET programme.

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## Primary Education Development in Bangladesh- Access to Basic Education and Right to Quality education: Analogous or Paradoxical?

Maliha Shahjahan and Mohammad Rayhan Sharif

### Introduction

Free, compulsory and universal primary education in developing countries is often misconstrued by historically transfused conceptions as defining the right to education in terms of means, like-availability of minimal needs of schools, fund and teachers etc, rather than the desired ends of education. The impetus on means of education as education rights systemically denied the attainment of basic education of a large portion of children living in developing countries, like-Bangladesh and the manifestation is high drop out rate and appalling quality of education. Education Watch 2003-04 revealed that one in every three children remains 'non-literate' or 'semi-literate' even after five years of schooling in Bangladesh. Also, one out of five children cannot enrol in primary schooling while one in every three of those enrolled drops out before completing the five-year course<sup>1</sup>. Even after three years of the instigation of the six-year long Sector Wide Program in Primary Education, Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II) amounting to 5000 Crore BDT, still the dropout rate is 47% in Government primary schools.<sup>2</sup>

The primary education sub-sector in Bangladesh is still on a journey of experimentation. The reply to the basic query- 'What is required' has always been guided by the external thoughts in the name of different popular brands like a most recent one - 'universal primary education'. Such guidance is always imported as obvious in the component of overseas development assistance and followed by the state as stipulation of agreement. 'Zero level' acceptance of people's opinion results in barriers to respond along the lines of social fabrication, history of culture and indigenous norms and practices. Top-down approach and government-donor elite partnership makes 'Primary education sub-sector' a good client for receiving loan opposed to user. Donor driven projects are implemented in primary education sub-sector one after another in search of ways to address the flaws of previous projects, but the basic question of education 'right to quality education' has always remained unrequited. Can only the numerical figure of gross enrolment and infrastructure development meet the thrust of 'Equitable Access to Quality Primary Education'? - The paper may not provide all answers but generate some points, which may act as target issues to act upon in future.

### Chronological development of primary education in Bangladesh

Prior to the colonial invasion, Ancient Bengal had an affluent indigenous elementary education system with flexible features of a community-led social institution. The mentors of such social institutions were qualified to impart basic education, which had relevance to people's life and culture and the rudiments of the 3 R's (reading, writing and arithmetic). During the expansion of the British colony, the British ruler initiated British education instead of promoting the community-led education institutions. The necessity to introduce "British education in India at all levels in order to create a whole class of people who would be Indian in body, but English in taste and thought" was first held in the British parliament by Lord Macauley. Then the "downward filtration" education policy commenced for the British dominion in India. Proposed quality of education services run by the state followed this downward filtration policy; higher quality for richer or powerful natives to lower delivered to poorest and powerless natives.

The notion about "education for all" owned by the elite of this part of the world, Bengal, from the British period, is apparent through three broad categories of education services, one is led by the state or colonial government to the poor and marginalized, the second is for the elite by the elite as privately run services, and the third remains for the elite administered by the state (convent, cadet college are comparatively newer additions). Main intention is always to maintain

<sup>1</sup> Ahmed, M. & S. Nath. 2005. Quality With Equity The Primary Education Agenda. Education Watch Report 2003-04. Dhaka: Campaign for Popular Education, Bangladesh (CAMPE).

<sup>2</sup> Baseline Survey,2006, Directorate of Primary Education, Dhaka

a large but ritualistic and conformist state driven poor quality education for the people who are extremely powerless - socially, economically or culturally. The successors of the British Empire, which may include rulers of West Pakistan and rulers of the newly emerged nation (lovingly termed as "war torn" country-till the 80's) maintained "malnourished primary schooling structures" created by Lord Macauley.

Since independence in 1971, Bangladesh, has inherited a huge but ailing rural primary education system for the marginalized segments of the society. The new Government became so motivated and inspired, based on the donors interest and promises to fund or support education programmes and policies, that they enacted Primary Education Act and 'nationalized' all schools. This might be apprehended as a process of the creation of "millions of powerless minds of children" as a fertile bed for experimenting donor-driven global conformist psyche of consumerism. There was also a practice to generate minimum level of skills both for "reserved professions like clerical armies" of a country like Bangladesh and for "non-skilled but migrant reserve workers" for the global labour market. This was the right impetus of setting the stage for aid bonanza in the name of "universal primary education" programs in the 80's. Bangladesh for the first time in last 80's under the Second Five Year Plan (1980-85) allocated nearly half of the education sector budget for implementation of two major projects entitles, "Introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE)". Since then the education aid-bonanza continue and these days the inflow of education

#### **Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II)**

PEDP-II plan documents envisaged this program as a unique approach of development by bringing together government and (eleven) development partners under one coherent sub-Sector wide approach (SWAP) to create an environment for nationwide improvement in primary education. According to the donors and planners of Bangladesh government, PEDP-II has been designed to act as a catalyst in achieving holistic and long-term sector wide planning in the education sector. Officially, PEDP-II aims at bringing about an effective, systemic change in primary education management towards improving the quality of primary education, increasing access, completion rate, and participation. It has been claimed that the programme is designed in line with MDG, Dakar Framework for Action on Education, National Plan of Action (NPA) on Education and the PRSP.

#### **Policy intentions - behind PEDP-II formulation -**

- Incorporating lessons learned from the PEDP-I as well as other sector wide programs in Bangladesh and the region.
- Instigate Government Leadership" - development projects in formal primary education sector, prior to undertaking PEDP, had always fallen short of effectively addressing the need for government leadership, resulting in policy fragmentation, replicated approaches, distorted spending priorities and inadequately addressed institutional development and sustainability issues.

Reforms in the entire management of primary education through organizational development and capacity building of education managers and teachers, updating the existing curricula, keeping provision of adequate supplementary learning materials, introducing and exercising modern and scientific teaching-learning methods and techniques and adequate infrastructural support are documented as the prime focuses of PEDP-II for bringing about an effective change to improve the quality of primary education and increase equitable access, completion and participation in primary education. Reform plan includes implementation of a minimum standard of educational services through Primary School Quality Levels (PSQL) that would focus on access to educational services and the quality of school environment provided; designating and forming a Primary Education Cadre to provide an appropriate career and promotion structure for permanently recruited officials, including primary school teachers; building organizational capacity and systemic change that is consistent with a policy of increased devolution of authority and responsibility to local level.

According to the PEDP-II official documents, direct beneficiaries of PEDP-II are as follows: about 18.5 million children (of which 53 % are poor) in the formal and non-formal primary education sub-sector in 64 districts comprising 481 Upazilas - in about 65,000 primary schools. By the end of the PEDP-II, enrolment of poor children is expected to increase by 2.7 million - 3.2 million poor students, 67-76% (compare with 55% in FY 2001-02) of total PEDP-II

expenditure is expected to have been targeted to the poor. About 35,000 newly recruited and another 40,000 serving teachers will be trained by about 650 upgraded adequately prepared educators; at least 80% of primary education administrative personnel, who will benefit from management training; all 320,000 existing trained teachers who will receive further in-service training through several stages during the PEDP-II period. The school management committees i.e., the wider school community will receive systematic training and support.<sup>3</sup>

#### **PEDP-II Financing Plan and process**

The total cost of the programme (project proposal) in six years is estimated at US \$ 1.815 billion. The financing plan shows that the government of Bangladesh alone bears the largest share amounted to about 64% (63.9%), two-thirds of the total expenses, while all development agencies all together constitute the rest about 36% (36.1%), one-third of total funding. Again, the assistance from development partners is comprised of two forms: a) Loan and b) Grant. Among the total development partners assistance, one-third is loan while two-third is grant. Financial support will be received from the Government of Bangladesh- GoB, International Development Agency-IDA, Asian Development Bank-ADB, Australian Agency For International Development-AusAID, Canadian International Development Agency-CIDA, Department For International Development-DFID, European Commission-EC, Japan International Cooperation Agency-JICA, Norwegian Agency For Development Cooperation-NORAD, Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency-SIDA, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs - Netherlands, MoFA. The program is being implemented by multiple sources of fund with diverse nature. For instance, Government of Bangladesh, Bi-lateral grant, IDA Credit, ADB Loan, UNICEF parallel fund and JICA parallel fund. ADB provides a loan of \$100m. The term of the loan will be 32 years, including a grace period of 4 years with an interest charge of 1% per annum during the grace period and 1.5% per annum there after. IDA provides a credit of \$100m on standard IDA terms, channelled through ADB.

#### **PEDP-II Financing Plan and Process**

| <b>Participating Actors</b> | <b>Foreign Exchange</b> | <b>Local Currency</b> | <b>Total cost (US \$ Million)</b> | <b>Percentage of total cost</b> | <b>Type of assistance</b> | <b>Nature of Co-financing</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ADB                         | 31                      | 69                    | 100                               | 5.5                             | Loan                      |                               |
| IDA, The World Bank         | 46                      | 104                   | 150                               | 8.3                             | Loan                      | Parallel                      |
| DFID                        | 46                      | 104                   | 150                               | 8.3                             | Grant                     | Joint                         |
| EC                          | 31                      | 69                    | 100                               | 5.5                             | Grant                     | Joint                         |
| Netherlands                 | 15                      | 35                    | 50                                | 2.8                             | Grant                     | Joint                         |
| NORAD                       | 12                      | 28                    | 40                                | 2.2                             | Grant                     | Joint                         |
| SIDA                        | 09                      | 20                    | 29                                | 1.6                             | Grant                     | Joint                         |
| CIDA                        | 06                      | 14                    | 20                                | 1.1                             | Grant                     | Joint                         |
| JICA                        | 01                      | 02                    | 03                                | 0.2                             | Grant                     | Parallel                      |
| UNICEF/AusAID               | 04                      | 08                    | 12                                | 0.7                             | Grant                     | Parallel                      |
| GOB                         | 0                       | 1161                  | 1161                              | 63.9                            |                           |                               |
| <b>Total</b>                | <b>200</b>              | <b>1,615</b>          | <b>1,815</b>                      | <b>100.0</b>                    |                           |                               |

Source: PEDP-II project Proforma, Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), November 2003

PEDP-II financial management does not consistently follow pooled or non-pooled funding mechanism. Rather in PEDP-II implementation process, pooled funding, co-financing, and parallel funding- all work in a parallel way. In that sense, PEDP-II operates its financial management under the provision of a mixed funding mechanism. The expenditure on ICB goods and international consultants comes from non-pooled parts, stipend of the students and salary of teachers are borne by the government remaining outside the pooled fund, parallel funding is operated by UNICEF/AusAID and JICA to a number of sectors like teachers in-service training, social mobilization, curriculum development of PTIs etc. are the indications of mixed funding mechanism of PEDP-II. Moreover, instead of one PEDP-II has three procurement guidelines--- Public Procurement Regulation 2003 of GOB, World Bank Procurement Guidelines and ADB

<sup>3</sup> Rereading PEDP-II: A critical view of the outcomes anticipated , Commonwealth Education Fund (CEF)- Bangladesh , December 2006

Guidelines. PEDP-II investment cost (in lakh taka) also reveals the fact that the previous trend of spending on hardware and recruitment prevails but that on software and quality concerns is neglected again.

#### **Partnership/Ownership in PEDP-II**

SWAP refers to active participation of government, private sector i.e. civil society organizations, and NGOs, development partners in project planning and implementation. But in PEDP-II, only public and donor agencies are working together and the potential role of other non-governmental stakeholders is largely ignored. Even participation of the locally elected bodies has been overlooked. Although PEDP-II tries to address the issue of decentralization and reform of the system through SLIP and Upazila level education development plan and more devolution of the powers at school level, PEDP-II does not explore the possibility of linking the education management at the lowest rung with local government like Union Parishad. The need for creating linkages between PEDP-II and the local government has largely been ignored in all PEDP-II planning documents, even within the framework of School Level Implementation Plan (SLIPs) and Upazila Primary Education Plan (UPEPs). Since the PEDP-II failed to involve all potential stakeholders in its planning and operations, it could not satisfy the necessary condition of mediation of different interests. "Also, lack of understanding of the objectives of the reform and of the SWAP has been reported in Bangladesh as leading to a lack of perception of benefits by staff (Foster 2000)".<sup>4</sup>

#### **Dependency on International Consultancy Vs Indigenized Solutions**

About 65% of the financial support to implement PEDP-II is provided by GoB, yet about 11820.40 lakh BDT are meant to be spent on consultants, of which three fourth on foreign consultants (although Bangladesh has expertise!). Many people heavily criticize technical assistance today in the aid system for being over-priced, as Mark Sundberg (of the World Bank) mentioned "500 days of technical assistance costs the same as employing 5,000 teachers often (in donors led SWAP or large programs)". "Because most technical assistances are still donors driven and concentrated on expatriate consultants with high rates of pay, when similar services are available locally with much less cost. (European Community Aid to Bangladesh Background Country Study Paper, January 2007 )"<sup>5</sup>

#### **Alarming - Macro Outcome after Halfway of Implementation**

PEDP-II points to the fact that at the end of the project in 2009, the net enrolment ratio will be 88%, completion rate for class five will be 82% and acceptable levels of literacy and numeracy will be only 50%.<sup>6</sup> This means that education for all is far away as 1.8 million children will defy education and schooling even after the successful enforcement of the PEDP-II by 2009. According to UNESCO Education Support Strategy (UNESS) for Bangladesh, UNESCO, Dhaka, September 2006, "but, of greater concern, is that only two-thirds of those children who start primary school complete Grade 5, and despite the high net enrolment rates, only 55% of the school-age cohort completes primary school. A primary school leaving examination did not exist until December 2006, so it is not possible to compare examination pass rates. However, only about 40% of the top 20% children who take the primary scholarship exam get through. A passing mark is only 33% and most of the children get no more than 45%"<sup>7</sup>.

#### **In lieu of Conclusion**

Still primary education system in Bangladesh is not equitable and cannot thus be regarded as pro-poor; and the quality and content of education do not effectively serve the goals of human development and poverty reduction. Despite rhetoric since the colonial days, and the constitutional pledge of independent Bangladesh, effective participation in basic education - primary education for children and functional literacy and continuation of education for youth and

4 Foster, Brown and Conway 2000: Sector-Wide Approaches for Health Development. A Review of Experience. WHO, June 2000.

5 (European Community Aid to Bangladesh Background Country Study Paper, January 2007 ); Dr Thomas Costa, University of Dhaka and Desk Study, August 2006; Walter Eberlei, University of Applied Sciences Düsseldorf The present document was commissioned by CIDSE and Caritas Europa as part of the research for their report, "The EU's Footprint in the South: Does European Community development cooperation make a difference for the poor?" (March 2007). Full report: <http://www.cidse.org/docs/200703201810542840.pdf> Main findings and recommendations: <http://www.cidse.org/docs/200703211426497220.pdf>

6 Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II), Final Plan October 2002, Government of Bangladesh & PEDP-II Project Preparation Team

7 UNESCO Education Support Strategy (UNESS) for Bangladesh, UNESCO, Dhaka, September 2006.

adults - remain beyond the reach of a large proportion of the population. There is a general agreement that the number of institutions and enrolments have grown at all levels, but quality of education has deteriorated and remains seriously deficient; especially so in institutions to which the children of the poor go to in larger numbers. Equity and serving the poor are not explicit criteria in financial provisions and allocation for education even in the public sector, neither in planning nor in management of public education. The education system has failed to make the grade in respect of access with quality and equity.

Community agreed, community validated and community relevant planning and management of education system can only generate shared understanding of quality and make our nation develop a real and worthy education development plan and program. Absence of professional, participatory and indigenized dialogues on education quality is one of the drawbacks of PEDP-II formulation or implementation that lacks people's wider participation and ownership. Credit support to PEDP-II should be measured within the framework of aid effectiveness and any sort of evaluation of relevance and effectiveness and necessity mapping of receiving credit for the improvement of primary education should be available for media.

However, according to a Paper commissioned for the EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, Education for All by 2015: will we make it? in 2007 , "The Paris Declaration has not reached down to the primary education sector in Bangladesh and has really only been addressed at a high level in the government. No monitoring of donors is carried out, nor is there any government-led management or coordination of capacity development, This is in spite of the considerable needs in the two ministries of education and the prevalence of many programs to strengthen the directorates. Although the government is critical of consultants, it has not taken the lead in this area, nor generally, in donor coordination."<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> EFA Global Monitoring Report 2008, Education for All by 2015: will we make it? UNESCO, Paris.

## About Madrasa Education<sup>1</sup>

Kawser Bin Khaled

[One]

Islamic Education has a rich and proud history for almost 1300 years that has been enriched by the active contribution by the Islamic scholars. Throughout the broad Islamic empire, Education-centers were established based on history and modern teaching. For a long time the Islamic scholars have led the fields of world education, though a point to be noted that the title 'Philosophy of Islamic Education' has not been effective. This situation can be seen throughout the western and Islamic ambience. It can be explained in the environment of Islamic education contrary to the Western world where no reasonable cause are made to for arriving at clarity, reality and idealism.

Philosophy known in Arabic as Phalasapha and considered as a pure branch of knowledge is prohibited by the most Islamic theologian. They are uncomfortable using the word. They think that the use of the word Phalasapha is opposed to the Islamic Akida and point of view. Besides, the western interpretation of Education is different from Islamic Ilm or education. The bottom line is that the Muslim scholars intentionally avoid these labeling. Throughout modernism a platform of knowledge and 'Education' has been created which was not explained fully by the scholars of the Muslim World, though the modernism has just started of late in last few decades.

While facing the modern or imperialistic education system, the Muslim scholars show a tendency of "Islamization"- or turning the western education into Islamic. The main characteristics of this trend are not questioning the main platform, but to dress it in an Islamic manner.

Though it was not that ineffective, a large number of Muslim scholars have worked about the characteristics of Islamic Education or Islamic Education Philosophy where they are not definitive. As the elements needed to study the characteristics of Islamic Education are present, most organized form can be found in Gazzali's Futuhatul Ulum, where the author discussed about the source, characteristics, target and headings. Even today his guidelines are being followed.

The first and the most important resource that comes in our hands is the Holy Al-Quran. If we see how the Holy Quran sees Education, we can find a good perspective on Islamic Education.

"O my Allah let me be enriched in Knowledge." (Sura Twaha: 114)

"Allah shall heighten their respect of those who are given knowledge. (Sura Mujadala: 11)

"Are they the same, those who know and do not know?" (Sura Jumar: 9)

Quran inspires its followers to learn and gather knowledge and to respect ascends in the Lord's eyes of those who are active in learning. It draws a line of difference between the learned and the uneducated.

"When they are told, follow what Allah has created; they say, no, we shall follow what we received from our ancestors."(Sura Bakara: 170)

"Do you have any explanations? If you do present it to me; you only follow imagination and say imaginary things."(Sura An-Am: 148)

"Do not those on which you have any idea about."(Sura Boni Israel: 36)

The holy Quran not only frowns upon the conventional practices and myths, but it insists on learning as way to avoid these; it leans toward researches and explanation rather than following blindly- thus Quran presents the practice of knowledge as a holy duty. So when Islam defines the practice of knowledge as a holy duty, the next obvious question is: what is knowledge? How does Islam define it? Is all knowledge educational to Islam?

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Kh. Imran Kabir from original article written in Bengali

The Islamic scholars have given it a lot of thoughts and all knowledge is not Education. 'Knowledge' stands on a special theory in Islam; it puts it in two categories: first is Nawkliyah or universal knowledge and the other is Akliyah or manmade knowledge. The universal form is the standard and all manmade knowledge must be supported by it; any knowledge opposed to it is not considered as knowledge in Islam but it is the opposite; Akliyah must always follow Nawkliyah. Allah is the ultimate source of knowledge and all pure knowledge comes out from him.

"Those among Allah's followers are wise, fears him the most." (Sura Fatir: 28)

Practice of knowledge is embedded with acquiring it in Islam; it is hard against the traditional practice of 'practicing knowledge just for knowledge, knowledge is only knowledge when it is in practice'. This is where it differs from the western point of view.

Islam does not believe in false existence of knowledge. Knowledge is only knowledge when it is actively practiced; there is no effortless Ilm in Islam. Knowledge is path to connect to the Almighty- through which the wise men show ordinary men the light. Knowledge is not an effortless object. Islam's second resource of knowledge, Hadis has the perfect examples:

"Rasul (Sm.) was asked, 'who are wise?' Rasul (Sm.) answered, 'Those who practice knowledge.' " (Mishkat: 37 Daremi)

"Those people are worst to Allah Quamat day- who could not be helped through his own knowledge." (Mishkat: 37 Daremi)

Like the first source Quran, Hadis inspires knowledge and its practitioners and not only that; Hadis has also declared practicing knowledge a holy duty.

"Seeking knowledge is a must for all Muslim men and women." (Bukhari)

"A person who is on the quest of knowledge shall remain in Allah's path till he returns." (Mishkat: 34)

"Go to the farthest China in quest for knowledge." (Tirmiji and Daremi)

"Acquire Knowledge from cradle to the grave." (Tirmiji and Daremi)

"Knowledge is wise man's lost treasure, wherever it is found still remains his. (Mishkat: 34 Ibne Maja, Tirmiji)

"Allah shall ease the path to heaven for he who goes out to seek knowledge." (Mishkat: 32)

The bottom line found from these Hadises is that- acquiring knowledge is a lifetime process, and for that one may have to travel out of Muslim countries and it is a holy duty for both men and women.

The third source for diagnosing the form of Islamic Education - "The Idea of Islamic Education"- is various books written on this topic in the golden age of Muslim Dynasty.

## [Two]

To understand the idea of Islamic Education one needs to understand three words of Arabic language, through these three words together stands as the main structure of Islamic Education. The first one is Tarbiyah, which came from the word Rabbun meaning nurturing and flourishing; to nurture a child to adulthood and to help him to grow. The second one is Taadib, coming from Adboon, meaning to be gentle, nice. The job of flourishing moral buildup is not limited to a single person but to a whole race. To reflect ones moral duty, the type which is included in any type of social obligations; one such is fighting for justice.

Rasul (Sm.) said in one Hadis- "I am sent to fulfill moral characteristics."

Taalim, the source of this third word is Ilmun, means learn, which incorporates both teaches and learns in Arabic. Mainly it means that both the teacher and the student change themselves throughout the process of knowledge. Rasul (Sm.) said, "I am sent as a teacher."

Through these three words the idea Islamic Education becomes quite clear. The perspectives of Education's secular meanings and differences become clear. Where modern means of Education defines a person's individual freedom, Islam stands for something quite different, it



stands for being involved and flourished in every aspect of society. Thus Islamic Education justifies a person's excellence.

When conventional Education's point of view stands for a society of free wills, Islamic education then feels a need for a greater society-, which is run by divine course acting upon the responsibilities towards the universe and serving justice.

Another great difference is - where modern western Education strives for 'Sure Knowledge'; the objective of Islamic Education stands for Knowing the Lord, understanding his greatness and preparing one's self through it: that is flourishing the practice of divine knowledge through establishing a relationship with Allah. And since Allah is the source of all knowledge- then establishing ones relationship with Allah by practicing knowledge. The duty, which the Nabis used to fulfill through their Nabuwaat, became a duty for Alems after the end of it. One of the greatest Hadis of Rasul (Sm.) is-

"Surely the practitioners of Knowledge are the heir of the Nabis."

Under the famous Hadis book of Mishkat, Ilm can be defined like this-

"A light coming from the lamp of Nabuwaat."

Thus the Nabis used to know Allah and formed a relationship with him and today that is the job for scholars. Therefore practicing knowledge in Islam means- Knowing the Lord, forming a relationship with him and through it knowing his other creations and changing one's self along the way. There are many other matters related with the Theory of knowledge in Islam besides these basic elements.

### [Three]

#### **Madrasa Education: Front Bangladesh**

In Bangladesh two types of form in Madrasa Education: Alia and Koumi. It is not possible to discuss about the premise of Islamic Education without going through these forms specially the Koumi form. But before we begin, we must clear the snobbish mentality of the so-called secular groups about Madrasa Education. After a long term reign of colonial governments and their own Education system in this country, there have been calamitous effects regarding Madrasa Education and without clearing these effects it is impossible to discuss the form of Islamic Education in Bangladesh.

From the previous discussion, it is clear that there is a gulf of difference between the premises of Education in Islam and the modern theories. Though modern Education system strives to create good citizens who are cautious about maintaining the laws and security of the State; the Islamic Education system feels the need to form Justice. If imposing Education's target is to produce slaves for the multinational companies and to achieve the comforts of this world, whereas Islamic Education's goal is towards divinity. Even if modern Education's evitable goal is to create the atmosphere for free thinking and free will beyond the realms of society and through it bringing capitalistic consumer generations; Islam still want to create a person accountable to society and as a result creating a civilized society.

Of course there is social and political agenda here. So the proposal to modernize the Madrasa Education to fulfill today's needs is another way of telling to give up the natures of Madrasa itself. As long as Madrasa is following the premise of Islamic Education, it will keep its own trend.

The second serious complain about Madrasa is- aborting the English language instead of accepting it. The complaint is raised, but the historical background is forgotten. It has not been forgotten that to fight the English colonizers, it created a revolution it is still doing it. Today's modern Education is just a newer edition to those of the colonizers and the fight is still on. Another main reason might be the basic difference between Islamic and modern Education. It must be said that people's reaction towards Madrasa Education is not promising and it has a negative impact on the entire society.

There is a negative impression about Madrasa and its students, which causes a proper discussion about them, quite impossible. Especially after 9/11 we have killing desire towards them, which is not a good sign. Through this the imperialists are getting the best of us and we

must remember that. For this reason, to clean up the dirty thoughts about Madrasa education we need this discussion.

The so called one way theories and accusations that are presenting Madrasas as the factories of bombs, terrorists; and through these accusations a group of people are erasing the Islamic traditions to create a "Modern" and "safe" world. How to get rid of these mentalities and to take a proper lesson from Islam is the main agenda for today.

There can be debates in society and through them we resolve important issues. So just as we should discuss this issue it should not be a racial weapon for the imperialists. Our main goal is to invoke debates and discussions on this topic to resolve this issue. In this lesson we shall do the following- First to see the complaints about Madrasa Education and secondly to examine and clear them and to take a look at Islamic and Madrasa Education's history.

#### **Conventional Objections against Madrasa Education**

1. Madrasa education is very outmoded, backdated, inappropriate for the society, and not time-befitting.
2. Madrasa education is creating terrorist, so religious terrorism is increasing.
3. Madrasa education is teaching in a language that is not accepted in modern world. Madrasa education chose Arabic, Farsi, and Urdu as their teaching medium. They discard English language that is the medium of modern education.
4. Madrasa education, especially in Indian subcontinent, has been rejecting English language. But by doing so they are presenting themselves as old-fashioned, narrow minded and unfitted for the modern world.
5. The syllabus of Madrasa education lacks some subjects that are now the subjects of each and every other education system, such as mathematics, English language, science, biology, geography, social science, chemistry etc.

#### **Our Views against these Objections**

1. Madrasa education is against "Modernism", because it questions the desire and propensity of modernization. It covers both conscious and subconscious. What is Modernism? Colonization, racism, and imperialism are intensively related with this question. "Modernism" is a racist and sectarian act by the so-called progressive dominating intellectual, who is the followers of the colonizers' step of forcing their own language, education and tradition on us; and Islam and Madrasa education is something they cannot accept. Islam is against racism and any kind of sectarianism; in that connection Islam and Madrasa education directly opposes the "Modernism" and its materialistic conscienceless greedy slaves who live a Djvice life. So it becomes outmoded, backdated, and inappropriate for the society in the eyes of these so-called progressives.
2. First and foremost we have to identify---- What is terrorism? Who are terrorists? Who are named terrorists? Why are they called so? Nobody is accusing that ---- Madrasa education is creating thieves, burglars or bank robbers. They are fighting against the existing imperial world system, enforcing political and cultural power against capitalist society----is this why the accusation is causing? Is it because----They are not cooperating or accepting the education and life plan controlled by and in favor of the multinational corporations? This mentality is nothing but a sociopolitical war against the age of increasing imperialism, and as an opponent it can be a pretty strong one. So is not the political struggle of an ethnic group is blamed as a terrorist movement? This whole process is done to oppress the opposition in the name of modernism and terrorism. There is nothing to be misunderstood.
3. There two topic here. Firstly: educating language. Madrasa education teaches Arabic, Farsi, and Urdu as language teaching. This is absolutely necessary. This is also needed in modern educating system, but they did not follow it. Our school, college and university does not teach these languages, it is a limited situation or in a sense anti-progression. To know and understand our history, tradition and culture these languages should be learned.

Secondly: choosing these languages as medium. Is Madrasa education is supposed to educate in English as English medium? Madrasa education especially in this sub-continent

has been avoiding English from the beginning. It was not just a reciprocal behavior but also a political action that point out how they protested the movement of the British and their enforcing language English. Madrasa education identifies this as the way of socio-political and moral struggle. The colonizing power in the way of becoming the dominant power changes the social, educational and cultural structure, and in this case rejecting English was a way to make own stand for Madrasa education. But educating in one's own mother tongue is a matter of consideration. But if this is it then the English mediums should be similarly accused.

4. Madrasa education is a kind of religious study. It only teaches earthly knowledge only to earn ones living. Madrasa education does not reject gaining knowledge, but it held itself not as a place to gain knowledge but to learn how to live a proper life. Islam and Madrasa education never ignores the right of knowledge.

#### **History of Madrasa education**

The first Islamic education institution was both established and run by Rasul Muhammad (Sm.) in his time. Suffa was a hut established beside the mosque near Muhammad (Sm.)'s house. Some people stayed there overnight to do religious study. Muhammad (Sm.) along with his Sahabi (followers) used to sit there and discuss about the proper way of life. Those who lived in the Suffa had no connection about earning money. People of Mecca used to feed them on their own cost. At least 40 person at a time stayed in Suffa is found in the history. Famous Hadis describer Abu Hurayara was a member of Suffa. From his description we can see that these members of Suffa were very poor and owned near to nothing.

There was no specific syllabus at the beginning of Islamic education. But the main topic was always religious. Mainly they were taught the proper way of living and the discussion started from Hadis.

The academic form of Islamic education started in the age of Kalifa Rashidin. The four Kalifa established many Madrasa for spreading the knowledge of Quran.

Before Abbasi Kalifa started the independent form of Madrasa, they were part of masques. In these places the wise people taught others without any favor. They sat in the mosque and interested people went to them for knowledge. The present form of Madrasa started in the age of Abbasi Kalifas but there was difference. For example 1) there were no specific rules and the wise taught as their wish. 2) There was no syllabus students learned what they wanted. 3) There was no building and no wages for the teachers.

Madrasa as its present form came to existence at the last days of Abbasi Kalifas, but in the first years there was no buildings and the teachings occurred in the mosques.

Sheljuki Ujir Nazmul Mulk built one of the first academic Madrasa in 1065ad. Gaggali was a teacher of this Madrasa for 6 years.

#### **Madrasa education in South Asia**

This system can be divided into three periods- 1. Sultani period 2. Mughal period 3. British period.

These divisions are not only based by time they also have technical difference.

#### **Education at Sultani period**

It started at the age of Kutubuddin Ibeq (D 1210ad). There was no guideline and teachings were held in masques or citadel.

First Madrasa was established by Sultan Shamsuddin Al Tamash in D 1236. Then it developed in the time of Majjuddin Gori, Muhammad bin Tughlok, Firoz Sha, Sikandar Logi etc.

#### **Review Education at Sultani period**

The sultans established this education system for their own favor. They used to train their courtiers and officials in these institutes.

This system was not religious based. The syllabus was based on the practice of Fikkah. The other subjects were to modify the practice of Fikkah, like philosophy. This practice was criticized

because it taught the unimportant branch of religion Fikkah, and left out the real religion itself.

In the syllabus philosophy was there as long as the practice of Fikkah, but its only purpose was to explain Fikkah so this practice also did not develop much.

Sultani education system was not a practical and proper education. They had mathematics and engineering but only to the elite. Their education system did not promote science and technology.

Not all the Muslims acknowledged this Sultani education. There were many small ways too. People used to learn about religious in the mosques and they also had a syllabus. Not all the natives accepted Farsi language; they used Urdu to write poems.

#### **Education at Mughal period**

Nearly every Mughal king patronized this education. Akbar the great opened Madrasas for Muslims and other teaching institute for the Hindus.

Aurongojeb was the generous patron of Madrasa education among all the Mughals. British traveler Hamilton had spoken about a city where there was 400 Madrasa situated.

#### **Review Education at Mughal period**

In the Mughal period, except emperor Akbar, the emperors rule the country in the Hanafi Majhab style. They used their education system to develop efficient officers. This education was not only for making officers but also to promote science and culture.

An Iranian philosopher who inserted much Iranian culture in it influenced education at Mughal period. He included many philosophical texts in the syllabus that flourished the subject in this sub continent. Many books were published from Hayadrabad. But these studies were limited in views and mostly supports the Iranian and Greek philosophers. Only known philosopher Mowlana Azad tried to create a new form of philosophy.

This education system actually have no real purpose, it did not cover religion neither philosophy. But at that time a theologiest Sha Alliullah created a better religion based syllabus.

#### **Education during and after British period**

Several changes take place at this time in Indian Islamic education. This change took place mainly to the mentality of people related to this education not with the syllabus. The present system of education in Bangladesh is from this period. Deobondho, Ali-Gore, Nadowa were the main institute established in this period. Analyzing this period is important for the people who are discussing about the present Madrasa education of Bangladesh.

This education system had been attacked by the British in many ways. Farsi was the main language medium of this education system and it was also the official language of the Muslim empire. In 1837 Farsi was prohibited from official language.

The main income source of the Madrasas at that time was Oyakaf and Jaigir which was seized at that time.

The British established an education system to create local clerk, and Hindus were ahead of the Muslims.

This created various reactions on Muslims' mind: most of them start opposing the British to quench their anger. This anger was not organized. But two groups tried to organize their anger in two different forms. One was accepting their education and countering their actions in their own language and the other avoiding the education and culture brought by the colonizers.

Syed Ahmed, Syed Amir Ali and Jamalluddin Afgani were the followers of the first path. Ali-Gore is the creation of this structure.

Kashim Nanutuvhi, Rashid Ahmed, Gongguho Promukh was the leaders of the other way. They created Deobondho Madrasa in 1866. They didn't have any land or government help and they refused to learn anything modern.

**Proposal**

- One has to stop thinking about traditional point of view and prospective of education; and embrace Madrasa education from its own point of view.
- These subjects should be talked about and considered regarding Madrasa education.
- Those people who are involved maintaining Madrasas should be consulted.
- News ways should be sought for developing Madrasa without turning it into a colonizers dominating device. Not only Madrasa other educating systems should developed this way.

## Inclusive Education in Bangladesh

Ali Manash

### Abstract

The purposes of this paper is to explore the current status of inclusive education in Bangladesh and focus on the resources we have to support inclusive education for children with disabilities in our country. Policymaking and its implementation by government and non-government organizations have been described in this paper. We do not have many experts in this area; attempts have been made to explain some concepts and basic information about current status of inclusive education in Bangladesh.

### Introduction

Access to education is one of the most fundamental rights of any person on earth. The Constitution of the Peoples Republic of Bangladesh (in Article 17) suggests that Bangladesh needs to initiate a need-based-compulsory and free education, a fundamental human right, for all children. The Constitution offers a uniform, mass oriented and universal system of education, extending free and compulsory education to all children. It has been more than a decade since the United Nations declared the "Education for All" in 1990; Bangladesh government also made a declaration on "Education for All" and introduced Compulsory Primary Education through constitutional means.

### Facts

The scope of education for children with disabilities is very little in our country due to lack of institutes enrolling disabled children and shortage of skilled teachers. There has been very little effort to promote adaptation of teaching approaches and materials regarding education of children with disabilities. However, the teachers training programs of the Government's Resource Teachers for integrated schools, the Government Institute of Special Education, The Dhaka University and some NGOs provide training coverage on these issues. Workshops by the National Forum of Organizations Working with the Disabled (NFOWD) in association with the Government and NGOs have been conducted over inclusion of disabled learners into mainstream education. There has also been an emphasis on creating provisions for special education at national and regional levels for the disabled, who are unable to study in mainstream education.

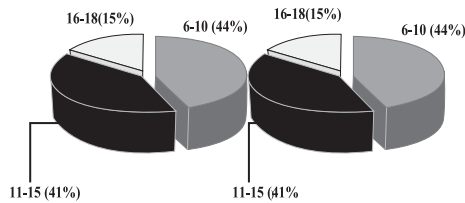
To ensure "Education for All" the Ministry of Education has adopted the Jomtien Declaration in 1990 which provided policies in this regard. This declaration was aimed at ensuring education to all children and those with disabilities. However, education of the disabled is the primary responsibility of the Ministry of Social Welfare, the ministry ignored educational issues of disabled children.

There are initiative to develop appropriate policies and legislation for changing focus of the existing educational system from a subject-focused one to a learner-centered approach. The Department of Primary and Mass Education, however, has completed a study on education of children with disabilities. The findings of the study are expected to contribute in developing policies and its implementation to facilitate inclusion of disabled children in mainstream education. NGO's have also taken up initiatives to provide training to teachers regarding the issue of disabled.

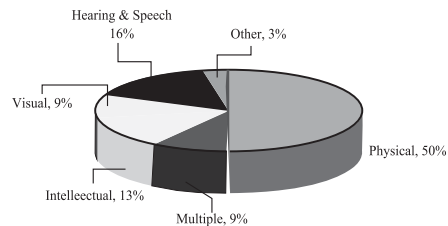
The Department of Primary Education (DPE) under the Primary and Mass Education Division (PMED) commissioned a research project in 2002 called Educating Children in Difficult Circumstances: Children with Disabilities (ESTEEM II). The Government has recognized that the "Education for All initiative" will not be successful unless education to children with disabilities is ensured. The study was conducted to assist the Government in developing or reforming policies on the education of disabled children. It has been recognized that education to children with disabilities will not be ensured properly unless the Ministry of Social Welfare takes a proactive role in.

As part of the ESTEEM II research project, a survey was conducted in collecting data from 360 children with disabilities. According to the survey, 28% stated that they had no problems in enrolling into mainstream schools while the rest 72% stated that their parents faced problems. Of the respondents, 56% were male while 44% were females and 66% of them lived in rural areas. About 50% of the respondents had physical disability, while 16% had a hearing or speech impairment.

**Figure 1.2: Age of Respondents**



**Figure 1.3: Types of disabilities**



Source: CSID, ESTEEM II Survey

The survey concluded that only 11% of the total group was receiving education. Table 8 highlights the type of schooling they were enrolled in:

**Table 1**

| ESTEEM II Survey Percentage of Disabilities & Education by Type 2002 |        |             |           |            |         |       |
|--|--------|-------------|-----------|------------|---------|-------|
| Type of Disability   | Formal | Non- Formal | Inclusive | Integrated | Special | Total |
| Physical   | 68     | 5           | 5         | 18         | 5       | 101   |
| Multiple   | 20     | 20          | 20        | 40         | 0       | 100   |
| Intellectual   | 33     | 17          | 0         | 17         | 33      | 100   |
| Visual   | 0      | 0           | 0         | 25         | 75      | 100   |
| Hearing & Speech   | 50     | 0           | 0         | 50         | 0       | 100   |
| Other  | 0      | 100         | 0         | 0          | 0       | 100   |
| Total  | 48     | 10          | 5         | 23         | 15      | 101   |

Source: CSID, ESTEEM II Survey

Other includes children with cerebral palsy

Note: Source data does not equal 100% due to rounding

Provisions for Appropriate Teaching Aids, the education for the disabled children has been affected severely due to lack of appropriate teaching aids, assistive devices and facilities. A few NGOs operating special education centers ensure provision of these items. The Government also runs 64 integrated schools for the visually impaired, which provide materials in Braille.

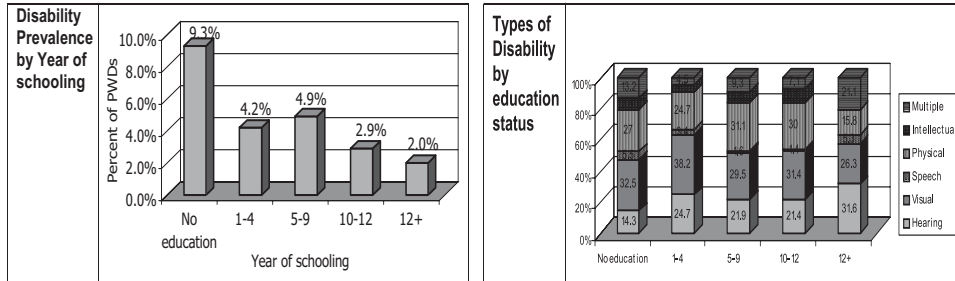
Increasing Retention Rates for All Children in Education, although there is no specific policies to assume responsibility for education of children with disabilities, attempts have been made to pursue concerned ministries and departments to facilitate assumption of responsibilities of education learners with disabilities in mainstream educational setups.

Very minimum intervention took place on the inclusion of disability issues in the educational curriculum. The Ministry of Education included this issue in its ESTEEM II study to explore possibilities of such inclusions.

The prevalence of impairment decreases with an increase of year of schooling of the study population. *Almost 10 percent of people with no education have an impairment of one kind or another compared to 2 percent the peoples with higher education.*

*Disability rate significantly decreased with the increase in year of schooling of the respondents. About 10% PWDs have no education. Only 2% of disable respondents had 12 or above schooling experience. This rate is 4.2% for 1-4 years school, 4.9% for 5-9 years of schooling and 2.9% for 10-12 years of schooling.*

**Figure 1.4: Disability Prevalence by Education Status**



Source: Unnayan Onneshan Survey 2005

There is a wide scale exclusion of persons with disabilities from mainstream education. The access to education of persons with disabilities is very limited and often inaccessible. There are very few specialized schools, but these can offer to a limited few. The common education system and materials are not appropriate or enough. Limited efforts exist in reforming the education approach to make it more accessible for the persons with disabilities. It is estimated that, while there are approximately 1.6 million children with disabilities within the school-going age in Bangladesh, less than 20,000 have actually access to school education.

The school structures, in most cases, are not mobility-friendly, for the children with physical disabilities and visual impairments. A lack of assistive devices for both mobility and communication, and also a lack of classroom adaptations act as barriers to education for persons with disabilities. There is lack of Logistic and resource persons. According to the national rule of business, the education for children with Disability is under the Social welfare ministry, not under the education ministry and they are providing only special education.

#### International commitments

The Government of Bangladesh ratified CRC (Child Rights Convention) and a signatory country of the following international and regional declaration on education and disability:

1. Education For All (EFA): Jomtien (1990) declaration;
2. Salamanca Declaration (1994) World Conference on Special Needs Education;
3. Dakar Framework for Action (2000);
4. E-9 Declaration (2000); (iv) UN Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities (1993);
5. Biwako Millennium Framework for Action (Asia-Pacific Decade of Disabled Persons 2003-2012) etc.

#### National commitments and programmes

1. Nationally Bangladesh has its National Policy on Disability - 1995;
2. National Disability Welfare Act-2001; National Action Plan on Disability-2006;
3. Institutional Programmes by Department of Social Services for Persons with Disabilities relating to education and training;
4. Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP); National Education Policy-2000;
5. Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) -II;
6. Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project- under Department of Secondary and Higher Education- Ministry of Education;
7. National Plan of Action (NPA) for Children (2004 - 2009).

Education issue of individuals of special needs is some how included in all the above policy, legislation, plan/projects etc.

#### The Education System in Bangladesh

The school system in Bangladesh has 3 levels: Primary, Lower Secondary, and Secondary. The primary level is compulsory and length is 5 years. The length of Lower Secondary level is 3 years and Secondary level is 2 years and these two levels of education are not compulsory. In higher education there are 3 stages such as; Higher Secondary (2 years), and University level



is 4 years. In all the levels there are Government Schools, Colleges and Universities besides private ones. Government education institutions are less costly than the private ones. There are specialized technical/engineering schools, colleges and universities in Government and private sectors.

In the primary level there are 2 systems. One is formal and another is Non-formal. All the non-formal schools are operated by Non- Government Organisations (NGOs). The non-formal schools are established for marginalized, dropped out and children with special needs.

There are about 50,000 (fifty thousands) schools operating all over the country and providing non-formal education with the assistance from non-government organizations. Few NGOs have changed their policy recently and began enrolling children with disabilities in their non-formal schools alongside children without disabilities.

A Research titled "Situation Analysis and assessment of education for Children with Disabilities in South Asia; East Asia and South Africa", conducted by Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID)- Bangladesh, commissioned by the University of East Anglia, UK found that three systems----Special, Integrated, and Inclusive-----of education are being practiced In Bangladesh for providing education to children with disabilities. The Government of Bangladesh established Special and integrated education system and NGOs are implementing Special and Inclusive education system.

#### **Measures undertaken**

Department of Social Services (DSS), Government of Bangladesh, is operating 5 Special Schools for Blind Children, 7 for Deaf Children, 1 for Intellectually disabled children. The DSS is also operating 64 Integrated schools (Special Classes in the mainstream schools) for blind children in 64 districts. NGOs are operating many Special and Inclusive Education centres but there is no reliable data available on the number of schools and enrollment of children.

The Ministry Social Welfare established a National Centre for Special Education (NCSE at Section-14, Mirpur, Dhaka in the year 1992). The following programmes are running under the centre:

#### **Special Schools**

There are three primary level special schools in the centre with residential facilities. One for Blind children, one for Hearing & Speech Impaired Children and one for Intellectually Disabled Children. Process is going on to upgrading the schools up to secondary level.

#### **Teachers Training College**

This College is affiliated with National University. The College offering one-year-course on "Bachelor in Special Education" (B.S.Ed.) Degree has 45 seats with residential facilities. NGOs are also operating teachers training colleges besides the Government initiatives.

#### **Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) -II**

In 2004 the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education in it's Primary Education Development Project (PEDP)-II included a component for ensuring inclusive education to children with disabilities from 2004.

The effort was taken based on findings and recommendations of a study carried out by Centre for Services and Information on Disability (CSID) in association with Cambridge Education Consultants Limited, UK, (commissioned by the Department of Primary Education, Government of Bangladesh) in the year 2002;

At the end of the year 2005, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education circulated an order to all Primary Schools for enrolling Children with Mild Degrees of Disabilities.

#### **The Department of Secondary and Higher Education**

The Department of Secondary and Higher Education has been undertaken a project titled "Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education". In this project proposal it has been mentioned that: This project would contribute in achieving the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) and PRSP in the following manner:

- (1) Improving quality of education through quality teachers training.

- (2) Ensuring equal educational opportunities to people living in distance/remote areas and under developed areas.
- (3) Creating education opportunities for all through providing training to the teachers involved with teaching-Disabled, Minority and Refugee children.
- (4) Encouraging recruitment of increased number of female teachers in Secondary education.
- (5) Promoting participation of people in order to bring qualitative change in education through raising social awareness.

#### **Dhaka University**

Dhaka University is offering a Masters Course with honors on Special Education through Department of Special Education under the Institute of Education and Research (IER). The courses have 3 disciplines:

- i) Education of Persons with Visual Impairment;
- ii) Education of Persons with Hearing & Speech Impairment; and
- iii) Education of Persons with Intellectual Impairment.

Major Shortfalls in existing education system for Children with Disabilities in Bangladesh

- i) In Special Education system
  - I. Inadequate number of Government Special/Integrated Education Institutions operated by the Ministry of Social welfare. Non-Government Special Education system is very costly.
  - II. Insufficient government resource allocation for special and integrated education system.
  - III. Low salary and benefits for resource teachers, causing lack of interest in this kind of job.
  - IV. Inadequate Early Detection and Intervention programme. Each school has 60- 70 seats but there is no system to identify disabled children and mobilize them to enroll. So, many seats remain vacant.
  - V. Inadequate teacher training facilities and trained teachers.
  - VI. Teachers have an interest in advanced training to enhance capacity and develop skills but the authorities (Government & NGOs) are not interested.
  - VII. The Infrastructures of most of the Schools are not Physically Accessible.
  - VIII. There is no uniformed curriculum in the special education system among NGOs, to accommodate different types of disabled children. Different organisations use different curricula developed by them selves.
  - IX. Sign language used in special schools for hearing and speech-impaired children is in English so they cannot communicate with others (in family & community). Bengali signing has been developed recently but not practiced widely yet.
  - X. Lack of relevant support systems (Extra session & IEP- Individual Education Plan), support system such as; Therapeutical and assistive technology.
  - XI. Special education system emphasizes on vocational training, which is not sufficiently aimed at transferring children into higher education.
  - XII. It is also observed that children do not have the option to proceed/apply for inclusive education. There is hardly use of computer for the visually impaired students in classroom.

#### **ii) In Integrated Education system**

- I. Integrated education system is only being operated by the Government and for blind boys only.
- II. Supply of Braille books and equipment is inadequate.
- III. Low remuneration and benefits of resource teachers.
- IV. Resource teachers have no opportunities to develop further skills.
- V. Insufficient resource allocation to Integrated schools for proper support of the blind children.

#### **iii) Inclusive Education system**

The Inclusive education system has been introduced in very recent years and is being operated by NGOs in non-formal education settings and primarily in rural areas.

- I. Most of the schools are pre-primary level.

- II. Teachers are not adequately qualified and trained.
- III. Only marginalized children with mild degrees of disabilities are enrolled in the inclusive schools.
- IV. Classrooms and premises are not accessible and seating arrangement is not comfortable for disabled children.
- V. Classroom environment is not suitable to accommodate different types of disabled children.

#### **Conclusion**

It has been found that the Ministry of Social Welfare, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education and Secondary and Higher Education; Ministry of Women and Children Affairs separately prepared their policy and plan, which is not at all harmonized with the International Concept of Inclusive Education and Education for All. So, a close coordination and joint effort among all the concern Government Ministries and Departments is needed to prepare an effective and uniformed action

plan to ensure educational right of the children with disabilities and individuals with special needs. The concept of Inclusive Education (IE) system is a shift from the traditional welfare and service oriented practice of special or integrated education that was not appropriate to be a much effective and rights-based system. IE is a new concept and globally recognized but implementing this system is depending upon the values, attitude, and resources. A vast task is needed to be carried out to introduce effective inclusive education system to ensure education equity among all children. There is no example of successful implementation of IE in front of us as yet. The inclusive education for disabled children is undoubtedly a new dimension and it has valid logic for implementation in different societies suited to its local socio-economic and cultural condition.

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## **Improve teacher education: Key competencies required for teachers to implement inclusive education for the children with disabilities**

**Nusrat Zerin**

### **Introduction**

For many years, special educators attempted to meet the needs of students with individual education plans in education settings apart from general education for the children with different types of disabilities throughout the world. The policy makers and the teachers were very conscious to segregate the children with special needs from the non-disabled children for different social stigma and misconceptions. In the best of situations, special and general educators collaborated and students with disabilities were included in typical classrooms for part of the day or when they demonstrated some level of proficiency. However, this "visitor" approach of education for special needs children often was met with frustration on behalf of students and teachers alike. Resources and support were unevenly distributed and students did not achieve a true sense of belonging. As a result, educators and parents began to call for a more inclusive way of educating all students. While terminology has shifted and provided different meanings to many people, the idea of inclusion is truly a philosophy. It is not a specific program, nor does it supplant existing laws.

### **The following quotes illustrate how inclusion is currently being described:**

- Although the terms inclusion or inclusive education cannot be located in the law, the provision for least restrictive environment provides the legal impetus for inclusive education. What is inclusive education? The underlying assumption is that it is an attitude or belief system, not an action or set of actions. It is a way of life; a way of living together, based upon the belief that each individual is valued and does belong (Thousand & Villa, 1995).
- Inclusion involves students attending the same schools as siblings and neighbours, membership in general education classrooms with chronological age appropriate classmates, having individualized and relevant learning objectives, and being provided with the supports necessary to learn (e.g. special education and related services). It does not mean that students never receive small-group instruction or that students are in general education classes to learn the core curriculum only (York, Kronberg and Doyle, Exceptional Children, 1992).
- Inclusive education means that all students are provided the supports and opportunities, they need to become participating learners and members of their school community. Every effort will be made to meet the individual needs of all students through a diverse and accommodating curriculum in a regular education environment. Collaborative planning, shared ownership and common responsibility for the education of all students will foster a climate of acceptance and support with the family, school, and community (as defined by the MPS Inclusion Task Force).
- An inclusive school is an educational institution in which all available resources are collaboratively utilized to meet the educational needs of all children who reside in its attendance area. Inclusive schools have strong site-based management and teacher teams who jointly plan, implement, and evaluate their educational programs. In an
- inclusive school, all students are placed in age appropriate classrooms. Learning is an interactive process, which relies on a variety of instructional formats to address individual needs and learning styles. Ancillary staff support is provided in the context of the core curriculum and classroom activities. (Michigan Inclusion Project, USA)
- Inclusion is the education of students with disabilities in the classrooms and schools they would attend if not identified as disabled, with the appropriate supports and services necessary to enable the student to be successful (Illinois School

Psychologists Association Task Force on Inclusion, 1994).

- Inclusion is a cohesive sense of community, acceptance of differences and responsiveness to individual needs (Stainback and Stainback, 1990).

Inclusive education focuses on how schools can provide the "least restrictive environment" for students with disabilities through ensuring all opportunities for all types of facilities and services. We are also finding that inclusion creates schools in which all students feel included and the education reforms itself for every child, not the child changes to receive education. It is an exciting process, which has great benefits for everyone. In this sense, to make all children able to receive education in a proper way, there is no other better way to create an inclusive education environment where trained and dedicated teachers play a vital role to ensure the quality teaching-learning process.

Teacher's education is essential to implement the concept of inclusive education for the children with disabilities, consequently it must be priorities to train all teachers in same way to enhance their skills and update their knowledge. Teachers can be benefited by the approach of Inclusive education in various ways. Such as-

- It helps teachers appreciate the diversity of individual human being.
- It helps teachers recognize that all students have strengths.
- It creates an awareness of the importance of direct individualized instruction.
- It increases ways of creatively addressing challenges.
- It teaches collaborative problem solving skills.
- It develops teamwork skills.
- It acquires different ways of perceiving challenges as a result of being on a multi-disciplinary team.
- It enhances accountability skills.
- It combats monotony.

Inclusion must permeate teacher education not be seen as a separate area of study for teachers.

In "World Declaration on Education for All" - it has been stated in Article 1: Meeting Basic Learning Needs, that "Every person - child, youth and adult - shall be able to benefit from educational opportunities designed to meet their basic learning needs." These needs comprise both essential learning tools (such as literacy, oral expression, numeracy, and problem solving) and the basic learning content (such as knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes) required by human beings to be able to survive, to develop their full capacities, to live and work in dignity, to participate fully in development, to improve the quality of their lives, to make informed decisions, and to continue learning. The scope of basic learning needs and how they should be met varies with individual countries and cultures, and inevitably, changes with the passage of time. All of these are needed to achieve not only from community but also from parents, teachers and school authorities.

In "Article III: Basic education should be provided to all children, youth and adults- To this end, basic education services of quality should be expanded and consistent measures must be taken to reduce disparities." To attain this, quality teachers are essential to fulfil the need of quality education and also inclusive education where different types of special needs children will be included and receive education with other non-disable children.

#### **Competencies required for teachers: Bangladesh Context**

It is a challenge to implement the concept and practice of inclusive education for the children with different types of disabilities in Bangladesh as the education system is rather complicated one. The schools, colleges, education and academic institutes are implementing their education approach in a complex multidimensional way, which are not following any common guideline. There are different types of schools and educational institutes, like- government primary schools, registered non-government primary schools, government secondary schools/high schools, Madrasa (Muslim religion based education system), Kindergarten schools, private pre schools and primary schools, English medium schools, English medium Madrasa, Non-formal pre-schools and primary education centres (NFPE centres run by different NGOs), cadet

schools etc. Teachers of these schools and education centres vary in their academic qualification, skill and knowledge. Curriculum, textbooks, teaching-learning materials, teaching-learning strategies and process are not common in these varieties of education centres.

The implementation process, policies and practices need to be changed and planned according to the complex pattern of education institutes and all the teachers of these diversified schools and academic institutes need to be trained through a common capacity building process. Otherwise the inclusive education implementation process will be hampered and cannot achieve its goal and target successfully.

The general practice of traditional teaching-learning process, which the traditional teachers of education institutes and schools follow, is totally lecture based. Primary teachers training institutes (PTI) and the teachers training colleges provide all the necessary information in their courses but the general practice in the mainstream schools and colleges are still following the traditional teacher centred education process. This is one of the main barriers for the special needs children, who can receive education in the mainstream school setup to complete their education. It is highly in demand that the teachers should follow the participatory teaching-learning methods and strategies to meet the educational needs and then philosophy of inclusive education. If there is an adapted school infrastructure for the children with disabilities which is accessible for all, the teaching-learning materials are available, referral service is properly provided to the children with disabilities as per their needs then it is very important to follow the participatory and child centred strategies to enhance the practice of inclusive education in Bangladesh.

In different mainstream educational institutes different types of disabled children are studying (especially the physically challenged children) and completing their education without any special facilities and guidance from their teachers. But to ensure quality teaching-learning process in different sectors of education, the madrasa teachers, the NFPE teachers, the kindergarten teachers need to gain the knowledge of applying different teaching-strategies in classroom settings.

### **The scope of improving the competencies of teachers from the point of global perspective**

Findings across the globe regarding the capability and competencies of the school- teachers (especially the schools for special needs children) are that schools, educators and teachers are struggling to respond to the wide range of diversity of students. "At the root of implementing a public education system, that embraces a philosophy of full inclusion is well and appropriately trained teachers and school administrators."<sup>1</sup> An analysis on the key competencies for teaching for inclusion, and how teacher training institutions can respond to this need, would consider:

#### **1. The international findings<sup>2</sup> of the universal issues of inclusion process:**

- Leadership;
- Collaboration;
- Systemic assessment replacing individual assessment;
- Parents as partners;
- Successful and promising inclusive classroom methodologies.

2. No nation is doing as well as we expect in appropriate practices of inclusive education<sup>3</sup>. What they are practising is just different forms of experiments in this regard. This provides an imperative for education systems to change and develop its capacity to include all children<sup>4</sup>. Government and other important agencies are assessing these practises and the findings are taking for considerations for planning of inclusive education systematically.

3. Initiate process to include inclusive education as a topic of teacher training institutions: Teacher education is a core element for building the capacity of the education system to do inclusion In order to build such capacity, teacher training institutions would consider<sup>5</sup>:

- The research literature about teacher education models for inclusion;
- The indicators of successful inclusion practices in home and abroad;
- The implications of these indicators for determining the needs of teachers and schools;

- The implications of these indicators for determining the design of all teachers training courses and programs in different teachers training institutions (Primary, Secondary, Madrasa and other).

4. The restructuring of teaching education training courses and programs coherently in light of different findings, their implications and experiences throughout the world.<sup>6</sup>

Fundamental imperative for practice of inclusive education, "The good teacher is a friend who loves all of the children, equally. Good and not too strict. A good teacher is a role model to every child who helps them to grow and develop, and guides to the future. But being a good teacher is demanding so let's thank the good teachers!"<sup>7</sup>

The pedagogy of inclusion begins with an elemental (basic and essential) act of love. The international community views the nations and within nations with recognition that the diversity of individual human difference is to be valued and included in schools.

For students with disability, UNESCO has promoted inclusive school communities as "The most effective means of combating discriminatory attitudes, creating welcoming communities, building inclusive society, and achieving education for all."<sup>8</sup>

In order to consider about the responsibility of teacher education for inclusion, the designers and implementers of teacher education (i.e. the universities) are required to understand with great accuracy and depth the notion of inclusion, and accordingly design and implement a curriculum for training all teachers throughout the country. Such a responsibility is within reach the key competencies are already discussed and agreed on in the literature. Keynote presentations at the 13th World Congress of Inclusion International in Melbourne, September 2002 by Porter, Petersen, Naicker, Wills and Jackson indicate a consistency and coherency about the definitions of what it takes to do good inclusion.

Furthermore the Review of Educational Services for Students with Disabilities in Government Schools in different developed countries has produced sets of key competencies together with recommendations to implement strategies to build professional capacity of teachers to execute inclusive education. These strategies are consistent with the research literature. They have found and summarized some common things regarding the practice of inclusive education in developed world. That is-

#### **Features of Successful Inclusion: in developed countries**

The implementers of developed countries on inclusive education identified five (5) characteristics of successful inclusion.

##### **a) Leadership**

Inclusion requires visionary leadership at every level of its implementation process. Leadership is the most powerful predictor of successful inclusion. Leadership includes:

- Setting the vision to implement,
- Organising the school for different events of inclusion of disabled children,
- Providing adapted and modified support for inclusive classrooms for all types of children with disabilities.

##### **b) Collaboration / team work**

Inclusion requires collaboration and teamwork. No teacher can or ought to have the capacity to make the process of inclusion perfect alone. Collaboration recognises teachers as life-long learners, problem solvers and front line researchers. Making time available for personalized staff development is essential.<sup>9</sup>

##### **c) Assessment**

Assessment needs to be refocused onto the capacity of systems and individuals. There have been lots of studies defining the inadequacies of special education assessments and replacing these with diagnostic and prescriptive measures of effective programs. For the student, authentic assessments-portfolios and modified reporting to pre-post learning is emerging as best practice.

**d) Parent Involvement**

Inclusion works best with effective parental involvement-programs that engage parents as co-learners with teachers in collaboration are most effective.

**e) Inclusion oriented Classroom Practices**

Inclusion works best with cooperative learning, activity based, mastery learning, using instructional participatory strategies and technology where applicable, multi-level instruction and peer support and tutoring. These are the most effective, inclusion oriented instructional practices.

**Research Literature on models of teacher education for inclusion**

The research literature explores the challenges facing institutions of higher education preparing educators for inclusive education. Three models emerged in this part:

A. The teacher training/education course that attempts to teach inclusion from within a special education school. This model dominates much of Western Education, but is heavily criticised by Booth and others as perpetuating segregation<sup>10</sup>. This model is not a perfect one to replicate for its limited scope of work and lack of scope to adjust with regular education system.

B. The teacher education courses that views special education as collaborators to work with regular education teachers in doing inclusion. This first generation model was first developed and became prevalent in North America and recently adopted by New Zealand (for developed countries). The driving force appears to be an attempt to shift the available and current special education resources to consultative and co-teaching roles. This model also fall prey to Booth's critique of the need for a fundamental restructure to allow inclusion to permeate general education.<sup>11</sup>

C. The teacher education course that believes that all teachers can be taught to do inclusion. This is a fundamental restructuring designed to infuse inclusion. This innovative model is at the forefront of teacher preparation and shows the way in design for the long-term inclusion of all children in local schools.<sup>12</sup> This model is much more flexible and practical than the other models. It focuses on the low cost, easy application and changes of the system which is very much possible to implement for the developing, underdeveloped countries of the world.

**Implications of the indicators of successful inclusion**

To date, no system has avoided or made a complete shift away from segregated thinking about learners with impairments. Even in contexts where education is provided in the mainstream, this has often produced segregating practices inside regular learning centres and that no nation as a fully inclusive education system. In systems undergoing inclusive development, change has to be introduced at all levels and sectors of the system if it is not to be undermined. The democratic ideals require that we develop collaboration between special and general education at the preparation level to prepare teachers for teaching all students.

Emerging from these indicators is, a teacher who has a deep desire to take on the challenge of life long learning (as in a profession), has some reflective tools to recognize her/his own inclusion oriented capacity, has leadership who supports her/his will to build capacity, has some mastery of cooperative learning strategies, works well with parents and colleagues and inspires others to share successes and problems would be key competencies that schools should be looking for to transact inclusion. Teachers need to get a comprehensive educational background by receiving all the necessary things for appropriate application of inclusive education for all types of learners in real sense.

The leadership to build inclusive school communities is an integral and critical part of education reform, and particularly to the professional development of teachers to do inclusion, and so must be a core part of their training on this issue.

Beyond the scope of teacher training, but relevant to building inclusive school communities is the necessity to ensure that other staff (school authority, psychologists, speech therapist, physiotherapist and other common specialists) also must have as part of their core training, the leadership roles and how to transact such roles in supporting schools and teachers to do inclusion.



Inclusion must permeate teacher education not be seen as a separate area of study for teachers. It must be added in every part of teachers training related areas to achieve "Education For All", not only in Bangladesh but also throughout the world.

#### **Appendix 1**

#### **a) An example of considering about what competencies teachers may need for inclusive schools:**

##### **i. Practical and Functional Competences needed:**

The demonstrated ability in a realistic context, to consider a range of possibilities for action, to make considered decisions about which possibilities to follow, and to perform the chosen action.

- Creating a learning environment in which learners challenge stereotypes about language, disability, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, geographical location,
- Undertaking analyses of barriers to learning and participation in the local schooling context,
- Creating an environment in which all learners are equally valued,-
- Developing strategies, through the curriculum, to build students' self-esteem,
- Creating lesson plans that are responsive to student diversity,
- Developing resources to support learning and participation,
- Drawing on community resources to support teaching-learning process,
- Drawing on a variety of instructional strategies and assessment techniques, and developing the ability to use them effectively and appropriately,
- Evaluating learners' performance and competence in a fair and sensitive manner.

##### **ii. Foundational Competences:**

- Where the individual learner demonstrates an understanding of the knowledge and thinking which enhance the actions taken.
- Understanding the philosophy and assumptions regarding inclusive education policy and practices.
- Understanding the nature of barriers to learning and participation, and the principles underlying different strategies that can be used to address them,
- Understanding different learning styles, preferences and motivations,
- Understanding the nature of diversity in schools and communities,
- Understanding the assumptions that underlie a range of assessment approaches, and their particular strengths and weaknesses in relation to learner diversity,
- Understanding that inclusion is concerned with increasing the participation of all students who are vulnerable to exclusion, not just those with disabilities.

##### **iii. Reflexive and Spontaneous Competences:**

- In which the learner demonstrates the ability to integrate or connect performances and decision making with understanding and with the ability to adapt to change and unforeseen circumstances, and explain the reasons behind these actions.
- Reflecting on the extent to which objectives of the learning experience have been achieved and deciding on adaptations where necessary,
- Reflecting on how language, disability, race, gender, ethnicity, culture, geographical location and other differences impact on learning, and making appropriate adaptations to teaching strategies,
- Reflecting on whether children are actively involved in their own learning, and developing strategies to maximise participation for all learners,
- Reflecting on all skills learners bring to the class and making it explicit that all skills are valued, not merely academic skills.
- Interpreter and Designer of Learning Programmes and Materials
- Reflecting on and interpreting assessment results, and feeding these into processes for the improvement of learning programmes,
- Reflecting on language use in schools that may promote discriminatory practices, and developing a language that affirms all learners,
- Reflecting on whether there are any exclusionary practices in the ethos and culture of the school, and developing strategies to address them,

- Reflecting on strategies to assist teachers in working collaboratively to develop inclusive curricula,
- Reflecting on the effectiveness of staff development programmes, and finding ways to ensure that they meet the needs in the school Context.

**As a Leader, Administrator and Manager, teachers may need following competences:**

- i. Practical Competences:** The demonstrated ability in an authentic context to consider a range of possibilities for action, to make considered decisions about which possibilities to follow, and to perform the chosen action.
- Managing various approaches to teaching such as group work, collaborative learning, individualised learning, peer-mediated learning, in different educational contexts and with diverse groups of learners,
  - Working with other peers in participative decision-making and collaborative teaching with the aim of maximising the participation of all learners,
  - Creating an inclusive ethos in the school where all learners, staff, parents and community members are valued,
  - Resolving conflicts in the classroom and school in a sensitive manner
  - Supporting the involvement of parents and the community, and building structures to facilitate this,
  - Accessing human and materials resources from the community in order to maximise the participation of all learners,
  - Planning collaboratively with peers in developing ongoing staff development programmes that are relevant and meet local needs,
  - Applying research in inclusive education meaningfully to educational problems,
  - Promoting and supporting innovative practices in order to improve the school's responsiveness to diversity,
  - Managing and facilitating institutional and organisational change.
- ii. Foundational Competences:**
- Where the learner demonstrates an understanding of the knowledge and thinking which underpins the actions taken.
  - Understanding various approaches to managing classrooms in order to ensure that they are responsive to diversity,
  - Understanding current legislation and policy with respect to the management of inclusive education,
  - Understanding approaches to conflict resolution, problem-solving, and mediation,
  - Knowledge of community based support systems and organisations that may be accessed for the school,
  - Understanding and engaging with current research on inclusive education in order to promote an inclusive culture in the school.

**Teachers need other competences to be an active part of Community and can enhance citizenship and pastoral Role:**

- i. Practical Competences:**
- The demonstrated ability in an authentic context to consider a range of possibilities for action, to make considered decisions about which possibilities to follow, and to perform the chosen action-
  - Responding to current social influences that place learners "at risk", such as violence, HIV/AIDS, substance abuse, teenage pregnancy, poverty, environmental degradation,
  - Showing an appreciation and respect for people of different values, beliefs, practices and cultures,
  - Valuing, affirming and supporting all learners in the classroom irrespective of diversity,
  - Developing school based support structures for learners in need of counselling, and social and learning support,
  - Developing a pastoral care programme to support personal, social and emotional development of learners and teachers that is reactive and proactive in nature,
  - Developing a discipline policy that is based on mutual respect,

- Facilitating a partnership between the school and parents, community members, and community organisations, for example, disabled people's organisations.
- ii. **Foundational Competences:**
- Where the learner demonstrates an understanding of the knowledge and thinking which underpins the actions taken.
  - Understanding policy and legislation on children's rights and human rights in the country and internationally,
  - Understanding the possibilities for life-skills and work-skills and training possibilities in the local communities, organisations and business, for all learners including those with disabilities,
  - Understanding the impact of class, race, gender, disability and other identity-forming forces on learning and participation,
  - Understanding child and adolescent development, and theories of learning and behaviour and their applicability to the particular schooling context,
  - Understanding potential barriers to learning and participation, and ways in which to build resilience-promoting and health-promoting schools.

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## The Autonomy of University and The Twenty-Year Schemata<sup>1</sup>

Shahidul Islam

'from the point of view of autonomy, university institutions have fluctuated or still fluctuate between complete academic freedom and subservience to political and economic power. This results in the deterioration of the university's moral and scientific autonomy in the face of undue external pressures that prevent it from behaving according to its own nature.'

The University As An Institution today.  
An UNESCO Publication (1993)

### Why is the autonomy for university inevitable?

Since legislation of private university law in 1992 more than fifty private universities have been established here and there in the country. This is a sign of peoples growing interest in higher education. But, there is nothing not to be glad at this sign. The mass does not have a positive impression about the private universities. More over, our president, grants commission, and figures of such rank pass such comments on these private universities that the mass' presumption seems to be true. We think people have been founding these universities with a wrong concept. What is a university? What is its aim or target?

What does the autonomy for a university mean? Is that autonomy means not keeping touch with society and state? What is the necessity for autonomy for university? Who are against it? Who do stand in support of it? We are to face questions of the sort. Answers do vary from person to person. But, well, there has one point been unyielding; that is autonomy for universities is inevitable. But that autonomy is not without keeping touch with society, state or politics. As the society changes its shape in course of the change within its structure, the change grabs the nature of university as well. As the concept of aim and target differ, the concept of autonomy gets changed likewise; it gets compelled to be changed.

The question may be raised-why? Firstly, it is the English that established university in this zone in the shape of that of in Europe and even today universities of our country are directed by the concept derived from the western civilization. However, recently, by the interface of American civilization, universities in our countries are rising imitating the American form. Secondly, the bourgeois culture we belong to, is almost totally imported from England; for instance, democracy, parliament, bureaucracy, university, judiciary, nation-state, fundamental rights, fiction-poetry-drama etc. Thirdly, due to being under British rule for over 190 years, spiritually we are profoundly associated with England. University did not remain out of the changes English society receives through renaissance, reformation, and industrial revolution. The fall of Catholic Church and the empowerment of monarchy and Anglican Church, then the monarchy, the gradual reduce of the power of the Anglican Church and the increase of the power of parliament and affairs alike have changed characteristics of university. The character of the university, its aim and goal and the platform of the autonomy for university will not be intelligible if we do not assimilate it to the wind of change began to blow from the twelfth century in England; especially the changes through the 15th century renaissance, 16th century reformation, 17th century civil war and revolt, and 19th century industrial revolution. This essay is divided into two parts. The first part attempts to define university and describe its aim and goal, and explain why the autonomy for university is inevitable to reach the goal. The second part discusses the twenty-year schemata along with politics, private university and the autonomy. This section mainly talks of the change in English society and the changes of the universities of England. A third part talks of Bangladesh; a report on the universities of Bangladesh and autonomy.

- a. James A. Perkins, the president of the university of Corneal, specifies three aims of university, and he believes that, a university, in fact, can contribute to the society only if these three aims are united together. Those three aims are to:

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<sup>1</sup> Translated by Achintya Das from original article written in Bengali

1. Acquire knowledge through research;
2. Dispense knowledge through lessoning and
3. Apply knowledge to collective welfare or to social development.

To render him, these three are not only the main target of modern universities, but also the sources of their vast power and intricate perplexities. That the universities are the centers for acquiring knowledge and teaching is an ancient concept. In earlier time, these two aims were considered to be the main purpose of a university. The third one that the university will contribute to the application of knowledge in the welfare of

Society is a recent realization. University has been growing as a national institution since the building of nation-state. The concept derives from there. But apart from the dispute of when the concept emerged, it is a fact that, universities have been blessing one or another part of society since the very beginning. Another old dispute has been going on for long. That is-which one is the main concern of a university, research or teaching? I could have extended the size of this essay putting both sides' arguments. But I do not feel the necessity, for the dispute does not make any sense to me. The reason sounds like if the ultimate target of a university is social development, it can be obtained through both research and teaching or either of the options. Still they may not obtain it. It depends upon the main structure of the society. What the society expect from the university through research and teaching are:

- a. Preserve the storage of knowledge of the centuries; spread those and hand those over to new generation.
- b. Intensify the intellect of a student and build him or her as a conscious and cultured citizen.
- c. Involve in the search of truth authentically;
- d. Work as a center of free thinking and
- e. Grow the suitable leadership that can lead the state onward, working in different stages of the society with efficiency and intellect.

All these are conventional thoughts about university. No one has any disagreement with these. But when, through research and teaching, the responsibilities described between a and e, do not incorporate to Perkins' third aim, it can be said that, the university has been failed to play its role. However, the question cannot be overlooked how much the role of a university in application of the knowledge acquired from society. Since the establishment, university has never directly administered a state. University has been supplying the necessary trained people for maintaining domination and oppression of the ruling class. So, how and how much role a university can play in the society, mainly depends upon the characteristics of the ruling class; upon the basic economic and political structure of a state. Many a men disagrees with the third opinion. The group is mainly the group believe in 'art for art's sake'. However, the number of people of the group has decreased by today, because now it is an open secret that economics is directly related to education. Education now has become a tool for the leading manufacture and is performing predominant role in the field of social and economic development. It means, as it is profit worthy to invest in industries, so is to education and research. However, there are some differences. The investment in industries risks a chance of loss, but while investing in the field of education, there is not the least chance of loss. Our education minister asserts this statement referring to a remark by famous economist J. Maurice Clark who says, "Knowledge is the only instrument of product that is not subject to diminishing return." The economists like Adam Smith and Alfred Marshal have admitted this economic aspect of education. Recently, especially after the World War-II, research on the economics of education has increased immensely. I will put down result of two recent researchers. One of them is noble prize laureate American economist Theodore Gultz, and another is Soviet educationist C.G. Straumiline. Gultz is a pioneer in estimating the economic value of education. Three important results of his research are:

- a. Education contributes more than other material contribution in the economic development U.S.A. receives in three decades (1929-1957);
- b. Education plays much more important role than that of industry in the development in 1909-1929;

- c. "In the development of 1909-1929, the invested elements contribute double than education; but in 1929-1957 education contributes more than material elements."<sup>2</sup> The result of the research of Edward Denison, another American economist, supports the argument of Gultz. Straumiline's research on the laborers employed to the metal industry in Leningrad. To render him, education plays a role in economic development and the enhancement of the productive rate of the laborers. The important results of his research are:
- a. Just one-year schooling of a laborer increases 30% production rate in average. On the other hand, an illiterate operator of a bench or lead machine improvises his or her skill up to 12 16% by one-year practical experience.
- b. "The four-year primary schooled laborers are 43%; secondary schooled laborers are 108% and higher educated laborers are 300% more productive than illiterate ones."<sup>3</sup> The impact of education is not limited merely to producing assets in society; rather it is influential to the social, cultural and political field as well. So, as the center of higher education, university has spread its influence over the society, economics, and culture of nowadays world. The degree holders of university capture a vast sum of important figures including statesman, ministerial staff, administrator, business-executive, scientist, and technologist. Though, recently some high quality research centers have been founded, still, in the field of supplying the skilled manpower to every stage of the state governing, the position of university has been unique so far. The university was founded to preserve the power of a very negligible clergy and elite society. By the time university did not have any social role. The role and prestige of the university have been increased hugely through the social changes taken place in around a thousand years. So the nation expects that kind of administrative body for a university that can actively help the university reach the goal more easily; administration of that sort is autonomy, which means a favorable environment without any outsider interruption- where the development of society and state gets quicken through research and teaching. Where a 'Body Corporate' is grown along with the buildings, chancellor, vice-chancellor, senate, syndicate, the council body, the teachers students-staffs, and the autonomy of that sort gets assured, is called university. But where everything exists without that autonomy, may be something other than university.
- c. On 31 August-6 September 1965, a seminar was held at Tokyo in Japan organized by International Association of Universities (IAU). About 500 members from 65 countries along with around 300 representatives gathered there. Among the three agendas, one was 'autonomy for university'. A meeting of the governing board of IAU, held in 1962 in Delhi, imposed the responsibility of preparing a report on 'autonomy for university' on Sir Hector Hetherington. The governing board takes up a long discussion with the report in Cambridge and Moscow and finalizes it to present in the conference to be held in Tokyo. At the opening of the first session, the chairman of the association, Emirates F. Serile James, principal of the University of O'nc. Gill says in his brief speech, "The problem of autonomy was as old as university institutions themselves. It had, however, changed its nature gradually over the years, from the really autarchic independence of the University of Paris in the 12th and 13th centuries, with its own courts of justice, to an eventual recognition that there was a fluid relationship between the university and the community that it served- a relationship which was vital to the university itself, which required a degree of independence to do its work for the community justly and properly and vital also to the community."<sup>4</sup>

The ground that gets emphasized in the speech of Serile James is that, the main target of university is to work for the mass and the community, and to perform this duty the autonomy is inevitable. The third agenda for that conference was "The contribution of Higher Education to Economic and Cultural Development". It is clear that, through the conference, the social role of university was given emphasize. Without any hesitation James says that the autonomy for a university is inevitable for the development of the community. The institutional liberty of university is necessary not only for its own sake but also for the society. However, how the

responsibility of a university to the community depends upon what sort of society and state structure it belongs to. The form of the state abbreviates the role of a university to the society. The autonomy faces an encounter as the university, crossing the determined limit, tries to spread itself over the wide range of the society. There had been a little theoretical talk on the rationality of autonomy, because now the concept of autonomy cannot be separated from university. Now it has been a universal axiom conviction. The discussion talked mostly of some special phases of autonomy. For instance, the relation of the university with government has been discussed vastly along with the participation of students in the administration, the relativity of the autonomy, the mass' outstanding interest to higher education, the problems derived from the vast extension of university, the responsibility of university to the community etc. Before letting you be aware of the unanimous resolution of the conference, I think it necessary to mention some parts of the speeches delivered from one or two representatives; for example, to render Dr. M. A. Gani, the then vice chancellor of the University of Dhaka. We know, in 1961 the armed autocratic Ayub government planned to dismiss the autonomy of university by the black law of university and Dr. Gani was assigned to demonstrate the plan over the university of Dhaka. People have not forgotten the terror he employed then. So it is likely to draw curiosity about what he had said in Tokyo conference. The conference was not resolute to the issue of participation of the students in administration. Still many said for and against it on the basis of reality they are living in. Expressing the opinion that the participation of the students in administration would be dangerous, Dr. Gani says, "Suggestions which tended to admit students into the councils of university administration should therefore be vigorously opposed."<sup>5</sup> However, it is true, though strange, that he supported the unanimous resolution taken by the conference and said, "Unquestionably each university should try to safeguard its independence to the best of its ability on each of the five points mentioned by Sir Hector."<sup>6</sup> Dr. Gani's solidarity with the autonomy is really very interesting. The double-faced ethics of destroying the autonomy in one's own country and supporting the very factor in an international conference is not that much rare in our country. Emphasizing on electing a rector or vice chancellor through election, Dr. G. Bossa says, "he should be elected by the college of professors, and that the state should not intervene in any way whatever. Moreover, it was important that the council which administered the University ... should be composed mainly of teachers even if representatives of the Government or of the community were also members."<sup>7</sup> Dr. V.G. Sinako from the Foundation College of Philippines says, "the University could only accomplish its full mission in society if it and its teachers enjoyed the widest autonomy."<sup>8</sup> Dr. M. Al Fasi from the University of Muhammad V of Rabat, expressing his pleasure on the resolution about the autonomy, says, "Such a wide argument should not fall to carry with some government which were still inexperienced in University matters and had not sufficiently realized that it was in the name of efficiency itself that autonomy should be respected."<sup>9</sup>

The representatives from the capitalist and socialist states talk over the issue of relation between the University and the government on the basis of their native experience. We have noticed in the social context of our country that there has been a malicious relation between the state and the University since the liberation. They treat themselves to be enemy of each other. The experience is all the same to the people of Asia, Africa and Latin America. So they consider the autonomy mainly to be a state without any disruption of the governmental authority. But when we receive a different note from the representatives of socialist states, it seems to be a bit unintelligible. When the rector of the University of Bostok of the East Germany and the vice rector of the University of Claz of Rumania say, "The state should not in principle be considered the 'enemy' of the University", it does not match with our experience. But it becomes comprehensive with a little thinking that the exploiting state and the state without exploitation determine the relation between the state and the University. Anyway, at last the conference reminding the teacher-student-administrator, who construct the 'Body Corporate', of the responsibilities to the community, state and the world, get resolute utterly- "It is the duty of the Universities to contribute to the highest development both of the national community to which they belong and the cause of international scholarship. Experience makes it clear, however, that they fulfill these functions most effectively when they enjoy a high degree of autonomy and are in a position to maintain academic standards by having decisive voice in respect to the following matters:

1. Whatever the formalities of appointment may be, the University should have the right to select its own staff.
2. The University should be responsible for selection of its students'.
3. The University should be responsible for the formation of curricula for each degree and for setting up of academic standards. In those countries where degrees, or the license practice a profession are regulated by law, universities should participate effectively in the formulation of curricula and the setting of academic standards.
4. Each university should have the final decisions as to the research program carried on within its wall.
5. The university should be responsible, within wide limits, for allocation among its various activities of the financial resources available i.e. space and equipment; capital funds; recurrent operating revenue.<sup>10</sup>

Thus the conference, defining the autonomy, determines its edges. That is, the members, present in the conference, connote that when the university can demonstrate its own resolution on the above five factors, it can be said that the university is enjoying autonomy to the full brim. Usually the first four factors do not create any dispute. In spite of the deviation of the state structure, and the warp and woof of relation between the university and the state the liberty of university is admitted by every civilized state. There has been dispute on the fifth factor. The opposing ones argue, while the maximum currency of a university comes from the government treasury, then how if the government does not have any authority over university? That is the issue of relation with the government is associated to university. The issue got much priority in the Tokyo conference. Many speakers doubt that dependency upon the government may reduce the autonomy of the university. The government, at times, in many countries, attempts to impose political objective on the university reducing the budget or threatening to reduce the budget, and succeeds in most cases. So, in order to preserve the autonomy, many emphasize on taking legal steps. For instance, it will not be acceptable by any means to reduce the budget in contrast with the earlier year and a fixed percentage of the national budget have to be allotted for university and it can not be reduced, by any means, as a pretext of economic inconvenience. It gets proved by all these discussion that the issue of preserving the autonomy had the representatives tensed. Another issue deserves not to be escaped in the discussion of the autonomy is- who does or do stand against the autonomy? Who are its opponents? A single utterance is not enough to answer; it demands explanation. I would like to say that friend and foe need to be defined anew along with the historical evolution of the society. It is admitted to all that capitalism once played a progressive role. It opened the door of bourgeois civilization cracking the inertial feudal community. By the time, the prominent universities of England (Cambridge, Oxford etc) were about to die having belonged to the grip of the Church and the King. After the triumphant industrial revolution, in 1850, parliament reveals a bundle of bourgeois democratic laws over the universities demolishing the feudal laws. The Oxford and the Cambridge opposed in right earnest. Since then the existing concept of autonomy came to exist. Again, in 1917, after the thriving socialist revolt, the concept of autonomy of the university gets changed there. With the decay of the bourgeois state, in spite of bourgeois autonomy, a bundle of humanist socialist laws were demonstrated in universities. The universities taking the pleasure of bourgeois autonomy opposed the change. However, the threat for the autonomy can be from both inside or outside the universities. Sometimes it is seen that outsider community, state and conventional concerns tend to take authority over the autonomy of the universities. And sometimes the university seems to be a threat for itself. The 'Body Corporate', namely university, works for the search of truth and social development. University has been doing the job with very much intensive care despite various ups and downs, adverse environment, and pressure. It is found that the university had been enduring the search for truth within many a hurdles. History has sketched the portrait of Copernicus, Kepler, Bruno, and Galileo within golden frame. But it is not a constant truth that the university never bent down to reactivity. But, that it has been impossible to completely destroy the 'Body Corporate' proves as we find the university getting back to its conventional concern of searching for the truth at the very first chance. Things even have been like that the hour the outsider community is stepping onward through progressive revolt; the



conservative university is preserving the reactive perception and cannot accept the progressive changes. In this case I would surely like to say that the university itself has lost the right of deserving the autonomy going astray; for instance, what happened in England after the bourgeois revolt and in Soviet Union after the socialist revolt. In this connection, the vice-rector of the University of Klaz of Rumania, Alexander Rosca says in the Tokyo conference, "It goes without saying that the significance and the function of university autonomy also vary-in terms of general guidelines of the State. When the orientation of the State constitute an obstacle to the general evaluation of society or the interest of the people, the exercises of university autonomy, from a progressive standpoint, has a particularly important practical value. But when the state itself is the promoter of progressive social development, state direction does not clash with the advanced spirit of university autonomy."<sup>11</sup>

'The university is a nonprofit institution and, especially in countries with limited economic resources...'. Schutze, H.G. Ndunda, M. Yang Chen. (1992) 'Private suppliers could therefore be tempted to increase the quantity... even though this has an adverse effect on quality.' Eicher, J.C; Chevillier. T. (1992)

### **The twenty-year schemata**

Keeping pace with the rest of the world interest for education has been increasing in Bangladesh too. Especially, the sector of higher education has been the most eminent sector as a result of the amplification of higher education. During the years from 1975 to 1986, through the world, students for higher education have increased by 18.4 million in number. In the developed countries the increasing figure has been 4.5 million and in the developing countries it's been 13.9 million. According to the statistics of UNESCO, in 1970 the number of the students of higher education was 24.2 million. The number has gradually risen to 47.5 million in 1980, 58.4 million in 1988, and 61 million in 1990.<sup>12</sup> This enhancement is more in the developing countries than the developed countries. "During the years between 1970 and 1988, this figure has been 8 times in Sub-Sahara Africa zone, 6 times in East Asia, Pacific and Arabic zone, 4.5 times in Latin America and Caribbean zone, and double in south Asia."<sup>13</sup> In the industrially developed countries the increase rate is 56%. It suggests that in developed countries higher education has come to a stable rational state far ago.

Our Bangladesh could not stay untouched of this current of the spreading of higher education. Next to the Liberation War, during 1972-'73 Bangladesh had 6 universities and the students were 26,390 in number.<sup>14</sup> Except the National and Open University, the number of the public universities has been 21 and of the private universities 54 in 2004. In 2004, the number of the students of the 21 public universities has been 1,12,327 and of the 53 private universities 62,856.<sup>15</sup>

Besides this, a total of 4,16,646 students studied in the colleges under National University in 2004 and many of them studied in honors and masters courses. Adding this number, I think, may increase the total figure more than the double of the arithmetical assumption- $1,12,327+62,856=1,75,183$ . This statistics suggests that after Liberation the demand of higher education has increased vastly in Bangladesh as well. So education has been a great sector concerning finance. A huge chance for the upper class, which has been rising for the last 35 years, has been disclosed, and in 1992, by the 'private university ordinance', the government provides them a grand legal break to invest in this sector. The upper class, built up of white and black means, did not wait a single moment to take the chance. By 1995, 18 private universities were founded and 1818 students get admitted to there.<sup>16</sup> By 10 to 12 years, the number of private universities increased to 54 in 2004. Still, many businessmen are said to have been on the waiting list craving for founding private universities. There is nothing not to be glad by this enormous increase of interest for education. It is of course good news for a nation, state or a race. It is undoubted that it could have been a grand success for human development if the state were able to direct this positive enthusiasm properly. But the government has been failed to lead this mass demand for higher education to the right direction and the government elected in 1991, ignoring the mass demand, lower and lower middle class, sympathizes for upper and business classes and provided the opportunity for a booming business with higher education by announcing the 'private university ordinance' in 1992. The university grants commission itself has declared the private university as a "non-profit organization" regarding the position the

private universities have reached by now through the passage of that 'ordinance'. "But this matter is not mentioned in the related law."<sup>17</sup> The university grants commission recommends announcing a government order with a comprehensible explanation. So question does arise while announcing the ordinance did the government not know that private university is not a profit worthy business enterprise? Was not mentioning of any prohibition on this issue an error of the then government or was it deliberate? If it were an error, it could have been corrected while amending the private university law in 1998. But it was escaped. It evidences that the government maintained the commercial approach in the private university law very much consciously, and the government driven the state away from what it was supposed to do to fill up the huge demand for higher education, and was caring to preserve the interest of some upper and business class people. The university grants commission has criticized the private universities more seriously in its annual report in 2004. The university grants commission, claiming the private universities not having the statutes for the administration management says, "Due to the lack of legal authority i.e. vice-chancellor, registrar, examination controller, even after 8-12 years of the foundation, the legality of the certificate of the students are being questioned. Besides this, many students are not getting the 'original' certificates."<sup>19</sup> The grants commission thinks that the government can resolve the problem by approving the appropriate authority. The commission comments as put above whether the laws and regulations are being followed by the board of governors or board of trustees and vice-chancellor in the maintenance of the universities. It evidences that the private universities of Bangladesh are not following the examined structure that has been working for the university management for thousands of years. Those universities do not care for senate, syndicate, and education council. Either a board of governors or a board of trustees, just like the way a bank-insurance or a business enterprise runs, is running those universities. It is not associated with the concept of university at all. The board of governors or the board of trustees takes all the administrative and education related decisions including the employment of the vice-chancellor. Many prominent private universities do not have a single educationist in the board of governors or the board of trustees. Under patronization of the World Bank, the University grants commission, in 2006, submitted schemata to the government for next twenty years making many an anti-public proposal like reducing autonomy of the university, curtailing teachers role in governing the university and keeping higher education within the reach of rising upper class. The name of the schemata is Strategic Plan for Higher Education in Bangladesh 2006-2026. Though the schemata have been prepared with much cunning care, still some facts have leaked out. The question for its acceptability would have been questioned-it would have to receive an encounter like the Sharif Education Commission by Ayub Khan. The schemata include a short rule named Regulation Private University mentioned in the rule B2.10 in the 32nd page. The section discusses openly about the present condition of the private universities and about how those are supposed to run. So, I think it is necessary to render those elaborately for public information. There are many disputes against the twenty-year schemata. What the schemata think about the autonomy of public and private universities will be a later investigation. But at present, it is necessary to examine the outlook of the schemata about the private universities. That rule of the schemata says, "The private universities are managed in accordance with the provisions of the Private University Act 1992, which is in the process of revision." That is the rule does not talk of senate, syndicate or education council; rather it talks only of board of governors or board of trustees. But about how should a university run, it says, "Ideally private universities should have a similar administrative structure to their public counterparts, including Vice-Chancellors others statutory bodies." That is the public universities of Bangladesh should follow the administrative structure. And that is the ideal form of the governing of a university. Like the public universities, the private universities also should have the vice-chancellor, various statutory organizations as senate, syndicate and education council. This form has been working as a proved active inevitable structure for the university through the years. The twenty-year schemata denote that those sort of administrative forms are absent in the private universities of Bangladesh. No democratic rule of employing the vice-chancellor is followed there. Here, the chancellor employs a vice-chancellor under the recommendation of the 'owner' of the university. The owners of the universities and their representatives play most actively in the case of governing the universities. Almost all of the owners are prominent to a considerable state as a member of the board of

directors of various banks-insurances-garments, industries and business enterprises. But university is a distinct unique institution. Most of them are without any experience of running a university previously. Most of them were not associated to university by any means. So without a senate, syndicate and education council, a private university is no more any university. Many compare those universities with computer training centers or coaching centers.<sup>20</sup>

According to the twenty-year schemata, "the major impediments of the private universities include: the sponsors director's influence in the management of universities, non-compliance with the statutory requirements, absence of consistent admission and examination policies, non-transparent financial management, lack of adequate number of full-time academic staff, lack of proper infrastructure, inadequate laboratory and library facilities, absence of co-curricular and extra-curricular activities and a commercial bias in decision making."<sup>21</sup>

private universities of Bangladesh are in a threat by the world due to the absence of the 'Body Corporate' consisting of senate, syndicate, chancellor, vice- chancellor or rector, which has been working boldly from the very starting in every university of every country. The annual report of 2004 of the university grants commission whispers slightly of this matter as it says, "Due to the lack of legal authority i.e. vice-chancellor, registrar, examination controller, even after 8-12 years of the foundation, the legality of the certificate of the students are being questioned." The report claims that the students are not getting the 'original certificate'. While announcing the 'private university ordinance', the government or the ruling class did not consider that these are not business enterprises. As a result, the schemata, patronized by the World Bank and supervised by International Advisory Group, do not hesitate to express such an unwelcome, disgraceful remark regarding the private universities of Bangladesh. The schemata recommend some means that may be helpful to make a private university a university in reality. The main idea of those recommendations is reconstruction of the administrative body and more transparency in the employment of the vice-chancellor. It is already mentioned that the highest administrative organization of a private university is 'board of governors' or 'board of trustees'. The chair of the board is either the owner him or herself or his or her representative. The schemata recommends for syndicate and education council instead of that non-university like administrative form. It also recommends the vice-chancellor to be the chair as being the administrative chief. Though the recommendation is large in size, I feel it necessary to render it exactly. It says, "For private universities, specific guidelines need to be developed for ensuring a good governance system. This should include restructuring their governing bodies and a more transparent appointment of the Vice-Chancellors. The governing bodies must have a wider representation, including academics and members of the civil society. The Vice-Chancellors/Pro. Vice -Chancellor should be appointed on the basis of academic merit, with long experience in university teaching, wide research credentials and leadership capabilities; sponsors directors of the private universities normally should not be nominated or appointed as Vice-Chancellor or Pro-Vice Chancellor. The Vice-Chancellors should chair the university syndicate and academic council meeting replacing the current practice of the chairman of the governing body (who is usually one of the sponsors) presiding over the meetings. This would ensure better accountability."<sup>22</sup> The schemata informs in a footnote about how the vice-chancellors of the private universities are get appointed as: "Many private universities are functioning without an appointed Vice-Chancellor. These universities use the title 'Vice-chancellor designate'. The sponsors of these universities generally look for a person of their own choice to be nominated to the chancellor for appointing as vice-chancellor to retain their control managing the affairs of the universities."<sup>23</sup>

There is nothing to disagree with the recommendation made about the private universities. But it gets clear that the schemata want to reduce the autonomy of the public university and recommend for private university only for the upper class as it recommends imposing responsibility of appointing the professors upon the university grants commission, and immediately after fixing the 'realistic tuition fee' says, "arrangements must be made so that poor students can also study in the private institution." That in spite of having talked enough against private university, the support of the schemata is for the private university gets clear once the whole schemata are read attentively. Now, let us examine how that twenty-year schemata want to reduce the autonomy of university. The Executive Summary part of the report starts with, "Higher education in Bangladesh today is not in proper shape." Yes, it cannot be ignored. Not

only the higher education, in fact the entire education system is about to meet its decay. Then it continues: "Higher education has not been able to meet the aspirations of the people." Yes, it is also true. And for this reason, the upper class is sending their children abroad for higher education. And the expensive private universities are for them. Referring to the cause why the higher education has not been able to meet the aspiration of the people it says, "It is plagued with problems and constraints like poor funding, weak management, low use of ICT facilities in teaching and learning process, government and external interference in the management of universities, and involvement of teachers and students in state politics." None of these is possible to deny today. Emphasizing on the issue that the universities cannot maintain their administrative deeds properly due to the outsider and governmental interruptions, it is mentioned in page 4: "External influence in the governance of the universities has been one of the reasons for their declining performance." It is likely to seem as one goes through these remarks that the twenty-year schemata perhaps attempt to suggest some effective and stable recommendations in solution to these problems. But the entire report discloses the secrets. Then reducing the role of the teachers in the governance of the university, capturing the liberty of expressing opinion in the name of stopping politics, and establishing a governmental and outsider rigid authority over university are the focal concerns of that schemata.

We have noticed earlier that the ruling class has been the grave enemy of autonomy. The director of 'Division of Higher Education' of UNESCO Marco Antonio Rodrigues Dias says, "One highlighted aspect is that universities do not exist for themselves. External forces have a tremendous impact in the life of universities."<sup>24</sup> This has been revealed at the very beginning of the schemata. It is mentioned that the main obstacle for the proper governance of university is "government and external interference in the management of the universities." But it is a strange fact that in spite of realizing that reality, the interference of government and outsider authority were recommended to be increased instead of being stopped. It is mentioned in the chapter entitled "Strategic role of Ministry of Education" that, "Ministry of Education (MOE) can participate in the University affairs through representation in the different governing bodies such as the university senates and syndicates and the role it plays in the process of appointing Vice-Chancellors."<sup>25</sup> This remark contradicts with the very beginning one regarding the governmental and outsider interference upon universities. And this discloses the secret intention of the twenty-year schemata. The schemata take us back to Pakistan period with lulling words. For information of the reader, it is to mention that after the liberation, the four universities operated autonomy facilitated the participation of all stages including government service holder, parliamentarians, and the mass of all stages in the senate and syndicate. The external interruption entered by these people and made the path for the decay of autonomy. Very mysteriously the university grants commission wants to make this thing stronger after making it clear that it is a threat for university. Autonomy makes it guaranteed that the role of teachers takes the foremost part for a university. The teachers would take decision and demonstrate it. At present, the participation of the teachers is less than one third.

The teachers cannot take sufficient part in the governance of university in spite of having the intention. The role of the senate and syndicate, constituted of the two-thirds representatives of the community, is predominantly active here. Probably the introduction of five student representatives elected by student vote in the senate by the 1973 ordinance was for the first time in the history of university. It facilitates the leadership quality of the students. UNESCO refers to the entry of two students in the university management body in Greece in 1978 as the first evidence of history.<sup>26</sup> The twenty-year schemata, at one hand recommend increasing the number of governmental and external members (businessmen) to reduce the autonomy of university, and on the other hand, indicated decreasing the role of teachers in the governance of university to destroy the autonomy totally. The report entitled "Reorganization of the composition of university governing bodies" says, "Composition of University senate and syndicate should be reorganized, reducing the representation of teachers and registered graduate as well as the members of the government nominees to allow for greater representation of stake holder, including the members from industries." This recommendation is clearly opposing to the autonomy of university. University is a 'Body Corporate'. In the 1993 report of UNESCO it was mentioned that, "The university arose from agreement and consensus

between teachers and students, who were united for corporate management of universal knowledge."<sup>27</sup>

In the schemata, an absurd proposal has been recommended in appointing the vice-chancellor. The opinion of the schemata regarding the present method is, "The existing system of appointing vice chancellor needs to be changed, as it leaves much scope for political maneuvering." We have noticed earlier that in the schemata, the Ministry of Education has been recommended to play significant role in appointing vice chancellor, and now the schemata fear of political interference. The entire schemata involve such self-contradictions. The recommended system of appointing vice chancellor instead of the existing one is bureaucratic in a sense, and aims at increasing political interruption. The schemata say that the chancellor would make a search committee imposing the leadership on some retired justice or the vice chancellor. That 'search' committee would propose a three-member panel directly to the chancellor or would submit a five-member panel to the senate. The senate would propose a three-member panel from the five members to the chancellor. The chancellor would appoint a vice chancellor from those three. The schemata think it would prevent the political interference. This sort of thinking is nothing but stupidity. Hasn't there been any wise person among the composers of the schemata who could have said that the mentioned 'search' committee would be made up of the loyal persons to the government and the names proposed by the 'loyal' 'search' committee would not but be some loyal to the government? Thus, the schemata tend to impose the black law of 1961 Pakistan period upon the mass once more. More evidences prove the schemata recommend authorizing the vice chancellor to nominate the dean, senate and the syndicate members. So, there should not have any doubt that the schemata tend to reduce the fundamental right of teachers and students by recommending an anti-constitutional proposal of stopping the student-teacher politics. They want to increase authority of the government over the public universities by increasing the power of the university grants commission. To say briefly, the schemata seem to be threat for the university. Opening the international conference in Caracas, the director general of UNESCO Prof. Frederica Mayor says in 1991: "A university is to disseminate and popularize knowledge. Above all a university is to create, to promote scientific research, innovation and investigation. A university is of quality, not one whose degrees are often meaningless. ...A university is for strengthening of freedom, dignity and democracy."<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, the university grants commission, financed and technically supported by the World Bank, wants to introduce a discriminatory higher education. It has submitted an intricate anti-public blue print of higher education for twenty years to diminish liberty, dignity and democracy. Due to so many self-contradictions and unconsciousness of the members of the commission, a truth has been leaked out. In the rule A1.2, in connection to "Previous Reforms, Commission and Report", it is mentioned why in 1959 people rejected the Shrif Education Report constructed by so called the iron man of Pakistan field marshal Ayub Khan. Why in 1962 the report faced an encounter is mentioned there. Why did "the Sharif Commission and Hamidur Rahman Commission proved controversial"? Because the report was 'elitist,' 'discriminatory,' and 'anti-poor-bias'. For this reason, people threw the report to dustbin. The twenty-year blue print is wicked to the very point as well. This is too 'elitist', 'discriminatory' and 'anti-poor'. And this is admitted by the schemata itself in the 8th page of the 'executive summary' by mentioning: "The new strategy will bring increased educational opportunities for students but they their parents will have to meet up increased fees." But the blue print does not say anything about how many guardians of this country can carry the extended fees. However, the blue print mentions another 28 public universities of the quality of Jagannath University or Noah Khali Science and Technology University be established by the next 20 years. This reveals the 'elitist', 'discriminatory' and 'anti-poor' approach of the twenty-year schemata. The University of Noah Khali starts with four faculties. It plans to have admitted 400 students; 100 for each faculty. Considering the increased interest for higher education of the people, it can be said that several thousands of students would try for those 400 seats. So did they. But strangely only 183 students got admitted. 217 seats remained vacant. But, why? The field report says that they did not have the ability to get admission at a huge cost of Tk 20,200. Those who got admitted claimed they had to maintain the expense by means of tuition as the expense was too much for their parents. It suggests that the blue print has been prepared for the rich and upper middle class. In the 23rd page of the 1993 report of UNESCO says, "Autonomy is indispensable to the

role and work of the university."<sup>29</sup> The concept of university without autonomy is absurd. It is autonomy that will bring confidence in the teachers-students back and make them more responsible. The only way of removing the faults of democracy is more democracy, and likewise, the faults we detect today of the autonomy of university cannot be repaired by destroying autonomy. Rather, more and more autonomy will make the administrator, student and teacher more responsible, confident and democratic. So to stand against the anti-autonomic recommendations of twenty-year schemata has to be assimilated to the struggle of establishing democracy in this state.

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## Higher Education in Bangladesh: Diversity, Quality and Accessibility

Md. Rabiul Islam

### Abstract

Higher education is one of the important parts of the education system. The key aims of higher education are to generate new knowledge, explore research works on different social and development issues, anticipate the needs of the economy and prepare highly skilled workers. In these contexts, higher education should be standard, welfare and sustainable development oriented. The present paper intends to analyze the higher education system of Bangladesh in the light of diversity, quality and accessibility. The main objective of this study is to explore the standard of higher education of a public university in Bangladesh. Nonetheless, the paper emphasizes on the students opinion about the present education system of public university, existing problems and challenges faced by the higher education institutions; and finally juxtapose the three key issues like diversity, quality and accessibility of higher education system of Bangladesh. Rajshahi University was purposively selected as study area for the present study. Both qualitative and quantitative methods have been used for analyzing data. The findings of the study show the different branches of higher education, its quality and the present situation of accessibility of the students. It is expected that the findings of the study would be able to represent the overall scenario of higher education system of Bangladesh.

### Introduction

Education intends to promote such values and improve people's capacity that sustains environment and development issues of any countries. It helps to create awareness, welfare attitudes, skills and behavior as well as a sense of ethical responsibilities among the people. Education has different levels such as primary, secondary, higher secondary and university education. Among these, university or higher education is one of the fastest growing parts of the education system. In these contexts, higher education should be standard, welfare and sustainable development oriented. One of the key aims of higher education is to anticipate the needs of the economy and prepare highly skilled workers to make it competitive.

This is especially important for a developing country like Bangladesh. Because, it is badly needed to build up our human capital, and higher education can play vital role in this regard that promotes to the growth of economy, achieve and sustain a high quality workforce. But higher education is now globalized and in many ways commercialized affair. As a result, quality of higher education is ignored and business attitude prioritized, especially in the context of third world countries. As a developing country, in Bangladesh, this scenario is more vulnerable.

The main objective of this paper is to explore the present feature of higher education of public university. The other related specific objectives of the study are to:

- a) know the students opinion about the present education curricula and -their diversifications;
- b) explore the quality of higher education;
- c) identify the existing problems of higher education; and finally
- d) find out the way to overcome the challenges faced by the higher education institutions.

### Methodology

The study has applied descriptive and exploratory methods in unfolding the higher education system of Bangladesh in respect of diversity, quality and accessibility. The qualitative and quantitative methods have also been used for analyzing data. In order to collect different types of experiences and challenges about the higher education, Rajshahi University is selected as a study area.

By using purposive sampling method 7 faculties of the study area have been selected. 20 departments and 5 students from each department have been selected randomly. That means the total number of respondents are  $(20 \times 5) = 200$ . Data was collected from the respondents

from April to May 2007.

Both questionnaire survey and observation methods have used for collecting primary information of the study. Apart from these, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) method has used for conducting the research.

**Study Findings**

**Diversity of Higher Education**

Diversity of education refers to the qualities, facts and things in education system that are different from each other. It helps the students, faculties, and staffs to fulfill their primary mission like providing a quality education. Diversity of education promotes personal growth, healthy society and encourages critical thinking. Simultaneously, it helps the students to learn and communicate effectively with people of varied backgrounds.

In the present study, diversity of higher education means the various branches and multidimensional approaches of higher education. The diversified focuses of the respondents have been observed in the present study. Among the respondents 21.00 percent are the students of Social Science Faculties, 19.00 percent Arts, 16.00 percent Life and Earth Science and only 3.50 percent of Law Faculties. The teaching methods, quality of education, educational curriculum, providing facilities of the departments of mentioned faculties are different from each other. Besides, socialization, thinking, motivation, career plan and perceived benefits of the students are also different.

**Table: 1 Diversified Focus of the Respondents**

| Focus                  | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|------------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| Arts                   | 38                    | 19.00      |
| Law                    | 7                     | 3.50       |
| Social Science         | 42                    | 21.00      |
| Science                | 29                    | 14.50      |
| Life and Earth Science | 32                    | 16.00      |
| Business Studies       | 28                    | 14.00      |
| Agriculture            | 24                    | 12.00      |
| Total                  | 200                   | 100.00     |

**Quality of Higher Education**

Quality of education depends on different issues like teacher's responsibilities and standard of teaching, educational curriculum, providing facilities and so on. The present study tried to focus some core issues relating to quality of education.

**Class Conduct and the Teachers Responsibilities**

Holding regular classes is one of the important components of quality education in any educational institution, especially at university level. But in the present study shows, 45.00 percent respondents have claimed about holding irregular classes in their departments. Simultaneously, 55.00 respondents have given their comments on holding their class in regular basis. That means the major classes have not been held properly in a good number of departments.

Among the 200 respondents, 110 have given the positive responds about the regular class, and 90 given the negative answer in this regard. Mentioning the causes behind irregular class the students raised some significant issues relating to the present situation that are prevailing in the university.

Most of the respondents (44.44 percent) pointed out the involvement of teachers with other professions like research projects of outer organizations, job in private universities, and involvement in business are the main reasons behind holding of irregular class. Besides, 31.11 percent identified the lack of cordial attitude and willingness of teachers, 27.78 percent political programs like hartal as well as students strike. At the same time, 22.22 percent students mentioned the involvement of teachers in personal and familial affairs and the lack of teaching staffs behind the irregular class in their departments.



**Table: 2 Causes behind the Irregular Class**

| Causes   | *Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|--|------------------------|------------|
| Busy for personal affairs of teachers                | 20                     | 22.22      |
| Meetings of academic affairs                         | 12                     | 13.33      |
| Political programs                                   | 25                     | 27.78      |
| Lack of teaching staffs                              | 20                     | 22.22      |
| Lack of cordial attitude and willingness of teachers | 28                     | 31.11      |
| Involvement with others professions                  | 40                     | 44.44      |
| Total  | 90                     |            |

\* Multiple responses were available

The respondents said that 55.00 percent teachers conduct the class regularly and 45.00 percent does not take it regularly (table-1). Among the respondents 44.50 percent commented that their teachers enter into the classroom in just time and 55.50 percent does not go in time. That means most of the teachers do not follow the schedule class time.

According to the Rajshahi University rules duration of each class will be 45 minutes. But most of the teachers do not follow the rule. The respondents pointed out that teachers either enter class on time or go out before the schedule time. Interestingly, 65.50 percent of the respondents have meant that the schedule time for class is not sufficient at the university level.

Scheduled 45 minutes class time is sufficient or not in answering this question 69 students given negative answer out of 200. The students emphasized on expanding the class hour in this regard. About 35.00 percent of them said, the time of each class should be 70-80 minutes and almost 29.00 percent have given opinion that it should be 60-70 minutes. Their average expected duration of each class is 71.09 minutes.

**Table 3: Respondents Opinion about Expanding Class Hour**

| Class Time ( Minutes) | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|------------|
| 50-60                 | 12                    | 17.39      |
| 60-70                 | 20                    | 28.99      |
| 70-80                 | 24                    | 34.82      |
| 80-90                 | 9                     | 13.04      |
| 90-100                | 4                     | 5.80       |
| Total                 | 69                    | 100.00     |

### **Educational Curriculum Completion the Syllabus**

About 48.00 percent respondents said that their course teacher does not complete syllabus on time. On the other hand, about 52.00 percent gave positive answer in this regard. Due to different types of engagement of public university teachers, in most cases they do not complete their assigned courses within scheduled time.

### **Subject Matter of Syllabus**

On the other hand, most of the respondents think that the study topic of their syllabus is not enough and only 28.00 percent thinks it is okay. They pointed out the study content should be modified according to the changing scenario of national and global context.

### **Upgrading the Syllabus**

Out of 200 respondents 144 have said that the subject matter of their syllabus is not enough in relation to the present changing world. So, they have given different comments relating to update the syllabus. Among them, most of the respondents (77.78 percent) have given priority to include recent issues in the syllabus. About 47.00 percent emphasized to update syllabus in regular basis and 35.42 percent thought the medium of instruction must be in English.

**Table 4: Comments of the Respondents of updating the Syllabus**

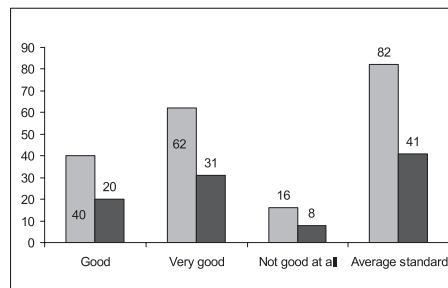
| Nature of Comments                              | *Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|---|------------------------|------------|
| Giving priority to include recent issues        | 112                    | 77.78      |
| Medium of instruction must be in English        | 51                     | 35.42      |
| Updating syllabus in regular basis              | 67                     | 46.53      |
| Revise the syllabus to reality and job oriented | 25                     | 17.36      |
| Total   | 144                    |            |

\* Multiple responses were available

**Teaching Skills of Teachers**

Most of the respondents of the present study (41.00 percent) have commented that the teaching skills of their teachers are average standard; that means not full satisfactory. On the other hand, 31.00 percent said very well and 8.00 percent told that teaching skills and overall performance of their teachers are not good at all.

**Figure 1. Comments of the Respondents about the Teaching skills of Teachers**



**Library Uses**

Out of 200 respondents 157 (78.50 percent) use the university central library and 43 (21.50 percent) do not use. Among the users 53 (33.76 percent) use regularly and 104 (66.24 percent) use irregularly. Those who do not use the central library they showed some causes behind it. Most of them (37.21 percent) indicated the shortage of updated books and journals, 23.26 percent showed the lack of necessary books and 18.60 percent pointed it at lacking of their willingness.

**Table-5: Causes behind not to use the Library**

| Causes                                 | Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|--|-----------------------|------------|
| Lack of study atmosphere               | 9                     | 20.93      |
| Lack of necessary books                | 10                    | 23.26      |
| Shortage of updated books and journals | 16                    | 37.21      |
| Lack of willingness                    | 8                     | 18.60      |
| Total                                  | 43                    | 100.00     |

**Accessibility of Higher Education**

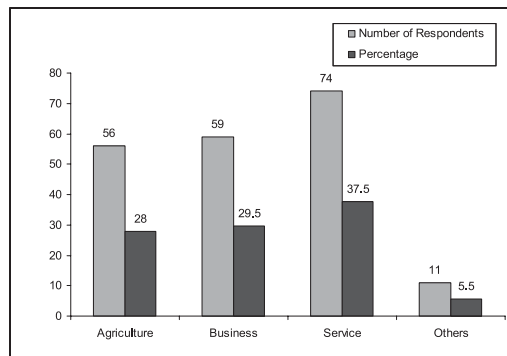
Accessibility of higher education means the students opportunity to get chance in the university education and sufficient support from the educational institutions. The growth of enrolment at the secondary level and high output from higher secondary examination put a pressure for admission in the higher educational institutions. But due to limited capacity, annually a few number of students may be enrolled at university level. Thus, each year a large number of students remain out of higher education.

On the contrary, due to poverty and hike in the cost of education materials causes the students of lower middle class not get equal access to higher education. Moreover, those who get chance in university education they have the limited access to attain all kinds of diversified educational facilities regarding their study fields.

**Economic Status of Students**

Most of the respondents came from the middle class family and at best 37.50 percent respondent's family income is based on service, 29.50 percent business, 28.00 percent agriculture based and rest of 5.50 represent on other sectors. Though Bangladesh is an agriculture-based country, the students of agriculture-based family have been reduced alarmingly.

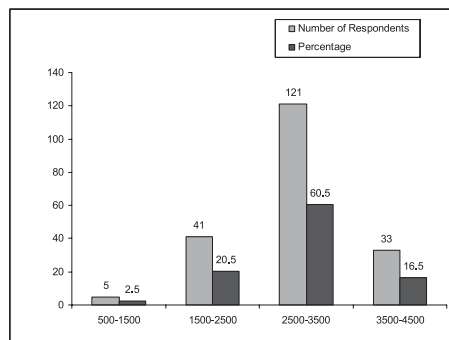
**Figure 2. Sources of Family Income of Respondents**



**Monthly Expenditure**

60.50 percent respondents of the present study expense taka 2500-3500 per month while only 2.50 percent respondents' expense 500-1500 taka. Their average monthly expense of the students is Tk 3220 that creates obstacle to sustain them in the university education.

**Figure 3. Monthly Expenditure of the Respondents**



**Existing Education System  
Nature of Satisfaction**

Either the respondents are satisfied or not with the present university education system showed 113 (56.50 percent) respondents in positive attitude. On the contrary, 87 (43.50 percent) respondents expressed their dissatisfaction with the present university education system.

Those shown dissatisfaction raised different causes behind it. Most of them (25.29 percent) have pointed out lack of job oriented education, about 21.00 percent identified lack of grading system, 18.39 percent non-participatory education and 17.24 percent raised lack of research based education at university level. They think due to lack of availability of grading system the public university education fails to cope with the modern education system.

Moreover, 16.09 percent have mentioned lack of technology based education and about 14.00 percent pointed out Bengali as a medium of education caused their dissatisfaction about university education.

**Table-6: Causes behind Dissatisfaction on the Present Education System**

| Causes   | *Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|--|------------------------|------------|
| Traditional system   | 10                     | 11.49      |
| Lack of linkages with the education of developed countries | 11                     | 12.64      |
| Medium of instruction is Bengali                           | 12                     | 13.79      |
| Lack of association with technology based education        | 14                     | 16.09      |
| Lack of research education                                 | 15                     | 17.24      |
| Non-participatory based education                          | 16                     | 18.39      |
| Lack of job oriented education                             | 22                     | 25.29      |
| Lack of grading system                                     | 18                     | 20.69      |
| Total  | 87                     |            |

\* Multiple responses were available

### Modern Facilities

The respondents think that they do not get the modern educational facilities from the university. About 96 percent respondents do not enjoy Internet facilities. Only 4.00 percent gets this facility from their departments. Simultaneously, they do not have other modern facilities like projector, multimedia, white board, power point presentation and so on.

### Barriers of Higher Education

There are huge challenges faced by the public university in Bangladesh. The respondents of the present study have mentioned some issues that hindered smooth running of university. Most of them (16.50 percent) identified corruption as one of the barriers of higher education. Besides, 13.00 percent appointment on nepotism, 14.00 percent recruitment of less meritorious teacher by political identities, 12.00 percent session jam and 11.00 percent have mentioned lack of modern facilities that are creating problem in the higher education. In addition, teachers and students politics, financial crisis, lack of residential halls, shortage of seats for the applicants as well as involvement of teachers with other activities have also been identified as barriers to higher education in Bangladesh.

**Table 7: Barriers of Higher Education System**

| Existing Barriers                                  | *Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|--|------------------------|------------|
| Corruption   | 31                     | 16.50      |
| Nepotism   | 26                     | 13.00      |
| Recruitment of unskilled/ less meritorious teacher | 28                     | 14.00      |
| Teachers politics                                  | 17                     | 8.50       |
| Involvement of teachers with other professions     | 18                     | 9.00       |
| Nasty student politics                             | 21                     | 10.50      |
| Financial crisis                                   | 15                     | 7.50       |
| Lack of residential hall & shortage of seat        | 31                     | 15.50      |
| Classroom crisis                                   | 5                      | 2.50       |
| Session jam  | 24                     | 12.00      |
| Lack of modern facilities                          | 22                     | 11.00      |
| Total  | 200                    |            |

\* Multiple responses were available

### How to Develop the University Education

Considering the existing university education system the respondents have recommended some key issues relating to the uplift of university education. Most of the respondents emphasized on reforming the existing students and teachers' politics, controlling corruption and nepotism, increasing modern facilities as well as removing session jam for the betterment of university education. Furthermore, they raised the issue of increasing teachers' responsibility, recruiting teachers by their merit, introducing more participatory and research based education as well as English medium study for the betterment of university education.

**Table 8: Opinion of the Respondents for Uplifting the Higher Education System**

| Nature of opinion  | *Number of Respondents | Percentage |
|--|------------------------|------------|
| Reforming the existing students politics   | 28                     | 14.00      |
| Stopping the teachers politics   | 32                     | 16.00      |
| Recruiting teachers by merit   | 17                     | 8.50       |
| To be more responsible of the teachers   | 13                     | 6.50       |
| Checking the corruption, nepotism and involvement of party politics both teachers & students | 23                     | 11.50      |
| Increasing modern facilities   | 29                     | 14.50      |
| Introducing participatory education  | 14                     | 7.00       |
| Orienting research based teaching method   | 12                     | 6.00       |
| Launching the English medium Education   | 26                     | 13.00      |
| Raising financial support  | 16                     | 8.00       |
| Reducing residential crisis  | 10                     | 5.00       |
| Eliminating session jam  | 22                     | 11.00      |
| Formulating the education system modern and time bound                                       | 27                     | 13.50      |
| Total  | 200                    |            |

\* Multiple responses were available

### **Challenges of Higher Education in Bangladesh**

In the present context Bangladesh, the university education has been facing some crucial challenges that can be mentioned here.

#### **Poor Quality of Teaching Staffs**

Poor quality teaching staffs available at university fail to satisfy students' needs. Most of them lack specialized research knowledge and training on higher education. Moreover, due to the recruitment on political consideration a good number of teachers have no scientific and update knowledge that assist them to change their teaching methods.

#### **Traditional Teaching Method**

The traditional teaching method is the common feature in our universities. Sharing of knowledge and students participation in learning process is very minimal. Brain storming discussions and presentations by the students enable them for a better grooming up. But this is almost absent in our university education system. Moreover, the monologue teaching and learning system, gap and lack of communication between teachers and students act as barriers in creating the congenial atmosphere for learning in the universities of Bangladesh. Simultaneously, modern teaching methods and facilities like Internet, multimedia, sound-system are also absent at the public universities.

#### **Corruption and Nepotism**

Corruption is one of the crucial barriers to higher education. Besides, nepotism, recruitment of less meritorious teachers creates difficulties in the higher education system. Furthermore, financial crisis, lack of residential halls, shortage of seats against demand as well as involvement of teachers in other activities are also identified as the barriers to quality education in Bangladesh

#### **Teachers and Students Politics**

Party politics by both teachers and students have created a great chaos in the higher education sectors. Both teaching and learning is greatly interrupted by the teacher and students politics. So, respondents of the present study have identified it as a major problem in the higher education institutions.

#### **Inadequate Library and Laboratory Facilities**

Adequate library and laboratory facilities are very important particularly for the university education. But the quality and other facilities both in library and laboratory are very poor and outdated. There is shortage of modern equipment in the laboratory. On the other hand, recent

text and reference books, professional journals are hardly available in library. So, inadequate library and laboratory facilities are hindering the quality education in the University of Bangladesh.

#### **Weak Financial Base**

The government allocation that is given for universities, mostly spent for salary and allowances of the faculty and staff members. As a result, due to weak financial base the universities of Bangladesh cannot play their assigned role. Even lack of financial solvency some universities do not spend anything in research sector. But higher education and research must go together.

#### **Policy Thrust in Higher Education**

##### **Need-Based Education**

Higher education should be need-based. That means necessary institutes or departments having close connection to employment opportunities and income generating activities should be opened in every neglected field of education. Simultaneously, unnecessary, self or specific group interest related initiatives should be discouraged. Moreover, new institutes should be opened aiming at reducing regional imbalances and resource mobilization.

##### **Accountability and Transparency in Administration**

The financial and administrative management of higher education should be accountable and transparent. To make higher education sustainable the management has to create own sources of income for abating the dependency on government allocation. One of the important roles of university management to ensure income keeps connection with the different types of costs. Furthermore, university management should be corruption free so that transparency is ensured in every spheres of administration.

##### **Transparent Recruitment**

The recruitment policy should be planned and transparent. Unplanned and political recruitment reduces standard of education. In this context, priority should be given to the merit, academic result and research work. Besides, a commission relating to teachers recruitment should be formed so that non-political and bias free recruitment is ensured.

##### **Modify the Syllabus**

The syllabus of university education should be modern, time-bound, need-based and international standard. The university authority has to monitor properly to add new and innovative courses and ideas in the learning process so that the students can face the challenges of new millennium. Besides, the credit transfer system should open from any Bangladeshi university to abroad.

##### **Medium of Instruction**

Higher education of Bangladesh should be more global. In this context, the medium of instruction of higher education must be in English so that the graduates can adapt themselves to the competitive world.

##### **Teacher-Student Politics**

The university should be free from political interference. Student politics must be constructive and students' welfare oriented. On the other hand, teachers should avoid the servile of political parties. In order to create safe and sound atmosphere and ensuring standard of education it is burning question to reform of political practice of teacher and students. Moreover, the internal conflict of teachers should be removed.

##### **Modern Equipments**

Improving educational facilities especially computer and Internet access, scientific laboratories, and equipment should be ensured in place of traditional ones such as libraries, classrooms, dormitories, and recreation as well as cultural facilities. Moreover, the website of university and departments should be well organized so that students and other stakeholders can gather necessary information.

### **Teacher Evaluation System**

The university management has to introduce teacher evaluation system in the education process. The evaluation may be both by the students and the university authority. But this evaluation should be bias-free.

### **Participatory and Research Based Education**

Higher education should be highly participatory, reciprocal and research based. Both teachers and students spontaneously participate in this learning process and research activities. Besides, the class hour must be at least 1 hour and 50 minutes in lieu of 45 minutes so that students can get more time to participate properly in the learning process while facilitators can explore them in the classroom for a longer time.

### **Conclusion**

Higher education sector can meet the needs of the economy. It promotes an overall development of society, viz., social, economic, technological, human resources development etc., which are highly correlated. The development of higher education plays an important role in facilitating these changes and producing adequately trained manpower. The effectiveness of higher educational institutions contributes to development both internally and externally. So, higher education needs sustenance and quality. For improving the quality of higher education to a sustainable level it is needed to reorient curriculum and introduce vocational and job oriented courses.

Due to low quality of training, lack of combination of knowledge and practice, and poor capacity and the existing education system of public university is vulnerable. It is losing its articulation. As a result, public university fails to keep the tradition as well as quality of teacher, research and the social accountability.

On the other hand, higher education of Bangladesh lacks a long-term vision, incomplete education commissions and proper policies. There are needs to introduce proper policy in order to minimize the problems prevailing in the higher education system. For this, joint effort by the government, civil society and university authority is required in keeping the education standard.

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## **The impact of the 'Brain Drain' on education and development A comparative study between skilled and semi/unskilled emigrants**

Gazi Mahabubul Alam  
Sarwar Basher

### **Abstract**

A theory often advanced is that the 'brain drain' of third world graduates to the first world generates a high income of foreign currency, and that this income contributes to the development of third world. In this paper, however, we put forward the theory that semi or unskilled emigrants currently contribute the higher income of foreign currency. Although the highly skilled group may earn higher wages, they do not necessarily send large remittances back to the third world, mainly because they have settled into a good life in the country they have migrated to. Moreover, I also emphasise that cost of producing a highly skilled individual is greater than that of semi-skilled or unskilled graduate. This paper suggests that there is a need for intervention by international donor organisations for global collaboration in order to facilitate the development of the third world by halting the 'brain drain'.

### **Introduction**

Rigorous discussion concerning the concept of a 'brain drain' began in the early 1980s and continued until 1990s. The discussion formed a dominant role in scholarly debate aiming for the development of third world (Hazen and Alberts, 2006). However, in the first decade of the 21st century, scholars are convinced that it is widely accepted that the brain drain generates a high income of foreign currency into the third world (Lucas, et al., 2006). This has effectively quietened discussions concerning the effect of the 'brain drain'.

The term 'brain drain' is used to denote the migration of highly skilled people from one country to another, particularly from the developing world to the developed world. Many types of workers (highly skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled) travel from the developing world to find an employment in a suitable profession and enjoy a higher standard of living in the first world. There are other significant reasons put forward to explain why individuals migrate from the developing world. While we calculate the contribution made by the emigrants to increase income of foreign currency, we usually fail to quantify specific contribution made by highly skilled emigrants through a comparative study between the highly skilled and semi-skilled or unskilled groups.

Such a comparative study has now been conducted. It seeks an answer as to how much of a contribution is made by either the highly skilled or semi- or unskilled emigrants to increase foreign currency income. In addition, this paper provides answers to the following questions.

1. Why do individual migrate from the third (developing) world?
2. How much public money is invested in production of a highly skilled and semi- or unskilled emigrant?
3. What contribution is made by highly skilled and semi or unskilled emigrants in order to increase foreign currency income?
4. What are the advantages of 'brain drain'?
5. What are the disadvantages of the 'brain drain'?
6. How emigrants, particularly the highly skilled group, can contribute more significantly to the development of their country of origin?

To help find answers to the questions, we have used fieldwork data from interviews conducted, rather than secondary literature, as the main source of information.



### Data

Qualitative methods were used allowing interviewees to express their views in a free and personal way and giving as much prominence as possible to their thematic associations.

Semi-structured interviews by qualitative approach were held with:

- Four highly skilled emigrants
- Four semi or unskilled emigrants
- Two policy-makers---one from India and the other from Bangladesh
- Two children of highly skilled emigrants
- Two children of semi or unskilled emigrants
- The parent of a highly skilled emigrant
- The parent of a semi or unskilled emigrant

### Interview sample

The subjects of this paper are the respondents of eight interviews. It has been proven that, in order to receive proper, specific and reliable data, attention must be given to triangulation of samples (Cohen, et al., 2002). I therefore selected my respondents from four countries: USA, UK, United Arab Emirates and Malaysia. These particular countries were chosen as each has a significant number of emigrants living and working. The first two countries are first world while the latter two are mid-developed. The immigration rules and regulations of each of the countries differ in several ways. Two people were selected from each country, one with highly skilled emigrant status and the other with semi or unskilled status.

The identity of each of the respondents has been withheld to respect confidentiality and ethical issues, but brief descriptions have been provided.

Respondent A is highly skilled emigrant working in one of the biggest hospitals in the UK. Born and brought up in India, he gained his degree in medicine in South India. He worked for four years in India until he received the government scholarship to complete further study in the UK. Dr A and his wife (also a medical professional) travelled to the UK in 1999 in order to pursue higher study. After its completion, he was offered employment in the British National Health Service (NHS). He and his family now live in the UK and plan to settle permanently. Dr A has two children, both of whom are studying at a private UK school. Dr A's father, once a senior government official in India, still lives in India. Although his parents are retired, they do not require financial support from Dr A.

Respondent B lives in the UK, a student at a 'college' in London. Although officially a student, his main intention is to work. His 'student' visa status is maintained as this is the only way he can live and work in the UK. Raised in a village in Bangladesh and the second of five children, his father ran a small business. Mr B's UK wages are the main source of income for the family in Bangladesh. He works in an Indian restaurant and lives in a shared room above the restaurant with two of his colleagues. His plan is to marry a British Bangladeshi so that he can settle in the UK. Mr B has completed his bachelor degree from a Bangladeshi college located in an urban area. However, he does not need a degree to carry out his job of work.

It is worth mentioning here that, in preparing answers for this paper, only the cost of education required to be proficient in any particular job will be considered as the total educational expenditure invested to educate each of the respondents is calculated.

Respondent C is an engineer, graduated from what is considered to be the finest engineering institute in India, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Bombay. He has worked for the Microsoft Corporation for the last three years, travelling to the USA to take up a post with Microsoft after graduating from the IIT. His father is an officer in the Indian army, his mother a medical professional. Mr C is married to a USA citizen and his parents are financially comfortable.

Respondent D has been living in the USA for fifteen years. He preferred not to reveal his country of origin. A taxi driver, he lives in New York with his family, three daughters and a son, all of whom attend a public school. Mr D's wife does not work. His parents still live in his country of origin. Before arriving in the USA through a diversification visa (DV) programme, he worked as an office administrator in the country of origin. He holds a masters degree; however his job

needs only a secondary school certificate. It is worth noting that, in order to qualify for DV lottery, the candidate must have a higher secondary school certificate.

Respondent E is a Bangladeshi expatriate in Malaysia. After graduating from the University of Dhaka, he remained and taught at the University for a few years before receiving a commonwealth scholarship and later travelled to the UK to pursue a PhD. After completion of the PhD he was offered employment in a Malaysian university, where he now lives with his family. His wife, a doctor, works in a hospital in Malaysia and his children attend a private school. All of Mr E's brothers and sisters have settled in various developed countries as highly skilled emigrants. Their parents lead a nomadic existence, travelling between the countries to stay with their children, although they continue to use Bangladesh as their permanent address.

Respondent F is a Malaysian factory worker. He has been living in Malaysia for ten years and married for five. His wife, two children and parents live in Bangladesh. After completing eight years of schooling in a very remote village in Bangladesh, he worked in a garment factory in Dhaka before travelling to Malaysia in December 1995 to seek employment. Since then he has worked in several factories in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Respondent G works as a doctor in a Dubai hospital. She gained her medical degree from Bangladesh. Before travelling to UK in 1994 for further education, she worked in a hospital in Dhaka, Bangladesh. She lived in Dubai since 2001 with her husband and two children. Her mother lives in Dhaka. Dr G has lost her father in 2004 and her mother needs some financial support. Dr G's husband runs a business in Dubai and her children attend private educational institutes in Dubai.

Respondent H is a diploma engineer who graduated from a polytechnic institute in Dhaka in 1988. Prior to migration to Dubai, he worked for a private organisation. His wife, three children and parents live in a district town in Bangladesh. Mr H has three sisters and five brothers, all living in Bangladesh.

Respondents A, C, E and G are considered as belonging to the highly skilled group of emigrant and, as such, their migration is treated as part of the 'brain drain'. On the other hand, however, respondents B, D, F, and H are considered as semi or unskilled emigrants and their migration is considered as a 'physical drain'.

We were also able to interview a legislator working in Bangladeshi education sector, labelled I. In addition, an informal conversation was held with a policy maker working with the Ministry of Labour and Employment, India, based in Mumbai. She is labelled J.

K is classified as a British Asian, born and raised in the UK. Her parents arrived from Bangladesh in 1972, her father is working in one of Nottingham's Indian restaurants. K has been working with a multinational company.

L is also a British Asian, his parents travelling from Bangladesh in the early 1970s. L's father used to run an Indian restaurant in Haverfordwest, Wales. L used to help his father in the restaurant; now he runs his father's business.

M is a US Asian citizen. His parents left Bangladesh in 1982 and he studied in the USA. M's father has been working as a faculty member of an US university. M runs a business at Queens, New York.

N is a British Asian, raised in the UK. His parents came from Calcutta, India. His father studied in the UK and took employment as a medical professional. N is a solicitor.

O is an engineer who once worked with a government agency in Bangladesh. He lives in Dhanmondi, Dhaka. His son remained in Australia as a highly skilled emigrant on completion of his further education at the University of Melbourne.

P is a doctor who once worked in a hospital in Bangladesh. After retirement from the hospital she moved to Uttara, Dhaka, where she runs a private clinic. Her daughter studied in the USA where she now lives with her husband, an engineer in the US government.

Q is mother of non-skilled emigrant from Bangladesh, and a housewife. Q's son lives in Qatar and works with an engineering construction company as semi-skilled labour.

### **Limitations of research**

Financial constraint has been the main limitation for this piece of personal research, meaning that it was not possible to conduct a wider research. The constrained circumstances have meant that I could conduct only a few interviews, and mainly by telephone. We were therefore unable to observe the physical appearance of the respondents and this was unfortunate, as the physical appearance of a respondent can occasionally guide the researcher in the formulation of his questions (Bell, 1999). In addition, there was occasionally a poor connection during some of the long distance telephone calls, making it hard to hear the interviewees.

As individual researchers not funded by any local and international agencies (Department for International Development [DFID], local government project), it was not possible to gain their full confidence. Within the remit of this individual research, We were unable to collect some necessary data and documentation from the British Council, US embassy USIS, the Indian High commission and some other foreign missions required to thoroughly examine some of the issues. Support was gained to some extent from a few of the private and public organisations: UGC, the Ministry of Labour and Employment, and the Ministry of Education in India and in Bangladesh.

However, a significant amount of data was collected, and selection of data for analysis and presentation created a problem (Patton, 2002). Avoiding personal 'bias and subjectivity' (Cohen, et al., 2002 P184) in relation to what should or should not be presented in the thesis was difficult. However, the data finally selected is, we believe, representative of what I saw, heard and noted.

In conclusion, we do not claim that this study is a postulate but could be a model for further studies. We also argue that the developing third world could benefit from the findings, discussion and suggestions of this study.

### **Findings and Discussion**

Why does an individual choose to migrate from the third world?

It has been noted that many semi and unskilled people travel overseas to work just because of lack of job opportunities in their own countries. According to B:

"In order to find a job, I had applied for at least 500 vacancies, unfortunately I was unable to get one. As you know, job applications in Bangladesh cost money, and I invested a good amount of money in order to apply for a job. I was really frustrated, and then I decided to go abroad. Fortunately, I was issued with a student visa in 2001. However, a significant number of my friends are also trying to travel abroad. I know that many of my friends have lost a lot of money, as they have been cheated by the manpower brokers. However, they keep trying to travel overseas as there are almost no jobs in Bangladesh for those of us who are not highly skilled."

The opinion of H differs from B in a number of ways. He found it difficult to manage his family on his income while he remained in Bangladesh.

"After completion of my diploma degree, I used to work with a private organisation. I was poorly paid, and it was very hard for me to survive. That led me to live abroad. Living abroad without my family is so hard and sorrowful, however, thanks to Allah, at least at the end of every month I can send a good amount of money home that makes my family survive more smoothly, though not luxuriously. For me, to see a smile on the face of my family is more important. At the end of day, when I think that my children, wife and parents are happy, I forget my hard life abroad."

D was not living in such miserable conditions in Bangladesh. However, while he fortunately received a DV lottery, he planned to settle in USA as he and his family considered that living and working in the USA would not only provide the potential to earn more money, but would also be beneficial for their children's prospects.

F provides another significant reason to travel overseas to work. In his view:

"Working as a labourer in a garment factory in Bangladesh, I couldn't manage to provide food for my family once a day. So I had to travel overseas. I sold the little property of my father in order to travel in Malaysia. Living abroad is so hard. In order to earn every single penny, I have to work hard. I try to save as much as I can. I will work for a few more years then I will return home. This is why I am now trying to save some funds that will help me to manage my family after my return."

Q states a very important issue:

Every parent deserves to have the company of their children and wife zealously love to receive the escort of husband and without having father's affection the children are like orphans, however, so you can think that while family members allow to live their guardian away from them, they have no alternative. If there is any scope, we could survive; we would no longer permit my son to live in overseas.

Reviewing the statements made by B, F, H and Q, it may be concluded that the limited scope for a reasonable job in their country of origin forced them to work overseas. However, even though there is a very little scope for work, the semi and unskilled group are very poorly paid. The small wage they receive is insufficient even for a hand-to-mouth survival. Although the respondents do not like the emigrant's life at all, they feel they have no alternative and that this is the only way they can help their family survive.

The following statements, provided by the highly skilled emigrants, confirm that they had been enjoying a reasonable standard of life in their countries of origin. However, they have settled overseas in order to secure a better position for themselves and for their next generation.

According to A

"While I was working in India, I used to receive at least 200 salute a day. Life was really enjoyable and charming. I also received a good salary package. However, there are also significant reasons not to work in India. There are a number of problems, especially the political crisis in southern Asia. A country where a political crisis always results in unrest and fighting between the rival groups is not safe, and I cannot allow my children to live a dangerous situation while I am able to provide something better. If I lived in India, I would always feel tension for my family as they could be killed or hijacked at any time. This frustrating situation also hammers the job performance of an individual and does not let him carry out his job properly. Due to some unavoidable situations, I was not able to help underprivileged groups. I can work for privileged groups. My job also destroyed the rights of poorer people. Now, even I cannot help the poorer people in India, but my work does not destroy their rights, so I am happy now. Moreover, the prospects of my children are more important to me, so living in the UK is happier, safer and peaceful for me.

The following opinion of C is clear and straightforward enough to understand his thinking:

"While I have the opportunity to work with the best company in the world, there is no point in wasting my time in India where the working atmosphere is dreadful. Moreover, there is not a lot of scope for career promotion in India. I do not want to waste my brain and time working in atmosphere where the scope of research activity is almost zero. I have worked hard to gain a good diploma and so I deserve the good life that can only be provided by the USA lifestyle. I can also work with top-ranking professionals in the USA, but if I worked in India, I would just meet the challenges of national level.

E also emphasises the number logistics. He states that a poor working atmosphere and poorly paid salary package is what mainly persuades individuals to work overseas. However, his main argument is that, in order to achieve an international standard within one's career objectives, the third world is not suitable for scholars.

G places a heavy emphasis on money matters in order to justify her reasons for migration. According to G:

"When I worked in Dhaka, I was poorly paid. The salary package I received was not sufficient to live life to a good standard. I could earn more money through private practice, but private practice is hard work, and achieving success through private practice takes time. Moreover, as I was in a full-time job, private practice was unethical, and so I decided to work abroad."

Both O and P say that it is very hard to pass days of their aged life without seeing the children regularly. However, they also say that parents want nothing in exchange for the sacrifices except that the happiness of their children lasts. So if the children are happy living abroad, the parents should feel glad. P explains how he feels:

"When I hear that my children are doing very well at an international level, I forget every single sorrow of life. I just feel proud."

The statements of A, C, E, G, O, and P testify that, not only because of poorly paid salary packages and a weak work atmosphere at home, but also in order to secure a better standard of life, improve career objectives and to ensure good prospects for their children, members of the highly skilled group make the decision to settle in developed countries.

How much public money is invested to produce a highly skilled and semi- or unskilled emigrant?

The following data sets out to determine the amount of public money invested in order to transform A, C, E and G into highly skilled individuals. It is important to note that the calculation has been compiled from various sources. In addition, I sought to ascertain where each of the respondents had received their primary, secondary and tertiary education as I interviewed them. Being from southern Asia and having experienced in conducting education research has assisted me in calculating the amount of public fund invested to make these individuals highly skilled.

| Highly skilled Respondent Identifier | Total invested for primary education | Total invested for secondary education | Total invested for tertiary education and higher studies | Total   |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| A                                    | £3,000                               | £5,500                                 | £60,000 plus salary paid while on study leave            | £68,500 plus salary paid while on study leave |
| C                                    | £ 4,500                              | £7,800                                 | £17,000  | £29,300                                       |
| E                                    | £3,700                               | £6,200                                 | £55,000 plus salary paid while on study leave            | £64,900 plus salary paid while on study leave |
| G                                    | 3,000                                | £4,500                                 | £44,000 plus salary paid while on study leave            | £51,500 plus salary paid while on study leave |

The figures do not include any sums invested by the parents or guardians of these individuals in any capacity.

The following data sets out to analyse the public funds invested in order to educate the individuals B, D, F, and H in a similar manner. However, this calculation does not include all of education received. This calculation will only consider the extent that education is required in order to carry out their jobs, as scholars Richard (2003), Psacharopulos & Patrions (2002), and Prithchett (1996) believe that extra or unnecessary education received by individuals that is not required for completing the individual's task merely increases the cost of investment in the education budget, as there is no rate of return for that said education.

| Semi/Unskilled Respondent Identifier | Total money invested for primary education | Total money invested for secondary education | Total money invested for tertiary education plus higher studies | Total   |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|---|---------|
| B                                    | £3,700                                     | £6,200                                       | Nil   | £9,900  |
| D                                    | £ 2,500                                    | £5,500                                       | Nil   | £8,000  |
| F                                    | £3,700                                     | £3,200                                       | Nil   | £6,900  |
| H                                    | £3,000                                     | £9,000                                       | n/a   | £12,000 |

In conclusion, it is clear that in order to produce highly skilled individuals, a country must invest large amounts of public money. However, P states that public funding is insufficient to develop the highly skilled individuals needed. She says:

"Apart from public funds, careful and expensive parental participation in the education of an individual plays an important role in making the individual highly skilled. The children of the underprivileged cannot prove themselves as highly skilled in the rigid and competitive atmosphere."

What contributions are made by highly skilled and semi or unskilled emigrants in order to create a higher income of foreign currency?

Before focusing on this issue, it should be acknowledged that highly skilled individuals always have a higher salary potential, as empirically discovered by Psacharopulos and Patrions (2002),

Harmon and Walker (1999), Hartog, et al., (1999) and Appleton (2000). Moreover, Tilak (2002) claims that data from every society shows that a post-secondary education ensures a higher income and greater opportunities for graduates. Comparison between those who have attended college or university and those who have not reveals consistent benefits to the degree holders. In my opinion, the highly skilled individual receives a better salary package than the semi-skilled individual, while the semi-skilled individual has more salary potential than the unskilled. In contrast, Alam (2006) expresses an interesting point:

"Those who seek to pursue higher education expect to benefit in both their professional and personal lives, and the areas in which they hope to gain will also differ greatly. Higher Education provision reflects this. Research repeatedly finds that primary and secondary education contributes to a higher rate of return for the nation overall, whilst higher education provides greater benefits for the individual.

The purpose of the following discussion is not for any comparative study of the salary package received by skilled and semi or unskilled emigrants, nor will it reveal the ratio of salary packages received by the two groups. The data aims to illustrate the contribution made by highly skilled and semi or unskilled emigrants in order to create a higher income of foreign currency?

| Respondent Identifier    | Remittance forwarded during previous 12 months |
|--------------------------|--|
| A                        | £1,500   |
| C                        | - £35,000                                      |
| E                        | £2,200   |
| G                        | £4,800   |
| Number of Respondents: 4 | Total: - £26,500                               |

It is interesting to note that the highly skilled emigrants do not send huge remittances. However, all of the respondents state that their family at home is financially comfortable, and that they do not necessarily need the financial support. However, they do occasionally send money home and donate to the people of their country of origin, even though they consider themselves to be a part of economical and social development of the country to which they have emigrated. C makes a fundamental point:

*"Although I was born and raised in India, now I am an American, and as an American I must contribute to the economical and social development of the USA. Moreover, in order to lead a luxurious life and secure good prospects, I should not waste my money by sending it for unnecessary reasons to India."*

As an individual, C always tries to understand what is beneficial for him. However, C also should understand the responsibility to provide a financial return to his country of origin, where he was educated with public funds. There is also a moral and ethical obligation to provide support to the country of birth as a citizen of India ((I and J). I and J also state that every citizen is a part of the country, so C's comments cannot be considered as a civic comment (see below).

| Respondent Identifier | Remittance forwarded during previous 12 months |
|-----------------------|--|
| B                     | £8,000   |
| D                     | £1,200   |
| F                     | £2,000   |
| H                     | £5,000   |
| Total respondents: 4  | Total: £16,200                                 |

It is clear that semi or unskilled emigrants send comparatively more money home than the highly skilled group even though they receive smaller salaries. The semi or unskilled group are better placed to send a larger remittance home, as they have no family in the country where they are working. They are also keen to accumulate savings, as savings will help them both gain financial stability and support their family in achieving a better standard of life. In this regards, B says:

"We are not living as the part of the society where we are working, and our family needs money from us. It is important that, at the end of the day, we have to return so we save money and will try to establish business in the home country."

Children of semi or unskilled emigrants living in the developed world also feel a sense of responsibility to support relatives of their parents in the country of origin, although they consider

themselves as part of the country where they have been educated (L).

In contrast, children of the highly skilled group do not feel the same, as they know very little about the country from where their parents moved away for a living (M and N).

#### **What are the advantages and disadvantages of the 'brain drain'?**

##### **Remittance**

On one hand, a significant number of scholars such as Marchal and Kegels (2003) Mora and Taylor (2005), Richard (2005), McKenzie, and Yang and Martinez (2005) firmly advocate that highly skilled emigrants generate a higher income of foreign currency for the country of origin. They often miscalculate and, in addition, they fail to ensure that the higher income in foreign currency is entirely generated by the semi or unskilled group. It is also important to note that highly skilled emigrants are the product of large amounts of public funds, therefore it is commonly presumed that they will contribute more to the development of their original country. In contrast, it is found that the emigration of highly skilled manpower essentially provides personal benefits for the individual, rather than public benefits (see below).

Scholars such as Chellaraj, et al., (2005), Schiff (2005) and Ozden (2005) empirically prove that skilled individuals provide greater benefits for the countries to which they have migrated. They argue that, with the assistance of research conducted and the professional engagement of skilled emigrants, the developed world is progressing outstandingly towards economical and social freedom.

##### **Collaboration**

A, C, E and G claim that highly skilled people form a bridge between the developed world and the developing world. As stated by A:

*"If you see today's India, you will be surprised. A significant number of call centres and international IT business organisations have been established in India. This has been possible because many Indians have worked around the globe in reputable international IT organisations."*

##### **However J's view differs from that of A and it is important to note it**

*"I acknowledge that Indian IT professionals work around the globe and, to some extent, help us to establish international IT business in India. However, the main reason is that the Indian government provides very good support in order for the international businesses to be established in India, especially within the IT sector. In addition, the IT professional is cheaper in India than in other countries, and this is what mainly persuades the international IT business organisations to establish their businesses in India. I also want to add one more issue; in some cases the skilled immigrants are harmful for India as they sell their consultancy services to the Indian government and business organisations at a higher cost. Moreover, the wages they receive as a consultancy fee is tax free, as they often argue that they have to abide by the income tax rules of the country where they are currently working and, if they also have to pay tax to the Indian government, it will be double burden."*

The disadvantages of 'brain drain' are manifold; however, I will attempt to discuss some of them in brief

##### **To provide private benefit**

According to J:

*"I acknowledge that, as we cannot provide sufficient wages and a good working atmosphere here for highly skilled individuals, that leads them to seek suitable positions in the developed world. However, we must bear in mind that highly skilled people consume most of the education budget. The money for this budget comes from the public funds, contributed through tax paid. Moreover, a portion of the budget is also provided by donor agencies as either aid or a loan. Since there is hardship, we usually take the funds from international organisations, such as UNESCO, IFM, and the World Bank, under any condition. It is also important to note that the remittances received from highly skilled emigrants essentially contribute to the private and family benefit of the individuals; the country gains somewhat less. It is shame that our skilled individuals don't understand our situation and I must say that they are turncoats."*

### **Shortage of professionals**

The third world is currently experiencing difficulties in the development of essential competent professionals for many different professions. In such circumstances, the migration of highly skilled manpower makes significant progress in the third world even more restricted. It is frequently found that schools and universities in the third world suffer from a dearth of academic staff. Hospitals face not only a shortage of competent doctors and nurses but there are also shortages of medical professionals.

In this context I observes that:

*"In the name of high immigration, the developed world is collecting skilled, well-trained, and experienced individuals from the third world; so the third world cannot meet its own demands. Moreover, successful entrepreneurs migrate to the developed world through an 'entrepreneurial migration' scheme; this is even more dangerous as they migrate from the third world to the first with huge funding. This is because, according to the rules of the scheme, the entrepreneur who wishes to migrate has to deposit a large amount of funds."*

How emigrants, particularly the highly skilled group, can contribute more significantly to the development of their country of origin

Under the present circumstances to hire graduates from the third world or to provide highly skilled emigrants' status, developed countries are not concerned about contracts with the third world governments, and the third world government also has no misgivings. Therefore, in order to hire the graduates or to provide highly skilled emigrant status, an agreement is usually made between the graduate and the business organisation within the developed country where the graduate is hoping to provide a service. Once the graduate and the business organisation reach a mutually acceptable agreement, no intervention from the third world government is possible. Therefore the graduates try to gain as much as they can in personal benefits. A, E and G have an intention to contribute to the development of third world. E explores a means of contributing to the country of origin. According to E:

*"When the third world employs a consultant from the first world, the hired consultant usually does not need to pay tax in the country where he or she provides services. If the income is exempt from taxation, then we are happy to remit this amount for the development of third world. However, it would be better if the first world could design a system whereby the exempted tax could directly be remitted from our employers to the concerned third world government."*

Some scholars propose that, as the developed countries enjoy the benefits of the third world's 'brain drain', thus they should invest in the establishment of better education provision in the third world. This idea is not exempt from criticism: if individuals from the first world invest in education in the third world, for instance in Bangladesh, they would affect the Bangladeshi education system in such a way that may affect individuality and ethical values of Bangladeshi. Moreover, the philosophy of first world entrepreneurs may not necessarily be that of the third world's countries, or may conflict with national objectives. In addition, the threat of privatisation of education through franchise provision continues to exist.

In this regard, an example from China and Malaysia may be put forward. A considerable number of US, UK and Australian universities provide education in China and Malaysia, and the main purpose of these universities is to earn money. This situation is threatened as it has been illustrated by some scholars that the first world universities operating in China and Malaysia are providing a lower quality of education for Chinese and Malaysian students than that of which is provided on the parent campus overseas. As a result, although the Chinese and Malaysian students receive international degrees from international providers, the acceptability of their qualification is less than that of Western graduates (see Alam, 2006). It is worth noting that, because of 'diploma disease', educational standards across the entire world are a declining feature. It is also interesting to note that, following introduction of the GATS agreement, higher education has been seen as a commodity that results deterioration of quality education internationally (see Alam, 2006).



## Conclusion

To conclude, it should be noted that people who have migrated with a body but not necessarily a brain contribute more to the development of their country of origin financially, even though the highly skilled group are more productive and their reward significantly higher. Moreover, in the developing world, the privileged group always take the cream while the underprivileged struggle with a hand-to-mouth existence, either because of inefficient taxation rules, corruption, or some other fault of existing systems.

In order to address the situation, urgent steps is needed to be taken by donor agents. All major donor agencies need to establish a commission jointly to oversee the 'brain drain' policy. This should be designed to ensure that, before any agreement is made between a labour seeking to emigrate and the overseas employer, the potential emigrant's country of origin should receive legal public benefit. Once the proposed commission can ensure that the country that has funded production of the graduate will benefit from the country where graduate intends to work as skilled manpower, the donors may claim that they have fulfilled their role. Otherwise developing countries can claim that they are contributing some form of donation to the developed world.

In conclusion, until and unless the policymakers, legislators and governments of the third world countries provide a decent and adequate working environment for their educated people, the educated community will continue to seek employment overseas and the 'brain drain' will continue. However, without making use of trained and skilled manpower within the underdeveloped countries, the shortage of trained professionals to meet requirements of the home-based professions will also continue, and there will be little hope of development on that front.

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## Neo liberal PRSP & Education: A policy without action

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### 1. Background of the introducing PRSP

In the following years of the liberation of Bangladesh in 1971, the five-year development plan and its implementation strategies was the base of country's economic development. This development plan was sector segregated wherein country's development partners, where fits their interest, were directly involved in the planning and implementation of sector-wise development activities under different programs and projects. Such type of development planning would play a positive role strengthening major economic sectors like agriculture, fisheries, micro-enterprises, small industries etc, and public service sectors like health, education, transportation, social safety nets etc which had direct impact in pro-poor growth and country's poverty reduction.

Since 1980s to 1990s development partners in Bangladesh, especially the World Bank and IMF, had been advising the government to make reforms in financial strategies under Structural Adjustment Program (SAP) to achieve the so called macro economic stability. This reform program was comprised with devaluation of local currency; reduction of state expenditure in service sector, market liberalization etc. Like Bangladesh many other poor countries adopted this policy, but failed to achieve the desired goal of economic stability.

In fact, implementation of SAP failed to reach its goal of poverty reduction and created unemployment and economic disparity among the people of different social classes in many Asian and African poor countries, which made IMF bound to rethink on it. Thus, in 2000, International Monetary Fund and World Bank (IMF & WB) came forward with a new development prescription 'the theory of continued economic growth' for the poor & developing countries. Supporting to this theory the WB Group argued that, achieving of continued economic growth is most effectual in poverty reduction for a country rather than adopting integrated development strategies. On paper, this theory said 'sustained poverty reduction would be possible through continued growth in economy and per capita income'. But, practicality of the implementation of this theory is just opposite to the sense of sustained poverty reduction and pro-poor economic growth. The basic principal and characteristics of this new theory is to support decentralization of State owned Enterprises (SoEs), create space for free market economy through import liberalization, dismantling role state role in delivering basic services to its citizen and, facilitate access of corporate investment of the Northern rich countries in the basic service sectors and natural resource based industries. This corporate and private sector bias financing framework of the IMF, in turn, has been allowing the MNCs to dominate the economy of poor countries, grasp the natural resources and repatriation of resources to their country of origin.

Therefore, to promote corporate interest, the IMF & WB imposed a pre condition to the loan recipient countries for preparing 'poverty reduction strategy paper' PRSP. PRSP is a basic requirement of the international financial institutions -IFIs (e.g. the World Bank and IMF) to the poor countries that receive development loan from those institutions. In September 1999, the World Bank and IMF declared that debt cancellation of the HIPC's (Highly Indebted Poor Countries) and soft loan receive opportunity will depend on the formulation of National poverty strategy of the debt bearer countries.

Just to have the financial assistance from development partners Bangladesh compelled to prepare and somehow prepared the conditional PRSP. In the following years of PRSP implementation it has been found that the existing 'corporate sector bias' economic policies would never be a pro poor development plan. Besides, country's economy is in the verge of hardship due to negative impacts of the implementation of PRSP conditions, and we are worried how to resilience from this looming threat. Even after fulfilling all compliances, the IMF & WB have regretted to disburse the 6th installment of PRGF (Poverty Reduction Growth Facilities) loan for Bangladesh just excusing that, "the PRSP period is over".

**2. What will be the characteristics of 2nd phase (2009-2011) PRSP?**

Despite frequently discourse and criticism on the result and negative impacts of implementation of previous PRSP the present care taker government has near to finalize the second phase (2009-2011 fiscal period) PRSP.

Here this should be mentioned that during the first PRSP our donors also said, the respective country will prepare the PRSP on the basis of their ownership and in the light of existing country need and problems. And this PRSP will must be based of development support of donors. But in reality the donors didn't keep their commitment and imposed lot of conditions during financial support through PRSP. That's why government has failed to establish effective coordination between donor support and PRSP planning to reduce poverty.

So in this backdrop we think that as a care taker government has commitment to do something good and benevolent for our poor people. So considering this government should not prepare the second PRSP just having the financial assistance from donors, rather ensuring people participation and focus the people's issues to the donors that will be helpful for taking strong position for future country perspectives.

**3. PRSP and Education: Our education system and the scenario of MDG (Goal- 0 2 ) achievement**

The Millennium development Goals (MDGs) set out a powerful agenda for a global partnership to fight against poverty, offering a shared vision of a better world by 2015. This vision is aimed to cut extreme poverty and set 8 Goals along with 18 targets to be achieved in global perspectives. Bangladesh is one of the visionary and also follows these goals to achieve by above stipulated time.

The 2nd goal of MDG is to achieve universal primary education. In order to achieve this goal, Bangladesh targets to increase net enrollment rate in primary education from 73.7% in 1992 to 100% by 2015

**PRSP in Bangladesh: Where conditionalities ignored the country ownership**

Preparing a full pledged PRSP Bangladesh has taken the time almost three years (2002-2005). Full pledged PRSP was approved by the cabinet in October 2005. Before that an interim PRSP has been published in 2003. Bangladesh has tried to ensure a participatory process as much as possible according to capacity. Government has tried to taken the civil society opinion and discourse have been done up to the district level. But our civil society has opined and criticized that the participatory process of PRSP formulation was controlled by some bureaucrats and absent of political parties. Here it should mentioned that the political parties were engrossed themselves with extreme clash and conflict and due to that it was impossible to reach a consensus to a national issue.

There are some popular development issues were included in the policy matrix of PRSP. Besides some donors especially IFIs conditions was incorporated also. Among these conditions import liberalization, decentralized and privatization of State owned Enterprises (SoE) and service sectors (especially water, power and communication sectors those are profitable) was the prime. Government has fulfill the conditionalities, for example in the fiscal year 2007-08 the import liberalization has crossed over the respective target and government has imposed the increasing import duty on capital goods and raw materials according to IMF advice.

Now Bangladesh has implemented the 1<sup>st</sup> PRSP and second PRSP (2009-11 fiscal year) near to finalise. By this time our government, civil society and donors have been assessing the impact during PRSP. This has observed that, during PRSP implementation hard core poor has been increase about 55.8 million. The income inequality has also increased which was 0.33 in 200to 0.46 in 2005.

The inflationary situation has also increased up to 14.7% according to Bangladesh Bank report (December 2007). Government budget deficit (3.9% of GDP) is still going higher and facing trouble in Balance of Payment (BoP). The budget allocation of debt servicing is 20% of total budget and surpassed all service sectors (education, health and poverty reduction budget). The prominent economists have made liable IMF conditions for this economic crisis and inflation.

MDG-2 progress and future perspective

| Indicator                           | Base year 1990 | Current scenario 2007 | Rate of progress | Existing progress time will need to achieve |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|------------------|---|
| Net enrollment in primary education | 73.7%          | 87.2%                 | 0.9%             | 2021  |
| Drop out ratio                      | -              | 47%                   | Negative         | Uncertain                                   |
| Teacher student ratio               | 1 : 72         | 1 : 63                | 0.9%             | Uncertain                                   |
| Adult education                     | 36.9%          | 50%                   | 0.8%             | Uncertain                                   |

and to reduce dropout rate in primary education from 38% in 1994 to bring zero level by 2015. Bangladesh has achieved remarkable success in the sector of primary education. This success has come from through achievement of net enrollment increase and gender equalization. The gross enrollment rate in primary education is 93.71 and net 87.2%. Male- female ratio is 55:45. Achievement in gender equality, Bangladesh holds 125th position out of 180 countries. Adult literacy rate has been increased from 36.9% to 50%. So sustaining this achievement, we should look to ensure the quality of education indeed.

Nevertheless, we have some challenges to achieve universal primary education. Till now about 04 million of rural children and about 03 million of urban slum children are excluded from education. Drop out rate has been increasing near 47% according to the evaluation report of PEDP-II (Primary Education Development Project-II). Bangladesh has need 1.7 billion US\$ of universal primary education by 2015, where 40% of fund has to be collected from other countries and donor. Out of this, our existing infrastructure is not sufficient for primary education, and due to that at least 1.8 million children will remain excluded from education after 2009 too.

#### **a. PRSP commitment and budgetary allocation in Education**

In PRSP, education has been treated as an investment for human resources development. Here also said that, inaccessibility to education is an element and cause of poverty. Most of the poor people don't have access to education and it's weakening their capacities. In PRSP, it's suggested that the opportunity of uniform primary education system have to introduce for all children and after 05 years competency test will be introduce for ensuring quality education. PRSP also planned to make 90% assimilation between primary and madrasa (religious) curriculum. And introduce of separate cadre service for primary education.

The uniform curriculum will be implemented for all level of education in both rural and urban area where people irrespectively both rich and poor get a job for their livelihood after completion of education. But there was no guideline to implement the program in last years' budget allocation.

There is an intensive relation between teaching time & teacher-student ratio to ensure the quality education. The teacher-student contact hour in Bangladesh is the lowest in the world, only 444 hours in a year. But it should be minimum 666 hours in a year. Teacher-student ratio should be 1:30. But in Bangladesh it is 1:63 and some where especially remote rural area it is 1:83. These issues have been ignored in PRSP. Moreover 3 new women polytechnic institutes are planned to be established to encourage women in technical education that's has not yet been initiated.

Government has allocated the budget for education only Tk. 122730 million for the fiscal year 2008-09. This amount is only 1.9% of GDP (it was 2.4% in 2006-07 and 2.33% of GDP in 2007-08 fiscal year) where PRSP commitment was to frequent increase of budget allocation in order to effective human development effort by the state. If we see the last year budget allocation (it was Tk. 123800 million for fiscal year 2007-08) and compare with existing inflation rate (14.7% according Bangladesh Bank Report December, 2007) that's will reduce the net purchasing power obviously.

Government didn't follow the PRSP commitment to effective increase of budget allocation for education which is really to be benefited for the poor. Rather she is following the donor's conditions and formulated the policy to privatize the education sector under the name of so call public private partnership. In reflecting of this policy government has decided to hand over the primary education supervision system under the management of NGO. This decision has been protested by the primary teachers and civil society group and at last postponed.

#### **b. Analysis of PRSP policy matrix: Interim PRSP recommendations in education are ignored in the final PRSP.**

PRSP formulated development policies for 18 different sectors. In this relation the government of Bangladesh promulgated that targeted national growth will be achieved through implementation of these sector specific development activities and policies, which alternatively will contribute to the poverty reduction.

Therefore, since the implementation PRSP government had been reminding that pro-poor development issues should be prioritized in reducing poverty, otherwise expected target might

no be achieved. But the analysis of the accomplishment of policy matrix revealed that the issues/policies in line with the IMF and corporate interest were more focused and implemented than the issues/policies related to poverty reduction. As result, in the PRSP period poverty and unemployment has been increased than previous years.

In case of policy issue for educational development there are some problem identified and recommendations made by interim PRSP in 2002. i.e.

- Drop out of student is treated a major problem and this is happening due to poverty in rural areas in Bangladesh.
- The teacher student ratio is not satisfactory and quality education is not ensure for existing shortage of teacher and their low quality, absent of teachers hidden cost of primary education in rural areas and lack of necessary input in rural level primary school.
- Curriculum of higher education has to be revised and make alignment with the global needs.

So considering the above problems the policy has been designed in final PRSP for education is incomplete and sometime confusing. To improve the level of quality education PRSP has set up indicator of 70% learners will overcome the skill oriented test after completed the primary education. But PRSP didn't clear its policy especially on how many teachers have to be deployed, requirement of infrastructure development and input supply to ensure the quality education during the PRSP. That's why after implementation of PRSP no quality education is ensured and drop-out is still going higher in rural areas.

| Implemented  | Not Implemented   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Policy Matrix- 13 Education Sector Development :</b><br/>                     The target has been achieved on enrollment and Gender balance in Primary Education<br/>                     Undertaking ROSC (Reaching Out of School Children)<br/>                     project loan from ADB which is targeting the re admission of drop out children in Primary Education but not effective due to lack of monitoring<br/>                     Formulation of private sector participation policy and<br/>                     government decided to hand over the primary education to NGOs management.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensuring quality education due to lack of ;</li> <li>- sufficient educational materials &amp; inputs</li> <li>- Increase the number of Teacher and their Training</li> <li>- Modernize the education curriculum and make it time fashion</li> <li>- Mainstreaming the policy between government</li> <li>- Primary Curriculum and NGOs</li> <li>- Introducing ECD (Early Child Development) program</li> <li>- for rural children</li> <li>- IGA oriented education program for poor children</li> <li>- Introducing similar curriculum for both <i>Madrasha</i> (religious education) and general education</li> <li>- Regulatory Frame work for quality control in High Educationer</li> <li>- Reviewing Course Curriculum considering demand of</li> <li>- Higher education in national and international level</li> <li>- Policy of Budget allocation in Education sector at least 5% of GDP</li> <li>- Policy of ensuring Infrastructural facilities (at least 50% of their demand) for most depriving areas in education.</li> </ul> |

**4. What can our government do? Concerns for making a sovereign development planning**

**a. Long term development planning: going back to country's five year development Planning**

Government is proceeding to prepare the second phase PRSP for 2009-2011 fiscal years and expected to be finalized before budget declaration of 2008-09. Here, this is to mention that government claimed the first PRSP as pro poor, result oriented and country owned document. But analysis of the impact of PRSP showed that no pro-poor issue was materialized due to imposing conditionalities of donors. Rather PRSP implementation and loan conditionality of the WB and IMF reduced domestic investment and increased level of unemployment.

In this context, preparation of the second phase of PRSP, just to satisfy loan conditionality of the IMF and WB, would again be the suicidal decision, which may make Bangladesh as a neo economic colony of the aggressive multination companies.

Therefore, we demand canceling the preparation of second PRSP and re-introducing Five year planning what we had during 1970s. Many countries across the world faced losses and economic fall down following the implementation of PRSP. Meantime, Vietnam and Cambodia have already gone back to their previous own development planning.

Bangladesh also should promulgate and implement five year plan to tackle down poverty situation. This development plan must be based upon our problems, using our own resources and avoiding all sorts of conditions of the WB and IMF.

**b. Country must have our own Development Goal in case of long-term human development plan.**

Government should set specific development goal for a long-term period e.g. for next 10-15 years focusing education which will contribute the poverty reduction, employment creation. For example, Vietnam and Cambodia has taken their own development goal in the light of the MDG.

**c. Development plan should be annually target oriented**

Although there had some good development policies in the first PRSP but specific projection and target of achieving these was absent. Thus, the various changes or development indicators during the PRSP period remained murky. Therefore the development plan those will contribute on human development and poverty reduction (like education and health) should be yearly target oriented and, should be specified with yearly budget requirement.

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## Return from the school system in Bangladesh

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### Abstract

This article examines the contribution made by the school system in Bangladesh using primary data gained from a small-scale research and supplementary secondary data. This study contains both school and out-of-school education. Findings show that primary education contributes mainly for social development. Secondary provision also contributes mainly for social development, while some attempts in contributing economic development are not working properly because of existing education system and job pattern. Higher Education (HE) consumes a large portion of public and private fund to ensure economic development. Unfortunately, because of existing job pattern of Bangladesh and requirements placed for recruitments, contribution from HE is low whereas investment to education is reasonably higher. Overall conclusion suggests that there is a scope for development at each provision. This study also advocates an urgent need to conduct a broader study on this issue to make the education system more effective and development oriented.

Keywords: Rate of Return (ROR), Investment in Education, Out-of-school Education, Employment Market, Manpower Planning, Economic Return, Social Return

### 1. Introduction

It is predominantly assumed that investment in education has a significant return; therefore, countries are paying especial priority in allocating budget in education. A number of researches have been conducted in the field of return to investment in education (Psacharopoulos and Patrions, 2002; Harmon and Walker, 1999; Hartog, et. al., 1999; Appleton, 2000). Most of those find that return to investment in education is reversed (Hartog, et. al., 1999 and Appleton, 2000). Most of the works included in this area put an effort to understand the return to investment in education in terms of financial benefit (Psacharopoulos and Patrions, 2002; Murphy and Welch 1992; Card, 2001 and Rouse, 1999). Scholars argue that even though the Rate of Return (ROR) in economic perspective is low, it may be higher in social development which is somehow nearly impossible to determine (Murphy and Welch 1992; Card, 2001 and Rouse, 1999). Factually, economic development and social development are interrelated thus it is worthwhile to note that if education broadly contributed in social development, it would have an impact on economic development.

What is not education? - a question is merely impossible to answer. Education is subsequently provided by a number of providers (i.e. religious institutions, paternal participation, media, development made by the globalization of 21st century, technological behavior changes and institutions of education, partners for development etc.). In order to calculate the ROR, we never make comparison between the contribution of education provided by school system and other providers. We also do not often recognize the contribution made by other providers while we work for ROR. The adherents of other fields often argue that not only official provision for education but also other providers of education (i.e. media, participation and governance etc.) are playing a role in the development by educating the community. A study is yet to be conducted in Bangladesh to explore the contribution made from each of the field individually. Once, we have the specific contribution from respective field, making comparison will just be a matter for calculation.

Countries have set up goal, aims and objectives gained through education. Legislators often feel that achieving officially determined goal in favor of education is a primary responsibility of formal school system (Alam, 2008a). Many instances have been found that other providers such as media, religious institutions and globalization hinder the success of formal school as they may have other goals, purposes or vision which are different from their school counterpart.

Different level of schooling (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary) is working to contribute in a



specific focus. For instance, primary education should mainly work for the development of social freedom while higher education must be more focused on economic growth. If a particular kind of education is provided to do a special job, employment of such an individual in another job does not make any sense and it provides reverse return. Moreover, if graduates employed with a higher or specified or differentiated diploma do not fundamentally use their education in doing their jobs, also provide reverse return.

Given the discourse outlined, few research questions are generated:

1. What is the contribution made by different level of education?
2. What is the contribution made by school system and other providers of education?
3. What is the disparity in selecting the aims of education provided by other providers?
4. What is the gap in the school system in contributing desired level of contribution?
5. How can school system contribute more significantly?

Finding section of this article intends to answer of these questions. We aim to provide a further model and food for thought in investigating the ROR of education in Bangladesh before drawing the conclusion. Prior to do this, we will provide a review of literature and data collection and analysis coherently.

## 2. Literature review

### 2.1. Key Findings from Existing Literature

A comprehensive study with a comparative analysis is yet to be conducted to calculate the contribution made by different levels of education (i.e. primary, secondary and tertiary). Adherents of primary school provision argue that the overall ROR of primary provision is higher than secondary and higher education provision. On the other hand, some scholars argue that ROR is always higher for the provision of higher education. Data from virtually every society shows that post-secondary education ensures a higher income and greater opportunities for graduates. Comparison between those who have attended college or university and those who have not attended shows consistent benefit to the degree holder. Even those who attended college or university but without earning a degree are better placed. There are variations between countries, but the pattern holds globally. Alam (2008b) also finds that ROR of higher education is not significant always because of low quality education offered and the nature of the course. Moreover, he also says that currently students are procuring education for obtaining certificates rather than to know how to do the job. This attitude confirms a lower ROR from higher education provision.

Alam (2008b), using the data in the context of industrialised countries, advocates that investing in child education provides more ROR. However, even though Bangladesh has increased a significant proportion of budgets for early childhood development with an especial focus on pre-primary provision, the ROR is a declining feature (Shahjamal and Nath, 2008; Alam, 2008b). Colin (1999) and World Bank (2002) explore that ROR of Vocational Education and Training (VET) is significant which is higher than other types of education. Lewin (1993) finds the investment towards VET education higher than others, but the ROR is comparatively lower.

The above argument generates some interesting questions to consider: does education really provide a significant ROR to the investment made, if not what is the problem(s) within the education. Even in case if it is proved that primary and secondary education contribute less than higher education, there is no way, we can stop operating primary and secondary education as these levels are the basis for higher education. Nevertheless, even if it is found that education in general does not provide a substantial ROR, stopping operation is not a solution. Rather, we need to discover how the country can widely be benefited from the education. This research will inform some present status and scenario using following methods. We aim that this will help us in formulating our education policy and its implementation.

### 2.2. Currently Used Methods of Calculating ROR

According to Colin (1999), the calculation of ROR to education is not possible with the indicators currently used. Many researchers (Harmon and Walker, 1999; Murphy and Welch 1992; Card, 2001; Rouse, 1999; Hartog, et. al., 1999 and Appleton, 2000), working on 'Return to Investment

in Education' aim to discover the ratio and equation of total earnings of graduates, and the total investment required to produce graduates<sup>1</sup>. This way of calculating the ROR has been criticized by Psacharopoulos and Patrinos (2002) and Pritchett (1996). Alam (2008a) saying that high salary received by the graduates does not necessarily mean that these graduates are comprehensively using their gained knowledge through school in doing the job while their works do not contribute towards the development. The calculation of ROR by calculating the difference of earnings of graduates and investment is made to create a scenario where graduates may work better in the developed countries. These process work because of the relevance of education system with existing work pattern and future action plan and proper taxation provision from earning of the graduates. Alam (2008a) also argues that sometime contrasts of the philosophical aspects of knowledge and different ways of interpreting knowledge between different providers or institutions (Schools, different types of schools, media, and informal institution) also restrict the proper calculation of ROR. An alternative calculation model is yet to be provided by them; however some researchers argue that calculation of ROR must be based on the productivity of workers/graduates once they are in employment. Colin (1999) says that, even though in many cases in-service training does not increase worker income, Bennell (1996) finds that it (in-service training) makes them more productive and therefore it has a significant effect on development. Fagerlind and Saha (1989) argues that in the case of education and training programme, there is a need for a new policy to ensure that employees use gained knowledge in their daily practice. Failure to call on knowledge gained means they lose it and later investment in training will provide a reverse ROR.

Issues related to education pattern of many developing countries and employment patterns give grave concern, which need to be addressed. It is evident that profession-based jobs must be occupied by professional staffs, trained specifically for doing those. For example, a 'medical cadre' must be occupied exclusively by doctors, but graduates in medicine can work for other cadres<sup>2</sup> (i.e. in administration, policing, foreign affairs, taxation). In addition, obtaining high scores in scientific subjects is easier when compared to the areas of Social Science and the Arts. Thus science graduates, especially doctors and engineers, take advantage of public service examinations. Moreover, every sector, enterprise and organisation (i.e. the army, banking and industry) needs its medical and engineering professionals, and therefore the Public Service Commission in developed countries creates an artificially larger job market for science graduates, specifically for medical and engineering graduates. In addition, the most profitable opportunity for science graduates, especially for doctors, is to enter private practice, either full or part-time. However, we argue that, if science graduates are employed within the public sectors and also busy in working in the private sector, who are to provide the essential support for the enormous number of poor people, dependent on the public services?

The public service examination is a place for competition among Science, Social Science and Arts graduates. Graduates in the same subject do not generally compete against each other to acquire the professional job for which they have been trained. A graduate who has studied Arts or Social Science does not essentially compete with other graduates who have studied the same subject in the public service examination. Is the HE of developing countries able to produce an expert capable of doing the specialized job - or is it producing a graduate with a basic education? A further question arises: do jobs in Arts and Social Science of the public service examination require a person to have a basic education, or to be a specialist?

To have doctors and engineers working in different career areas (those of policing, administration and foreign affairs, for instance) proves that investing in the production of these graduates is ill-advised. We further argue that the earning of a graduate employed in an area for which they are not trained and not proficient, does not constitute an actual 'return to investment in education'. It also forces the nation to have a society of unemployed trained graduates. It can be seen that investing large amounts of money in the production of science graduates does not make sense if they work in the field of social science or the arts in professional life. Finally, we need to consider whether education creates jobs, or if education should be provided according to the needs of the job market?

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<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to note that, in order to produce a graduate, investment in the school is not the total investment required, as students enjoy subsidized national and international facilities (i.e. subsidized transports and cafeterias).

<sup>2</sup> But these jobs should be allocated for Arts and Social Science graduates.

### 3. Methods

Determining methods in calculating return to education is the hardest job, thus the discussion is often limited to informal communication although a number of scholars realize that education may not have a significant return. In order to understand a comparative situation, this study covered a number of respondents varying in their education levels and types and job pattern. Respondents who are involved with work (job) are only considered. 176 respondents with no education and 1200 with different level of education have been considered for quantitative part of this study. Of the 1200 graduates, 247 are primary, 219 are secondary, 231 are higher secondary and others are higher educated. We covered graduates studied different areas (i.e. science, commerce, arts, engineering, medicine and other professional course). Quantitative data were used to understand their perception regarding the importance of their gained education in doing the jobs, for which they are involved, and their change of behavior in respect to the social development. Questionnaires designed by using a number of indicators informed employees' productivity in doing the jobs. Questionnaires also informed the level of use of education knowledge gained from school in implementing the jobs in which they are employed. Some indicators also included in the questionnaires that informed the contribution of education gained through school for social development. Interviews were conducted with 200 respondents who were the respondents for quantitative part. Of the 200 respondents, 46 have no education, 37 have primary education, 32 have secondary education, 47 have higher secondary education and the rest 38 have higher education with a random sampling system. However, we covered the graduates studied different field as the way maintained for quantitative part. Interview data supplemented the data gained from questionnaires. The group who has no formal education is considered to understand what difference is made by primary education provision and where we stand without having any kind of education. Thereafter, consideration of other level of education helped to compare with each other. This helped in determining what level of education is mainly required for what kind of jobs. It is important to note that academic and scholars are not considered within the sample as this study aims to explore the issues with the workforce.

### 4. Result and Discussion

#### 4.1. Contribution Made by Different Level of Education

According to the perception of every group of respondents, education is very important for both economic and social benefits. Most of the respondents' view that education provides diploma that is helpful to be employed, and employment brings economic prosperity. This prosperity provides a social prestige. Most of the respondents with primary and secondary education perceive that this kind of social prestige is social development. Thus the concept of social development is not clear to them yet. Data reveal that 100% respondents with no formal education do not face any difficulty in implementing the works for which they are engaged. However, they believe that they could join with a better job if they received education. Hence, the question is; if after having education, no one is found to do these kind of jobs, what will be the prospect of this sector? Surprisingly, 100% respondents with primary education are involved in the jobs that are covered by the group having no formal education. These primary graduates also do not feel that they necessarily need the primary education in doing the job for which they are employed. Observation also notices no difference of job performance between two types of graduates. It is interesting to know; does any especial skills are required in doing such kinds of works? It has been found that the jobs mainly covered by the uneducated group and primary graduates require a number of skills, which they learn after involving with the jobs. Bangladeshi primary education does not usually provide any skills that are required for jobs. Primary education concentrates on providing some competencies that are required to continue secondary education, thus the group, dropped out from primary level, almost achieved no skills which are necessary for their working life.

Group having no formal education perceives that they are unable to contribute for social development as the way primary graduates do. In order to contribute for social development, communication skills are important so that they can have access to all of the information. If they were educated, they would play a role for democracy, governance, transparency, health and other issues. They also feel that if they were educated, their voice was considered as important and powerful thus chance to contribute in development would be more.

Respondents with primary education feel that they have more communicative skill than the group having no formal education. This helps them in a number of ways. An important fact is marked that within the current climate, they are to contribute significantly for the development of good governance and democracy, and they are well aware of the problem. Furthermore, they are playing a diminutive role for the development of health and education sectors as they are more aware than the group having no formal education.

Our study explored to find that the people dropped-out are not playing a role for economic development. However, they are somehow contributing for social development. The people completed primary education and received secondary education will play the same role if secondary education fails to provide necessary skills for the jobs, they are engaged.

Of the respondents with junior secondary education, almost 33% are involved in the sectors where both group having no formal education and primary graduates are involved. This group also does not feel that their education is helping for their jobs. Remaining 67% involved in different kinds of jobs. Of this 67%, 40% believe that they can use only 5% of education they received, 30% believe that they can use 10% of education they received from their secondary education provision, and the rest 30% are using 15% of education that they gained. Thus 33% of the graduates drop out from the junior secondary school provision does not use any education for their jobs; other 67% use only 10% of their knowledge on an average. Junior secondary education helps the students who continue further education. Data reveal that graduate with junior secondary education contribute more than primary graduate as secondary graduates are more communicative.

Of the respondents with secondary education, almost 28% are involved in the jobs that are covered by junior secondary graduates. The job performance between junior secondary graduates and secondary graduates are almost same. 72% of the junior secondary graduates are involved in different kinds of jobs. Of this 72%, 64% received general education, 16% received Madrasha education and the other 20% received VET. On an average, graduates with general education use 15% of their education in doing the job, while Madrasha and VET graduate use respectively 10% and 25% of their gained knowledge from education. There is a very slight difference noticed in regards to the contribution of social development between junior secondary and secondary graduates. The group who continues higher education uses their secondary education to enroll into higher education.

Of the graduates with higher education, respectively 20%, 30%, 20%, 20% and 10% studied arts, business studies, science, professional courses (engineering) and medicine. The graduates from arts discipline view that they just use 50% of their higher secondary education in doing the jobs for which they are employed. Of the science graduates, only 30% have been employed in their respective subjects, others are employed in various fields. The graduates who are employed in their respective field use only 18% of their gained knowledge from their higher education. The science graduates who are working in a field other than their subject, only use 40% of their higher secondary education knowledge. Of the graduate with professional degree, 60% are involved with respective professions use 25% of their gained knowledge from higher education. The 40% of professional graduates employed in different fields use nearly 30% of their higher secondary education in doing the job. Of the medicine graduates, 70% are involved with their profession who use 40% of knowledge gained from the higher education, the remaining 30% who are involved other field use nearly 30% of their gained knowledge from higher secondary education. No significant difference on the contribution of social development between graduates with higher secondary education and higher education was marked.

Overall, primary, junior secondary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary graduates respectively use 14%, 12%, 16% and 11% of education that contribute towards the social development, while education provided by other providers contribute significantly more.

#### **4.2. Contribution Made by Other Provisions**

The 21st century has shaped the world in different ways. Not only technological changes but also changes in many aspect of social life have taken places. Some scholars argue that education has provided us such a wonderful and meaningful 21st century. However 21st century has created an atmosphere which is helping the expansion of education rapidly. Moreover,

different types of Medias and education providers apart from formal school system are playing the best substitute role of formal education system. Earlier, contribution of media and 21st century only benefited the higher educated group as they had a scope to access in those. These days, mass people are also the beneficiary of the modernized 21st century. People in a rural village use many types of electronic devices (i.e. mobile phone, watch, radio and television). This also helps them learn so many things that are related to their job (economic development) and to social development. Scanning the questionnaires, primary graduates who are related with farming activities learn 26% skills from radio and television. Interview data reveal that media and other modern innovations of 21st century changed the life pattern of primary graduates noteworthy which is connected to the social development.

Data received from secondary graduates reveal that media and other innovations of 21st century are power weapons in learning new skills, linking to economic and social development. Data further reveal that quality of education provided by the formal schools has deteriorated enormously. Students are not significantly learning skills from the formal schooling that are required for their employment. Twenty-first century not only teaches them new skills that are required to gain economic benefit but also make a significant changes on the behavior patterns for coping with the changes recently made in the globe. Thus, this somehow helps the graduates in contributing their economic and social development. With the scope of this research, it was not possible to determine the contribution made by other providers apart from formal school system, however it should be noted that other providers are one of the best substitutes or even in some cases other providers play vital role where education system just work as substitute.

Overall, it was found that primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary graduates respectively use 17%, 12%, 9% and 7% of the education gained from other providers ( i. e training, workshops, radio, newspapers, 21st century, TV etc.) for their jobs. On the other hand, they respectively use 18%, 22%, 28% and 26% of their knowledge gained from other providers that contributes towards social development.

However, interview data reveal that education gained through formal system make a foundation thus using education provided by other providers is possible. One respondent observes that "Formal education provides fundamental knowledge such as reading, writing and communication skills and knowledge of analytical analysis which are products of formal school system. This helps to achieve and use education received from other providers, thus without the education of formal system, other education will be ineffective".

#### **4.3. Disparity in Selecting the Aims of Education Provided by the Different Providers**

Both formal (institution of education) and out-of-school provisions of education (i.e. newspapers, radio, TV, technology, 21st century etc.) are working towards the development of a nation. Both providers mainly help a country to achieve economic and social development. Education is a serious concern of public policy while media receive attention of public policy when their broadcast is related to government policy. These days, media enjoys a reasonably high freedom on issue of forecasting cultural programmes (i.e. drama, cinema, talk shows and borrowed programmes from Western) and the advertisement and promotional programmes.

Formal education system considers that bondage to our own culture and heritage will make our life more systematic. This will help us in achieving our social development in the light of science. In contrast, because of market approach, media has developed a western model that help to sell their programmes. Thus, a contrast in the context of cultural, traditional and heritage learning has been noticed between school and out-of-school provisions of education. These days influence of media is much stronger than ever earlier thus schools are struggling to put forward their arguments to the students. One respondents note that "I do not agree that which provisions (school, family or TV) are providing right education towards the culture. But I found a huge gap between different providers. This makes a students' life problematic as they do not know which one should be considered." Not only students but also guardians are quite confused. However because of commoditization, we have to consider the ideology and theme from media. This makes a chaotic situation which makes our children argumentative. As a nation, if we are argumentative, we will never come to a consensus at any issue thereby causing hindrance to socio-economic development.

The advertisement programmes of different Medias have been widely criticized. Respondents urge that media survived by the advertisements. Within current climate of state policy, a little rule and regulation is available for advertisement policy. In order to earn money, media are forecasting any types of advertisement provided by the 'buyer'. This teaches a number of things which contrast local culture and tradition. One respondent views that "Currently advertisement and some other programmes forecasted by the Medias teach some unethical issues. You can see a number of advertisements teach the students how to be inattentive and irregular in attending schools and classes. Lying attitude is being also thought by the advertisement. Until and unless, the objectives of school and out-of-school provision will be the same, it will take a long time to achieve desired level of development".

#### 4.4. Gap in the School System in Contributing

Education of almost all the developed countries has been designed according to the need of present job market. Analyzing the trend of future job market is also considered in designing education. In order to progress economically, new sectors are developed in the context of globalization and business trend of 21st century. A manpower pattern is calculated. In the light of this calculation, different types of education and level of education are provided to create a working force. After the drop out, students join with the work force. Here we need to understand what is the drop out rate and who are the dropout group and where are they joining as a workforce. Accordingly, education is needed for providing and designing decent curricula that includes necessary skills important for this particular drop out group in doing the job. It is also important to understand what kind and level of education is important for our work pattern. After determining it, country needs to emphasize on providing this education by ensuring required enrolment. Stopping drop out should be an agenda from a particular kind of education which is related to work. This is not currently practiced in Bangladeshi education system. Currently Bangladeshi education system mainly concentrates on providing foundation for higher education. Pursuing higher education is considered as a fashion and tradition for privileged group. Higher education in Bangladesh does not necessarily provide public benefit while it provides private benefit, therefore not only privileged group but also others are more interested to go for higher education. Bangladesh needs to understand what kind of education is required for its present job pattern and the needs for future trends. The idea is to ensure this kind of education according to the students' capability which needs to be paid attention. However, the balance of income between different kinds of graduates also needs to be considered. Otherwise no one will be enthusiastic to procure the specific kind of education advocated by the government.

#### 4.5. Investment and Return

Five tables are drawn in order to have a brief understanding of the investment made on education and its return. Before noting any remark from the data presented in the Tables, it is worthwhile to understand the relevance of these data, its collection process and the interpretation. Notes in this regard are followed underneath of each table.

**Table 1: Unit Cost subsidised by exchequer based on development and revenue**

| <i>Level</i>  | <i>Unit Cost from Public subsidy</i> | <i>Total public unit cost</i> | <i>Unit Cost subsidised Publicly</i> |
|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Primary   | US\$ 4 700                           | US\$ 4 700                    | Not Included                         |
| Secondary<br>(General + Science Vocational)   | US\$ 6 700                           | US\$ 11 400                   | Not Included                         |
| Higher secondary level (Traditional + Polytechnic + Others)   | US\$ 4 800                           | US\$ 16 200                   | Not Included                         |
| Higher education (Bachelor & masters at different disciplines-General, Engineering, medicine, profession-based etc) | US\$ 17 000                          | US\$ 33 200                   | Not Included                         |

Source: Different government documents

The data presented in Table 1 have been compiled from different government documents which provide information on public revenue and development budget. Caution attempts were made in the process of compilation and calculation. The Table includes both development and revenue budgets invested to education. However, every cycle (i.e. primary, secondary, higher secondary and tertiary) required a specific period to complete. Therefore, it is important to calculate the interest rate on investment at every cycle which was not done. Parents and other sponsors also invest a substantial amount of fund for the development of education which is not included. If these were included investment towards formal provision of education would be much higher. However, it is now evident that being a very underdeveloped country, formal provision of education receives the highest priority in allocating the fund in Bangladesh. But we should not compare with other countries as investment in a sector always depend on the total economy of a country.

**Table 2: Return from school and other provisions**

| <i>Graduates</i> | School education |            |                  | Other provisions of education |            |                  | Average (Both) |
|------------------|------------------|------------|------------------|-------------------------------|------------|------------------|----------------|
|                  | Economic (%)     | Social (%) | Average (School) | Economic (%)                  | Social (%) | Average (Others) |                |
| Primary          | 0                | 17.0       | 8.5              | 14.0                          | 18.0       | 16.0             | 12.25          |
| Secondary        | 6.35             | 12.0       | 9.18             | 12.0                          | 22.0       | 17.0             | 13.09          |
| Higher Secondary | 13.38            | 9.0        | 11.19            | 16.0                          | 18.0       | 17.0             | 14.09          |
| Tertiary         | 18.78            | 7.0        | 12.89            | 11.0                          | 26.0       | 18.5             | 15.69          |
| Average          | 9.63             | 11.25      | 10.44            | 13.25                         | 23.5       | 18.37            | 14.4           |

Source: Analysis of data gathered from the respondents

**Table 3 - Comparison of Economic and social return**

| <i>Graduates</i> | Economic return |                     |             | Social return |                     |             |
|------------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------|---------------|---------------------|-------------|
|                  | School (%)      | Other provision (%) | Average (%) | School (%)    | Other provision (%) | Average (%) |
| Primary          | 0               | 14.0                | 7.0         | 17.0          | 18.0                | 17.5        |
| Secondary        | 6.35            | 12.0                | 9.17        | 12.0          | 22.0                | 17.0        |
| Higher Secondary | 13.38           | 16.0                | 14.69       | 9.0           | 18.0                | 13.5        |
| Tertiary         | 18.78           | 11.0                | 14.88       | 7.0           | 26.0                | 16.5        |
| Average          | 9.63            | 13.25               | 11.44       | 11.25         | 23.5                | 17.37       |

Source: Analysis of data gathered from the respondents

Data presented in the Tables 2 and 3 are quite similar. Two Tables are made in order to understand the different comparison using same data. Table 2 focuses on comparison on school provision to others while Table 3 tries to understand the comparison between economic and social development. Data used in both the Tables are collected through the questionnaire. Interview data is also used to testify and nullify the data achieved through questionnaire. Questionnaire data used in this Table are proven to be valid as they are the products to testify and nullify test results through random interviews. Questionnaires, used to conduct this survey, exercise a number of indirect indicators to understand the use of education of workers in order to perform their jobs and regular tasks required to undertake the social life and human needs perspective.

**Table 4 - Return after deduction of unemployment**

| <b>Graduates</b> | <b>Economic return</b>       |                                       | <b>Social return</b> | <b>Average</b> |
|------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
|                  | <b>Total economic Return</b> | <b>Deduction for unemployed group</b> |                      |                |
| Primary          | 7.0                          | 0.3                                   | 6.7                  | 12.1           |
| Secondary        | 9.18                         | 1.08                                  | 8.1                  | 12.6           |
| Higher Secondary | 14.69                        | 2.49                                  | 12.2                 | 15.4           |
| Tertiary         | 14.89                        | 4.49                                  | 10.5                 | 13.5           |
| Average          | 11.44                        | 2.04                                  | 9.4                  | 13.37          |

Source: Analysis of data gathered from the respondents; Provisional census report 2001

Data used in Table 4 are the products of both primary and secondary sources. Census report is used to understand the unemployment rate of different types of graduates. Thereafter, amount of total unused education is determined. This unused education mainly impacts on economic return. However, if the trend remains, it will affect on social return in the long run, since Alam (2007) explores that educated unemployed group bring social decadence and unrest. Table 4 shows that within the current climate, huge amount of education is totally unused in general. Total unused education is the highest at tertiary level where public subsidy is also the highest. Moreover, tertiary graduates practice a high level of corruption which is lowering the social return for tertiary provision. In fact, return from tertiary level is low as a whole; however the two reasons identified (higher unemployment rate amongst tertiary graduates and practice of huge corruption by tertiary graduates) force to have a negative return from the tertiary level (see table 5).

**Table 5 - Individual use of education of each stage of education ladder**

| <b>Grade</b>                      | <b>Contribution</b>  |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Use of primary education          | 12.1                 |
| Use of secondary education        | $12.6 - 21.1 = 0.5$  |
| Use of higher secondary education | $15.4 - 12.6 = 2.8$  |
| Use of tertiary education         | $13.5 - 15.4 = -1.9$ |

Source: Analysis of data gathered from the respondents

In the ladder of education, primary education is considered as a starting-edge while higher education is the ending-edge. It is factual that starting-edge of ladder is always required. The use of middle stages and final stage of the ladders always depends on situation/circumstance. While, if ending-stage of the ladder is used, starting and middle stages will be used automatically. We have identified five stages of education ladder in Bangladesh. Efforts were made to understand the specific use of each provision of education. Primary education is the starting-edge of the ladder thus it is used every time if education ladder is used. Considering this, it is realistic that use of primary education should be the highest. Table 5 shows that the use of primary education is 12.1% while tertiary provision scored 1.9%. The reasons of this negative score achieved by tertiary level have been discussed earlier.

### 5. Suggestions and Conclusion

Results show that there is a gap between Bangladeshi education system and employment pattern. It is significant to consider that having been dropped out from the school, individuals join with the labor market. Currently, drop out exists at all level of education. Our primary and secondary education provisions mainly work to make their graduates competent for higher studies. With the current climate, they do not produce workforce that is important for our existing



need. Moreover, a country does not necessarily need its all individuals to be highly educated. For a country, a certain proportion of population educated with higher education are required who are extremely qualified to contribute mainly in the field of research and knowledge creation. Countries are essentially in need of more technically and professionally sound graduates who have job-oriented knowledge. Bangladeshi education system nourishes the pupil to learn some basic theories than to understand the applied use of those theories. Based on the above results, some suggestions are made aiming that implementation of these suggestions will provide more ROR to the investment in education than the ROR received earlier.

- Legislators need to calculate the number of employed individuals sector by sector. It is also important to understand the probable job fields for primary and secondary graduates. Keeping these in views, skills required for jobs should be thought from the skills system.
- We need to identify how many higher educated professional graduates are required in respect to different field. Accordingly, a portion of students will be prepared for higher education based on their merits and interests. No economical and social privilege will be considered in selecting the students aiming to catering for certain purpose.
- Country shall not produce huge number of higher educated individuals than its need as it consumes a large proportion of budget.
- Country should explore the potential employment market within national and offshore and manpower will be developed with the view to the projection.
- Rules should be restricted for the professionals to work in their receptive field explicitly.
- It is important to make aware the employers and individuals not to suffer in diploma disease rather they need to understand the concept of job, ready for the graduates.
- Increasing budget for in-service training is required. Undertaking in-service training should be obligatory for the officials and workers. Saving budget from non-required higher education should be invested on VET programme.
- In conclusion, in the Third World, any research carried out invariably results in a long list of recommendations. Policy-makers consistently fail to follow any of the suggestions made or, at best, partially implement those. A comprehensive solution continues to be elusive whilst the prevailing culture of corruption and political influence prevents the effective implementation of polices. Suggestions emerging as results of this research follow, however, we wish to emphasise that straightforward and direct implementation of the suggestions may not fully address all the existing problems. However, we firmly advocate that, if a transparent and open policy structure is developed and political interference is minimized, the suggestions could go a long way towards solving at least some of the problems facing the education sector in Bangladesh, particularly related with the return of investment in education.
- It is also important to carry out an extensive research in the field of ROR in education of Bangladesh and also important to conduct some study focusing some aspects to have an in-depth knowledge.

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## Educational Research and Educational Reform in Bangladesh

Hosne ara Feroja

### Introduction

The beginning of human race and dawn of civilization, human beings had been inquisitive to explore, innovate, discover and invent things beyond perception and imagination. To get things done, Man has lots of quarries and to get the answers, man has to search for. Since then, research works have come into force. In the present changing world, 'Research towards reforms' - is demand of the day. The need for research was never more felt as it is now in order to search for the desired goals for MDG (Millennium Development Goal), EFA (Education for All), NSPR (National Strategies for Poverty Reduction). Amid rapidly changing social environments and conflicting opinion, research before reform has become a very important issue of the day. Evidence based policy and evidence based practice -these two terms may be used as tools to research the desired goals which may open wide into the world of research and may have impact in a direct or indirect way where findings are applied in research -oriented policy or practice.

### Constitutional provision for Education

The constitutional provisions of education system of Bangladesh are:

- To establish a uniform, mass-oriented and universal education and to extend free and compulsory education to all children to such a stage as may be determined by law.
- To relate education to the needs of society and to produce trained and motivated citizens to serve these needs.
- To remove illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law.

Since the emergence of Bangladesh there have been as man as five educations commissions / committees but a permanent education commission is yet to be formed. The major general set in the reports /documents are:

- To produce trained motivated, worthy and productive citizens for the country.
- To turn the population of the country into human resources within the shortest possible time.
- To inculcate moral, human, social and religion values in the learners.
- To help flourish democratic consciousness in the learners through to learn of other opinions and ideas and fostering life -oriented objectives and positive attitude towards man and society.
- To accomplish learners overall growth and development and enhance their creativity.

At present the entire education system of Bangladesh has been split out for Human Resources Development (HRD) and Poverty Reduction i.e. PRSP which has recently renamed NSPR.

### Structure of the Education System

Education in Bangladesh has three major stages - primary, secondary and higher education. Primary education is a 5-year cycle while secondary education is a 7-year one with three sub-cycles: 3 years of junior secondary, 2 years of secondary and 2 years of higher secondary. The entry age for primary is 6 years. The junior secondary, secondary and higher secondary stages are designed for age groups 11-13, 14-15 and 16-17 years. Higher secondary is followed by higher education in general, technical, technology and medical streams requiring 5-6 years to obtain a Mater's degree

### Streams of the Education System

Primary level education is provided under two major institutional arrangements (stream): general & madrasa. Secondary education has three major streams: general, technical-vocational and madrasa. Higher deduction, likewise, has 3 streams: general (inclusive of pure and applied science, arts, business and social science), madrasa and technology education. Technology education, in its turn, includes agriculture, engineering, medical, textile, leather technology and

ICT. Madrasa functioning parallel to the three major stages have similar core courses as in the general stream (Primary, Secondary and Post-secondary) but have special emphasis on religious studies.

### **Educational Research: An overview**

The need of research for the development of education was well reflected in the Education Commission Report of 1974. During the 2nd 5year plan (1980-85) education research gathered momentum with government initiative for Regional Workshops/ Seminars on specific educational issues. Education oriented inter-country visits sponsored by UNESCO intensified the felt need for undertaking educational research for extending support to policy formulation.

Under Universal Primary Education (UPE) scheme of the government several formative & summative evaluation studies were carried on by local researchers - thus preparing the ground for continuing research works.

Govt. bodies like Planning Commission, Donor Agencies like USAID, ADB, SIDA/CIDA became interested in pre-appraisal studies for future projects & impact studies for on-going projects. These activities helped to expand the scope of education research.

The process for educational research gained further impetus during the 3rd 5year plan (1985-90) and during the 4th 5year plan (1990-95) it opened into new opportunities.

#### **Research capacity building and research institutions**

For capacity building in research area, "research methodology" courses have been incorporated about three decades back in tertiary level education curricula which renders a positive impact on the learners and in creating a body of social researchers.

Other donor agencies, NGOs & autonomous research organizations commission research works on consultancy basis by expert individuals & local firms. There are specialized research institutes in public universities (e.g. IER, DU)<sup>1</sup> and research units in a few agencies under the Ministry of Education (like NAEM). Other research organization that deserve mention here are:

1. Centre for Policy Dialogue (CPD)
2. Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies (BIDS)
3. Foundation for Research on Educational Planning & Development (FREPD)
4. Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC)
5. The Institute of Education & Research (IER)
6. National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE)
7. National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM)

The research activities of the first three organizations cover almost all socio-economic issues including education. The research programmes of the last four organizations, however, have education and training as their focus.

Research studies conducted by these agencies provide input in decision-making and policy framing. However, the system of interlinking education policy framing and reforms with research finding has not been firmly institutionalized.

### **Education Research and Reforms**

A major intervention in primary education was made in 1986 when studies were undertaken on primary education to make it need-responsive and time befitting. The reform that resulted from this intervention was the remodeling of the primary education curriculum. From a traditional mode the curriculum was transformed into a competency based one bringing in radical changes in both pedagogy and learner assessment system.

A major reforms in the education sector occurred in the area of secondary curriculum in 1996. The Curriculum Implementation Task Force constituted for the purpose, met in large groups involving all stakeholders, small groups of experts and organized Focus Group Discussions (FGD). The findings of these research works were: (i) education standard is not up to the international level, (ii) acute moral degradation is observed in the youths, (iii) education is not

<sup>1</sup> IER: Institute of Educational Research; DU: Dhaka University

job-oriented (iv) education is not helpful to fully exploit the potentials of the learners. To address these, the following reforms in the secondary curriculum were initiated: (i) establishing equivalence of education (curriculum) standard to the international level (ii) inculcating values into the curriculum (iii) curriculum to be made need based and job-oriented (iv) curriculum to be designed in such a way that learners' potential is exploited to the fullest extent.

On the basis of these research findings, secondary curriculum had been reformed and revised in 1996.

A turning point in the area of linkage between education research and reform is observed towards the end of the last century.

A very structured education reform program had been undertaken at the advent of the new century. Ministry of Education assisted by IDA, undertook a reforms package covering four major areas:

- (i) Area 1: Effective System Management
- (ii) Area 2: Teacher Recruitment, Education and Training
- (iii) Area 3: Curriculum and Textbook
- (iv) Area 4: Vocational Educational and Training

The MOE-IDA decided to commission research studies on the broad areas to identify specific reform areas. Roundtables of all stakeholders, GOB-WB meet, small group expert meetings were the mechanisms for identification of specific areas for reforms. Decision was taken to carry out intensive studies on the identified areas so as to extend strong research support to reforms. The areas of study ultimately identified were:

1. Effective System management: Funding Formula for MPO<sup>2</sup> (Linking salary subvention for teacher to their performance)
2. Effective System management: Devolution of Administrative Functions
3. Effective System management: Rationalization of Facilities Department (FD)
4. Teacher recruitment, education and training: Establishment of Teacher Recruitment, Deployment and Education Authority
5. Establishing Teacher Standards and Incentives
6. Improving curriculum and textbook: Bifurcation of National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB)
7. Improving curriculum and textbook: Creation of Independent Textbook Approval Authority.
8. Improving technical-vocational education and training: Autonomy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institutions
9. Development of a Medium Term Policy framework for Education.

Teams comprising both national and international experts conducted 9 studies on the above 9 areas. On the basis of the study reports reform measures were undertaken.

In addition, MOE on its own undertook a number of reforms during the period 2002-2006. These reforms, as mentioned below are also based on focused studies on five relevant areas. The reforms that were materialized include: (i) reforms of different agencies under the MoE regarding their functioning (ii) improving economic conditions of non-government teachers through the introduction of teacher benefit, (iii) ensuring and strengthening community involvement in education management and local supervision, (iv) setting up an Educational Commission for overall reforms of education sector, (v) enhancing competencies education functionaries and teachers through extensive and intensive in-service training package.

Of these institutes NAEM, IER, NAPE, BRAC have done a significant number of studies on the burning issues of education. NAEM has conducted 23 research works over the last five years, all related to current policy, relevant research & discussion in education dealing with most current issues. IER of University of Dhaka is basically an institution for teacher education. IER's

<sup>2</sup> MPO: Monthly Payment Order

objective is to promote and provide facilities for advanced study and research education. It also brings out journal, which publishes research works. BRAC, the largest local NGO having countrywide network of work centers, has been conducting, research work mainly on non-formal and adult literacy .It has a database and a bulletin on research component for evaluation of its programmes. FREPD is a research organization with the main focus upon educational planning and development has done a number of valuable researches.

### **Reforms in Education**

Govt. had undertaken programmes and activities for enhancement of both quality & quantity of Primary, Secondary & Tertiary levels. Regarding quantity, a number of projects have been undertaken particularly for increasing the participation of girls in the capacities of both students & teachers. These have resulted in the expansion in the number of educational institutions, teachers & students & also in achieving gender parity both at the primary secondary levels of education. All these projects and programmes were undertaken based on the findings of need-based study.

### **Reforms in Primary Education**

#### **Nationalization of Primary Education**

The general goal for primary education is to help in the physical, mental, social, spiritual, moral human & aesthetic development of the children of Bangladesh & inspire them to have a vision for a prosperous life. With this end in view the govt. in 1974 enacted a law titled " The Primary Schools (Taking Over) Act, 1974 and nationalized primary education, making it free, placed it under a centralized administration and made the teachers state employees.

#### **Compulsory Primary Education**

In 1990 the Govt passed a law in Parliament, the Primary Education (Compulsory) Act, and made primary education compulsory from 1992 onwards.

#### **Ensuring access of children into primary system**

The attempt started almost three years back for streaming poor and poorest children into the system, measures like "Food for Education" was introduced. It started showing remarkable achievements. NER enhanced from 77% in 1999 to 87% currently. The Food for Education programme has been replaced by Children Stipend Programme where Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP II)

This program extends from 2003 to 2009 and represents a major strategy in the GoB'S EFA and poverty reduction agenda through the provision of Universal Primary Education and sustainable socio-economic development and equity in Bangladesh. The major interventions under this program, designed to improve the quality of primary education, include rebuilding, renovation and expansion of the Directorate of Primary Education (DPE), the National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE) and 54 Primary Training Institutes (PTIS) with the provision of computers and furniture, construction of new Upazilla Resource Centres (URCs), new and larger class rooms, sanitation facilities, supplying of text books, on time to all students, training for teachers and SMC members.

### **Reforms in Secondary education**

The general goal for secondary education is to accomplish learners overall growth & development. The govt. made different interventions over the years in order to enhance the quality of education at secondary level.

#### **Privatization of Textbook publishing**

An Independent Textbook Evaluation Committee (ITEC) independent of NCTB has been formed to ensure standardization of quality of textbooks for the learners at secondary level.

#### **School based Assessment (SBA)**

In the existing system of assessment learners are usually assessed mainly in the cognitive domain. With the introduction of School Based Assessment (SBA) six relevant skill areas have identified for learners assessment. They are - thinking, probing, personality, communications, cooperation & socialization.

### **School Performance Based Management (SPBM)**

It is a modern management method. Through SPBM performance of students, teachers & others is assessed to ensure improvement of secondary education. The objective of SPBM is to assist schools to themselves improve their performance through systematically addressing identified internal problems.

### **Reorganization of GPA System**

The GPA system had been introduced in the school final examinations in 2001 and at the higher secondary level subsequently. Before this introduction, the learners were ranked on the basis of absolute marking system. This has ensured correct judgments of the merits of the students.

### **Introduction of ICT in Education**

To keep pace with the fast moving world & to popularize science & technology education, government has taken lots of interest in the field of Information & Communication Technology. Steps had been taken to provide computers to educational institutions and education offices at district level. As a result flow of education information has been expedited.

### **Female Stipend Projects 1994 till date**

With a view to enhance girls' participation in secondary and higher secondary education, Govt. provided stipends to female students through a number of female secondary stipend projects covering the enter country.

### **Ensuring 30% female participation in the teaching force**

In addition to the 60 per cent provision of female teachers' recruitment in primary education, the govt. has implemented the decision to recruit 30% female teachers in different levels of secondary education. In order to facilitate the earmarked intake projects like Programme to Motivate, Train & Employ Female Teachers (PROMOTE) was undertaken.

### **Widening scope for girls' education**

In the technical education sub-sector, a total of six new girls' polytechnique institutions have been established to enhance the coverage of girls in the technical education. In the year 2001-2005 the total number of Poly technique institutions stands at 37 and that of vocational institutes to 64 as against 20 and 51 in 2001. The number of teachers & students increased correspondingly.

The establishment of Asian University of Women at Chittagong will provide world class university education of women for the Asia region & promote the stream of trained women leaders. The project is under implementation

### **Foreign Language Training Centre**

With a view to develop human resources in terms of language and communication skills, a project for establishment of language labs has been undertaken. Under this project 10 modern language labs are being established in 10 districts and divisional headquarters to impart English, Arabic and other languages for the unemployed youths seeking jobs outside the country.

### **Recent Interventions in Secondary education**

The govt. made different interventions over the years in order to enhance the quality of education at secondary level. The two most recent interventions are: Teaching Quality Improvement Project (TQI) & Secondary Education Sector Development (SESDP) Project.

Teaching Quality Improvement in Secondary Education Project (TQI-SEP) (2004-2011)

Launched in April 2005, the project aims at bringing qualitative change at secondary level education by improving the standard of teacher education & recruitment process. Under the project all untrained secondary teachers in the country will be trained up. The head teachers & school managers like chairman & member of SMC will also be given professional development training on pedagogy & educational administration. The project will ensure in- service, pre service & continuous training for the professional development of the classroom teachers.

### **Non-Govt. Teacher Registration & Certification Authority (NTRCA)**

This project has addressed two very important long-standing issues of secondary education. One of the issues relate to recruitment of quality teachers & teacher registration. One of the

major problems that secondary education undergoes is that the low quality teachers outnumbered quality teachers resulting in low quality of education. The parliament has already enacted the Non-Government Teacher Registration & Certification Authority Act 2005. The purpose of the Authority is to ensure the recruitment & appointment of quality teachers at the secondary level & bringing them under the fold of registration which was never done in the past. Henceforth teachers will need to be registered with the Authority for getting into the teaching profession.

#### **National Teacher Education Authority (NTEA)**

The second issue is regarding the establishment of a National Teacher Education Authority for coordination of all teacher-training activities in the country. This authority will also plan, design & develop various teacher education & training programmes for teacher preparation at the secondary level.

These interventions are expected to change the quality scenario of secondary education remarkably.

#### **Secondary education Sector Development Project (SESDP), 2007-2013**

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to poverty reduction in Bangladesh through improving the relevance of secondary education to the demands of the labour market, by strengthening management, accountability & transparency in secondary education. The other objectives encompass the improvement of curriculum, equity and access of secondary education.

#### **Reforms in Tertiary Education**

Measures have been taken to ensure monitoring the standard of higher education system and institutions through the established Accreditation councils. The UGC<sup>3</sup> has been entrusted with this responsibility.

#### **Problems and Challenges**

National Training Policy 2003 permits all the training institutes of Bangladesh to spend 10% of its total budget on research works. Still resource constraint remains there. Lack of trained manpower, paucity of fund hinders pursuing educational research.

Educational research is yet to develop as a profession. Linkage between educational research & educational reform is not yet well established. No central agency is there to preview research proposal & judge their merits nor is there any place where to collect & preserve research reports. However, the public research institutions like IER, NAEM, BIDS, NAPE, have done limited & occasional study, policy relevant research advocacy & policy discussion in education. Whatever are the findings have impact to some extent on reforming education.

Research capacity and culture in education is comparatively remaining less developed. Yet effects are being made by both public and private institutes to come up with research towards policy formulation in national level.

In order to make the education need based & demand driven, research culture must be stimulated especially in higher education institutions & universities.

#### **Recommendations**

1. The necessities of research before any reform is not only felt but needed in the changing world. to meet the queries we need to research.
2. Research should be need based, demand driven, and current research priorities should be identified.
3. Exchange of views and share of experiences in the changing roles and shifting paradigms of research activities to meet emerging issues should be established.
4. Linkage and corporations among research institutes should be maintained.
5. 'Research to Reform' should be institutionalized.

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<sup>3</sup> UGC: University Grants Commission



6. There should be central /national research institute where all research work would be preserved.
7. Policy should be supported by research.
8. A systematic mapping of research publications should be done and to monitor duplication of works.
9. National Research committee should be formed for overview /preview activities.
10. Professional association of researchers / leaders be formed.
11. Reforms should be guided by result of systematic enquiry and research.
12. Linkage between research policy and practice be ensured which can address policy relevant questions/queries which
  - a) May have greater impact on improved policy and reform.
  - b) May also emphasis on researchers' awareness of the specific needs of policy makers and practitioners when they frame and conduct their research.
  - c) May help develop a collaborative framework for addressing the common issues and priorities of objectives.

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## Planning for an Effective Teaching Force

K. M. Enamul Hoque

### Abstract

Teachers' role is very important to the process of Human Capital development through raise of educational levels, facilitate learning process, leaving together in a peaceful manner and reduction of inequality exists in the society. Teacher works with children and young adults, those who would contribute now and in near future as they grow and become adult towards building a more tolerant and equitable society. A large number of professionally developed teachers is required for an enlighten Bangladesh society through providing quality education. The Government of Bangladesh needs to take appropriate measures to recruit adequate numbers of teacher, ensure proper initial and ongoing professional development, create a learning environment in the schools, and ensure proper supervision. EFA and MDGs can facilitate the process of development although more attention is required for secondary and higher education. It is equally important to ensure a decent working environment, provide living wages, facilitate equal rights for women, and involve teachers and civil society members in policy-making, implementation, and monitoring the performance of the education sub-sector to optimize the efficiency of the system.

### Introduction

Bangladesh has a strong commitment to education and it also has one of the largest education systems in the world.<sup>1</sup> Despite rapid growth in last few decades in terms of access and completion rates the system itself is a barrier to further improvement, especially improving the quality of education towards achieving the EFA goals and MDG. Considering these facts, Government of Bangladesh has taken numbers of initiatives including PEDP II, TQI to improve the quality of education towards creating an equitable society. But still quality of education is a question.<sup>2</sup> The teaching forces can play a vital role to improve the quality of education. Despite lot of attention of the government to improve the quality still the existing system may not be able to develop human capital towards an equitable society. The teacher recruitment process and their professional development initiatives are yet to be transparent at a desired level; they are involved in non-academic activities and they lack collective bargaining power along with lack of participatory planning results in the marginalize section of people are facing more challenges to realize their potential and improve their livelihood.

### Objective of the paper

The major objective of the paper is to understand the causes and consequences of lack of quality education and its relationship with teacher's performance and identify some issues that need to be addressed on priority basis towards planning for an effective teaching force.

The specific objective is to look into the causes and consequences of lack of quality education, quality teacher, educational management, and its effect on the society along with searching some options to find a way out towards an equitable and enlighten Bangladesh society.

### Sources of Information

Information used in writing this paper is mostly from secondary sources to facilitate easy references and provide documented evidences. Lessons from participating five sub national level consultations with the representatives of the Teacher's Associations, concerned government officials and selected civil society representatives have been incorporated to contextualize the issues raised and formations of recommendations and conclusion of the paper.

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<sup>1</sup> PEDP II project document

<sup>2</sup> The Education Watch 2000 report shows that only 2% student (national average, urban situation is better) achieves all 27 competencies (out of 53 competencies 27 cognitive competencies was tested in that study) after completion of their 5 years primary education cycle.

### Education as a Vehicle for Development

Many ancient scholars in different countries including Plato, Adam Smith, William Petty and others emphasized the importance of education in development. Plato believed that education is indispensable to the economic health of a good society and it makes citizens 'reasonable men'. A considerable part of a community's wealth must be invested in education as education has high value in the society.

The role of education in reducing poverty and inequality and in enhancing development was widely recognized since the period of Adam Smith. Towards a greater social and economic equality and creation of wealth of nations, education was understood to be a feasible contributor. According to Marshall, "the most valuable of all capital is that invested in human beings".

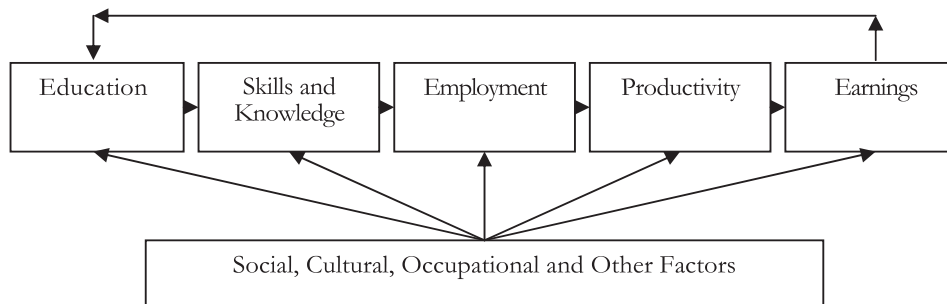
William Petty who first advocated equitable distribution of education; Lord Palmerston favored enhance of literacy for various social and political purposes; Horace Mann, Henry Barnard, James G Carter, Robert Dale Owen and George H Evans favored educational opportunities to be extended to poorer groups of population; Horace Mann viewed the school as an effective instrument to achieve justice and equality of opportunity and remove poverty.

Russia recognized education as "An increase of labor productivity is the only means to erase poverty in Russia and the best policy to achieve it is through the spread of education and knowledge" (Kahan, 1963).

According to Theodore Schultz, education has been considered as a strong foundation for economic growth and as an investment in human beings. In the human capital theory, education transforms raw human beings into productive 'human capital' by inculcating skills required by both the traditional sector and the modern sector of the economy, and makes individuals more productive members of the society, not only in the market place but also in the household and also in the whole society.

Both technical and general education contributes to economic growth through its ability to increase productivity of the population in general or of the labor force in particular, which leads to increase in individual earnings. The core of the human capital theory lies in the thesis that education increases productivity of labor force leading to increase in economic growth and reduction in poverty, as shown in Figure -1. This is true both at individual and macro levels.

**Figure - 1: Relationship between Education and Earnings in the Human Capital Framework**



Source: Tilak (2002 c)

There are numerous ways to understand how education influences socio-economic welfare at the individual level and the society as a whole, some of them are stated below:

**a. Individual level:**

- It increases one's human capital that leads to increase of productivity in the labor market, which results in increased earnings.
- Educated people make more informed choices in their consumption patterns.

**b. Societal level:**

- There is a positive correlation between education and health of the people; educated people health is comparatively better compare to uneducated one.
- Education reduces search time in labor markets for employment.

- There is an inverse relationship between average level of education and fertility rates, thereby reducing growth of population.
- There is a direct relationship between education level of children and their parents' education.
- It has an inverse effect on crime.
- It enhances social cohesion and foster technology development.

In addition to above, education generates a number of other positive externalities in the socio-economic and political cultural.

Most of the developing countries focus has been relatively more on primary education, including non-formal education and adult literacy.<sup>3</sup>

In calculating knowledge for HDI two third weight are being given on adult literacy while one third weight for combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ratio.

The rate of return studies conducted by Psacharopoulos observed that all levels of education are contributing to development but the rates of return decline by increasing levels of education that leads to furnish recommendation for reallocation of public resources away from higher education and in favor of primary education. As a result, today there is a strong presumption among many policy makers that secondary and higher education is not necessary for economic growth and development; on the other hand, it is literacy and primary education that is important for economic growth and reduction in poverty.

It was argued in some studies that besides the estimates on internal rates of return, increased national and international concerns for Education For All (EFA) also led to overall neglect of secondary and higher education in many developing countries. Efforts of governments, NGOs, including the UN agencies and bilateral aid organizations are concentrated their development efforts on primary education as an instrument of poverty reduction.

Comparatively very little attention is paid to a detailed examination of the relationship between higher education and development, or even secondary education and development. Recently it was observed that few international organizations turned their attention to post-basic education, realizing the connections between primary, secondary and higher education and development, and that goals relating to universal primary education or the Millennium Development Goals on poverty reduction cannot be reached by only targeting universal primary education.

#### **EFA and MDGs in Bangladesh**

Bangladesh played a proactive role in promoting EFA and MDGs at the national, regional, and international levels including E-9 countries. Bangladesh was signatory to both the Jomtien (1990) and Dakar (2000) Declarations. Dakar Framework for Action (DFA) reaffirmed the Jomtien goals and provided a comprehensive list of six EFA goals, 12 strategies and set the deadline till 2015 for achieving these goals. The EFA goals include early childhood care and education, free and compulsory primary education, equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills, adult literacy, gender parity, and enhance quality of education.

| <b>EFA Goals</b> |   |
|------------------|---|
| (i)              | Expand and improve comprehensive early childhood care and education, especially for the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children                              |
| (ii)             | By 2015 all children (particularly girls, disadvantaged and minorities) have access to and complete free and compulsory primary education of good quality       |
| (iii)            | Learning needs of all young people and adults are met through equitable access to appropriate learning and life skills  |
| (iv)             | 50% improvement in level of adult literacy, and equitable access to basic and continuing education for all adults.  |
| (v)              | Eliminating gender disparities in primary and secondary education by 2005, and achieving gender equality in education by 2015                                   |
| (vi)             | Improving all aspects of the quality of education, for recognized and measurable learning outcomes, especially in literacy, numeracy and essential life skills. |

<sup>3</sup> In calculating knowledge for HDI two third weight are being given on adult literacy while one third weight for combined primary, secondary and tertiary gross enrollment ratio.

The first four goals are sub-sectoral and target-oriented while the last two goals are crosscutting and improvement- sensitive.

Two relevant Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) are:

Goal 2: Achieve universal primary education  
 Target 3: Ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary schooling

Goal 3: Promote gender equality and empower women  
 Target 4: Eliminate gender disparity in primary and secondary education preferably by 2005 and to all levels of education no later than 2015

Immediate after the Jomtien Declaration Bangladesh introduced compulsory primary education and an Integrated Non-Formal Education Program, formation of new ministry (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education MoPME) and other associated measures to facilitate implementation, advancement and achievement of EFA including National Plan of Action (NPA I and NPA II), Primary Education Development Program (PEDPI and PEDPII), NFE policy framework etc.

### Formal Education System in Bangladesh

The formal education system in Bangladesh comprises three conventional stages--primary, secondary and tertiary education. Education System in Bangladesh is being managed and administered by two Ministries, Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME), and Ministry of Education (MoE) in association with the attached Departments and Directorates as well as a number of autonomous bodies.

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) was established to highlight the importance the government attached to basic education, comprising formal primary education (Grades I-V), pre-school or 'baby class' in primary schools or ECCE (yet to be formalized) and non-formal education that covers basic literacy, post literacy and continuing education, and life-long learning program for adolescents, youth and adults who have missed or dropped out of primary school early. The private sector manages the English medium kindergarten schools (about 16,000), without any oversight function or control exercised by the Government.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) manages the post-primary education that includes secondary,<sup>4</sup> higher or tertiary, professional, technical-vocational and religious streams of education, including primary school level stand-alone ebteyee madrassa and those attached to high madrassas (secondary and upwards).

University Grants Commission operates as an autonomous organization and serves as intermediary between MoE and the public universities (24) in respect of financial allocations and disbursements. It also approves and monitors academic programs of all universities (78), including the private ones (54).

The National Academy for Primary Education (NAPE), and 54 Primary Teacher Training Institutes (PTIs) are administered by the MoPME. The National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) and the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) including a unit for curriculum and materials development for primary education is under the administrative jurisdiction of MoE.

Both Ministries have their management structures at Divisional (regional), district and sub-district levels, operating independently in their own respective spheres. MoE deals with gender equity and equality (EFA Goal 5) separately for the post-primary levels, basically at secondary level.

There are 80,397 primary level schools with 344,789 teachers of which 124,990 (36.25%) are female teacher. There are about 16,225,658 (girls 8,134,437 = 50.13%) enrolled in these schools. In secondary level there are 18,500 schools with 232,929 teachers of which 46983 (20.17%) are female teacher. There are about 7,398,552 (girls 3,868,014 =52.28%) students

<sup>4</sup> Unlike many other countries, in Bangladesh, secondary education covers three levels: lower secondary (grades VI - VIII)/(in some country it goes by the name of upper primary), secondary (grades IX - X) and higher secondary (grades XI -XII)

enrolled in these schools (BANBEIS, 2006). In addition to above there are about 133,204 NFE centre with 93,080 teacher or facilitators of which 81,416 (87.47%) are female. There are about 4,593,019 (female 2,926,022 = 63.70%) learners enrolled in these NFE centre (CAMPE 2006).

#### **Existing state of quality of education in Bangladesh**

The term "quality" cuts across in various education issues. It focuses on literacy, numeracy and life skills. Quality Education includes the presence of:

- well-trained teachers and active learning techniques;
- adequate facilities and learning materials;
- a relevant curriculum that can be taught and learned in a local language and builds upon the knowledge and experience of the teachers and learners;
- an environment that not only encourages learning but is welcoming, gender-sensitive, healthy and safe;
- a clear definition and accurate assessment of learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills, attitudes and values;
- healthy, well-nourished and motivated students;
- participatory governance and management;
- respect for and engagement with local communities and cultures; and
- are linked with national goals for education and positive participation in society.

Therefore, major characteristics of quality education includes the physical facilities, nationally accepted curriculum, quality text books and supplementary reading materials, adequate teaching aids, properly trained teacher, learning environment, adequate contact hours, and good governance. Teacher needs to play a crucial role for ensuring quality education. The combination and application professional experience and enthusiasm of a teacher can create a learning environment that leads to quality education.

Commendable growth in access and achieving gender equity are the major achievements of those efforts. But in terms of efficiency, quality and achievement of learners, it needs to go a long way.

The Government of Bangladesh put numerous efforts to improve the state of quality of education, in particular, at the primary level. The Second Primary Education Development Program (PEDP II) tried to address the quality of education issue through four major components; those are:

- a. Organizational Development and Capacity Development,
- b. Quality in School and Classrooms,
- c. Quality improvement through Infrastructure Development, and
- d. Equitable Access to Quality Education.

Despite all efforts there are some 'Zones of Exclusion and Vulnerability' as listed below:

Zone -1: Out of school and never enrolled themselves in any type of institutions at the entry level

Zone - 2: Drop-outs from Primary level institutions

Zone - 3: Virtual and silent drop-outs

Zone - 4: No transition to institutions beyond primary level

The out of school and never enrolled refers to children of primary age group, who are out of school and have never been enrolled in any school. They constitute about 10% of all children (2004) poorest disadvantaged group - Extreme poor, women Headed families, working children, street children, children with special needs, Ethnic linguistic Minorities, Remote inaccessible area.

The second category refers to dropout or push out. Economic poverty, opportunity cost, and household work, etc leads to dropout of 48% children of the primary age cohort. Of which as significant numbers of children are actually pushed out from the system because of overcrowding and unfriendly school environment.

The third category refers to students physical presence but psychological, mental and intellectual absence. They are large, and have impact on quality, poor family environment, poor

teaching learning process, child labour, etc.

The fourth and last category of exclusion refers to despite of high transition rate, but effective participation is small. Survival rate is low, lowest for girl of the poorest families.

The National Plan of Action (2003 - 2015) for the Education For All (EFA) targeted that the Gross and Net enrolment rate for both boys and girls would be 110 and 95 respectively and the dropout rate should be reduced to 5% as summarized below:

**Table -1: Summary of Targets of EFA NPA II, 2003-2015 (In percent)**

| Indicators                                   | Benchmark 2000 | Target for the Selected Years |           |           |
|--|----------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
|  |                | 2005                          | 2010      | 2015      |
| ECCE (both formal and non-formal)            |                |                               |           |           |
| Formal ECCE (Primary School Attached)        | 22             | (# 1.0 m)                     | (# 1.0 m) | (# 1.0 m) |
| Non-Formal ECCE (Family and Community-based) |                | 15                            | 20        | 15        |
| Primary Education                            |                |                               |           |           |
| Gross Enrollment Rate (Total)                | 96.5           | 103                           | 108       | 110       |
| Gross Enrollment Rate (Boys)                 | 96.0           | 102                           | 107       | 110       |
| Gross Enrollment Rate (Girls)                | 97.0           | 104                           | 107       | 110       |
| Net Enrollment Rate (Total)                  | 80             | 83                            | 92        | 95        |
| Net Enrollment Rate (Boys)                   | 82             | 87                            | 91        | 95        |
| Net Enrollment Rate (Girls)                  | 85             | 89                            | 93        | 95        |
| Dropout Rate                                 | 33             | 25                            | 14        | 05        |
| Completion Rate                              | 67             | 75                            | 86        | 95        |
| Quality Achievement in Primary Education     | 05             | 30                            | 65        | 90        |
| Non-Formal Education                         |                |                               |           |           |
| NFBE-Access/Coverage                         | 11             | 19                            | 48        | 33        |
| Adult Literacy Rate (15-24 Age Group)        | 66             | 73                            | 82        | 95        |
| Adult Literacy Rate (25-45 Age Group)        | 56             | 70                            | 78        | 90        |

Source: EFA NPA II

Besides the state efforts there are some civil society initiatives to monitor the state performance in education along with policy recommendations which is known as Education Watch Bangladesh who looked into the different dimensions of quality that includes education provisions, education resources in schools, nature of deprivation, quality in the classroom, management at school and local level. They identified 7 priority action areas in primary education to promote Quality with equity as follows:

1. Recognition of inequity and deprivation in primary education as a serious problem and a commitment to deal with it
2. Addressing at the school level the syndrome of poverty and disadvantage affecting student performance
3. Effective implementation of competency-based primary education
4. Decentralization, local planning and management trial
5. Supporting development and use of professional capacity
6. A greater voice of stakeholders at all levels
7. Addressing governance issues.

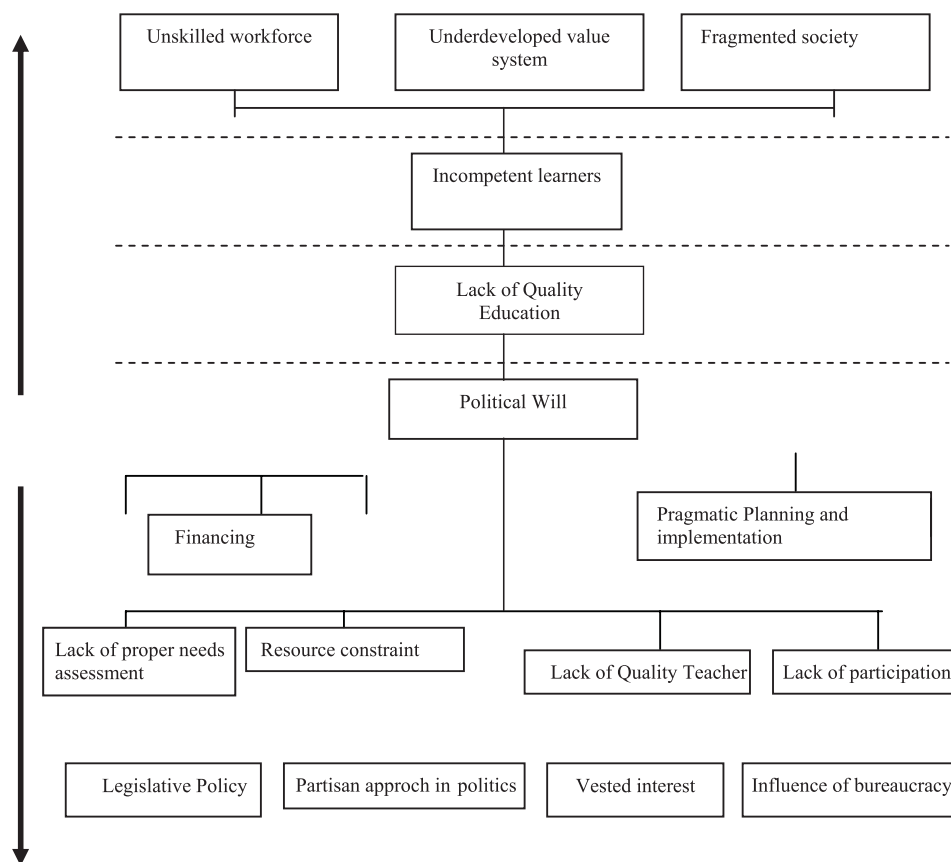
The Education Watch study also suggested that the Government policy for funding educational institution is inadequate. Government should evolve policy giving emphasis on requirements. Public funding on education needs to be increased; negligible public sources for improving the quality of education at primary and secondary are now used for payment of salary. More funds for improving quality should be made available on the need basis. The private expenditure of rich students is many times higher compared to poor students. The poor fall way short of being

able to meet even the most basic requirements. To remove social disparities safety net programs for the poorest are required. A policy reorientation and consequent changes in public financing pattern in favor of the socially disadvantaged students and institutions as well is required. School feeding, educational support program may be initiated in all types of institutions.

**Causes and Consequences of Lack of Quality Education**

There are numbers of issues that causes lack of quality education. Here I adopted a problem tree that shows major causes of lack of quality education are inadequate financing, lack of political will and lack of programmatic planning and its implementation which results in incompetent learners and that leads to unskilled workforce, underdeveloped value system and fragmented society.

**Figure 2: Causes and consequences of lack of quality education**



Again each of the causes as some other roots causes as shown in Figure- 2. To promote equity in the society we have to address those roots causes. In this paper I have tried to emphasize on the financing and programmatic planning issues with a little touch on the issue of political will.

As each of the causes deserve huge analysis and discussion, here I would concentrate my discussion mainly on pragmatic planning and financing issues with a little touch on the political will relate issues as detailed below:

**Financing Education in Bangladesh**

Despite the education sector has been receiving the highest public budgetary allocation in recent years (during the last 5 years, the allocation has been around 14% of the total public budget composed of about 9% in revenue budget and about 5% in development budget) still



there is resource constraint and lack of proper needs assessment for ensuring quality education at all levels of citizens. Education Watch 2006 identified the following major sources for financing education in Bangladesh:

- Public allocation
- Individual and community (donations)
- Institution's own assets
- Student's family (private expenditure)

The trend of the allocation to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME) as percent of total allocation to all sectors and also of GDP is a slowly increasing one although there have been small decreases in one year or another. Most of the allocation to MoPME goes to primary education and a small proportion to mass education.

Projects are being implemented to improve the quality of education through, for example, improving the quality of teachers. Second Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP II), one of the major projects, initiated in 2003, is due to be completed in 2008. It aims at improving the quality at all aspects of primary education.

Public expenditure in primary and secondary education in Bangladesh remains low in comparison with other developing countries and insufficient to ensure acceptable quality. Per student public expenditure in a year in government primary schools for 2005 was Tk 1,728 followed by Tk 1,656 in the Ebtedayee Madrasas, and only Tk 664 in registered nongovernmental schools. At the secondary level, the expenditure is Tk. 2,461 for per student in the government-assisted schools (98 percent of all general secondary schools) and Tk 3,810 for the secondary level (Dakhil) Madrasas.

Negligible public resources are available, specifically aimed at improving the quality of education at either primary or secondary level. Public resources provided are mostly for salaries, construction, and maintenance. Although, stipends provided are conditional upon attendance and examination results of certain standards, this is not enough to ensure quality of education of even the stipend-receiving students. However, budget allocations were always supply driven in Bangladesh. There was lack of proper needs assessment to ensure access to basic education for all children of the primary age cohort. Consequently, the state is not in a position to disclose facts related to proper estimate for achieving the target for achieving the universal basic education. Although the government of Bangladesh is committed to allocate 6% of the GDP for the education sector but due to resource constraint the actual allocation is about 2.2% of the GDP. To establish right to education, rights in education and right through education. A result based planning and monitoring mechanism could help in strengthening proper needs assessment and advocating for demand driven budgeting for ensuring quality learning environment.

#### **Political will**

The political will is facilitated by the legislative policy, partisan approaches in politics, interest of a vested group of people and influence of the bureaucracy. It was observed the 'the Bengal (Rural) Primary Education act, 1930' provided a comprehensive guideline to implement compulsory primary education policy including adequate guideline relating to recruitment of teacher, their roles, responsibilities and rights. It also looked into the financing, decentralization of powers, community engagement, and financing issues. But due to the great depression followed by Second World War this act could not be implemented. Later on a number of new acts and Education Commissions were formed but none of them could be implemented in a comprehensive manner due to lack of political will.

Another significant trend was observed in case of education policy or education commission reports that after a changeover in political regimes all efforts of predecessors have been postponed by the successors that result in no consistent effort to the development of education sector in Bangladesh.

Whenever a change is initiated, observance of vested interested groups was prominent, for example, mode of operation in case of Assistant Upazilla Education Officer (AUEO) and Upazilla Resource Centre.

The bureaucracy has high influence on the overall educational management. Bureaucracy often ignores the pedagogical aspects of education; frequent changes of the personnel in educational management result in weak education system and lack of quality education. Formation of an Education Cadre could overcome some of these barriers in a sustainable manner.

### Pragmatic Planning and Implementation

In different literature including the PEDP II document it is argued that student teacher ratio needs to be at least 1:40 for the primary level institution but the national statistics shows that there is serious shortage of teacher exists in the country. It was observed by an UNSCO commissioned study that the teachers in GPS are relatively better qualified compared to RNGPS teachers and Ebtedayee Madrasas, most of the teachers in RNGPS and Madrasa are untrained, quality of education in RNGPS and Ebtedayee Madrasa is relatively poor, large number of teachers have to be recruited every year to fulfill the requirement, existing facilities cannot ensure training of all teachers as shown in the Table -2 below:

**Table -2: Situation of teachers in GPS and RNGPS during the year 2005 and 2015**

| Particulars                                      | Situation in 2005 |           | Situation in 2015 |           |
|--|-------------------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|
|  | GPS               | RNGPS     | GPS               | RNGPS     |
| No. of teachers                                  | 162,084           | 76,566    | 199,682           | 75,223    |
| No. of students                                  | 9,483,891         | 3,572,686 | 8,196,156         | 3,087,582 |
| Student-teacher ratio                            | 58.51             | 46.66     | 41.05             | 41.05     |
| Shortage of teacher at the moment (1:40)         | 75,013            | 12,751    | -                 | -         |
| Teacher needed by 2015                           |                   |           | 82,300            | 6,023     |
| Data source: BANBEIS 2006 and DPE Data base 2002 |                   |           |                   |           |

Overcrowded classes could provide a little chance for teachers to follow-up student's educational achievements and also little chance for students to participate actively in the teaching-learning process. Thus it negatively influences the efficiency of the education process. The pupil-teacher ratio in the government primary schools is 58: 1 which is much higher than the desired level.<sup>5</sup> If we analyse the same at upazila level, the pupil teacher ratio in 31 upazilas is less than 40, and in 342 upazilas is more than 50. This clearly shows the requirement of recruitment of more teachers for government primary schools. In case of RNGPS if we look at the pupil teacher ratios at Upazila level, it varies from as low as 11 pupils per teacher to as high as 128 pupils per teacher. In 59 Upazilas, the pupil teacher ratio in RNGPS is less than 40, and in 275 Upazilas, it is higher than 50. It seems that the district Rangamati generally has the minimum pupil-teacher ratio.

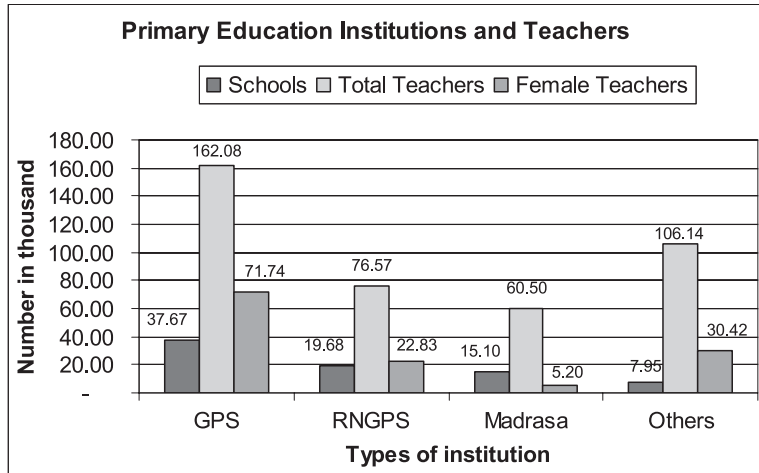
Only 4,546 (12%) GPS and 669 (9%) RNGPS run single shift primary school across the country while 32,975 and 17,797 GPS and RNGPS run double shift schooling.<sup>6</sup> There are about 900 and 600 contact hours respectively for single and double shift schools. PEDP-II targets to raise the number of contact hours between teachers and students through increase of number of single shift schools. The staggered schools in the country provide little opportunity to the teachers to improve the quality of students' performance and as a result it affects the efficiency of the whole system.

While looking at the gender aspect it was observed that except madrasa gender parity has been achieved through recruiting female teachers as shown in figure 3 below:

<sup>5</sup> The National Education Commission report -2003 recommended that the pupil- teacher ratio would be 30: 1 during next ten years and it would be 25: 1 during subsequent ten years.

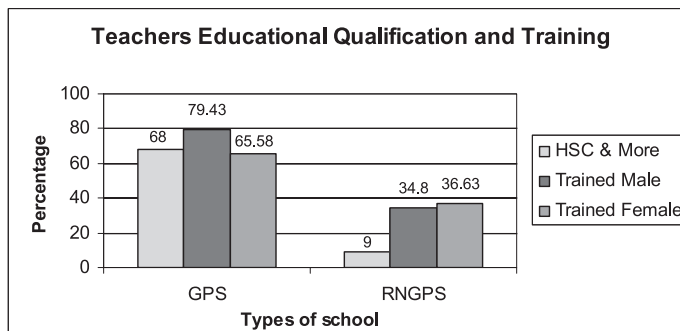
<sup>6</sup> The National Education Commission report -2003 recommended that the minimum contact hours for class one and two would be 720 hours and 1275 hours for class three, four and five. In this regard school days needs to enhance at 220 days a year.

**Figure - 3: Number of primary level institutes and teachers (in thousands)**



Primary school teachers are supposed to have one-year "Certificate-in-Education"(C-in-Ed) training that prepares them in pedagogical discipline, before taking classes independently. For various reasons, a large number of teachers are working in school without receiving this training as shown in figure 4 below:

**Figure - 4: Number of teachers in primary schools showing their basic education and training (in percent).**



It was also observed in different studies that there is urban rural disparity and within each sector there is classification of schools. Though there is a concept of catchments area, the schools are not properly distributed across the country, especially the ethnic minority groups and difficult to access areas are getting less attention to the policy-makers.

Most of the primary schools lack proper academic and management leadership that needed to perform their responsibilities effectively. According to the government directives the head teachers' key role is to ensuring effective functioning of a school but in the real life situation she works as any another teacher. The selection process of head teacher, time available to them, their training and degree of freedom do not support or encourage a leadership role.

Classroom observation by a research team found that there were serious deficiencies in subject knowledge, in particular, Mathematics, English and Bangla that caused students to be subjected to wrong information, explanation, examples and pronunciation.

The salary and benefits package both in primary and secondary level is not decent to provide honorable livelihood to the teachers and thus it does not attract bright young professionals in teaching. Consequently, the inferior one who cannot manage a job in other sector usually picks

teaching as profession though there are some exceptions as well.

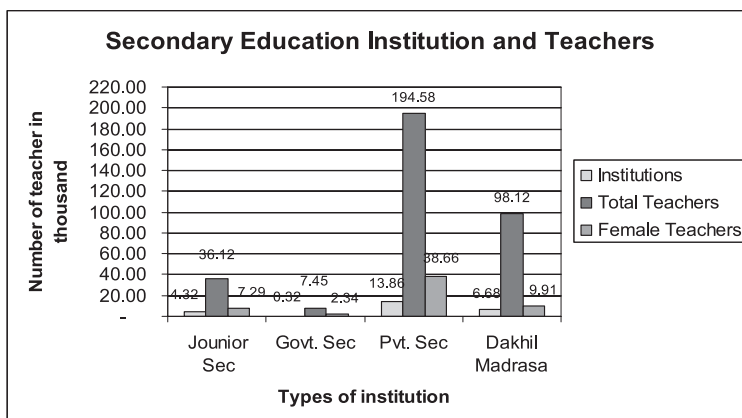
In secondary level it was observed that basic qualification of teachers was relatively better, half of the teachers in private school and less than one tenth of teachers in madrasa are trained and quality of education in those private school and madrasa is relatively poor as shown in table -3 and figure 5 & 6 below:

**Table-3: Situation of teachers in secondary schools during the years between 2005 and 2015**

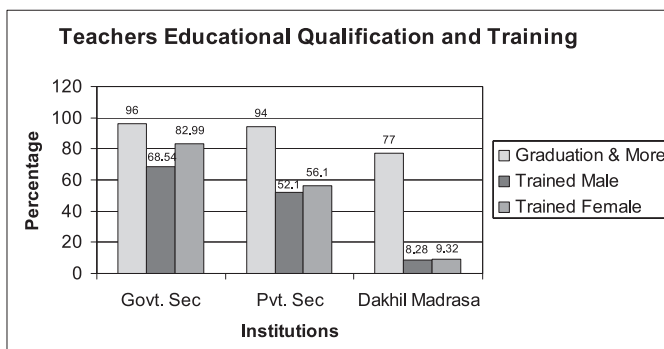
| Particulars                              | Situation in 2005 |           |           | Situation in 2015 |
|--|-------------------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|
|  | Public            | Private   | Both      | RNGPS             |
| No. of teachers                          | 7,452             | 194,5847  | 202,0366  | 283,070           |
| No. of students                          | 221,887           | 6,265,751 | 6,487,638 | 8,793,770         |
| Student-teacher ratio                    | 29.77             | 32.20     | 32.11     | 31.06             |
| Shortage of teacher at the moment (1:30) | none              | 14,272    | 14,218    |                   |
| Teacher needed by 2015                   |                   |           |           | 93,449            |

Data source: BANBEIS 2006

**Figure-5: Number of secondary level institutes and teachers (in thousands)**



**Figure-6: Secondary level institutions teacher's basic education and training (in percent).**



In addition to above it was also observed that the teacher recruitment process in private institutions is faulty. Quality of teachers training is poor and still not getting proper attention from the competent authority, TTCs do not have professionally competent trainers and there are some gaps between the curricula of school and teacher training.

One of the recent memorandum of the teacher's association shows that most of the important position in the secondary and higher secondary level is vacant for a long period of time as detailed in Table 4 below:

**Table - 4 : Status of Academic Supervision Position at the Secondary Level**

| Sl. | Name of the Position                 | Positions available | Positions filled-in | Vacancy |
|-----|--------------------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------|
| 1.  | Deputy Director                      | 9                   | 0                   | 9       |
| 2.  | School Inspector                     | 8                   | 2                   | 6       |
| 3.  | School Inspector (Female)            | 8                   | 4                   | 4       |
| 4.  | Assistant School Inspector           | 8                   | 0                   | 8       |
| 5.  | Assistant School Inspector (Female)  | 8                   | 0                   | 8       |
| 6.  | Head Teacher                         | 170                 | 37                  | 133     |
| 7.  | Head Teacher (Female)                | 147                 | 45                  | 102     |
| 8.  | Assistant Head Teacher               | 200                 | 87                  | 113     |
| 9.  | Assistant Head Teacher (Female)      | 164                 | 78                  | 86      |
| 10. | District Education Officer           | 64                  | 24                  | 40      |
| 11. | Assistant District Education Officer | 64                  | 43                  | 21      |
|     | Total                                | 850                 | 320                 | 530     |

Source: Secondary Teacher's Association memorandum February 2008

It expresses serious lack of professionalism and also lack of political will among the political leaders and the bureaucracy. As the responsibilities of most of the positions are being performed by someone, who doesn't belong to the education cadre or by official in-charge, the performance of these positions 'somehow' affecting the quality of education.

#### **ILO/UNESCO Recommendation on Teacher's Status**

International Labor Organization (ILO) and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) furnished about numbers of recommendation in 13 broad heads to improve the quality of education and maintain a minimum standard of teacher's situation in 1966 which seems still valid for country like Bangladesh that includes the following:

- initial and continuing training
- recruitment
- advancement and promotion
- security of tenure
- disciplinary procedures
- part-time service
- professional freedom
- supervision and assessment
- responsibilities and rights
- participation in educational decision-making
- negotiation
- conditions for effective teaching and learning
- social security

#### **Role of Teacher Associations**

Ideally the teacher's associations are the collective bargaining agent but over the period they become allies of different political parties and broken down into associations. In some cases the political government uses these small groups to pursue vested interest as well. Now there are more than 11 leading teacher's association working on the teachers issues. Many of them are using the same legal entity (one registration number is used by different associations) and the election or selection is yet to be transparent at a desired level.

As most of the times these associations are busy with the salary raise and promotion issues (getting upper scale), they could not put adequate attention or do justice to their roles and responsibilities towards enhancing quality of education and nation building activities. Consequently, over the period they lose their credibility and voice as well. Some of the example of such practices includes:

-The Teacher's Associations speak less about the initial and continuing training issues. Despite drawing attention to the teacher's shortage issues, they saw sending teacher for training as an obstacle to perform their responsibility. The Teachers Association could have taken a position on recruitment of adequate number of teacher and provide proper training to each teacher before entering to the classroom.

- They deserve promotion or formation of education cadre without preparing themselves through proper professional development and improvement of the learning environment at the classrooms.

- Work tenure is secured for the teachers of government schools. But it is not secured for the nongovernmental schools and madrasas both in primary and secondary level. In contrast, recent studies shows that the student's performance of the government schools is much better compared to that of the nongovernmental one. They are also 'urban bias' in case of location of the government schools except the primary one. Teacher's Associations could negotiate about equitable distribution of schools and they could also remind the state functionaries about the state obligation for providing basic education to every citizens of the country.

- The Teacher's Associations are not in favor of any kind of disciplinary measures against a teacher for nonperformance or underperformance. However, disciplinary measures are taken by the state only in case of misconduct as defined by the law of the land.

- Part-time service is ban in the context of Bangladesh both in primary and secondary levels. However, there are number of evidences of such practices by untrained and less qualified individuals. Difficult to access areas (like Char, Haor, and ethnic minority areas) are major victims of such practices.

- Standard norms and practices of professional freedom are yet to institutionalize in Bangladesh. The Teacher's Associations could have play a proactive role to formation of such norms through advocating with the policy-makers, which is yet a dream in this country context.

- The existing process supervision and assessment of teacher's performance are not congenial for promoting better learning environment. The Teacher's Association could have work as a pressure group for proper supervision and performance based assessment system in place.

- Both teachers and Teacher's Association are reluctant about performing the responsibilities but they are very loud about theirs rights. Without performing responsibilities claiming for certain rights could not draw the attention of the policymaker. In addition to above, they failed to form adequate number of allies to realize their rights.

- As one of the major stakeholders, involvement of Teacher's Association representatives in educational decision-making is essential. But as they are fragmented, their concerns was not listened by the policymakers. Consequently, they looses their ability negotiate in a systematic manner too.

- As consequence of weak negotiation skills, enabling conditions for effective teaching and learning process is yet to achieve, which results in inadequate competencies and low moral among the students. The Teacher's Associations could have negotiated for a better working condition and a decent pay for all levels of teachers.

- Although there is a provision for promotion but due to filling some suits by a group of teachers the existing system doesn't allow a teacher to be promoted to the higher level or to apply for the same since 1982. Negotiating those cases with the concern personnel and the concerned authorities could have created an opportunity to reopen the window. Formation of an education cadre could have promoted socio-economic security of a teacher.

But for all these issues a well educated, properly elected and committed Teacher's Association along with strong unity within the membership is essential.

### **Way forward**

With regard to financing issues it deserve serious attention and appropriate action by the government and all others concerned that include increase of public expenditure on primary and secondary education, improve of the quality of education at both primary and secondary levels while facilitating at the same time steady expansion of education at both the levels, promote equity in government support to different types of primary and secondary educational institutions regardless of their location (rural or urban), provide decent wage to the teachers, and provide special support to the students coming from the poor and disadvantaged families to expand their educational opportunities.

With regard to the political will strong political commitment, consistent effort by the political parties, long-term vision for nation building and formation of a committed workforce through formation of education cadre and permanent education commission is essential. Rethinking about one education ministry instead of two different ministries for primary and post primary level is essential.

Regarding pragmatic planning and implementation one must take care of better working conditions for teachers that lead to better learning conditions for learners. To ensure a better working condition first of all the competent authority needs to provide a decent working environment; a safe and healthy learning environment for teachers and learners, appropriate class-sizes and adequate pedagogical resources in the classroom. Secondly, competent teachers recruitment and provide with a modest living wages; salaries that allow for decent living conditions and that are regularly paid. Thirdly, an initial and ongoing professional development of teachers is essential. It would provide opportunities to gain and to develop professional skills, to be kept up-to-date with new information and pedagogical techniques, and to develop their career. Fourthly, involvement in policy-making; to ensure that new policies reflect the reality of the classroom, social dialogue should be an integral part of education planning and policy formulation representatives of Teacher's Association representatives and members of the concerned Civil Society Groups. Fifthly, unite the associations as collective bargaining agent to defend and enhance teachers' rights i.e. the working conditions, as well as quality assessments of teaching procedures, must be negotiated between representatives of the government or employers and the representative Teacher's Associations. Finally, ensure equal pay and equal rights for women.

### **Conclusion**

Quality education needs quality teacher. Teachers' influence is the highest in the life of a student. All the happiness, breath, and dreams, etc. has high influence on the formations of a student's life. But at present teachers faces inferiority complex as it is no more an honorable job. If someone can't find any other job only then he or she might choose teaching as a profession. If we really want to improve the quality of education we need to invest more to have a professionally developed teaching force with proper job satisfaction and promotion opportunity. Proper measures need to be taken for elimination of private cost of education to ensure balance growth and reeducation of inequality and poverty.

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