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Editorial

The NAEM JOURNAL is a biannual publication of National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM). The Journal is issued to disseminate the latest research on education and social science.

Last year, the 29th issue of NAEM Journal was published despite countless barriers caused by the pandemic. We are really happy to the fact that we have published the 30th issue of the journal in time without making any further delay. The 30th issue of NAEM Journal integrated Eight (08) articles about different aspects of educational research and authored by reputed researchers and academicians.

The 1st article is about the process approach for teaching English writing skill in secondary schools. The 2nd article is on teacher's professionalism and their professional development practices that have not yet met at the scale of satisfaction at the secondary level which has been explored in student's performance in the public exam. This 3rd article is focused on the transition and inclusion of student's with disabilities from special school to mainstream education in Bangladesh. The 4th article reflects psychological stress on tension among secondary school teacher's of Dhaka City. The 5th article is to develop an integrated model for promoting critical thinking among learners of secondary level. The 6th article is related to the effectiveness, efficiency and challenges of the Diploma Engineering program in Bangladesh. The 7th article is about women's perception, participation and aspiration of English language learning at TVET Institutions. The 8th article is to foster democratic skills through learning techniques.

It is to be noted that the ideas, findings and impressions in these article are absolutely provided by the authors and in no way reflect the policies or strategies of NAEM.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the scholars, researchers, NAEM faculties and support services for publishing this issue.

Rokshana Bilkis

Director (Research and Documentation), NAEM
and
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Process Approach to Teaching English Writing Skill in Secondary Schools

Rokshana Bilkis¹
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Sheikh Shahbaz Riad³
Mohammad Abu Hanif⁴

Abstract

This study tried to explore the feasibility of process writing in secondary schools. However, the study also tried to explore what approach teachers used to teach English writing; what the outcomes of the process approach are to teaching of writing; what challenges were there to implement the process approach; and what the opinions of the teachers and the students were regarding the process writing. Qualitative research approach was employed as it is possible to go deep into the research problem through qualitative approach (Bogdan & Biklen, 2009). The researchers employed pre-test and post-test method with forty six (46) ninth grade students of Quantum Cosmo School and College, Bandarban. Four (04) interventions were provided and during each intervention, there was a pre-test and a post-test. Moreover, six (06) facilitating teachers of the school were interviewed using a semi-structured interview schedule; and FGI was organized with all the students in three groups. Although there were pre and post tests, data were not quantified. The collected data were transcribed, coded, and then categorized based on the themes of the research questions. The major findings included: teachers used traditional product approach to teaching of writing; the process approach can minimize students' mistakes in writing and help students write longer compositions; the challenges of implementing the process approach included large multi-level classes, lack of teacher training, and examination system favouring memorization. The teachers and the students were found to be positive towards the process approach. If introduced and implemented properly, the process approach may improve the English writing situation at secondary level institutions in Bangladesh.

Keywords: Process approach, product approach, ninth grade (g-ix) students, secondary schools, writing skill

Introduction

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English language has made the world narrower and easily accessible as English is used as a common language for international communications (Rao, 2019). Being aware of the importance of English, the government of Bangladesh has made English compulsory in primary and secondary institutions and beyond (Podder, 2011). Moreover, students of secondary level have to sit for writing test to pass the internal as well as the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) examinations. It is the common perception of the people that the level of English of the SSC passed students remains unsatisfactory. Imam (2005) claims that the standard of English of the university going students is equivalent to that set for the students of class seven (g-vii) by the government of Bangladesh. However, the compulsory English cannot ensure the learning of English, especially the writing skill in Bangladesh. It is alleged that the language policy of a country plays a very important role to speed up the learning of a language (Hamid, 2010 & 2016), because the language policy explains clearly how to teach, what materials to use, and how to assess different skills of a language.

The Bangladesh government, after independence in 1971, put much importance to Bangla but it also attached importance to English. The Qudrat-e-Khuda Education Commission (Ministry of Education, 1974) states that English would enjoy equal status as was during the pre-liberation Bangladesh. But after the initial euphoria of using the new national language abated and the authorities realised that the country could not do without English, the government decided to take a pragmatic approach to English education. The National Curriculum (NCTB, 1995) introduced CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) approach with a view to developing the four skills of English language through practices. Under different governments set up various Education Commissions which had the task of defining and preparing the Education Policy in which English always formed one of the major components. However, although the curricula (NCTB, 1995 & 2012) put emphasis on learning English language through practices, teachers usually do not employ an approach that engages learners in language practices.

Statement of the Problem

Writing is a difficult skill to achieve and it requires recurrent feedback by experts and edits by the learners, and thus a learner achieves improved writing skill (Ebrahim, 2017). However, Ebrahim (2017) has claimed that teachers at secondary level do not follow the process approach to teaching English writing skill and for that reason, students fail to achieve writing skill. As the process approach is considered to be effective to improve writing skill (Sun & Fang, 2009; British Council, 2020), the researchers tried to investigate if the process approach to teaching writing is effective in secondary level institutions in Bangladesh.

Rationale of the Study

It has been reported that the standard of the SSC passed students' English is significantly lower than as set by the government in the curriculum (Hasan, 2016; Haque, 2011; Imam, 2005). Haque (2011) claims that the SSC passed students cannot write English properly as expected in the curricula (NCTB, 1995 & 2012). Hasan (2016) expresses his concerns that although the government introduced CLT approach with a view to improving students' English through practices, the teachers were found to stick to the traditional teacher-centered method. Besides, Hasan (2016) reports that teachers do not, in most cases, use the authentic materials prepared for use in the classrooms. As the traditional way of teaching failed to achieve the outcomes stated in the curriculum, the researchers wanted to try a different approach to teaching of English writing skill.

Research Questions

This study tried to find answers to the following questions:

- ✓ What approach do the teachers employ to teach English writing?
- ✓ What is the tangible effect of the Process Approach on students' writing skill development?
- ✓ What are the challenges for implementing Process Approach to teaching of writing?
- ✓ What are the reactions of the participants (students and the facilitating English teachers of the school) about the Process Approach to teaching of writing?

Descriptions of the Key Terms

The important terms used in the study include English writing skill; the process approach; the product approach and Boot Camp. The terms have been clarified below for the readers so that they can understand the report easily.

English writing skill

Writing for the little children can be defined as the act of putting together symbols systematically. However, writing for the senior learners is putting words, sentences, and the paragraphs coherently so that the whole write-up makes a sense. Being able to write isolated sentences cannot be treated as writing skill even though every sentence is grammatically correct. Naima (2020) claims that the ability to produce a longer text where there is logic, coherence, and clear meaning is writing skill. Mourtaga (2004) defines writing as a process where learners compile and critically analyse new pieces of information in their own words. Writing is a productive skill where learners have to produce something, receive feedback from someone expert, and edit based on the feedback. In this way, through writing and recurrent feedback and edits, students improve their writing gradually.

Process Approach

Writing is a process through which students have the opportunities to explore and discover their thoughts constructing meaning and assessing it at the same time (Zamel, 1983). In the Process Approach to teaching of writing, added emphasis is put on the meaning of the sentences and the compositions, and then the form or structure of the sentences or organization of the compositions is considered. It depends on the situation what method or approach would be suitable for the learners of a particular area. However, the approach which engages students in the learning process can be considered the best process.

The method of teaching writing where the students are provided recurrent feedback on their writing, the students edit the writing based on the feedback and then resubmit it to the teachers, is called the process approach. In the process-writing classroom, for example, teachers elicit relevant points about a topic or a title and write the points in the white board or blackboard. Then the teacher asks the students to write a composition on the topic using the points or pieces of information jotted down in the board. At the end, teachers allow students to receive feedback from their friends (checking in pairs), and finally the teacher provides general feedback on the areas he/she identified during monitoring. Based on the feedback provided by the teacher, the students edit and re-write the compositions. This process of writing, feedback, and edits make learners skilled in writing gradually.

Product Approach

According to Gabrielatos (2002), the product approach of teaching writing is a traditional approach in which learners usually memorize a model text and reproduce it in the examination scripts for teachers' marking or grading. According to Selvaraj and Aziz (2019), product based approach denotes a writing process that aims at the final product; there is no recurrent feedback, edits, and rewriting of the text. Usually students imitate a model text to produce one similar to or reproduce the same text and submit it to the teachers for grading. In this approach, teachers usually encourage the learners to memorize a composition prepared by someone else or which are available in the textbooks or in any other reference books.

Literature Review

According to Zamel (1983), writing is a process through which students can explore and discover their thoughts constructing meaning and assessing it at the same time. In the process approach, attention is paid first to the meaning and then to the form or structure of the sentences or organization. No way of teaching writing should be labeled necessarily as the 'right' or the 'best' way to teach writing skill; different approaches suit in different situations. The best practice in any situation depends on the type of students, the text type being studied, the school system and many other factors (British Council, 2020). On the other hand, "teaching writing needs various approaches blended with strategies. Writing approach describes the relationship between the beliefs that writers have about writing and the patterns of writing strategies that they employ" (Lavelle & Bushrow 2007, p.808 cited in Selvaraj & Aziz, 2019).

Our experiences show that most of the English teachers employ product approach in teaching English writing. For instance, in the product-writing classrooms, teachers provide examples or model composition for the students and based on the models, students produce a similar composition. In this case, learners have the knowledge of appropriate second language use and can apply their knowledge to write in the rhetorical patterns, comparison and contrast, cause-effect, classification of writing, and definition but in this approach, in most cases, students cannot write a piece of text in their own words (Harris, 1993 as cited in Tangpermpoon, 2008).

On the other hand, the process approach takes the stance that language teaching should be concerned more with what the learner wants to write not what they should write. The learners' interactions with teachers and classmates is important in process-writing. Thus, the learner is seen to have a role as initiator, not a mere responder or an imitator of other people's intentions and expressions (Zamel, 1983). O'Brien (2004) defined process approach as an activity in which teachers encourage learners to see writing not as grammar exercises, but as the discovery of meaning and ideas. During the writing process, claim Sun and Fang (2009), teachers enable learners to explore their thoughts and develop their own writing by using the five-step writing process model such as pre-writing stage (brainstorming, discussion in pairs or/and groups for generating ideas); writing the draft (writing the ideas in sentences and in paragraphs); receiving feedback from peers or/and teachers; revising the whole text based on the feedback (spelling, sentence structures, organization, etc.); and receiving feedback again and finalizing the write-up. Sun and Fang (2009) point out that process approach to the teaching of English writing has been advocated by many English teachers because the process approach provides the learners with skill and enables students to write on their own on any topic.

Two newspaper articles by Ebrahim (2017) and Naima (2020) delineate the writing teaching situation in Bangladesh. Ebrahim (2017) claims that there is no culture of providing corrective feedback in the school and therefore, students do not improve their English writing skill that much in schools. On the other hand Naima (2020) claims that teachers do not use the right approach to teaching of English writing at the undergraduate level. English writing teaching situation at secondary and tertiary level is not satisfactory. Therefore, there should be an initiative to improve the situation making our learners better in writing.

The above literature review shows that process approach to teaching writing is effective (Sun & Fang, 2009; British Council, 2020) although the Bangladeshi secondary teachers employ product approach. The product approach that the Bangladeshi secondary English teachers use does not help learners to develop English writing skill (Ebrahim, 2017) as learners do not go through the learning process.

Research Methodology

The current research was a qualitative study which employed qualitative methods as the research questions set for this study could be best answered with the qualitative methods (Bogdan & Biklen, 2009). This section and the sub-sections encompass an account of the general research design, sample and sampling framework, participant selection criteria, instruments for data collection, the procedures of collecting, analyzing, and presenting the data.

Sample and Sampling

The Cosmo Quantum School and College, Lama, Bandarban was purposively selected for the study because the school authority had already agreed to provide us supports for the study during the closure of the schools throughout the country due to COVID-19 pandemic. That school authority, with the permission of the government, invited all their students in the hostels although there was a bar against opening the classrooms. There were forty six (46) students in class nine (g-ix) in 2020 and all the students were selected as participants for the study. Six (06) teachers who taught English in the school including two (02) who taught in class nine (g-ix) were selected as facilitators. The facilitators observed the researchers' interventions and provided support to the students along with the researchers. Thus total participants were students forty six (46) and teachers six (06). All the forty six (46) students were not available in all the activities because some of them had to take part in their routine sports practices.

Sources of Data and Methods of Data Collection

The sources of data were the six (06) teachers and forty six (46) students of Class Nine (g-ix). However, the students were promoted to Class Ten (g-x) in 2021. The written tasks of only 10 randomly selected students were examined and analyzed although data were collected from all the forty six (46) students and interventions were provided equally without any discrimination. The writing tasks and the pre-tests and post-tests writings of the randomly selected ten (10) students were analyzed as the qualitative data collected from forty six (46) students and six (06) teachers were huge and therefore unmanageable.

This study employed 'one group pre-test and post-test design' to look for the answers of the second research question; and the data for the rest of the research questions were gathered using FGI, semi-structured interview, reflection and analyzed data using 'descriptive method'.

Tools for Data Collection

This study employed three (03) kinds of instruments for data collection, which included -

- (i) a set of pre-test and post-test tool,
- (ii) FGI schedule for students, and
- (iii) Semi-structured interview schedule for English teachers. All the tools were duly piloted and improved before data collection.

To test the effect of using the process approach to writing, the researchers administered a pre-test and post-test instrument based on topics included in the textbooks and on current issues which were most talked about during the intervention. Students were asked to write a paragraph on ‘Myself’ in 30 minutes.

Research questions, methods, participants, and data collection tools at a glance

Table: 01

Research Questions	Methods	Tools	Participants
What approach do the teachers employ to teach English writing?	FGI, Semi-structured interview	FGI schedule, Semi-structured interview schedule	Students and teachers
What is the tangible effect of Process Approach on students’ writing skill development?	Pre- test and post-test, FGI, Semi-structured interview	Pre-test and post-test, Semi-structured interview schedule,	Students and teachers
What challenges do the researchers face in implementing the Process Approach?	Reflection, FGI, Semi-structured interview	Reflective diary by the researchers, FGI schedule, Semi-structured interview schedule	Students and teachers
What are the reactions of the participants (students and the six facilitating English teachers of the school) about the Process Approach to teaching of writing?	FGI, Semi-structured interview	FGI schedule, Semi-structured interview schedule	Students and teachers

Methods of Data Analysis and Findings Presentation

As the study was totally a qualitative research, all the data collected were analyzed qualitatively and the findings from the pre-tests and the post-tests were not quantified; they were treated qualitatively. The data collected through interviews and FGI were transcribed and coded accordingly based on the themes of the research questions. The pre-tests and the post-tests data were compared to see the reductions in different types of mistakes in students' writing have been presented based on the themes of the research questions and related to the current literature to see what the data were saying. The researchers provided their own reasoning on the data based on their reflections. Of course, data collected from different sources and using different tools were triangulated as triangulation of data enhances the credibility of the findings (Creswell, 2009).

Process of Intervention

The six (06) day first intervention started in November 2020 with the pre-test and then through organizing different writing activities, peer feedback, researchers' feedback, students' correction, and sharing the corrected versions of their writing followed by teachers' comments and feedback, etc. The six (06) teachers were provided with training to familiarize them with the process of intervention. It was known from the school authority that two (02) of the teacher participants taught in classes 9 (g-ix) and 10 (g-x).

The second (2nd) intervention was of three (03) days and was provided in January 2021; the third (3rd) and the fourth (4th) interventions were of two (02) days each and were provided in February 2021. During the second (2nd), third (3rd) and the fourth (4th) interventions, the students got promoted to class ten (g-ix). The activities students were engaged in were chosen based on the students' and the English teachers' opinions received during piloting of the tools. The second (2nd), third (3rd), and the fourth (4th) interventions were provided focusing on the mistakes students committed in their writing tasks. Each of the interventions aimed at reducing the mistakes students committed in their previous writing tasks. The intervention was a kind of total emersion in the writing activity.

During every writing activity, the researchers were monitoring and noting down the mistakes of the students; and when they finished, the researchers asked the participants to get their writings checked by friends; and at the end, the researchers used to provide general feedbacks so that no one was hurt. During the feedback, the researchers or sometimes the facilitators engaged the participants in drilling a particular word and a sentence or a sentence structure with a view to minimizing the mistakes of the students in future writing.

Topics used in the intervention

The participants were engaged in writing on the everyday life topics. The topics included, for example, Myself, My school, My Favourite Teacher, My Favourite Poet, My Family, Natural Beauty of Lama Hills, Pahela Boishakh, My Best Friend, Kazi Nazrul Islam, a letter to a friend about the life in the pandemic, and so on.

Moreover, the participants were engaged in observing the nature and writing compositions. The idea of CTL (contextual teaching and learning) was used. Moreover, Writing Diary using

present, past, and future tenses; Writing Reflective Diary, etc. were used as topics of writing.

Although there is evidence (Sun & Fang, 2009; British Council, 2020) of positive impact of the process-writing, most secondary teachers in Bangladesh do not exploit the benefits of the process approach. This may happen because they are not aware of the process approach of teaching writing (Ebrahim, 2017) or because they are not interested to work hard as the approach demands more engagement of the students as well as the teachers.

Findings and Discussion

This section presents the findings under the heads such as current approach to teaching writing; outcomes of the Process Approach; challenges for implementing Process Approach; and teachers' and students' opinions about the Process Approach. The findings have been presented below in detail.

Current Approach to Teaching of Writing

The semi-structured interviews with the six (06) facilitating teachers revealed that they use the product approach to teaching English writing. One of the six (06) teachers claims:

I ask the students to read the compositions from the textbooks or from any other sources and tell them to memorize them for the examinations. Sometimes I give them the items prepared by me and the students memorize them for better grades in the examinations.

Similar voices were heard from all other five (05) teachers too. Another teacher maintains:

I ask the students to read a paragraph or an essay from the textbooks or from other sources usually selected by me. Then they write it and I examine them to check if they have memorized properly or not. They are awarded higher marks if they can write well from their memory.

All the six (06) teachers' opinions were similar, that is, they use the Product Approach to teaching English writing.

Similarly, the students' data from the FGI indicate that the teachers employ product approach to teaching English writing skill. One student claims in the FGI that teachers never give them feedback; the teachers never tell the students what weaknesses there are in their writing; they do not identify their mistakes and do not provide any suggestions for improvement. He maintains:

Our teachers tell us to read a paragraph or an essay from the selected books and we memorize them for the examinations. Our teachers do not, usually, identify our mistakes and do not provide feedback to improve writing. Sometimes, they read out and clarify the compositions in Bangla.

The above data indicate that teachers are heavily dependent on the product approach to teaching of writing. In this approach, teachers want the end product for marking. In this kind of approach, there is a little scope for writing development. Teachers claimed that they were not aware of the process approach to teaching of writing. The facilitating teachers teach their students using this approach and they have been doing as their teachers did in their school life. It is also known from the teachers that they did not receive any training other than the curriculum dissemination organized by the NCTB. However, all the six (06) teachers did not have an opportunity to take part in the NCTB provided training. In curriculum dissemination training, there was nothing about the

process approach to teaching writing. Through asking students to memorize any compositions such as paragraphs and essays, the teachers have been promoting plagiarism which is considered as a serious intellectual offence all over the world.

Outcome of the Process Approach

It is noticed from the intervention that the process approach minimizes students' mistakes and increases students' ability to write coherently. The major types of mistakes identified in the pre-test are given below with examples so that the readers have an idea about the types of mistakes of the students.

Examples of Mistakes Found in the Pre-test

Table: 2

Types of Mistakes	Examples (copied from students' scripts. The mistakes are made bold and in some cases, the correct words have been given in brackets)
Capital & Small Letters	Names of people and places: Sangchinthang bawm, english, bangladesh, bandarban, etc. Sentence starts with small letters: the name of my school is ---. my mother ---.
Number	I am a students of class ---. X and Y is my best friend. Four sister. I am 15 year old.
Spelling	Favourit, Faberit, Favrit, Favarite(Favourite); studing (studying); hobbit, hobbite, hobbys, hubby (hobby); leave (live); salsman (Salesman); Funy (Funny); then (than); lajer (leisure); mambers (members); dath (date) of birth, etc.
Verb forms	He give us ---. He talk to another people politely. He does not smoking.
Punctuations	--- fuskaetc (fuska, etc.). Its a big achievement. He read's in class ten.
Apostrophe	My father name, friend name, etc.
Sentence structures	I will playing. I have been studing here since 10 years. My have four sister. I am 17 old. Reading books are myfavrithobbys. I was admit in Quantum Cosmo School in 2015.
Others	I want to be BCS. He is a very honest and trust man.

The mistakes listed in the above table are some examples. Some of the students made similar

mistakes throughout their writings. Some of the students committed similar mistakes even after drilling to correct the mistakes. However, some students were able to minimize their mistakes through the interventions, feedback, and practices. Moreover, the students are observed to achieve the ability to write longer compositions than before. For example, the same participant writes the following two (02) paragraphs in the pre-and-post test on the same topic ‘Myself’. The student completes the paragraphs in 30 minutes each time and he could write only seventy four (74) words in the pre-test and one hundred and eighty (180) words in the post-test.

Some lines from the pre-test and post-test compositions (paragraphs) have been composed below in the following table to prove the above statement that students were able to minimize their mistakes and they achieved the ability to write longer compositions.

Table: 3

Pre-test	Post-test
<p>My name is Koshaimro. I'm 14 years old. I am a student of class 9. I like play cricket every day. I am a student of Quantum Cosmo School and College. I am studying in this school since 10 years. Cricket is my best sports to spend my leisure time.</p>	<p>My name is Koshai Mro. I live in Bandarban with my family. I am 14 years old. I am student of Quantum Cosmo School and college. I have been studying here for 10 years ago. I read in class ten in this school. I have got G.P.A. 5 in P.E.C.</p>

The paragraph in the left hand column has some minor mistakes although the composition in the right hand column seems structurally sound although there are also some mistakes. The analysis of the written scripts of the students indicates that the ninth (9th) and the tenth (10th) grade students committed mistakes in the areas of sentence constructions, tense, verb forms, spelling, capitalization and punctuation, use of apostrophe, and number (singular and plural). The researchers are mentioning tenth (10th) grade students because the ninth (9th) grade students who the researchers were working with were The promoted to class ten (10) just after the first intervention. Therefore, interventions were provided to the students of ninth (9th) and tenth (10th) grades. However, they were the same students.

The pre-test and the post-test writing of another student also shows the improvement in writing after the four (04) rounds of interventions. Some lines have been placed below for

the readers to have an idea about what kinds of improvement happened during and after the four (04) interventions.

Table: 4

Pre-test	Post-test
<p>My name is Sangchinthang bawm. I'm a students of Quantum cosmo school. My age is 17 years. My father name is Melorybawm and mother name is chamlengbawm. My group subject is science. English and science subject is my best favourit. (total words: 60)</p>	<p>My name is SangchinThang Bawm. I'm a student of Quantum Cosmo School and College. I am 17 years old. My father name is MeloryBawm and mother name is ChamlengBawm. My group subject is science. I like science and English subject. Science is my best favourite. (total words: 161)</p>

Writing in the pre-tests and the post-tests of another student may support the claim that students' writing skill improved due to the interventions. Pre-test and post-test compositions of another student have been presented below to show the positive change in writing.

Table: 5

Pre-test	Post-test
<p>My name is Thonging Khumi. I am a student of Quantum Cosmo School in class 9. I leavein my family. Our family mambers leave bandarban. Our family have some membersuches (such as) father mother and two sister and three brother. My father is farmer and my mother is home maker. My hobbite is playing foot ball and my lajertime like to gerdening. I am a bangladesh. (total words: 69)</p>	<p>My name is Thonging Khumi. I was bron (born) at runtong village in Bandarban district. now I am 14 years old. I read in Quantum Cosmo School. My father's name is mong Khumi and my mother's name is khan Khumi. My best friend name is Mangpong Mro. I like to play football, beatminton. Without it, I like catching fish and hunting, gradaing (gardening). --- (total words: 161)</p>

Although the student in the immediate above table (Table: 5) committed many mistakes in the pre-test as well as post-test, it is evident that the number of mistakes in the previous writing has been reduced, some the new types of mistakes have been committed by the student in the post-test. In every case, the length of the composition is more than the pre-test. Sanchin Thang Bawm could write only sixty (60) words in the pre-test and one hundred and forty (140) words in the post-test in the same period of time.

On the other hand, Thonging Khumi could write only sixty nine (69) words in the pre-test but he was able to write one hundred and sixty one (161) words in the post-test. The above data are evidences of the effectiveness of the process approach to teaching of writing. Analyses of the pre-test and the post-test scripts of all the forty six (46) students would provide similar improvement from pre-test to post-test although only the scripts of randomly selected ten (10) students were considered for analysis.

The facilitating teachers claimed from their observation and reading the write-ups by students that students' writing skill improved. One (01) of the six (06) teachers comments in the interview:

Although we do not apply, according to me, the Process Approach is the best approach to develop the English writing skill of the students. Students' writing has developed than before and they are now brave to write a longer paragraph or essay.

The teacher claims in the interview that they are not aware of the Process Approach to teaching of writing. But from their short training by the researchers and observations they have learnt about the approach. They promise to use this approach in teaching writing. Another teacher maintains that students learn many things through this approach as they have to do the writing tasks. He claims:

The process approach has many benefits. Students work joyfully, engage in brainstorming, they identify their own or friends' mistakes, and try to correct them. Teachers provide feedback indirectly and no student feels embarrassed. Students can write longer essays freehand although mistakes are still found in their writings in a good number. However, if this continues, students and teachers will improve their English writing skill gradually.

The participants in the FGI claim that the process approach has many benefits such as word-games improves their vocabulary; learning the uses of tenses, forms of verbs, etc.; making correct sentences; using the appropriate words in the right places; learning to write on uncommon topics, etc. One of the students in a FGI claims:

The process approach has benefitted us much. We can make word games and can play with my friends. We can now write a longer paragraph. We can correct our writing. Spelling mistakes have been corrected through practising again and again.

Similar voices are also found in other FGIs with other students. It indicates that the process approach has positive effect on the development of the English writing skill.

It is worth mentioning that the researchers engaged the participants in writing on different topics followed by peer and teacher feedback and editing and rewriting. The researchers' experiences showed that the participants committed same or similar mistakes again and again although the researchers and the facilitators engaged the participants in practices to minimize the mistakes. The above data including those in the tables show that some mistakes were minimized in the post tests. Naima's (2020) claim regarding the writing development is true. She claims that it is difficult to improve students' writing skill in a short period of time. It is also evident in the current study that the students were committing the same or similar mistakes again and again. This might have happened because most students did not take the intervention seriously and that was a new style of learning for them. It might take some time to get habituated to the teaching and the learning style. However, the participants' skill to write longer compositions developed to a great extent which is evident in their writing, interview, and FGI data.

Challenges of Implementing the Process Approach

The major challenges of implementing the process approach to teaching writing were visible while the researchers were providing interventions. More specifically, challenges were apparent while the researchers were engaging students in different writing tasks. The challenges also

emerged during the interviews with the teachers and the FGIs with the participating students. The challenges include the barriers to engage students in writing practice, peer checking, and editing; large multi-level class; lack of teacher training; and assessment system which favour memorization. The researchers found that there were students from different ethnic groups such as Chakma, Marma, Tonchonga, Monipuri, Morong, Bawm, Hindus, and Muslims. Their caliber was also different and most of the students were from underprivileged and low income families because the school authority admit only those students who are deprived, underprivileged and orphans. A small number of students could write better English and some students' level was so low; they were unable to spell many simple words correctly.

One of the facilitating teachers in the interview claims that it is difficult to engage the students in writing practices as they are not habituated in this kinds of activities. He alleges:

None of the students is interested to write on their own; they always prefer memorizing from the textbooks and from other sources. Of course, we tell them to memorize compositions and answers of questions. So that they can write correctly in the examination scripts.

He confesses that they (teachers) also do not try to involve students in different writing activities as they are not habituated to engage students and then provide feedback.

On the other hand, another teacher in the interview claims that it was difficult to deal with the large multi-level classes. One teacher maintains that each of the class period is 40 minutes and the number of students in each class is twenty five (25) to thirty (30). He maintains:

The number of students in a class is more than there should be and the length of each period is 40 minutes only. Some minutes are wasted in between the periods. In this 40 minutes, it is not possible to go to each of the students. But a good number of students can be reached if we engage students in peer-checking as was done by the researchers.

The researchers could understand that most of the students do not want to get their writing checked by their classmates; they think their classmates cannot check their writing properly or their classmates might underestimate them for their mistakes. They always want to show their writing to the teachers. Students in the FGI also claim that their teachers do not engage them in different writing activities as are being done by the researchers.

Another challenge is that students are not awarded better marks or grades if they write on their own as students' own writing usually has many mistakes, alleges a teacher. Students also claim that teachers do not give them good marks if they do not write from the textbook or any other sources usually selected by the teachers. One student who can write correct English (a small number of mistakes are found in his writing) alleges.

Our teachers always tell us to write from the book. They tell us to write answers from the textbooks and sometimes they write for us to memorize. If we do not memorize, teachers do not give us good marks. In case we fail, we do not dare write in our own words.

Teachers confess in the interview that they were not aware of the strategies of the process approach as they did not receive any training where they could learn about the techniques of the process approach. They also claim that they were not fully aware of the strategies of engaging students in skill practice activities.

Teachers also confess that they do not have any training on implementing the process approach. However, the claim that they are confident about implementing the process approach from their experiences as facilitators.

If the challenges of large multi-level classes or teachers can be trained so that they can engage all the students in different activities. Challenges related to assessment can be minimized through asking teachers to give higher marks or grades to those who write in their own English. Training of teachers can be arranged so that teachers can use the strategies of the process approach in teaching writing, the English writing teaching situation at secondary level may improve.

Teachers' and Students' Reactions about the Process Approach

The interviews with the teachers and the FGIs with the students show that they are positive about the process approach to teaching writing. The facilitating teachers and the students like the way the researchers provided general feedback without mentioning the names who committed the mistakes. A student in an FGI claims:

We are not afraid of you. You do not scold us. You tell us our mistakes with a smile. You do not tell who committed the mistakes. This is good. We love it. Please come to our school again. We want to learn English this way.

The researchers as teacher educators always consider mistakes as sources of learning and they believe that one mistake is one step towards learning. It is known from the students that their teachers are not that friendly. However, the facilitating teachers liked the researchers' friendly attitudes towards the learners. The students enjoyed more freedom to work individually, in pairs, and in groups. One teacher makes a comment in the interview:

I will use process approach in my teaching of writing for better learning of my students. Experiencing the process approach is the best time in my life as a teacher. I will use process approach in my teaching as this is an effective approach.

The above data show that the reactions of the teachers as well as the students are positive. The students like the autonomy where they have the opportunity to work on their own. Moreover, they have the opportunity to go through the learning process.

The researchers also understood that the teachers and the students were positive about the process approach to teaching writing. The facilitating teachers expressed their positive feelings regarding the researchers' friendly attitudes towards the students and the participatory approach that was used to implement the process approach. Although there are challenges, the large multi-level classes can be used as resources if the different ability students can be put in pairs and in groups. In that case, the advanced students can help the weaker students and thus they all can improve their own writing skill. Although the teachers and the students were positive about the process approach, the researchers are not sure if the teachers would continue their teaching as was done by the researchers or not. Policy decisions may be required to change the writing teaching style and assessment criteria.

Implications

As proved to be effective, the education authority can decide to include process-writing in the secondary English curriculum enabling the students to write English better.

Recommendations

Some issues emerged from the study which need to be resolved to smoothen the effective implementation of the process approach. In order to implement the process approach, the education authority can take the following steps:

- ✓ Teachers need to be trained in process approach to teaching of English writing so that they are able to utilize the strategies of the approach effectively.
- ✓ Writing in own English should be encouraged and the memorization of compositions and answers should be discouraged.
- ✓ As per the curriculum guidelines (NCTB, 2012), classes are of 50 minutes each and in some cases, it may be extended to 60 minutes. The curriculum guidelines need to be ensured.
- ✓ Providing feedback to a small number of students is easier and effective. Therefore, number of students in a classroom need to be kept minimum and the sessions need to be totally participatory.

Conclusion

The current study tried to explore what approach teachers use to teach writing to secondary students; what effect the process approach has on the development of English writing skill; what challenges are there to implement the process approach in schools; and how students and teachers react to the process approach. In order to explore the areas mentioned, the researchers provided four (04) interventions to forty six (46) students of class nine (g-ix) studying in Quantum Cosmo School and College, Bandarban. The current study is important as the writing skill level of students at secondary level is not satisfactory (Naima, 2020; Ebrahim, 2017) and the process approach to teaching of writing has been proved to be effective (Sun & Fang, 2009; British Council, 2020) to develop the writing skill of the students.

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Professionalism and Professional Development Practices of Secondary Teachers

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Abstract

The purpose of this investigation is to evaluate teachers' professionalism and their professional development practices that have not reached yet at the preferred level which is revealed in students' performance in the public exam in the context of Bangladesh. This study highlights teaching competencies, their attitude, behaviour and commitment to the profession and their efforts for professional development and the snags they face to be professional. Mixed-method design with triangulation approach and purposive sampling are employed in this study. Total 20 (twenty) schools are selected from both urban and rural areas. For survey questionnaire 170 (One hundred seventy) English and Maths teachers chosen while 10 (Ten) are chosen for interview; 60 (Sixty) students are selected for Focus Group Discussion. Simple statistics and thematic analysis of data have been used for findings. Teachers' attitude and behaviour single out professional teachers more than others. Some teachers are found highly professional because they feel themselves committed to the students making lesson interactive and lively using different techniques, fun and games. Students' performance of those schools is high. Again, some have brought some problems in broad day light like no promotion, biasness in selecting teachers for professional development training, huge work pressure; Teachers' unequal treatment to students, not following Teachers' Curriculum Guide, bringing guide books to class etc. are found in this study. So, it can be concluded that teachers' professional development is necessary for quality teaching to ascertain professionalism. In this regard teachers need support from authority and policy maker.

Key words: professionalism and professional development practice

Introduction

A teacher with high professionalism is the architect of shaping students' lives and their future. Teachers, who demonstrate professionalism innovate new things and implicate students in learning.

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Khan (2008) claims “Teachers are expected to constantly update themselves and keep in touch with what is new in the field.” A professional teacher is always apprehensive about his own performance and professional development. There are many issues allied with quality education, and teacher’s professionalism is one of them.

Professional teachers are the assets for their institutions that is evidenced with the performance of the students and teachers as well. They use effective strategies and play an important role in enhancing students’ motivation (Urhahne, 2015). They have competencies and positive attitudes towards their profession. They are always concerned about their personal development and interact and support colleagues. Thus increase the success level of the institutions. In the year 2020, 100% of SSC candidates passed from 3,023 educational institutes across the country whereas 0% pass rate was observed in 104 institutes (www.thedailystar.net/country/ssc-result-2020-83.75). This scenario is not expected since Bangladesh Government is concerned with quality education. Students’ performances mostly depend on their teachers while quality teachers can ensure quality education. Professional teachers ensure quality teaching and learning. Demirkasımog̃lu (2010) specified that teacher professionalism highlights teachers’ professional qualifications such as ‘being good at his/her job’, ‘fulfilling the highest standards’, and ‘achieving excellence’ teacher professionalism means meeting certain standards in education related to proficiency.

Professionalism and professional development programs for teachers are surely essential to cope with the changes of the new era. After the foundation of Bangladesh Government has fostered different Continuous Professional Development (CPD) programs for teachers to strengthen their quality. Professional development supports teachers to archetype their lifelong learning to achieve better accomplishment (Yuwono & Harbon, 2010). It is expected that CPD helps teachers to make up the gaps being professional. Therefore, this study is to investigate secondary teachers’ professionalism and professional development practices and the challenges they face at their institutions.

Statement of the problem

Teachers’ professionalism pre-requisite has some certain competencies to maintain their profession in a professional manner (Ekinici & Ekinici, 2017). In Bangladesh students’ pass rate in public exams is generally influenced by their performance in English and Mathematics. This statement becomes evident when the SSC (Secondary School Certificate) results of two years are compared. Students showed better performance in English and Mathematics in 2020 that consequence the overall pass rate and the number of GPA (Grade Point Average)-5 achievers in nine (09) general education boards. That year the pass rate in SSC exam is 83.75% while the pass rate was 82.80% in 2019. Secretary, Dhaka board commented that the performance of students in English and Maths always play a significant role in the overall pass rate of public exams (<https://www.thedailystar.net/frontpage/news/ssc-equivalent-exams>). The excellence or quality of an educational system is directly linked to the quality of teachers in that system. Teachers have impact on students’ academic and social learning (Tasdemir & et al. 2020).

Professional development is required for teachers to understand students and to learn different instructional strategies for teaching. Pre-service education and CPD are vital factors aimed at teacher professionalism (UNESCO, 2015). When any institution does not produce quality students or cannot show students’ success rate in the exam, it may be assumed that teachers’ professionalism is not at the expected level or there may be some other factors that impede them in professional practice and professional development.

Rationale of the study

Teachers should the responsibility to bring up students as skilled and qualified human resource for the future who can adapt and accommodate themselves with the changes of the modern world, innovate and create new knowledge for the human being. Teachers with high professionalism ponder themselves responsible for guiding young people for golden future reading their heart and knack. It is also noticeable that ‘the teachers who work in schools with poor academic achievement have lower levels of professional and personal development than their colleagues who work in schools with higher achievement levels’, (Özdemir, T.Y., Demirkol. M, Polat, H., 2019).

Teacher’s professionalism has an influence on the job and professional development practices as well as students’ learning outcomes. Findings from this study ought to be of interest to a number of researchers focusing on teachers’ professionalism and different aspects of research issues dealt with in this study. Also, the stakeholder and policymaker would appraise the needs and the interests of teachers for their professional practices. Furthermore, the findings can contribute studies on professionalism from other branches of human development.

Objectives of the study

The major objectives of this research are as follows:

- a. To evaluate teacher professionalism through teachers’ and students’ perspective.
- b. To estimate professional teachers’ effort for personal and professional development.
- c. To identify the difficulties they face and the effect of individual characteristics on their professional development.
- d. To find out the relationship between teacher’s professionalism and students achievement level.

1.4 Concept of Professionalism

Hargreaves and Goodson (1996) attempted to explain the concept of professionalism as “something which defines and articulates the quality and character of people’s actions within that group” (p. 4). Similarly, Day (1999) delineated professionalism as a “consensus of the norms, which may apply to being and behaving as a professional within personal, organizational and broader political conditions” (p. 13). When teaching is targeted from a professional perspective, the expectancies from teachers vary and boom. Evans (2011) examines teacher professionalism in three dimensions: behaviour, mind-set, and intellectuality. On the other hand, Boyt, Luschand Naylor (2001, p. 322) stress attitude and behaviour, as they mention “Professionalism consists of the attitudes and behaviour one possesses toward one’s profession.” They claimed that teacher’s motivation is the element for getting into the career. This motivation includes authentic passion for teaching, religious duties, financial hardship, perceived roles of women, or failure to go into different professions. Such reasons have implications on teachers’ professionalism and their professional growth.

Concept of Professional Development

Modern perspectives of professional development exemplify professional learning no longer as a short-time period intervention, but as a long-term procedure extending from teacher education at the tertiary level to in-service training in the workplace (Putnam & Borko, 2000).

According to Evans (2008), “Professional development is a key process within the wider agenda of raising standards and increasing societal growth capacity by improving policy and practice in all areas of public service provision, not least education.” The view of teacher professionalism is simultaneously related to professional development. So, an effective professional development needs to be a non-stop and well-prepared process (Little & Paul, 2009). Teachers’ professional development is the way of gaining knowledge of, how they discover ways to research and the way they practice their understanding in exercise to assist student gaining knowledge of (Avalos, 2011).

Research design

This research uses the mixed methods., quantitative and qualitative methods for gathering and analysing data considering its advantage. Creswell & Clark (2011, 5-6) mentioned, it “mixes (or integrates) the two forms of data concurrently by combining them, sequentially by having one build on the other, or embedding one within the other.”

In relation to the literature review sample are selected purposively ensuring representative population. Twenty (20) schools from five (05) districts i.e. Dhaka, Munshiganj, Kushtia, Jhenaidah and Sunamganj are selected from both urban and rural area. Questionnaire survey, interview and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) have been used to collect data.

Shuttleworth (2008) highlights that questionnaires are useful tools to find out the opinions of large number of teachers working in different schools and different cities. The questionnaire has been prepared on the basis of teachers’ competencies defined by the Ministry of Education in the course book of Bachelor of Education (Bashar & et al. 2018) and part of it adapted from the scale used by West et al. (2020). It has been implemented on one hundred and seventy (170) teachers.

Total ten (10) interviews have been conducted using interview schedule on English and Math teachers. “The purpose of the research interview is to explore the views, experiences, beliefs, and motivations of individuals on specific matters” (Gill et al. 2008). With them total ten (10) FGD have been conducted and in each FGD consists of six (06) students.

The tools have been tested earlier finalising at the field level by the study team and the respondents involved are not included as sample for collecting final data. After getting feedback, the tools are finalised. For the validity issue, questionnaire and interview schedule are distributed to some teacher educators. After gaining expert opinion from specialists the necessary changes mainly in the wording of the questions is revised and interview schedules have been finalised in relation to the feedback given.

To collect data, the research team has personally contacted the school authority over telephone for permission and visited some selected secondary schools. The data collection procedures have been carried out through several stages, namely: (a) assembling a list of questions in the Google form for teachers, (b) distributing the list of questions via email and (c) reviewing and analysing the data according to the responses obtained. Five (05) English teachers and five (05) Maths teachers

are interviewed face to face and online with Zoom and Google Meet. All FGD have been organised with the help of subject teachers and conducted through Google Meet solely with the students.

Method of Data Analysis

In quantitative analysis simple statistics i.e., frequency, mean and percentage have been used. In analysing the data from interview coding process and thematic analysis are done. The interviews and FGD are digitally recorded and transcribed manually. The transcripts are examined and tabulated to continue the analysis. Data are gathered from FGD according to the consensus of the participants (Krueger & Casey, 2000), minority opinions is also included that are relevant to research objectives.

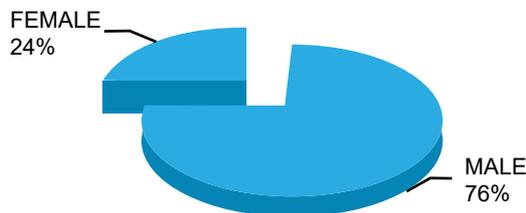
For more accuracy or credibility and to ensure validity of the study triangulation is used to gather quality data collected through survey, interview and FGD. Creswell (2012) defined triangulation as a method of verifying evidence from different kind of data.

Findings and Discussions

Demographic Information about the Participants

The survey questionnaire consisted of two parts whereas the purpose of the first part was to gather general information about the participant teachers. In this part participants were asked to put tick mark regarding the statement or word that match with them.

Among the total participant teachers 76% teachers are male and 24% of the teachers are female (See Figure 3.1.1).



The Figure 3.1.1 Participant teachers by sex:

The sample, 170 teachers have varying teaching experience ranging from 1 to 29 years and more. This signifies that all teachers including the novice and very experienced and aged teachers took part in the study.

Out of the sampled participant teachers, almost all are qualified with degrees. Most of the teachers are Master degree holder though 19% of them are simple graduate. A total of 16% of the entire participant teachers hold professional or B. Ed. degree. On the other hand, the participant teachers who attended professional development courses are not more than 24% (See Figure 3.1.2).

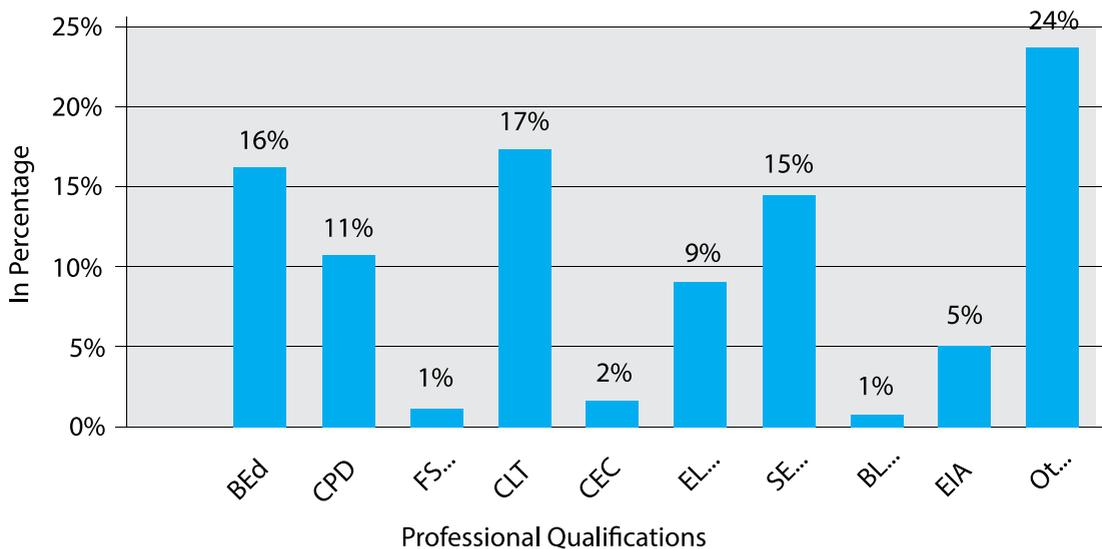


Figure 3.1.2 Participant teachers' professional qualification

Teachers' Professionalism and Professional Development Practices

The second part of the questionnaire consisted of 48 items under 8 dimensions with 5-point rating scale. All the sampled teachers were asked to rate on statements related to issues of teachers' profession and professional development practices. The values for rating scale were set as Almost never true=1, Seldom true = 2, Sometimes true = 3, Often true = 4, Almost always true = 5.

Teachers' Understanding about Curriculum & Lesson

Key focus of teaching is curriculum and lesson but the findings show that nearly less than 40% teachers have their understanding in English and Math curriculum and lessons (See Table: 3.2.1). In line with this three (03) of the interviewees cited the reason that they do not have TCG to follow.

Table: 3.2.1 Teachers' Understanding about Curriculum and Lesson

Sl. No	Competencies	Almost never true 1	Seldom true 2	Sometimes true 3	Often true 4	Almost always true 5
1	Curriculum (English/Maths) is well defined.	11.18%	11.76%	16.47%	28.82%	31.77%
2	Use Teachers' Curriculum Guide (TCG)	3.53%	11.76%	24.71%	26.47%	33.53%

3	Learning outcomes are well-defined in lessons	1.18%	24.71%	12.35%	37.06%	24.70%
4	Curriculum emphasises mastery of basic skills (English/ Maths)	10.18%	10.18%	22.94%	16.64%	40.06%

3.2.2 Teachers' Collaboration

Collaboration is one of the characteristics of a professional teacher. Item no. 5-8 in the questionnaire have been included to find out teachers' involvement in collaborative work. Statistical analysis show that more than 50% teachers' collaboration rate is satisfactory and they admitted that they learn much from their colleague through collaboration. These are manifested by the words of the interviewees. One of the interviewees mentioned, "In the beginning of my career I learnt easy techniques of presenting and solving Maths problems to students and arouse their interest in doing Maths". Very inspiring words came out from another interviewee: "We discuss several issues among our colleagues that help us how to plan and how to make our lessons easy and manage students etc."

Impact on Teachers after Attending In-Service Training/ Professional Development Courses

The participants' responses to the item no 9 and 10 in the questionnaire illustrate that most of the teachers gained required professional skills after attending professional development courses and they possess positive attitude towards them (See the Figure 3.2.1). In favour of this statement one of the interviewees reported, "Earlier I thought teaching listening practice would not be possible without audio material. But now I can teach listening by reading text also." The other interviewee conveyed: "Now I can browse internet and can prepare digital content to make math problem easy and interesting for my students."

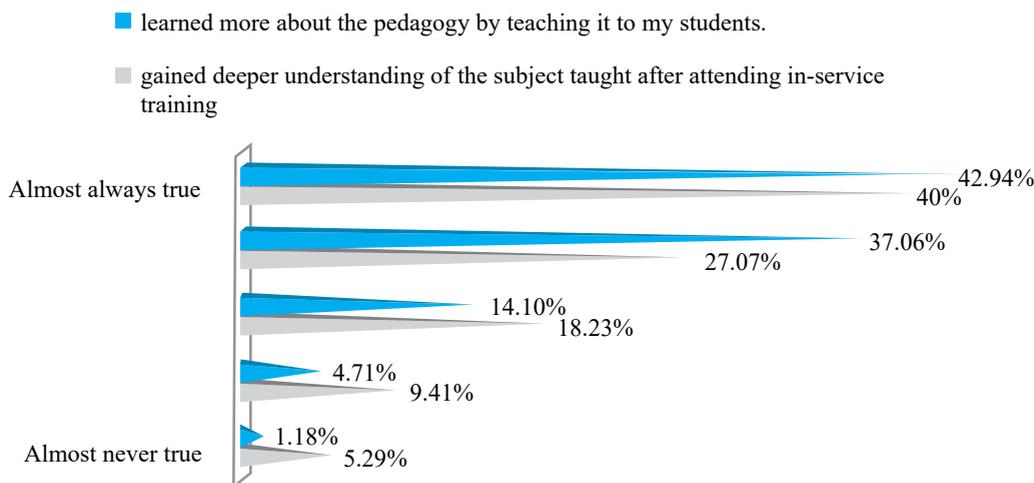


Figure 3.2.1 Impact on teachers after attending in-service training/ professional development courses

3.2.4 Pedagogical Practices and Students Achievement

Items 11-21 in the questionnaire have been set to perceive the scenario of the teachers' pedagogical practices. The findings show that more than 75% teachers do pedagogical practices (See Table: 3.2.3).

Table: 3.2.3 Pedagogical Practices

Sl. No	Competencies	Almost never true 1	Seldom true 2	Some-times true 3	Often true 4	Almost always true 5
11	Always come to the class with adequate preparation.	1.18%	1.18%	8.82%	45.29%	43.53%
12	Confident about your own strong verbal communication skills (speaking and listening)	1.18%	5.88%	17.06%	34.12%	41.76%
13	Innovate and use diverse instructional techniques considering child's individual differences and needs.	1.18%	2.94%	22.94%	33.53%	39.41%
14	Collect and use low-cost teaching materials.	3.53%	6.47%	12.35%	29.42%	48.23%
15	Use games and fun in your lesson to make lesson attractive.	1.18%	8.82%	17.06%	28.24%	44.70%
16	Use multimedia and digital content in teaching.	2.94%	5.29%	28.23%	31.77%	31.77%
17	Engage all students to participate in communications and collaborations	0%	2.36%	12.94%	39.41%	45.29%
18	Possess strong non-verbal communication skills (Body language).	1.18%	4.12%	35%	45.88%	28.23%
19	Treat everyone fairly and equally.	2.36%	3.53%	4.71%	27.64%	61.76%
20	Promote students' self-directed learning	1.18%	1.18%	7.06%	34.70%	55.88%
21	Check students' work regularly	10.59%	8.23%	5.88%	32.94%	42.35%

This statement is supported by the words of the interviewees also. One interviewee has claimed that she had found students' fear in English. So, she started teaching English in Bangla. Gradually she shifted into teaching in English. At the very outset, she instructed the students to speak in easy and simple sentences. She also used common topics for speaking practice. Teachers' professional practice is desirable who innovate and use diverse instructional strategies considering students' individual differences and needs.

Another interviewee has mentioned the reason for not following the pedagogical practice is the pressure of completing syllabus. So, they have to teach topics very fast. If they do not complete the syllabus, guardians send the students to private tutors.

On the other hand, in FGD majority of the students pointed out that they are hardly involved in the participatory activities in the lesson i.e., participating in games, fun, pair work and group works.

In managing students, caning is strictly prohibited but in FGD few students revealed teacher’s use of sticks to control the class. Some of them have opened teacher attitude towards students: “Our teacher says, students of science group are brilliant and you are good for nothing, you won’t be able to do anything”. They also have spoken about gender biasness of head teacher which have been quoted as:“You are female students and you will be busy in household chores what will be the use of participating in sports?” In fact, this sort of behaviour is inconsistent for professional teachers.

The research team has chosen a high achieving school and a low achieving school and collected data of students’ performance from 2016-2019 at the SSC level. To present comparative analysis pseudonyms are used i.e. ‘A’ is used for high achieving school and ‘B’ is used for low achieving school. The analysis shows that students’ achievement of school ‘A’ at the SSC level is high and is almost 100%. On the other hand, the pass rate of students’ achievement of school ‘B’ at the SSC level is not satisfactory (See Figure 4.2.2 and Figure 4.2.3). It shows that there is a relation between teachers’ pedagogical skills and students’ learning achievement.

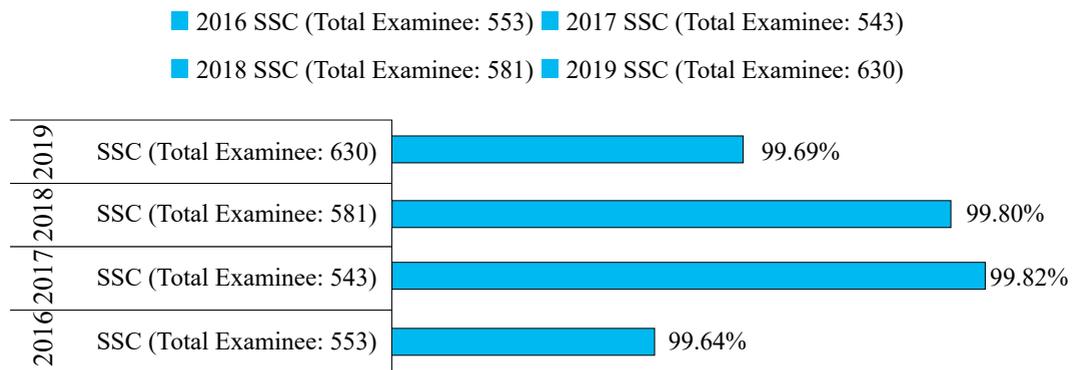


Figure 4.2.2 Students performance in the public exams in a high achieving school ‘A’

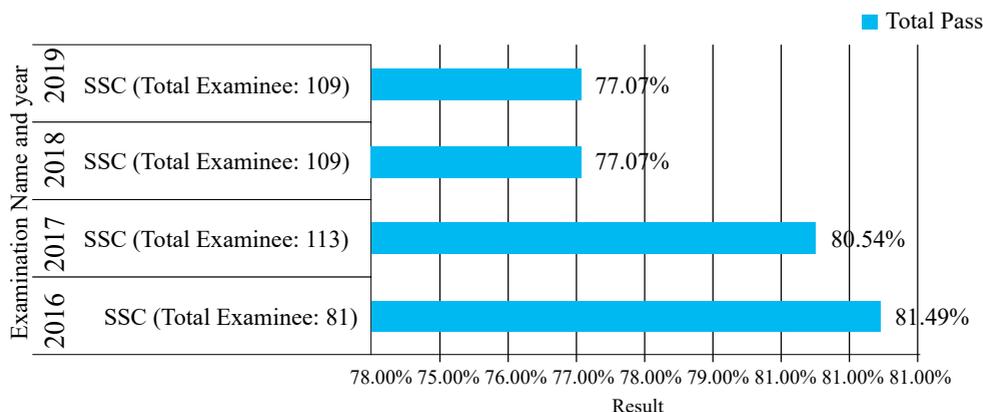


Figure 4.2.3 Students performance in the public exams in a low achieving school 'B'

Self-development Activities

A professional teacher always reflects on his/her teaching, regularly watches video of good classroom instruction, visits online teacher's portal as a member of a professional learning community. The findings from the questionnaire items 22-25 show that less than 50% of the teachers are concerned about self-development though in interview all the participant teachers showed their eagerness to develop professionally.

Attitude and Behaviour towards Profession

The findings from the items of the questionnaire 26-33 show that more than 70% of the teachers possess the positive attitude towards the profession and demonstrate in their professional activities. Among them behavioral element denotes the grade to which teachers can fulfill the requirements of the profession. It is the element in which teachers plan, apply, evaluate and develop techniques to ensure students' learning.

Most of the teachers (88.22%) join the profession from passion for teaching. Three of the interviewees have expressed the same opinion. They consider teaching as noble profession and teachers are the role model for the students. They serve the society taking part building the future generation and teaching values.

This profession has flexibility. It is noticeable both in the survey and interview that most of the female teachers and also a few of male teachers have joined this profession due to the nature of this job, they want to spend more time with their families. Four (04) of them added that they can earn even after their school time.

Also, in FGD most of the students talked about their favourite teachers whom they like most for their teaching and their empathy and support to their individual needs. At the same time, they mentioned they would love if they would get every teacher like him or her. On the contrary they revealed that sometimes they face difficulties solving problems or understanding lesson but not get attended by every teachers except a few.

School Environment

The findings from the responses against the items 34-40 in the questionnaire show that almost 75% of the schools have congenial atmosphere for teaching and learning while most of the interviewees have perceived the same.

Negative impact of school environment, as a whole, affects the students and teacher. This statement is supported by one (01) interviewee, she has cited that her colleagues are busy with private tuition with the consent of head teacher. Besides, result of public exam for teaching learning condition of the school has been getting worse day by day and no visible measure has been adopted to improve it. That indicates school environment has effect on teachers and students.

Barriers of Practicing Professional Development Activities

Regarding barriers of practicing professional development activities the responses to item 41 of the questionnaire display that more than 57.56% of the participant teachers consider school administrator is a barrier for practicing professional activities if they are not cooperative. All the interviewees also opine the same. In support of the statement, one of them has cited: "We conduct several in-house trainings whenever we get opportunity. Our head teacher has special eyes in this matter. We respect and consider our colleagues as family members. For students we conduct motivational classes and social activities together". On the contrary one female interviewee remarked, "When the members of Managing Committee get chance, female representative teachers have to face verbal sexual harassment." This sort of barriers should be addressed properly.

The responses against the item 42, among the participant teachers 61. Fifteen percent (15%) think colleagues non-cooperation is impediment in using techniques in teaching learning. In this regard one of the interviewees mentioned, "Some of my colleagues laughed at me when I first used pair work in my class".

In item 43, 63.62% participant teachers believe uneducated parents having no formal schooling are one of the barriers for practising new techniques in classroom. One of the interviewees exposed that once she faced complain from a parent for practising speaking skill in class. She said in this regard, "The teacher doesn't teach anything, rather students make noise in classroom."

Motivation or interest is important in learning. In item no. 44, 35.28% participant teachers consider students lack of interest is one of the barriers for practising professional development activities in classroom. On the contrary 37.03% of the participant teachers think students' lack of interest is not a barrier for teachers' professional development practices.

In item no. 45, against the statement, School prefers students' use of guidebook. 22.92% of the participant teachers optioned that their schools prefer students' use of guidebook.

To continue professional development practices and quality education physical condition of school and resources are essential. Against the statement in item no. 46 of the questionnaire 72.92% of the participant teachers and all the interviewees consider the same.

Teachers' self-motivation is vital in applying new innovation and techniques. Otherwise attending professional development courses will be of no use. In item no. 47, 64.08% participant teachers believe that teachers get spirit to practise professional development activities if s/he is self-motivated while most of the interviewees spoke out the same. As one of them stated that she

joined this profession out of passion. After her joining she noticed students' less interest in learning English then she organised different co-curricular activities to stimulate their interest in English.

In item no. 48, 60.15% participant teachers consented that lack of financial incentives from the authority is a barrier for practising new techniques in class room. Most of the interviewees opined the same as one of them told, "Financial support or our salary structure is very poor and not up to the mark and also we don't have provision for promotion. Sometimes that makes us frustrated." For this reason, they even do not show any interest to spend additional time for taking preparation about the classes. As a result, teachers become less interested in their professionalism and further professional development.

Lack of untrained teachers is a barrier that is pointed by three of the interviewees. One of them has argued, "If we think about professional development, we need training at a large scale which we are not getting now. Due to authorities' biasness same teachers are sent again and again to attend CPD courses".

Apart from these issues there are some other barriers found in the interview. Quality education is ensured if subject teachers teach the concerned subject. One of the interviewees claimed: "English teachers have to teach other subjects also due to shortage of teacher. As a result, they cannot put their full energy to their own subject teaching". Teachers' overload with classes and work are barrier denoted by four (04) of the interviewees.

Major Findings

- Teachers' professionalism and professional development practices have direct connection with students' exam result as there is a high-quality liaison between teachers' quality and students' accomplishment.
- Less than 40% of the teachers have inadequate understanding about English and Maths curriculum and lessons. Also, they do not have TCG to follow.
- All teachers both trained and untrained possess positive attitude towards professional development courses.
- Professional development courses change teachers' attitude and skills that they demonstrate in their professional activities.
- Less than 50% of the teachers do not have prerequisite degree or B Ed. degree in addition to their academic degree and have not attended in-service training or professional development courses.
- Due to biasness of the head teacher same teachers are sent again and again to different professional development training courses. Therefore, some teachers get least opportunity to develop professionally though they have strong desire for self-development.
- This profession is more disparate than other profession and has flexibility. So, most of the female teachers have joined this profession because they want to spend more time with their family.
- The teachers who come to this profession from passion and have professional competencies teach students with great care using varied techniques and new innovations.
- School administrators play a vital role in ensuring teachers' professionalism and practicing

teachers' professional development activities that reflect on students' achievement as well as public exams.

- Teachers are overloaded with classes and clerical job so they can find less time to take preparation for the class.
- Most of the teachers are less aware about using multimedia and participatory techniques to involve all the students in the lesson. They hardly use any other materials or games and fun to teach.
- Some teachers prefer guidebooks and are found gender biased.
- In few schools, atmosphere is adverse for female teacher i.e., representative female teachers have to face verbal sexual harassment from Managing Committee Members.

Discussion

B. Ed. degree or pre-service training is essential to join teaching profession. Persons having no training differ in performance: training can unfold and increase competence of average and weak performers to higher levels (Wilson, 2016). Teacher professionalism is simultaneously related to professional development (Evans, 2008). In this connection, Avalos (2011) spoke that teachers' professional development is the way of gaining knowledge, how they discover ways to research and the way they practice their understanding in exercise to assist student gaining knowledge of. Teachers' learning happens through joining a series of CPD courses. Graduate education and professional development courses are equally important for teachers to develop professionally and keep their knowledge up-to-date. But in the study, most of the teachers are found without having B. Ed. degree and professional development trainings. This post graduate degree is compulsory one year of study for graduate that Non-Government Teachers Registration and Certification Authority (NTRCA) approves for quality education.

The findings of this study divulge that all the participants accredit the importance of CPD courses. Also, among them, who attended professional development courses have acknowledged that their knowledge, skills and beliefs have been changed and they are now the confident users of modern teaching learning strategies. Begum (2017) also argued the same in her study.

Regarding collaboration it is also revealed that teachers' collaboration and support from colleagues enhance their professionalism. With their support they can solve any issues regarding teaching learning and become more competent. According to Shulman (1988), collaboration is a powerful tool for revealing and evolving the knowledge of teaching in particular.

Teachers' academic qualifications and pedagogical skills influence students' learning achievement that is also found out in this study. Diverse teaching styles have a great impact on pupils' learning process (Sheikh & Mahmood, 2014), and students centred teaching is always popular. A professional teacher is always concerned about this, They execute it in classroom. A substantial quantity of researches also presents high-quality liaison between teacher quality and pupil accomplishment (Abbate-Vaughn & Paugh, 2009). Furthermore, Opfer & Pedder (2011) have proven in their research that pupil accomplishment relies mainly on teachers' quality.

Most of the teachers are found being with positive attitude towards the profession and demonstrate in their professional activities. Evans (2011) mentioned that teacher professionalism

has three elements: behaviour, attitude and intellectuality. They feel that they have commitment to the profession along with students' learning. Among them behavioral element denotes the grade to which teachers can fulfill the requirements of the profession. It is the element in which teachers plan, apply, evaluate and develop techniques to ensure students' learning.

Motivation and passion are the substantial factors for the choice of teaching profession that is unveiled in the study. They consider teaching as noble profession and are the role model for the students. Teachers serve the society taking part in building the future generation and teaching values. They feel they have commitment to the profession along with students' learning. In this connection Watt & Richardson (2008) implied that teacher's commitment and motivation are major factors of teacher's behaviour. A professional teacher knows how to motivate students with different techniques. Ahmed et al. (2015) mentioned that no one can learn without interest and passion.

School environment determines the success in learning process, and enhances the quality of education likewise is exposed in this research. Most of the participant teachers suppose schools' poor physical conditions and lack of resources are the barriers for professional development activities. Khan and Iqbal (2012) have claimed in their research that physical facilities support both teachers and students in fruitful teaching and learning. Teachers' professional development activities are considered vital and have influence on school improvement (Hoque, et al, 2011).

Some teachers are found using unauthorised guide book and note book instead of textbook and TCG. According to Ahsan (2018), guidebooks and notebooks are some of the hindrances for quality education in Bangladesh. Dependency on this sort of guidebooks instead of textbook may lead students to lose their creativity.

Financial support or teachers' low salary structure has been represented as one of the barriers for practising professional development activities. This finding goes with the finding of Mehtab (2012) where she mentioned although teaching profession takes a lot of vigour and devotion but teachers get comparatively low salary in our country. In this connection Wilson (2016) argued, "Secondary teachers are a highly qualified group... They also have a right to the average earned by graduates with equivalent qualifications in other occupations".

Lack of untrained teachers is another barrier has been found out for practising professional activities. Professional training make teacher well-equipped for teaching and more committed to their work that is reflected on their job performance (OECD, 2014).

Recommendations

- Teachers must be encouraged to use written lesson plan and the school administrators must monitor and check lesson plan before class.
- Teachers must use participatory techniques and engage all the students in classroom activity. This issue must be solved through in-house training if there is no government training available immediately.
- Biasness in selecting teachers for training must be addressed carefully and proper training should be imparted where necessary.
- Most of the female teachers join teaching profession thinking it female-friendly. So, female friendly and secured atmosphere should be ensured by the school administrators.

- Sufficient number of teachers should be appointed to reduce pressure on the subject teachers.
- Infrastructure for using multimedia should be established and using resources and digital content in class should be encouraged and monitored by the school administrators. Best digital content may be awarded in each school.
- Tutoring is good for weak and slow learners but it should not be done for harvesting profit and business purpose. Tutoring of teachers must be monitored by the school authority.
- Teachers' salary should be handsome.

Conclusion

Professional teachers are the assets for their institutions which have been proved by the performance of the students and teachers as well. Professional teachers ensure quality teaching and learning. In Bangladesh, teachers can be called professional in some issues like teachers' collaboration, some of the issues of pedagogical practices and so on. On the other hand, there are still some shortcomings i.e., teachers' lack of understanding the curriculum, using resources, multimedia and digital content in class, insufficient training for teachers. Again, subject teachers have to take classes on other subjects, no promotion opportunity of teachers, less financial benefits etc. are the factors affecting teacher's professional development practices and students' achievement in the public exams. The situation needs to be improved without any delay in ensuring quality education for the twenty-first-century-learners.

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Exploring Transition and Inclusion of Students with Disabilities from Special School to Mainstream Education in Bangladesh

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Abstract

The study on the transition of the students with disabilities from special school to mainstream inclusive school in Bangladesh context followed a mixed approach where both quantitative and qualitative dimensions were investigated through different tools. The respondents were selected from special school and mainstream school teachers, parents of children with disabilities, school managing committee representatives, local education officials, inclusion experts and child-educational psychologist from different parts of Bangladesh. In this study, the existing policy, guideline, circular, documents have been reviewed in the lens of transition and inclusion of students with disabilities. In addition, current practices of transition and inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream education setting was explored in line with criteria (equal access, equitable acceptance, active participation, and learning outcome achievement) set by Directorate of Primary Education through Third Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-III). Moreover, every aspect and dimension of functional inclusive education in the socio-economic perspective of Bangladesh has been examined throughout the study. In this procedure, the current situation, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and challenges were presented for transition and inclusion issues. Different types of instruments were used to collect data from different respondents in the field level and various analytical frameworks for both quantitative (survey) and qualitative (in-depth interview, focus group discussion) aspects and methods (descriptive, narrative, thematic analysis, case studies) were employed to describe, analyze, extract and present the findings in accordance with the study objectives.

Keywords: Transition, Inclusion, Students with disabilities, Special school, Mainstream education

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Introduction

Transition is a psychological state of mind that takes place when a student changes his place from known to unknown where culture, society, and own cognition pose different challenges (Jindal-Snape, 2010). Change is inevitable whether people accept it or not. However, change can be quick but effective transition can be lengthy. Dixon & Tanner (2013) stated that transition is a continuous process and support should be provided where it is due. Transition regards as a prime ecological move that exhibits different social, emotional, academic, and organizational challenges. So, there is a common belief that institutional transition for children with disabilities is difficult. It is because students with disabilities particularly require support to manage change and build resilience. In this regard, educators can play an effective role in installing a constructive approach to change boosting their self-reliance. Students with disabilities are increasingly being educated in the normal school setting, endorsing a strategy of inclusion and promoting the privileges of persons with disabilities in Bangladesh. Commonly students with disabilities initiate their schooling in a segregated situation of a special school, transitioning to mainstream education either in primary or in secondary school after a course of skills improvement (Martin, et al. 2019). For every student with a disability, school transition is a distinctive and multifaceted process that requires in-depth study in our educational context.

Several researchers (Williams, et al. 2017) have identified key advantages of students with ASD in inclusive settings such as better academic learning accessibility, the inception of peer interaction leading to social skill development and prosperity for all students irrespective of abilities depending on the professional support (Goodall, 2015; Keane et al., 2012; Robertson, Chamberlain & Kasari, 2003). However, Humphrey and Lewis (2008) argued that general classrooms may cause complications for children with autism. They reported that children with autism are ten (10) times additional disbarred in mainstream education and even if they can enter, they become victims of bullying three (03) times than any other group of students.

Globally, successful inclusion is becoming a myth in the education system (Strnadová & Cumming, 2015). Although Inclusive policies were made nationally and internationally, admission in mainstream schools does not ensure inclusion for students with disabilities (Lynch & Irvine, 2009; Thomas & Loxley, 2007). Rather, Cassady (2011) found several factors that control the effectiveness of inclusion such as teachers' training and teachers' support, parental participation and peers' attitudes.

Some researchers argued on the limited availability of research findings on positive transition experiences (Keane & Costley, 2012). Although available studies show that factors associated with the aftermath of inclusive education for students with autism can be influenced, it also paves the way for further interventions that can have constructive results towards proper transition process (Rotheram-Fuller, et al. 2010).

A student's effective transition and adjustment in new places depends upon numerous components that include academic, cultural, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual abilities (McNerney & Pellicano, 2015). In particular, students having developmental and intellectual disabilities usually encounter early stage educational problems in school because of their disorders in intellectual and age-appropriate behaviour (Tobin & Staunton, 2012). Hence, the diverse range of such challenges needs to be examined.

Statement of the problem

The global drive for universal education has seen increasing numbers of students, including those with disabilities, attending primary through secondary education. However, in many countries including Bangladesh, the majority of students with disabilities struggle to succeed in mainstream education (World Report on Disability, 2011). Most of the schools tend to deny transition, the access of students from a special school, as their readiness for inclusive pedagogical practice is far away than the requirement. The transitioning students face a range of challenges when they enter the mainstream school from their previous special setting. Often this is because they are not supported in their transition to the inclusive phases. They either cannot move to the mainstream inclusive school at all, or they drop out after the transition happens because their new teachers' negative attitudes, poor inclusive teaching skills, knowledge, and understanding impede to include them in teaching-learning activities. Added to this, special education is not free like primary education in our country, rather it is sometimes costly. Families of children with disabilities are often among the poorest in a community in Bangladesh, unable to afford the costs of special school (Unicef, 2014). Thus, all students with disabilities encounter potentially disruptive or upsetting transition periods during their education as they move from familiar surroundings to unfamiliar ones. The school also shows reluctance to ensure peer and staff support and cross-institutional administrative collaboration for the effective transition as well as a resourceful continuation in the mainstream school.

Rationale of the study

Transition is considered as a pre-requisite of inclusive education which has been a national education agenda in the last decade. National and global commitment regarding the right to education in mainstream public institutions has been envisaged for many years. Bangladesh constitutional provision (Article 27, 28, 29), Compulsory Primary Education Act 1991, Disability Welfare Act 2001, Primary Education Development Program (PEDP-II and onward), Bangladesh National Education Policy 2010, Rights and Protection Act for Persons with Disability 2013, Policy Guidelines for Special Education 2018, Article-24 of Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and Goal-4 in Sustainable Development Goals (equitable quality inclusive education and life-long learning) all legal documents have been taken into account to embed transition and inclusion in mainstream education. In view of that, the transition issue necessitates being methodically studied for implementing the aforesaid agendas.

Current Government policy in Bangladesh regarding the education of students with disabilities and other special educational needs is one of increasing emphases on including as many of them as possible in mainstream schools (Asim & Ochiai, 2012). This is in line with an international trend towards increased inclusion (Booth & Ainscow, 2004). However, mainstream schools are not always disability-friendly in various aspects. In this regard, school readiness for this purpose requires systematic investigation. Therefore, the overall transition process of students with disabilities, from special school to mainstream school, including students' and family's preferences and interest, school readiness, cross-institutional professional relationship and collaboration, teachers' preparedness in terms of teaching-learning strategies, learning assessment, supply and use of resources and so forth should be methodically explored from the view point of right-based equitable quality inclusive education and student-centered lifelong learning.

Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study was to explore the transition and inclusion process of the students with disabilities from special school to mainstream school in Bangladesh context.

Specific objectives

- To review the current trends and issues of transition and inclusion of students having disabilities to our mainstream education system in Bangladesh.
- To identify the strengths and weaknesses in existing transition and inclusion process for students with disabilities in educational context of Bangladesh.

Conceptual framework

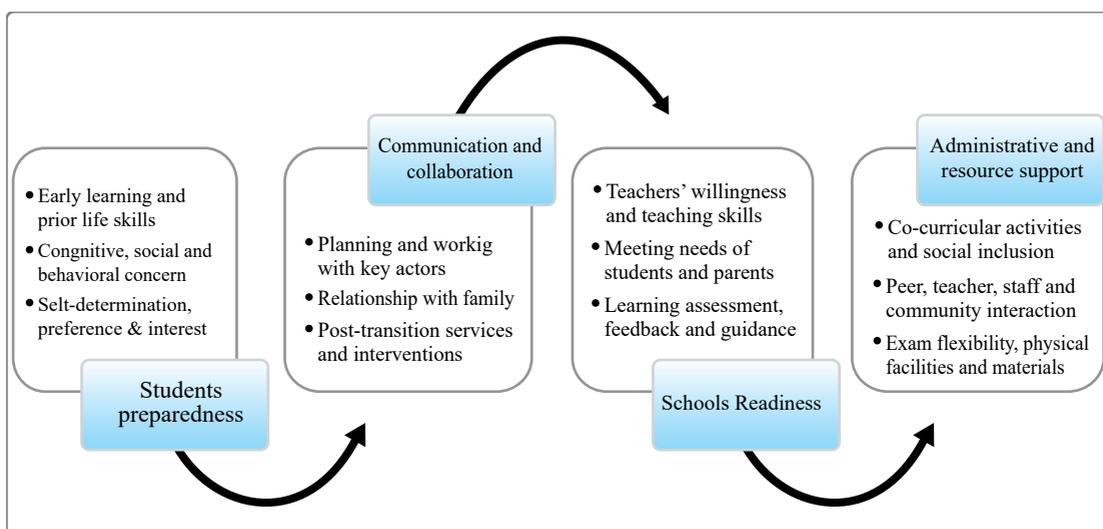


Diagram-1: Major variables that influence transition to mainstream school

Transition of students having disabilities from special school to regular school can be conceptualized by different critical components. Both students and teachers, school and community are integral part of this complex transition process. In the study on transition each associated components should be addressed from the view point of inclusive education. Needless to mention that the components of transition are strongly connected with each other components. Undeniably, the components are very crucial for better understanding of transition that is why all these will be importantly considered in tools development and data collection procedure.

Methodology

The proposed study employed mixed method research approach- Convergent Parallel Method. Mixed method research systematically combines both quantitative and qualitative methods by incorporating both numerical and narrative data in a particular inquiry. According to Creswell & Plano Clark (2011), a convergent parallel design involves that the researcher simultaneously

carry out both the quantitative and qualitative features in the specific stage of a research process, examines the two (02) components distinctly, and interprets the outcomes together.

Sampling

In the current study, sample schools (both special school and mainstream school) and sample respondents (teachers, parents, students) were determined by criterion purposive sampling method. As transition of students with disabilities is not frequently happened in mainstream primary and secondary schools, the criteria of considering the sample institutions were evidence or experience of transition and inclusive education. Furthermore, the diverse respondent chosen on the same principle based on the issue of interest, availability, and level of engagement with the transition program. Students with disabilities having experience of being transitioned selected as sample for interview, FGD and case study purposes. In this regard, student with different types of disabilities were addressed in this study.

Sources of data and methods of data collection

For the study, essential data and other information were collected from both primary and secondary sources. To ensure scientific validity of the study parameters and the identified indicators generated from study objectives, special schools (segregated setting) for students with disabilities, mainstream inclusive schools (both Govt. and non-Govt. primary and secondary schools), students having disabilities and without disabilities, parents of student with disability, teachers of both types of schools, related stakeholders (special educator, inclusive education expert, education psychologist, Govt. officials, SMC representatives) were the primary sources of data for the present study.

Secondary sources of data were the existing different acts, policy, reports, studies, guideline and framework regarding disability, inclusive education, and equitable quality education. National curriculum and teacher education curriculum also provided essential information. Collected documents reviewed and analyzed through content and interpretative framework.

Tools of data collection

Both conventional and participatory tools of data collection, namely Survey Questionnaire, In-depth interview (one to one) schedule, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guideline, and Case study outline. As self, parent, teacher reported data were main concern of the data collection, study tools reflected these respondents' diverse range of active and spontaneous participation. It is worth mentioning that all tools were prepared in English first and then translated into Bengali for better comprehension of respondents during field research.

Data analysis and presentation

Findings are systematically presented in several means-Textual (data are gathered and presented in written and paragraph form including quotation), Tabular (data are organized in statistical table in columns and rows) and Graphical (data are structured and visualized in various graph or diagrams, e.g. bar chart, pie chart, area chart etc). In this purpose, latest version of Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23) was used to produce and illustrate the findings.

Findings of the study

Required data were collected by using the developed tools. As the overall situation of educational settings and student-teachers' condition has been disrupted due to COVID-19 pandemic, the expected number of respondents could not be reached. A total one hundred and two (102) survey of special school teachers thirty four (34) and mainstream school teachers sixty eight (68), in-depth interview of thirty one (31) respondents, three (03) focus group discussions with relevant stakeholders and four (04) remarkable transition stories have been accomplished for data collection of the study. The findings of the study are presented as descriptive and graphical mode.

Trends and issues of transition and inclusion

Functional indicators of effective and successful inclusive education outlined in PEDP-3 Inclusive Education Conceptual Framework (DPE) have been followed to review the trends of inclusive education in Bangladesh context. The four (04) indicators of the framework is widely followed in Bangladesh for reviewing inclusive education practices in mainstream primary education. The four (04) indicators have also been followed to see the trends and issues of transition and inclusion in primary schools in this study. The indicators are as follows-



Diagram-2: Indicators of effective transition and inclusion used in the study

Access

Access and enrollment of students with disabilities in mainstream schools has been increased country-wide over the last two decades. Schools and teachers show positive attitudes toward the students with disabilities. However, in many cases, particularly in rural area, the schools buildings are still inaccessible in terms of inadequate infrastructural facilities such as ramp and toilet, and regular attendance in the class is not always monitored by the local authority or school managing committee members. A head teacher of a rural government primary school stressed-

We always welcome students having any types of difficulties including disabilities. We try our best to maintain the philosophy of *no child left behind*. All of my teachers along with the community peoples are very much sensitized about equal right to regular education of each students regardless of disabilities.

To ensure the barrier-free access for all students, some school still struggle with their insufficient physical facilities. An Assistant Upazila Education Officer (AUEO) emphasized-

It is very hard for the students who have physical disabilities to get the school without wheelchair. But few schools have broken ramp or the ramp is blocked by other stuffs. However, whenever we are informed we try to resolve the issue immediately. We also ensure their official enrollment in the school.

Participation

Teachers and students in regular classroom show helpful attitudes for the active participation of students with disabilities in class and other school activities. Involvement in co-curricular activities is also acknowledged. However, due to unfavorable seating arrangement or time constraints sometimes they cannot fully participate in the activities. A teacher of an inclusive classroom expressed her efficacies-

In my school we always try to involve all the students with or without disabilities. In particular, during teaching-learning session I engage a student who has hearing or vision problem with peers who do not have any problems, and call them to come front to write the answer on blackboard for their active participation in class.

In contrast, teachers often require some specialized teaching skills for better performance in terms of students' participation. A head teacher suggested-

Every teacher needs to be well-trained on inclusive education for effective and functional pedagogical practices. Essential teaching-learning materials and other resources also need be available in every school if we really want to actively engage all students in regular teaching-learning process.

Achievement

It is recognized that the ultimate goal of inclusive education is meeting learning needs and achieving learning outcomes. Students with disabilities participate in each type of formative and summative assessment and they obtain the required marks and get promotion to the next grade or level. A URC Instructor pointed out-

Students with disabilities can learn necessary social skills from everyday school culture. There is a huge difference perceived between their early and present competencies of overall performances. We can simply realize their confidence and positive changes after being included in mainstream school system.

However, their cognitive skills and positive behavioral attainment are sometimes far from the standard. A mother of a transitioned student with ASD claimed-

Teachers are very helpful in bringing out our children's potentials. But we expect more intellectual performance in terms of mathematical and reasoning skill. Teachers also need to pay extra attention to their behavioural adaptation.

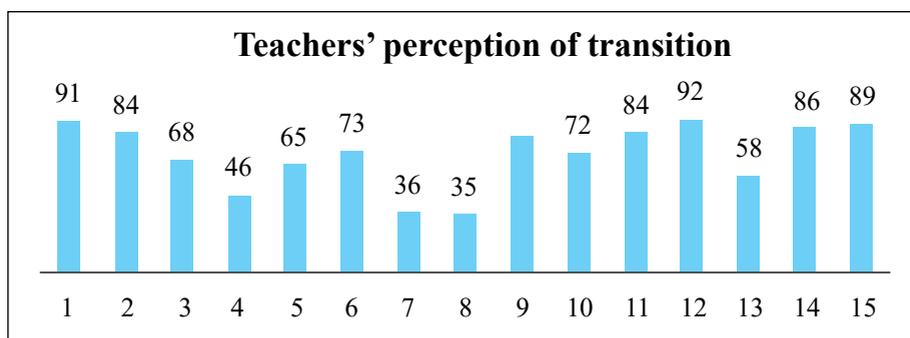
Acceptance

It was found that teachers, officials, staffs, community peoples and peers have changed their negative attitudes toward students with disabilities as well as educating them within regular classroom although many school community environment often seems unwelcoming as stigmatization, bullying, prejudice are still in place. A SMC representative spelled out-

School has drastically changed its negative notion to accept students with disabilities. Teachers are now willing to know about autism and motivated to receive training on how to manage them in classroom context. They also extend their mental support toward family as mothers sometimes get very frustrated.

Strengths and weaknesses of transition and inclusion

Both survey and interview data were used to identify the strengths and weaknesses of transition and inclusion process in mainstream education in Bangladesh. The collected data from different sources were triangulated for data validation. Answers against each statement of the survey questionnaire for both special and mainstream teachers were analyzed through statistical programme to see the strengths and weaknesses.



Graph-1: Teachers' responses (%) against statements of survey questionnaire

In the above graphical presentation, statement-1 was on teachers' belief of transition. More than 90% teachers believe that transition and inclusion should be implemented for students with disabilities in mainstream education. In statement-2, 9 and 11, it is indicated that more than 80% teachers believe that students with disabilities can learn better and can acquire behavioural and social skills in inclusive setting with the peers who do not have disabilities. In statement-12 which emphasized on community support for transition and inclusion, denotes that community extends their support for implementing transition and inclusive pedagogy. In addition, in statement-15, majority of the teachers (nearly 90%) of mainstream schools realize that their teaching capacities and diversified skills get improved through the inclusive teaching-learning practices.

In contrast, most of the teachers of special school do not communicate with mainstream school authority for transition of their students with disabilities who have achieved some practical and academic skills to be adapted in inclusive setting. Only 46% special teachers (statement-4) try for transition to nearby regular school and 36% special teachers (statement-7) try to follow up the academic and behavioural progress of the transitioned students in new school. In statement-8, it is revealed that majority of mainstream teachers are not interested to contact with special teachers for improving their teaching skills or acquiring differentiated teaching strategies for teaching in inclusive setting. Only 35% teachers show their motivation to enhance their pedagogical efficiencies in this regard.

The overall findings related to strengths and weaknesses of transition and inclusion process are outlined below that have been extracted from data of different sources.

Strengths of transition and inclusion

- Both special and mainstream teachers believe that SWDs should be placed in mainstream school
- Access and acceptance to mainstream have been accredited
- Peers show positive attitude and try to support SWDs in school activities
- Community participation in inclusive process has been broadened and strengthened
- Local education officials are willing to take the responsibilities for transition
- Flexibilities in examination and remedial education has been introduced
- Infrastructural facilities in schools and surroundings are improved for SWDs
- SMC and PTA are very motivated and responsive to transition and inclusion process
- Teacher training on inclusive pedagogy has been increased
- Financial assistance for enrolled students with disabilities is provided from government for continuation of education and other services needed

Weaknesses of transition and inclusion

- Social stigma and misconception of disability are still big impediment
- Special teachers do not communicate or follow up with mainstream school
- Mainstream teachers' capacities need improvement for inclusive teaching
- Assessment system requires to be modified as per students' needs and abilities
- Community needs to be more sensitized to transform school as disability-friendly
- Student-centered teaching-learning needs to be practiced more for SWDs
- Supply and use of teaching-learning materials / resources have to be confirmed
- Collaboration between special and mainstream school needs to be strengthened
- No transition policy or guideline from special to mainstream or primary to upper level is formulated by relevant directorates
- Cognitive and behavioural learning outcomes are sometimes overlooked whereas socialization skill is nurtured more

Discussion

In this study, the transition of learners having disabilities within a regular education setting has been explored from different dimensions. Firstly, the existing policy, guideline, circular, documents have been reviewed. Secondly, current practices of transition of student having disabilities in normal school were explored in line with criteria set by the Directorate of Primary Education through the Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP-III). Every aspect of functional inclusive education in the socio-economic perspective of Bangladesh has been examined.

Parents' participation is a critical part in the educational activities of students having disabilities. Parents and other family members are considered as the most well-known persons for any information related to their child's difficulties and in decision making process for well-

organized intervention. Child's parents and caregivers should be involved with related experts and educators to determine better services for their child. Parents have to extend their support and assume the liability for academic as well as non-academic activities at home and beyond for their child. Moreover, they need to change their attitudes toward transition and learning (Lynch & Irvine, 2009; Lilley, 2014).

Supportive and interactive peers play a crucial role in the development of individual with disabilities (Darretxe & Sepúlveda, 2011). However, it is found in this study that some students with disabilities do not find any support and become a victim of bullying that prompt them to drop out from school. Peer support not only helps student with disabilities but it has a grip on the lives of student without disabilities as Humphrey and Lewis (2008) stated that proper execution of peer support leads to acquisition of new skills for student without disability such as understanding of diversity, inclusive society preparation etc.

Dixon & Tanner (2013) argued that collaboration tactics for an inclusive school is a great asset but it not feasible for all the schools due to its financial reason. Moreover, in rural places, support team accessibility is another pressing issue. In short, absence of relevant policy and documents, lack of teachers' preparedness and teacher training, lack of different funds and materials, lack of social and community awareness and sensitization, lack of school and administrative collaboration and support were found very significant variables for effective transition and inclusion process in Bangladesh context. It can be mentioned that the findings from this study are much aligned with the other studies related to inclusive education for learners having disabilities in primary education context in Bangladesh.

Conclusion and recommendations

Transition is treated as a pre-requisite of equitable and inclusive education which has been a national education agenda in the last decade. National and global commitment regarding the right to education in mainstream public institutions has been envisaged for many years. Student's effective transition and adaptation in new school depends on several components that include school activity, cultural, emotional, behavioral, and intellectual abilities. In particular, students having developmental and intellectual disabilities usually face early stage educational challenges in school. Therefore the diverse range of such challenges associated with transition has been explored in line with inclusionary philosophy. It is expected that these findings have a great implications for future directions regarding transition and inclusion agenda for students with disabilities in Bangladesh context.

If the transition is happens appropriately the students with disabilities this will be efficient in achieving equal rights to education and can foster student's full development of potentials. Hence, the whole transition process of students with disabilities, from special school to mainstream school, including students' and family's preferences and concern, school readiness, cross-institutional professional relationship and partnership, teachers' preparedness in terms of teaching-learning strategies, supply and use of resources and so forth should be systematically monitored by related stakeholders with regard to inclusive education. Needless to mention that without appropriate placement of students with disabilities and without ensuring equitable

quality education for all, our national educational goals never be achieved. Timely transition and effective inclusive practices at educational settings are the viable strategy for safeguarding human dignity and social acceptance of the persons with disabilities at every sphere of their life experience.

The following implications and recommendations are formulated on the basis of findings for functional implementation of transition and inclusive education.

- Appropriate policy or guideline for transition from special to mainstream or primary to upper level needs to be formulated by relevant directorates.
- Teachers and authority of special schools have to be proactive in building and continuing professional collaboration with the mainstream school system.
- Professional development training on inclusive teaching-learning has to be confirmed for all primary and secondary teachers of mainstream schools.
- Teachers' capacities need to be improved for modifying disruptive behavioural problems of students and peers in inclusive classroom environment.
- School authority should welcome and respect parental participation for effective transition planning and functional education for students with disabilities.
- Assessment of students' cognitive learning has to be performed with reasonable accommodation principles and proper curricular flexibility.
- Members of School Managing Committee as well as community peoples have to be aware and sensitized for disability issue and transition process.
- The local education office has to extend the support to mainstream school by supplying teaching-learning materials / resources for effective inclusive practices.

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Psychological Burnout Among Secondary School Teachers of Dhaka City: Contribution of Demographic Factors

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Samsul Huda⁵

Abstract:

Burnout is distressing psychological state of an individual often characterized by emotional exhaustion, cynical, and impersonal attitude towards people at the workplace, and a low sense of personal accomplishment towards one's job role. The present study is set out to investigate the psychological burnout phenomenon among secondary school teachers of Dhaka city and to explore the demographic factors that contribute to teacher burnout. A cross-sectional survey method was used to collect data from seventy seven (77) purposively sampled teachers. The results from the multiple regression analysis revealed five (05) demographic factors: teachers' involvement in extra-teaching assignments, teaching experience, types of school, working hours, and gender. The study has implications to promote teacher well-being in Bangladeshi schools.

Keywords: Burnout, secondary school, teacher well-being

Background

Burnout is not a new phenomenon in the job industry, however, it's increasing rate in the teaching profession is alarming. Extensive research shows that the teaching profession has the highest burnout rate compared to any other public sector and teachers are consistently reported to be at the highest risk of burnout across the world (Gabriel, 2013; Jacobson, 2016). In this era of ever-changing education reforms, teaching is increasingly becoming a challenging profession due to various reasons that range from carrying out legislative mandates to managing the classroom to parental cooperation, which might culminate burnout among the teachers of different abilities (Ramberg, Laftman, Akerstedt & Modin, 2019).

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Additionally, burned-out teachers, in many cases, tend to switch to other professions because they are dissatisfied with the current one. It has been found that every year, about 7-8% of teachers change their professions due to burnout with their occupation (Shen, McCaughtry, Martin, Garn, Kulik ho comma & Fahlman, 2017). Excluding turnover, teacher absenteeism, and early retirement due to burnout status are significant outcomes that may not only put the burden of extra work on other teachers but also a waste of financial resources by hiring substitute teachers (Fisher, 2011) and leaving students to private coaching for overcoming learning the deficiency. These consequences have after effects on quality education. One of them is employing substitute teachers time and again who are not highly qualified. This not only degrades the quality of teaching but also makes students demotivated and apathetic (Shen et al., 2017). Another is the frequent transition of teachers hinders the way of policy implication along with a development plan for schools (Jacobson, 2016). Not only professional life but also the quality of the personal life of teachers are significantly deteriorated by burnout (Shen et al., 2017). Burnout of teachers takes a heavy toll on their physical, emotional, and psychosocial health (Jackobson, 2016). Regarding mental health, burnout can cause low confidence, low self-esteem, and clinical depression. Burnout is also detrimental to physical health, as in insomnia, headache, frequent cold, and flu, even in severe cases, show cardiovascular syndrome (Shen et al., 2017). Burnout does not affect the teachers only but also their students and the educational system. Therefore, it is deemed necessary to address the issue of teacher burnout for the sake of its appropriate management.

Statement of the problem

Bangladesh is going through a process of education reform for ensuring quality education, achieving the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG 4). In this regard, several educational reforms have been undertaken, but little attention has been given to the teachers who are carrying out those reforms (CAMPE, 2019). However, it has been widely reported that teacher quality is the most critical factor for achieving quality education (Dufour & Marzano, 2011). Keeping quality education at the heart, Bangladesh has taken several initiatives such as allocation of budget, reform policy, and launch development programs to improve teacher quality. Nevertheless, poor quality of education is still one of the major concerns of our education sector and the quality of teachers is one of the major reasons behind that (CAMPE, 2019; Rahman, 2014; World Bank, 2013). It seems that the existing endeavors towards improving the quality of teachers hardly could translate into effective classroom instruction and alleviate the overall quality of education. In fact, according to a report by ADB (2015), a weak teacher development program is one of the major issues that secondary education in Bangladesh is suffering from Most of the endeavors towards preparing quality teachers are mostly centered either upon teachers' professional development such as teacher training programs or on an increase in salary subvention (CAMPE, 2019). Consequently, psychological issues related to professional development such as burnout often remain neglected as a focus of teachers' quality development programs. The present study is set out to investigate the psychological burnout phenomenon among secondary school teachers of Dhaka city and the demographic factors contributing to the teacher burnout.

Importance and Rationale of the Study

Burnout is the most reported cause of teacher attrition (Jackobson, 2016). A burned-out teacher can be considered a burden on the education system as burnout remains in the system for

a long time without making any effective contribution to the system (Shirom, Melamed, Toker, Berliner, & Shapira, 2015). Burnout among teachers is a phenomenon that silently affects not only the individual teachers but the entire education system and its stakeholders particularly the students, our future generation (Fernet et al., 2012). Therefore, it is important to understand the causal phenomena of burnout to address the issue and plan effective intervention strategies. The study is set out to explore the demographic factors that contribute to teachers' burnout experience. The result will help to identify the potential demographic sources of burnout. This will also help policymakers to make schools a less stressful place for teachers in Bangladesh and formulate policies to facilitate teacher well-being and overall mental health.

Research Questions

The following research questions guide the study.

- i. What is the prevalence of burnout among teachers at secondary schools in Dhaka city?
- ii. Which demographic factors contribute to burnout among teachers?

Methodology

Sampling

Non-probability purposive sampling was used to select the teachers as the study participants. Number of participated teachers were seventy seven (77) and they were from different types of schools including, non-government schools with and without MPO (Monthly Pay Order) provision, Government, and English medium schools. Secondary school teachers in Dhaka city served as the source of data. The study followed a cross-sectional survey method to collect data as it allowed the researcher to take a snapshot of the researched phenomenon from a population too large to study directly at a point in time (Babbie, 2014). The present study was set out to explore the burnout situation among secondary school teachers in Dhaka city. By using a cross-sectional survey, it was possible to collect responses on burnout from a large group of respondents at the same time. Survey designs are also effective for handling the analysis of several variables simultaneously (Babbie, 2014). In this study, one of the group focuses was on exploring different demographics (e.g., gender) variables that are believed to contribute to burnout among teachers. Surveys also provide an opportunity to collect anonymous data from a large group, without prejudicing their responses (Fink, 1995). Furthermore, it was both time and cost-effective (Creswell, 2012), allowing the researcher to cover a considerable population with limited resources and within a limited time frame.

Tools of data collection

A self-administered questionnaire was used to collect data for the study. As burnout is a subjective experience, a self-report measure suits the purpose well (Babbie, 2014; Creswell, 2012). Given the study focuses on two (02) issues regarding burnout among teachers: prevalence and causes two (02) different self-reported measures for each of the issues will be used to develop the questionnaire. The questionnaire was divided into two sections: Part A, and B. Part A followed a brief description of the demographic items provided in Part A, for measuring the contributing factors of burnout among teachers. Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey MBI-ES (Maslach et

al.,1996) was included in Part B for measuring the prevalence of burnout. It should be mentioned here that the self-report measures adapted and piloted to be suitably applied for the study sample. Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators survey was translated following the back-translated method as suggested by Brislin (1970). A brief description of the two (02) subsections of the questionnaire is given below:

Part A- Demographic information sheet. In this sub-section demographic items concerning teachers were included. For instance, gender, age, marital status, type of school, educational qualification, teaching experience, no. of classes per day, salary, working hour, and involvement in any extra teaching assignment at school.

Part B- The Maslach Burnout Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES)- a 22-item survey comprised of three subscales namely: Emotional Exhaustion (EE); Depersonalization (DP) and a reduced sense of Personal Accomplishment (PA) (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1996). The emotional exhaustion subscale assesses feelings of being emotionally exhausted by one's work. An example of the EE subscale item is: "I feel fatigued when I get up in the morning and have to face another day on the job". The depersonalization subscale measures the feeling of detachment towards people (e.g., students, colleagues, staff, parents) at one's workplace. A sample item for this subscale includes "I feel I treat some students as if they were impersonal objects". The reduced sense of personal accomplishment indicates a sense of ineffectiveness and denying one's contribution to one's workplace. A sample item for this subscale includes: "I feel I'm positively influencing other people's lives through my work" (reverse coded). Each item of the MBI-ES is scored on a Likert scale in terms of frequency of experiences ranged from 0 (never) to 6 (always). Median of scores is considered as cut-off scores i.e., scores falling above-median scores were considered as high and below-median as low and falling on median as average scores. This is a popular survey with evidence of empirical validity and reliability to measure burnout in academic settings across different cultural contexts. The Cronbach's α value for this survey has been reported in past research as ranging from .71 to .90 (Maslach, Jackson & Leiter, 1997). In this study the 22-item bangla version of the MBI was found to be highly reliable with a Cronbach's alpha (α)=.87 which was comparable to the estimated range of Cronbach's alpha (0.71- 0.90) reported in the previous research.

Data Analysis and Presentation

Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze and interpret the data. The descriptive analysis involved the use of means and standard deviations, while inferential analysis involved using the Chi Square test, multiple regression techniques, and ANOVA. All the statistical analyses and all other data processing were done by using SPSS 20.0 windows program. For tabular and graphical representation, Microsoft Word 2013 and Microsoft Excel 2013 were used.

Results

Prevalence of Burnout among the teachers

The prevalence of burnout has been determined by teachers' responses to Maslach Burnout Inventory- Educator survey. Different demographic factors have been taken to consideration to

examine the prevalence among teachers.

Prevalence of Burnout across the Gender

Percentages of different burnout components across gender

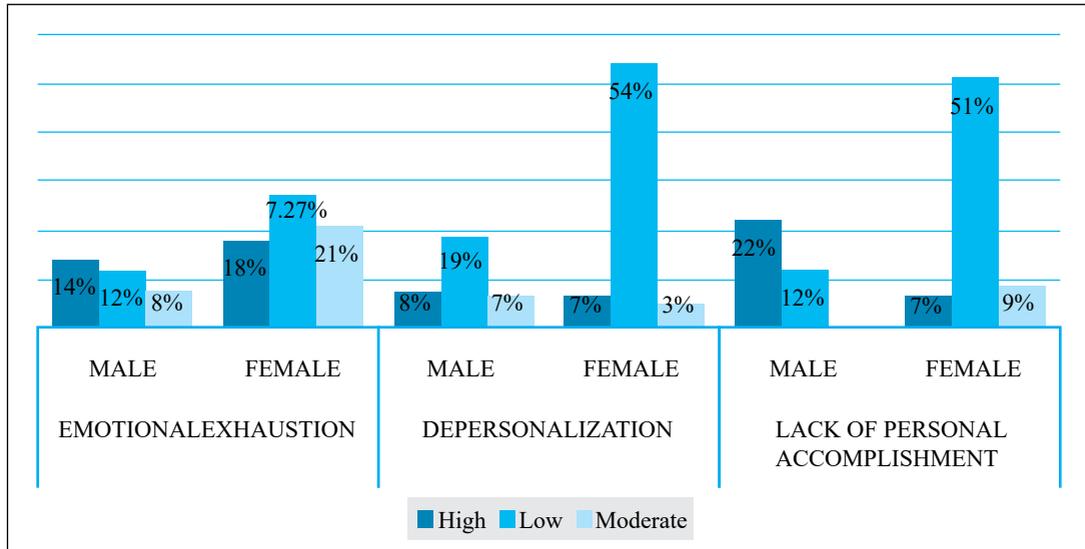


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the percentages of the three (03) burnout components across the gender indicating its specific component with level. Emotional exhaustion seems to have the highest prevalence among the participants as about 32% (M=14% and F=18%) of the sample falls under the category of having a high level of emotional exhaustion. Next to this, is a lack of personal accomplishment with 29% (M=22% and F=7%) of the sample reporting a high level of reduced personal accomplishment. Gender difference is found across all the components of burnout. Emotional exhaustion (14%) is prevalent in high levels among females comparing depersonalization and lack of personal accomplishment. On the other hand, male teachers exhibit a lack of personal accomplishment (22%) the most. According to the chi-squared test analysis the differences between male and female teachers is not statistically significant for the emotional exhaustion [$\chi^2 (2, N=77) = 1.77, p > 0.05$] and depersonalization [$\chi^2 (2, N=200) = 5.44, p > 0.05$] but it was highly significant for the personal accomplishment component [$\chi^2 (2, N=200) = 27.02, p < 0.01$].

Mean scores of different burnout components across gender

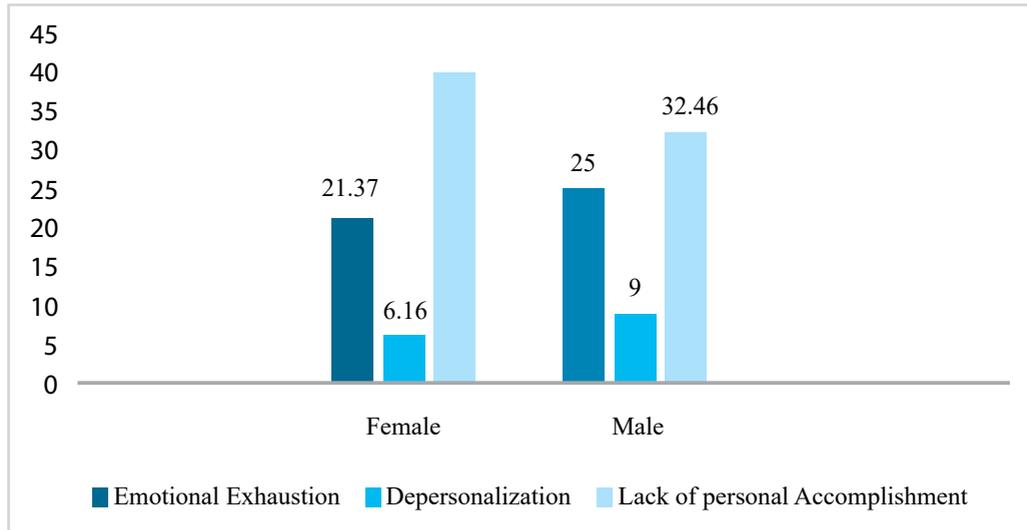


Figure 2

Figure 2 shows the mean scores of the three (03) burnout components across the gender. It seems that the prevalence of emotional exhaustion and depersonalization is higher among male whereas the prevalence of lack of personal accomplishment is higher among female. However, the result of ANOVA suggested that for the emotional exhaustion component the difference between males and females is not significant $F(1,75) = 1.212, P > .05$. On the other hand, the effect of gender on the mean differences of depersonalization $F(1,75) = 5.22, p < .05$ and lack of personal accomplishment $F(1,75) = 18.712, p < .01$ were significant.

Demographic Variables Contributing to Burnout

To answer the second research question on whether any demographic variable contributed to the teachers' MBI subscale scores, a multiple regression using a force entry method was conducted. Demographic variables: gender, educational qualification, involvement in extra teaching assignment, employment type, teaching experience, type of the workplace/school, number of classes, working hour, and monthly income were entered simultaneously as the independent or predictor variables, whereas the MBI subscale scores i.e., Emotional exhaustion, Depersonalization, and Personal accomplishment scores were entered as the dependent or criterion variable. Beta weights for each variable were compared against each other to determine which of the demographic variables provided the most unique contribution to the burnout subscale and the overall burnout scores. The results of the multiple regression analysis are presented in Table 1-4.

Table 1 presents demographic predictors of emotional exhaustion. The regression analysis returned a result of $R^2 = .491, F(20, 76) = 2.704, p < .01$. This means that 49.1% of the variance of the emotional exhaustion subscale scores in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of demographic variables in the regression model.

Demographic predictors of emotional exhaustion

Emotional Exhaustion			
Demographic variables	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E B</i>	<i>B</i>
Gender	-.609	.409	-.203
Educational qualification	-1.116	.636	-.276
Extra teaching assignment	1.301	.400	.457**
Appointment type	.114	.451	.035
Teaching experience			
Below 3 years	-.078	.594	-.023
3-6 years	-.242	.565	-.076
11-14 years	-1.350	.595	-.274
Above 14 years	-1.029	1.053	-.161
School type			
Non govt. school (with MPO)	-1.854	.592	-.421**
Govt. school	-.187	.820	-.029
English medium school	.549	.579	.130
No. of classes			
5-6 classes	-.226	.367	-.077
7-8 classes	-.302	.968	-.053
Working hour			
1-2 hours	.175	1.640	.020
3-4 hours	1.111	1.040	.252
5-6 hours	1.130	.970	.392
7-8 hours	.561	1.049	.168
Monthly income			
BDT 20,000/- -30,000/-	-.135	.531	-.041
BDT 31,000/- - 40,000/-	.829	.822	.113
BDT<40,000/-	.953	.868	.166
<i>R</i> ²	.491		
<i>F</i>	2.70**		

Table 1

Note: B= Unstandardised coefficient; S.E B= Standard error of B, β =Standardised coefficient; ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

According to the β values, Involvement in extra teaching assignment was found to provide the most significant contribution to emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .457$, $p < .01$). Non-Govt. schools

receiving MPO were found to be the next strongest predictor ($\beta = -.421, p < .01$), suggesting that teachers from those schools reported a lower score in the emotional exhaustion subscale of burnout.

Demographic predictors of Depersonalization

Demographic variables	Depersonalization		
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E B</i>	<i>B</i>
Gender	-.686	.295	-.335**
Educational qualification	.125	.458	.045
Extra teaching assignment	.521	.289	.267
Appointment type	.113	.325	.051
Teaching experience			
Below 3 years	.637	.428	.279
3-6 years	-.019	.408	-.009
11-14 years	-.873	.429	-.259
Above 14 years	-.689	.760	-.158
School type			
Non govt. school (with MPO)	-.169	.427	-.056
Govt. school	-1.133	.592	-.260
English medium school	.287	.418	.100
No. of classes			
5-6 classes	.041	.265	.020
7-8 classes	-.206	.698	-.053
Working hour			
1-2 hours	.665	1.183	.109
3-4 hours	.159	.750	.053
5-6 hours	.273	.700	.138
7-8 hours	-.413	.756	-.180
Monthly income			
BDT 20,000/- -30,000/-	-.404	.383	-.180
BDT 31,000/- - 40,000/-	-.171	.593	-.034
BDT<40,000/-	.119	.626	.030
<i>R</i> ²	.435		
<i>F</i>	2.15**		

Table 2

Note: B= Unstandardised coefficient; S.E B= Standard error of B, β =Standardised coefficient; ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 2 depicts the demographic predictors of depersonalization. The regression analysis returned a result of $R^2 = .435$, $F(20, 76) = 2.15$, $p < .01$. This means that 43.5% of the variance of the depersonalization subscale scores in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of demographic variables in the regression model. No demographic variable significantly predicted the score depersonalization score with exception of gender. Gender was found to be the only significant demographic factor that contributed to the depersonalization score ($\beta = -.335$, $p < .01$) suggesting that female teachers reported a lower sense of depersonalization as measured by the MBI than male teachers.

Demographic predictors of reduced Personal Accomplishment

Demographic variables	Personal Accomplishment		
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E B</i>	β
Gender	.465	.234	.217*
Educational qualification	.036	.364	.012
Extra teaching assignment	.018	.229	.009
Appointment type	.141	.258	.061
Teaching experience			
Below 3 years	-.500	.340	-.209
3-6 years	.272	.324	.120
11-14 years	.734	.341	.208**
Above 14 years	1.440	.603	.315**
School type			
Non govt. school (with MPO)	.458	.339	.145
Govt. school	2.042	.470	.447**
English medium school	.224	.332	.074
No. of classes			
5-6 classes	-.770	.210	-.369
7-8 classes	-1.676	.554	-.408
Working hour			
1-2 hours	-2.832	.939	-.445**
3-4 hours	-.143	.595	-.045
5-6 hours	-.172	.556	-.083
7-8 hours	.262	.601	.109
Monthly income			

BDT 20,000/- -30,000/-	-1.096	.304	-.466
BDT 31,000/- - 40,000/-	.033	.471	.006
BDT<40,000/-	.311	.497	.076
<i>R</i> ²	.674		
<i>F</i>	5.79**		

Table 3

Note: B= Unstandardised coefficient; S.E B= Standard error of B, β =Standardised coefficient; ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

In table 3, demographic predictors of reduced personal accomplishment are presented. Only gender, teaching experience, and working hours were found to be significantly predicted the score of reduced personal accomplishment on MBI. The regression analysis returned a result of $R^2 = .674$, $F(20, 76) = 5.79$, $p < .01$. This means that 67.4% of the variance of the reduced personal accomplishment sub-scale scores in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of demographic variables in the regression model.

According to the β value ($\beta = .447$, $p < .01$) Govt. school teachers reported to significantly experience a reduced sense of personal accomplishment. Next to which is working hour where the category of the lowest working hour made a significant negative contribution to the personal accomplishment subscale ($\beta = -.445$, $p < .01$) indicating that teachers having lower working hours tend to score lower in the reduced personal accomplishment subscale. After working hours, teaching experience comes next. Both the categories of higher teaching experience, i.e., 11-14 years ($\beta = .208$, $p < .01$) and above 14 years ($\beta = .315$, $p < .01$) made significant positive contribution to the reduced personal accomplishment score on MBI scale. This indicates that experienced teachers tend to suffer from a reduced sense of personal accomplishment more than those with limited teaching experience. The last predictor in the list is gender ($\beta = .217$, $p < .05$) suggesting that female teachers tend to suffer from reduces sense of personal accomplishment than that of male teachers.

Demographic predictors of Burnout

Demographic variables	Burnout		
	<i>B</i>	<i>S.E B</i>	β
Gender	-.829	.529	-.202
Educational qualification	-.955	.822	-.172
Extra teaching assignment	1.840	.517	.472**
Appointment type	.367	.583	.083
Teaching experience			
Below 3 years	.059	.768	.013
3-6 years	.011	.731	.003

11-14 years	-1.489	.769	-.221
Above 14 years	-.277	1.362	-.032
School type			
Non Govt. school (with MPO)	-1.565	.766	-.260*
Govt. school	.722	1.061	.083
English medium school	1.060	.749	.184
No. of classes			
5-6 classes	-.956	.474	-.239
7-8 classes	-2.184	1.251	-.278
Working hour			
1-2 hours	-1.993	2.121	-.164
3-4 hours	1.128	1.344	.187
5-6 hours	1.231	1.255	.312
7-8 hours	.409	1.356	.089
Monthly income			
BDT 20,000/- -30,000/-	-1.635	.687	-.364
BDT 31,000/- - 40,000/-	.691	1.063	.069
BDT<40,000/-	1.383	1.122	.176
<i>R</i> ²	.546		
<i>F</i>	3.37**		

Table 4

Note: B= Unstandardised coefficient; S.E B= Standard error of B, β =Standardised coefficient; ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 4 presents the demographic predictors of the overall burnout score. The regression analysis returned a result of $R^2 = .546$, $F(20, 76) = 3.37$, $p < .01$. This means that 54.6% of the variance of the overall burnout score in the sample can be accounted for by the linear combination of demographic variables in the regression model. Involvement in extra teaching assignments was found to provide the most significant positive contribution to the overall burnout score ($\beta = .472$, $p < .01$). This means teachers who are involved in extra teaching assignments at school tend to experience a higher sense of burnout. School type is another predictor that significantly predicted burnout as its non-govt. school (with MPO) category negatively contributed to the overall burnout score ($\beta = -.260$, $p < .05$), suggesting teachers working at non-govt. the school which receives MPO tends to report a lower sense of burnout on the MBI scale.

Discussion

Findings and discussion is presented according to the research questions. Also, the discussion explains how the findings connect with the previous literature. The prevalence of psychological burnout among secondary school teachers in Dhaka city is measured by the Maslach Burnout

Inventory-Educators Survey (MBI-ES). According to the Chi analysis, Emotional Exhaustion is the prevailing attribute of burnout among female teachers at a high level. Male teachers are found to suffer from a lack of personal accomplishment at a high level.

In addition, according to the mean score, it was found that female teachers exhibit more lack of personal accomplishment ($M=40.12$) than male teachers (32.46). On the other hand, male teachers have more depersonalization ($M=9$) than female teachers ($M=6.16$). This result is quite consistent with prior research findings. Female teachers have more emotional exhaustion and lack of personal accomplishment where male teachers suffer from depersonalization (Schaufeli & Greenglass, 2001). As female teachers are expected to serve their families mentally and physically, they often felt overwhelmed to balance their personal and professional life. This disharmony between professional and personal life leads to burnout (Grayson & Alvarez, 2008, Jacobson, 2016).

The results from the multiple regression analysis revealed that teachers' involvement in extra teaching assignments, teaching experience, types of school, working hours, and gender appeared to be significant predictors of at least one (01) of the three (03) burnout components. The following section presents a discussion on each of these factors concerning the research literature on teacher burnout.

Teachers' involvement in extra teaching assignments significantly contributed to the emotional exhaustion ($\beta = .457$, $p < .01$) and overall burnout ($\beta = .472$, $p < .01$). This finding is consistent with the findings of previous studies where non-teaching workload (e.g., meeting, paperwork, and administrative task) was found to be associated with burnout particularly to its emotional exhaustion component (Van Droogenbroeck, Spruyt, & Vanroelen, 2014). When nonteaching or extra teaching assignments are imposed upon the teachers, they perceived it as a burden and barrier to their core job of teaching students (Van Droogenbroeck, & Spruyt, 2014). Such demand for extra teaching job performance often turned out as a stressor to the teachers as they struggle to make a balance between the teaching and extra teaching assignments (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009). It has been well documented that many teachers considered extra teaching assignments as a distraction to their teaching job and hamper their class performance (Alarcon, 2011; Van Droogenbroeck et al., 2014). Teachers also feel that the time invested in such extra teaching assignments often sacrifices the classroom contact hour with the students (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2009). Involvement in non-teaching or extra teaching assignments not only burdening the teachers with extra workloads but also distracting them from the key motivation for which they opted for which is teaching and helping children to learn (Struyven, Jacobs, & Dochy, 2012). In Bangladesh, teachers are also made involved in different non-teaching assignments at the school which includes but is not limited to mentoring different committees (e.g., school debate), arranging different events (e.g., cultural events), and attending meetings (CAMPE, 2019). Therefore, it is not surprising that teachers reported feeling emotionally exhausted and experiencing burnout.

For teaching experience of 11-14 years and above 14 years the contribution to lack of personal accomplishment score was ($\beta = .208$ and $.315$, respectively, $p < .01$). This indicated that the higher the teaching experience was the higher it contributed to lack of personal accomplishment. This can be inferred that experienced teachers tend to suffer from a reduced sense of personal accomplishment which is consistent with the findings of the previous study by Koruklu, Kiremit, Feyzioglu, and Aladag (2012). This finding can be explained through the lens of Erikson's

psychological development theory (Generativity versus Stagnation stage) where middle-aged people might feel an absence of meaningful accomplishment (Berk, 2013; Karuklu et al., 2012). In Bangladesh, teachers hardly get any promotion and often retire with the same designation of Assistant Teacher with which they start their career though with time their job grade and salary increases keeping the designation the same (CAMPE, 2019). Such lack of opportunity of transition in the job may results in stagnation among the teachers after a certain period in the profession and contributes to their burnout experience.

In terms of the working hours, the study found a significant negative contribution ($\beta = -.445$, $p < .01$) to lack of personal accomplishment. This indicates, teachers, having lower working hours tend to score lower in the reduced personal accomplishment subscale. Extant research showed that hours of teaching per week cause burnout as teachers lack time for personal activities and research works (Khan, Din & Anwar, 2019).

Recommendations

Considering the study findings, some recommendations can be made for teachers, school administrators, and policymakers to reduce teacher burnout in Bangladesh. Firstly, a national-level survey study is necessary to know the actual status of burnout among the teachers. Secondly, involvement in extra-teaching or non-teaching assignments increases burnout. It is important to reconsider while imposing non-teaching tasks on the teachers. In terms of assigning non-teaching tasks to the teachers, special consideration should be given in using their faculty rather instead of tagging them with a job that neither they enjoy, nor they find meaningful to their core job i.e., teaching. Thirdly, it is high time that the Government starts taking the initiative to implement a proper professional development plan for the school level teachers which allows them to progress and develop throughout their teaching career. Finally, teacher well-being and mental issue should be included in the teacher development programs. Training such as stress management, a positive work environment, and mental hygiene should be introduced along with the existing pedagogical training.

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Developing an Integrated Model of Teaching Method For Promoting Critical Thinking among Learners of Secondary Education

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Abstract

The ever increasing importance on teaching Critical Thinking (CT) arrive the questions how to achieve this skill and ability. Thinking as the activity of the brain or of the mind can be communicated and/or enhanced through regular classroom activities. This study is a step to examine the short comings and weakness of existing pedagogy in promoting thinking ability of the learners of secondary schools. It used the Interviews, Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and Classroom Observations as data collection methods. Most of the respondents have expressed their positive views on the importance of CT skill, but confused in applying the teaching techniques due to the short duration of the class, crowded classroom, workload, too much exams and so on. This study figured out the appropriate strategies, i.e creating an environment for the students to think, ask question and make arguments. Moreover, the study proposed a model of 'Integrated Pedagogy of Critical Thinking (IPCT)' highlighting the core dynamics of three (03) major aspects of classroom activities, i.e. teacher, student and lesson to produce a well-rounded graduate and integrated academic as well.

Keywords: Integrated Model, Critical Thinking, Pedagogy.

Introduction

Critical Thinking (CT) is a crucial skill for living life and thinking pedagogy that constitutes one of the main aims of education. Importance of critical thinking is ever increasing as development in any sector largely depends on new ideas and skills. CT is the process to analyze, interpret, synthesize or, evaluate information in a clear, logical, reasoned and reflective manner to make a judgment or decisions or establish an argument. It's about thinking rationally and independently and thus mapping one's own opinions or conclusions. Critical thinking means making reasoned judgement, reasonably and reflectively deciding what to believe or do. Here CT can be defined as questioning (interrogating) and reasoning (evaluating) as example, seeking meaning, evidence, reasons, distinctions, and good judgments.

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Statement of the Problem

Current scenario of education in Bangladesh promotes rote learning and consequently causes barrier in thinking. Therefore, the government though recently initiated Creative Evaluation System, but it didnot provide proper guidelines for pedagogy. Conventional teaching method motivates our students to memorize to get good grades and nothing else. Students do not get chance to understand the contents or get scope to create something on their own. In fact, how we teach and what we teach need to be problematized. Teachers failed to implement it due to absence of teaching-thinking strategy.

Therefore, this study has been conducted on “Developing an Integrated Model of Teaching Method for Promoting Critical Thinking among Learners of Secondary Education”

Rationale of The Study

This study is to propose an implementable modern teaching method to enhance Critical Thinking skills among learners of secondary level of education. CT encourages students to solve problems independently and apply knowledge in new ways. It guides a student to apply his knowledge in real life situation. So it is not only essential for success in school subjects, but in everyday life as well.

The root of CT is the teaching practice and vision of Socrates 2500 years ago. It encourages students to be engaged in critical questioning and creative reflection because discussion and questioning are built in the nature of philosophy (Hashim, 2017). The body of work on critical pedagogy is growing with works by pedagogues from different areas of the world (Talukder, 2019). Ability of divergent thinking among learners is very important in this global era competition, because the level of complex problems in all aspects of modern life is getting higher. American philosopher John Dewey (1910) introduced the term ‘critical thinking’ as the name of an educational goal, which he identified with a scientific attitude of mind. Contemporary political and business leaders express support for CT as an educational goal (Hitchcock, 2018).

In 1960 Professor Matthew Lipman created an approach drawing on the works of Vygotsky, Piaget, and Dewey, based on the tradition of Socratic dialogue is called P4C (Philosophy for Children) which is practiced in approximately 60 countries. This teaching and learning approach is motivating and challenging for pupils and teachers, and taught learners to think critically. It improves behavior, motivation and learning social, emotional skills and dispositions over time, as well as cognitive abilities.

Critical pedagogy problematizes all oppressive and unequal power relations of society to ensure human freedom and social justice (Talukder, 2019). Thinking is also a religiously obligatory duty as it is established by major religions of the world. Accordingly al-Quran promotes variety of thinking styles for instance Inquisitive, Objective, Positive, Hypothetical, Rational, Reflective, Contemplative, Visual, Analogical, Emotional, Perceptual, Conceptual, Intuitive and so on (Badi, 2010). Recent days CT has reached in a more academic approach world-wide. For example, the European Commission has funded “CT across the European Higher Education Formula”, a nine-country research project to develop guidelines for quality in CT instruction in European institutions of higher education.

Bangladesh enjoins critical and creative thinking as the aims, objectives; and principles of the National Education Policy 2010. It emphasizes to foster creative and thinking skills among the learners through a system of education.

Introduction of Creative Question (CQ) by the GOB is an important step in developing creativity of students. This system increases thinking capacity in the form of application, perception, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. After introduction of this new system a mixed repercussion has been seen among teachers, students and guardians though it is implemented to break down the present trends of memorization (Sarker, 2017). Teachers' Training on CQ approach was inadequate in respect of time and concept. Most of this efforts are in vain as the education is not life oriented. It is remaining in paper and pen. Thus creative evaluation system implemented in Bangladesh has increased the scope for private tuition and wide spread use of guidebooks. Teachers and coaching centers give excuses that for learning how to write creative answers students need to have extra supports from school teachers as private tuitions. During assessment students do not have any scope to think deeply in the given short period of time. Thus it does not help them to improve their critical thinking ability. Teachers are always bound to force the students on writing long answers in exams rather than writing with applying critical thinking.

This study is a new addition in educational theory and practices in Bangladesh. Very specifically the study is helpful for popularizing the concepts of CT skill as an effective tool of pedagogy. Thus it can contribute to the educational policy of the country.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are-

- To examine the practices of the existing pedagogy in order to promote critical thinking skill.
- To propose an integrated model with comprehensive approaches of critical thinking pedagogy that is reasonably applicable in the classroom activities.

Literature Review

Critical thinking is the ability to investigate a text critically, and a critical thinker is an independent thinker. As a seeker of knowledge critical thinker is motivated by rationale and facts. So CT means acquiring specific abilities such as learning to analyze arguments, formulating and protecting peculiarities (Rupa, 2013). At present almost all well-established educational institutions around the world have included critical thinking as one of the essential learning outcomes in their curricula across different disciplines (Ahmed, 2020). Critical thinking is also emphasized in National Education Policy 2010 of Bangladesh describing the education system is to foster thinking skills among learners preparing good critical thinkers means working toward this ideal. It combines developing CT skills with nurturing those dispositions which consistently yield useful insights and which are the basis of a rational and democratic society (Rusbult, 2017).

State of Critical Thinking-Teaching Practice

Individual creativity may be affected by even very minor aspects of the social environment (Amavile, 2012). Aspects of social environment such as excessive time pressure, sense of competition over supervision, unavailability of working material etc. are prevailed in Bangladesh.

According to the World Bank report (2013), Bangladesh is also facing so many problems. Teachers do not have much effective training, also the curriculum and assessment procedures encourage and reward rote learning, the most common teaching style in Bangladesh is lecturing and reading textbooks. Teachers do not get much time; they have limited contact hours available during the academic year. Many teachers also have low motivation because the profession is not regarded as a high profile one, career progression opportunities are limited, and incentives for innovating effective teaching and learning practices are non-existent. Large class size, limited physical space, lack of resources, and insufficient time to complete the syllabuses are among factors that hinder the fostering of such thinking. The constraints of insufficient time and the haste to cover the curriculum have often led to rigid and structured ways of teaching that leave little room for thinking or flexibility (Hassan, 2018).

Development of CT skill hinders as teachers give less emphasis to achieve the purpose of science. Students disinterest in science occurred due to the absence of interesting classroom teaching, lack of qualified, trained and motivated teachers, lack of suitable textbooks, lack of favorable infrastructure of teaching-learning environment or “learning by doing” strategy in school (BANBEIS, 2015).

According to National Education Policy 2010, the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of Bangladesh has made changes in the content of the syllabus as well as the question pattern to assess the learner’s creativity. Survey conducted by Research for Advancement of Complete Education (RACE) found that more than half of 100 primary school teachers, who took part in a survey, are still blurred about creative education method. Even more alarming is that about half of the teachers (47%) surveyed rely on guidebooks to prepare lessons while 92% students take the help of guidebooks to understand their lessons. Guide books, private tutors and coaching centers have been the top dependence for the learners (Azad, 2016).

Study done by Sarker (2017) indicates that our teachers are not applying their expertise in the working field in practicing CQ. A noticeable incompatibility is found in selecting teaching methods in classroom. Teachers are not pedagogically well practiced though they were trained to do so.

Strategies to implement

It needs to be assured that it is high time to come out from ‘memorization based teaching and examination system’. Students need to be inspired to think and write to explore critical thinking and broaden the outlook of knowledge. We need to engage our students using the approach called ‘learning by doing’; activities like presentations, debate, inquiry-based questions, brainstorming, problem-solving, project-based learning, Socratic method and many more activities encourage students to think before doing their work (Islam, 2017).

Ahmed and et al. (2020) briefed different models of Higher Order Thinking Skills like: Dr. Benjamin Bloom’s (1956) Taxonomy of higher order thinking, Edward de Bono’s PMI Model for Thinking, Renzulli’s Enrichment Triad Model, John C. Bean’s Critical Thinking Strategies for Writing Classrooms in their study and showed the application of these models for English subject of Secondary students (Ahmed, 2020).

Abdullah (2013) examined the processes of implementing a CT pedagogy for developing the quality of classroom dialogue. The study explains that learners’ cognitive and meta-cognitive skills, highlighted in the critical language awareness theory, plays a significant role in engaging learners, through creating participation opportunities based on the notion of CT.

Assessment techniques should be used that provide students with an intellectual challenge rather than memory recall is instructed by Snyder (2008). Most approaches for teaching thinking work on the basis that one must not only teach skills but also encourage the disposition to use them. These dispositions are not themselves skills, but they do represent a readiness to use them. Examples of such dispositions includes: respect (for others and for the procedures of enquiry); open-mindedness (readiness to consider alternative views/explanations); and courage (to offer a point of view, a counter-argument, a justification etc.) (Rechard, 1995).

Therefore, it is time to launch the “Thinking School” focusing on key strategies such as: (i) infusion of thinking skills into the school, (ii) reduction of subject content, and (iii) revision of assessment modes (Hassan, 2018).

A large number of researches have been done and so many organizations are working on CT worldwide. But in the context of Bangladesh it is very few. There is no such academic approach or initiative to implement CT in Bangladesh. The previous studies conducted in Bangladesh are mainly to identify the problems but not to provide any solution. This study intends to find an applicable solution based on the experts, teachers and students opinion as well as reviewing document related to CT.

Methodology of The Study

Qualitative research approach based on interpretive paradigm is used for this study. Interview has been conducted with two (02) experts on pedagogy as well as seven (07) secondary school teachers and one (01) FGD (06 students) for students. In addition, five (05) classrooms have been observed. A convenient/ purposive random sampling method has been used to determine the respondents. Related books and research articles, documents, students, teachers of secondary education and experts of pedagogy are the sources of data of this study.

All interviews are tape-recorded and vary in length from 20 minutes to 40 minutes. The interviews are informal and open-ended, and carried out in a conversational style. The complete interviews are recorded and transcribed for data analysis purposes. Confidentiality has been ensured in every step. Interviews, FGD and class observations have been conducted through audio and video calls / video conferencing.

Theoretical Framework

One of the main objective of this study is to prepare an integrated teaching method for promoting CT in the classroom. In order to do this, the study has gone through selected framework, model and template demonstrated in the figure from which contributes to develop a new model for this study. Key findings from different models are discussed in order to develop an integrated method of teaching for promoting CT in the classroom activities.

Blooms Taxonomy:

Since CT is a metacognitive process enables the students to understand better on specific aspects and objects, a study conducted by Dwyer, Hogan and Stewart (2013) designed a model of improvising students’CT through a process using the Blooms Taxonomy (1956). It begins with setting out particular stage of competencies (Dwyer, 2014).

The model includes knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. It defines particular core values, skills at every stages must be achieved to go over the next. Each goal has particular tactics to be achieved. The evaluation is the highest level of acquiring CT ability.

Murrie Model for the Integration of Critical Thinking in the Classroom

Murrie (2019) discussd the integration of CT in pedagogy and developed a model of integration (Murrie, 2019). There are two different actors in the classroom- students and teachers. The goals and objectives are in the middle. Teacher facilitate the CT values through modifying contents and strategies. Here the students contribute through interactions. Then the outcome of the teacher is the successful implementation of the teaching plan and students is the development of their competencies. The figure 1 has given the foundation in making the model of this report.

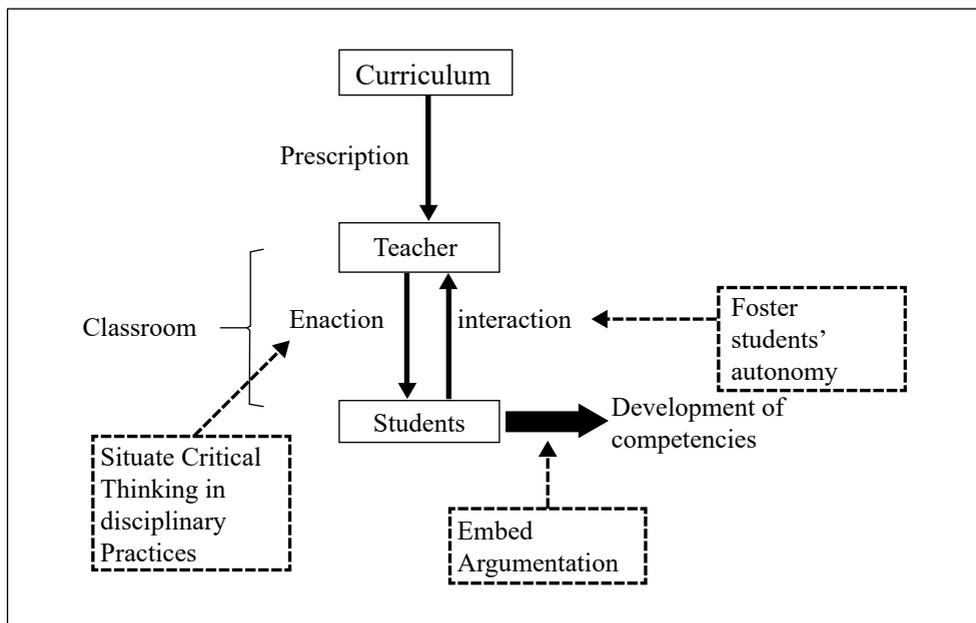


Figure 1: A Model for the Integration of Critical Thinking in the Classroom (Source: Murrie, 2019)

Figure 1 shows the assessment of the students CT ability requires the scale. In doing so, several indicators are set by Alfaro-LeFevre (2016). It includes mindfulness, knowledge of contexts, confidence, resilience, creativity, patience, decision making power, judging and appraisal capability. The indicators of this framework overwhelmingly evolved in making the scale of measuring CT competency.

TC2 model

The TC2 (The Critical Thinking Consortium) framework support Critical Inquiry in Mathematics demonstrated in Figure 2. This model includes nurturing learners as communities of thinkers, framing critical challenges that invite students think critically, teaching the intellectual tools that enable students to address critical challenges, last of all assessing thinking and performance to support students' use of the intellectual tools.

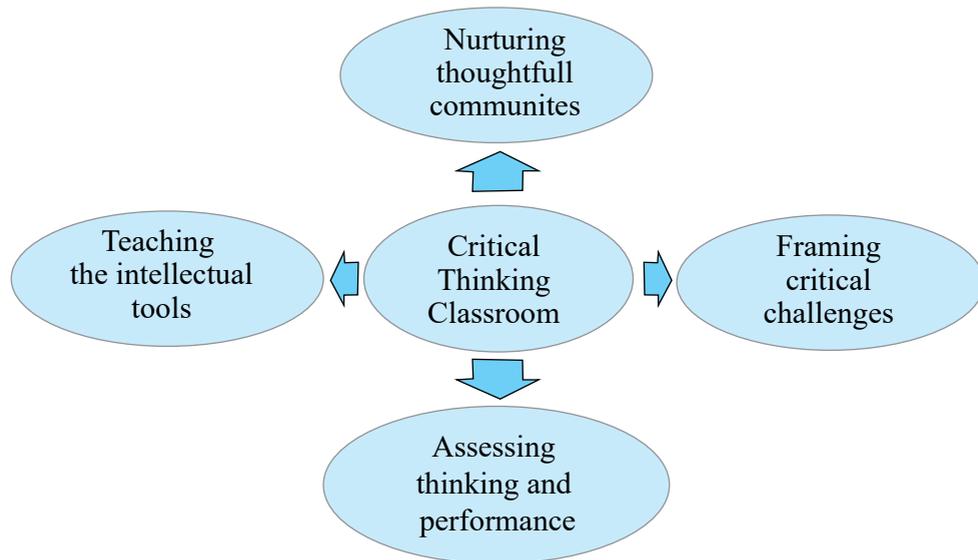


Figure 2: TC2 model (Source: www.tc2.ca)

TC2 model suggested ideas to promote CT pedagogy in like, thinking strategies, Foster helpful habits of mind, Develop background knowledge, Use different types of critical challenges, Present “open” problems, use Mathematics in real life situations, assessment reinforces the value of “explaining teacher’s thinking”.

The Fishbone Diagram

The fishbone diagram is a simple problem solving tool that allows quick and effective root causes to be understood, in the pursuit of corrective actions. It helps students to brainstorm and reasoning about any problem.

For constructing a Fishbone diagram one has to draw the box on the right of a flip chart, paper or board, and write the problem statement in the box. Now drawing the line going from left to right as the ‘Spine’, connecting to the problem statement. Drawing the ‘fishbones’ emanating from the spine which represent the main cause categories.

Findings And Analysis

Teachers’ views on existing pedagogy regarding critical thinking

Teachers were agreed upon a point that CT is essential for teaching but in practically CT’s use is very limited. The informants could not assure about practicing CT in their classroom. six (06) Teachers admitted that they allow questioning in the classroom though it is time consuming. In five (05) schools out of seven (07) sampled schools teachers take classes through power point presentation. They showed videos and pictures. But using tangible objects are absent in classroom practices. Teachers’ strategy was to solve the questions from Guidebooks. Other teaching strategies used by the teachers were group discussions, telling relevant stories, praising, project works, and let students to ponder, to relate the study with day to day life.

According to the most of the respondents (71.4%) the main barrier for teaching CT is the teacher himself or herself. Teachers should have CT mind or ability. Another main problem is the time (71.4%), teachers don't have that much time for CT. They have to give much time to all students. And one cannot apply the same theory for all students. Another problem is the planning (28.57%), our teachers are not that much prepared to take the classes to apply CT. 71.4% respondent identified that our content prepare students for memorization. Other barriers mentioned by the respondents are lack of supportive environment (71.4%), big classroom (57.14%), too much exam and result oriented education (85.70%), lack of family support (42.85%), interests of the students (71.4%). Figure 3 illustrates the picture.

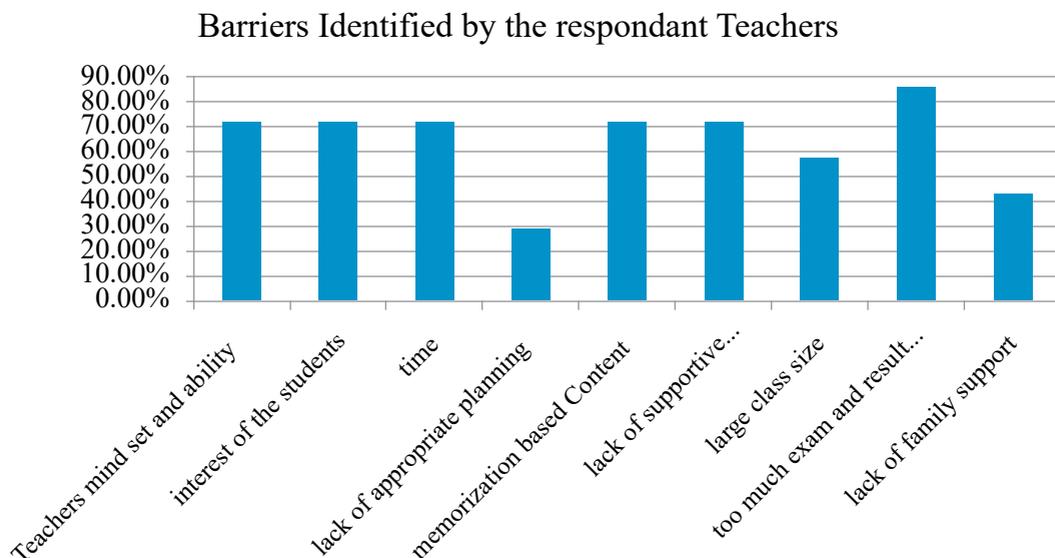


Figure 3: Barriers to implement CT identified by the respondent Teachers

During assessment students do not have any scope to think deeply in the given short period of time. Thus it does not help them to improve their CT. Teachers are always bound to force the students on writing long answers in exams rather than writing with applying critical and creative thinking.

Some teachers (28.57 %) try to use alternate teaching methods other than lecture methods. Snyder (2008) refers actively engaging students in project-based or collaborative activities can encourage students' critical thinking. But this effort also remains ineffective. For instance when teachers are providing project work to the students, teachers also give them information to buy the project in prepared way. Most of the teachers are unable to apply various teaching method for their limited skills and experiences. But experienced and capable teachers also admit that they only use traditional methods due to lack of facilities and infrastructures. Moreover, time constrain is the biggest factor for not using different teaching methods and aid. According to National Curriculum of Bangladesh a period should be of 50 minutes. But in practical it continues for 35- 40 minutes which is not sufficient for a proper teaching-learning experiences.

Use of Teaching Method

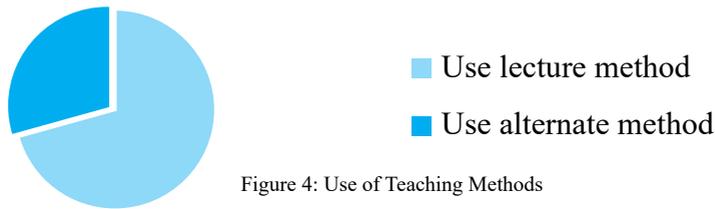


Figure 4: Use of Teaching Methods

The researchers did not find any emphasis on focusing instruction on the process of learning. Snyder (2008) emphasizes on focusing instruction on the process of learning rather than solely on the content. Emphases are given on solving questions from guide rather than reading books or enjoying study. But new learners need to take his or her work seriously and continue to create and solve things creatively. Students perform better when they able to share their own thoughts. But, the teachers hardly inspire the students to write on their own thoughts. They have to write according to teacher’s directions or from a guidebook. According to figure-5 it is clear that 71% teachers are satisfied with existing pedagogy and the rest 29% are not satisfied.

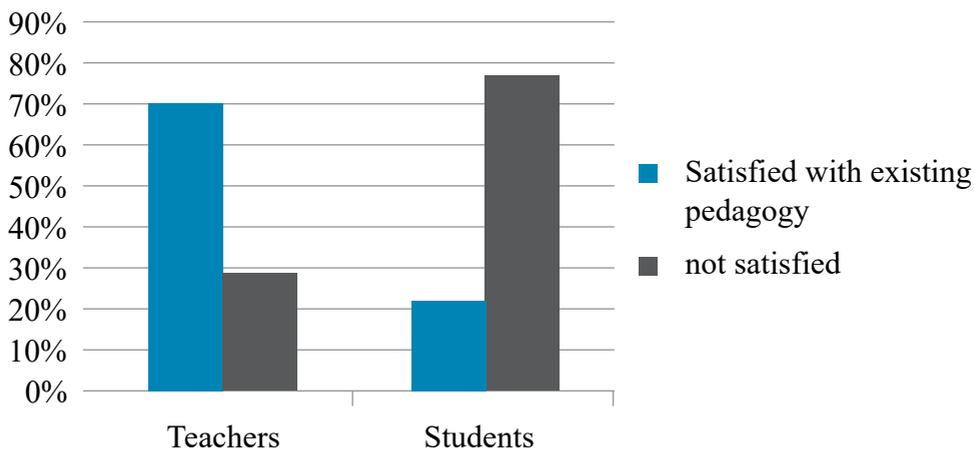


Figure 5: Satisfaction with Existing Pedagogy

Students’ View on existing pedagogy in regard to critical thinking skill

According to students, usually they do not get the opportunities to ask questions. Above figure-3 shows that 78% of the students are not satisfied with teacher-centric methods and the rest 22% of the students have accepted it well their views are as follows:

‘Sometimes we get opportunity for clarification. One teacher gave us the opportunity to think then answer the questions.’

‘Some teachers do not give us opportunity for further clarification. Then we have to remain in confusion. And we have to suffer. So I think we should have opportunity.’

Some students gave different opinions regarding the scope to articulate their points in a logical manner. For instance one said:

‘No, I don’t think so. Mostly teachers don’t try to accept our logic. Teachers try to establish their points keeping us shut that we have to listen only.’

While others view,

‘It depends on teachers. Those who give us opportunities, we can express ourselves there. But some teachers don’t and we can’t express ourselves there.’

One student replied affirmatively and others were negative regarding teachers’ encouragement for students to have comment on what each other says. Their views:

“Yes. But not all the teachers give us opportunity. Sometimes teachers have negative comments also”.

However, one student has differed with the opinions of the rest. She said only giving options to response, making questions are not enough supportive to develop CT ability. Most of the time it is found that the question, response or comment from the students are also based on the memorization.

Experts’ views on Existing Pedagogy in terms of critical thinking

According to experts opinion, we have to revise our traditional pedagogy as one stated,

‘There is a saying that in real life there are problems and by trying to solve the problems we learn a lesson. But in the classroom we teach lessons then we give them the problem. So, classroom situation is reverse.’

He also stated that the biggest challenge is the teachers themselves because of their poor background. He added, that they grew up like never asking questions. They were not allowed to ask question by their parents, their own teachers. Their mind-set is not for asking question.

Findings from classroom observation on existing pedagogy in regard to CT

Based on the classroom observation it was found that all classes (100%) were in lecture method. There were no students participation. On the contrary, three (03) teachers (60%) applied remarkable enquiry techniques in their classes as showed in figure 6 like deriving the lessons by asking questions in English and Science classes. In one (01) class English teacher was able to engage their students in some extent (20%).

Methods and techniques used in classroom

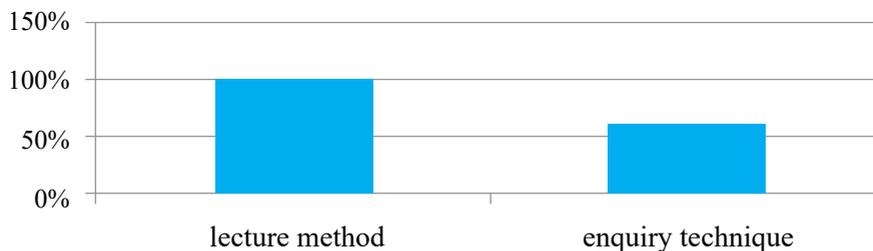


Figure 6: Methods and Techniques used in observed classrooms

Proposed Model of Critical Thinking Pedagogy

Experts suggested to offer students to ask questions, to make arguments, to comprehend their lessons, to introduce a well designed structural framework of teaching which will raise the level of students engagement and the use of different attractive graphical contents, videos, audios and teaching materials in the class. Experts also opined the necessity of having well-rounded integrated graduates having to personality and required CT ability.

According to research objective, figure 7 shows the proposed model of Integrated Pedagogy of Critical Thinking (IPCT). It refers to 3 key aspects: class-teacher, lesson and students. The model based on the teachers' and students' response, the experts' opinion collected as the primary data and by analyzing previous study reports, articles, books, GOs and NGOs policy and other materials. Here the integrated academic and graduate refers to the belonging of particular skills of CT- Interactive, adaptive, analytic, practical, critique, responsive, strategic, willing to adhere the differences and able to brainstorm and make the decision rapidly.

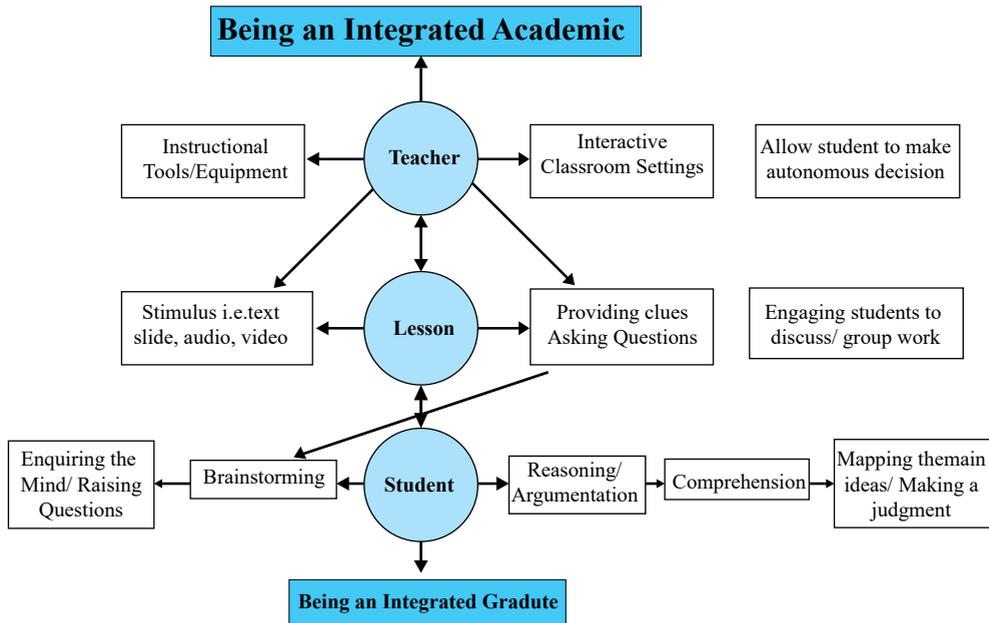


Figure 7: Proposed Model of Integrated Pedagogy of Critical Thinking (IPCT)

The first segment of the figure demonstrates that an integrated academic will ensure the availability of the educational instruments and materials in the classroom. It includes different digital multimedia classroom facilities like projectors and different online tools- computer, internet, presentation slides, graphical contents, flip charts, note pads etc. Then the teacher will concentrate over the sitting arrangement and physical structure of the classroom. The teacher will seat just in the middle so that he can communicate and have eye contact with each students of his class. The number of students in the class would also be limited. Teacher will make sure the sitting of week and good students in combined and appropriate way. The teacher must have the way to get into closer to every students to have the opportunity to exchange views. The teacher will make sure the fearless environment for the students to make response, raise questions, participate in discussion and argue their differences. They also shall be allowed to make their decision based on their understanding and thinking.

The second segment of the figure suggests to demonstrate well-designed teaching contents- videos, graphics, pictures, texts or audios, to make the lesson very much interactive. A teacher might start by singing, finger plays, showing pictures, storytelling and so on. The teacher will provide clues or questions as the food for thought to the students. In looking for the solution or answer, the teacher will assign the students into group work. Thus the way teacher will make sure lesson plan to be more interactive, creative and participative.

In the last segments, the activities of students are elaborately discussed. It starts with the dealing of questions, queries and clues. The students will brainstorm the particular queries in order to figure out it. The teacher will also help them in reaching out their answer. Teacher will give them particular response. The students will analyze the teachers' response and try to understand the difference between their and teachers' opinions. Here the students will make arguments in favor of their opinions. Thus the students will reach out to a particular level of comprehension on discussed issues. They can dissectify/ identify the main ideas, points, judgemental decisions from the whole process of discussion. This is the way how the students will be learned to think particular issues from critical perspective.

An integrated academic and a well-rounded graduate will come out through exercising the model-IPCT (Integrated Pedagogy of Critical Thinking) in classrooms.

Recommendations and Conclusion

Based on the study, the following are some specific suggestions both for policy level and classroom level:

Recommendations to the National Policy Level

1. Government needs to disseminate the idea or steps taken for improving the quality of education such as to make the teachers acquainted with recent curriculum, education policy and teachers' guide through training and workshops.
2. Incorporating the concept of 'Teaching Thinking' in teacher education in order to orient the teachers with CT so that they can adopt this approach.
3. Parents or guardians should be made aware to cooperate with school teachers. To materialize this 'Parents-Teachers interactions' program should be scheduled in yearly routine of each school.
4. Government has taken several steps in collaboration with some NGOs to improve education system. Such a project is Teachers' Training. Massive training has been provided though some lacking remains. In such case monitoring and mentoring is important.
5. Though the national curriculum has been improved a lot to meet the challenges of vision 2020, it needs to be more revised. The load of study should be minimized by making the curriculum more life oriented and enjoyable. Curriculum should be designed in such a way which encourages a learner to go for CT.
6. Preparing comprehensive teachers' guides/ modules for all subjects which will guide teachers a way to implement teaching thinking strategy. This will also consider the feasibility for applying those strategies in practical field.
7. Rethinking about the issue of teacher- student ratio, how to reduce this gap. Research study can be conducted to solve this problem. It can be minimalize by appointing more quality teachers, introducing more sections or shifts in schools. Disseminating or decentralizing

quality education throughout the country might be a solution. Also local resources should be utilized to prepare teaching aid.

Recommendations to the School Management Level

8. School authority should strictly follow the class timing of 50 minutes instructed by Education Policy.
9. Coordinators or school head must check the lesson plans before implementing it in classroom by respective teachers.

Recommendations for the School-Classroom Level

10. Teachers must follow 'Teachers' Guide' provided by the Government of Bangladesh. Along with these guides Science teachers must follow '*hate kolome Shikkha*' (Hands-on learning) guides.
11. Teachers should think of tasks that would let students link concept to their personal experience or prior knowledge. Connection to real world pave the opportunity to transmit this thinking skills to diverse perspective.
12. Let the students write arguments or analysis. The teaching of thinking should progress from explicit instruction to guided practice.
13. Let students have dabate or writing dialogues on different issues. Thinking skills can advance from simple to complex and may encompass more than one type of thinking skills being applied in a particular situation.

Conclusion

Nowadays shockingly Youngers are becoming addicted to devices and social media. Degradation of social, moral values is in alarming condition. Family bondings are at a risk, youth having lack of respects for parents, teachers and for other also. Thus they are losing their self-respect and integrity. Teachers are facing lot of troubles during class-time to control the unruly students. In this consequence, teachers suffer a lot to implement a proper teaching method. Teaching CT can step ahead to solve all those problems. As CT fosters resilience, empathy, flexibility of thinking and self-confidence. Such skills offer the best immunization against misinformation, bullying and indoctrination. To make the education more life-oriented it should not be only exam oriented but also enjoyable. In this case Government, educationists, teachers need to work and plan in collaborative way to improve the education system of Bangladesh.

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Effectiveness, Efficiency and Challenges of the Diploma in Engineering Program in Bangladesh from the Perspective of Polytechnic Graduates

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Abstract

Purpose of this study was to explore those factors in polytechnic institutes from the perspective of current and future market driven employability and income generation skills of the diploma graduates. This tracer study followed a mixed method approach where total two hundred and seventy two (272) graduates were surveyed along with conducting FGDs with selected graduates and interview with head of the polytechnic institutes, instructors/trainers of the institutes, and employers. The findings showed that according to the polytechnic graduates, the diploma program meets the basic technical skills demand of industries. Despite the generally positive responses towards the quality and relevance of training programs, graduates seem to see weaknesses in the institutions and trainers' capacity of training delivery along with lack of modern equipment and tools for training. They also found lacking in providing soft skills such as communication skills and problem-solving skills as well as industry-academia linkage to support graduates' learning and employment opportunities. In case of income and employment outcome, diploma graduates' performance found considerably below expectation where only about three-fifth (35) of the polytechnic graduates found full-time or part-time job, and around forty percent (40%) of the graduates remained unemployed. Among the graduates, employment shares of female and rural graduates are faring far worse than their male and urban peers. To response the findings, there need to create a meaningful career pathway for diploma students by incorporating a flexible demand-driven curriculum, upgrading the technical and teaching skills of teachers as well as equipment and facilities, strengthening partnership with industry in an effort to improve the quality of education and promote graduates' employment, expanding and improving job placement support services to students at the institution level.

Keywords: Tracer study poytechnic graduates, effectiveness and Challenges

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Introduction

Bangladesh is one of the fastest growing economies of the world. It has experienced over 6% of gross domestic product (GDP) growth for more than a decade (Ministry of Finance [MoF], 2018). Its recent gradation as lower middle-income country status and vision 2021 requires more investment especially in human capital (e.g. education). Because, human capital investment is the critical factor for the growth and development of a country. The rapid development of the current working world needs proficient workers mainly in fields which involved latest technologies (Bureau of Economic Research, University of Dhaka [BERDU], 2018). According to Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics (BBS, 2018) the number of workforce in Bangladesh has increased up to 6.8 million where there is an increase from 56.7 million in the year 2010 to 63.5 million in the year 2016-17 which shows an average of 1.0 percent increase per year. Different studies and policy reports by national and international organizations suggests that TVET could increase the level of productivity and income generation level along with reduction of unemployment rate. Technical skills are highly recommended in this regard and technical education is expanding gradually in the country where both public and private shares are increasing day by day (BERDU, 2018). However, the projected rate of technical and vocational education (TVET) enrolment is not more than 20% at the end of 2020 though most of the policy level organizations and experts including ILO suggests for more than fifty percent (50%) of enrolment in TVET(BTEB, 2018b). Studies suggest that effectiveness and efficiency of is the key factors to attract students and trainees towards TVET. Appropriate curriculum content, learning facilities and available resources in institutions are also a factors that influences trainers' production quality. Mismatch of skills occurred when there are imbalances in the curriculum content as the produced workforce does not match with industrial needs and the suitability of certain occupations in term of the skills that they are required to have (Mohd Yahya, 2003). Nonetheless, so far, there is lack of empirical data regarding effectiveness, efficiency and involved challenges of the program in Bangladesh. Therefore, it was needed to explore how much effectively and efficiently the diploma program creates employability skills among the graduates of polytechnic institutes in Bangladesh, and thus it was set as the problem of this study. To respond the problem, this study aimed at exploring the effectiveness, efficiency and challenges of the diploma program in polytechnic institutes in Bangladesh from the perspective of diploma graduates. In order to do these, three (03) specific objectives led this study:

1. To explore the current status of diploma graduates of polytechnic institutes regarding employment and income generation.
2. To assess the effectiveness and efficiency of the program to create market driven skills among the graduates.
3. To identify the challenges the diploma graduates faces regarding their employment in the industry.

Methodology

As a part of evaluating the diploma program of polytechnic institutes, we employed a tracer study approach as an assessment tool to measure the impact of the diploma program on target groups to explore effective and ineffective program components. ILO Thesaurus (2005) defines tracer study as an assessment tool which refers to “impact on target groups is traced back to specific elements of a project or program so that effective and ineffective project components may be defined”. In addition, graduate survey results are important for examining the relationship

between education and work (Schomburg, 2003). Furthermore, Millington (2013) and Shongwe et al. (2011) describes quantitative structural data on employment and career, the character of work and related competencies, and information on the professional orientation and experiences of their graduates. From methodological viewpoint, the sample of tracer study included the graduates who passed from that institutions 2012 to 2016 periods of graduates of diploma courses under BTEB as our target respondent. The representative sample size for graduate survey was 272 with male 224 (83%) and female 48 (17%). However, after data collection and cleaning, total 300 diploma graduates found attended the survey where most of the graduate respondents were male (84%) and around two-thirds resided in rural area. In case of graduates' share by institute type, around three-fourths (34) were from public polytechnic institutes. Among thirty seven (37) technologies of diploma in engineering program, graduates participated from sixteen (16) technologies. Other respondents could not be reached for depending on online survey instead of face-to-face interview due to COVID-19 situation. Apart from the graduates, the study collected data from the head of the polytechnic institutes, instructors/trainers of the institutes, and employers. To collect data from the respondents, it used structured opinion survey questionnaire for the graduates, Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) for in-depth understanding of graduates' perspective, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) for the institute heads, trainers/instructors, and employers. Due to COVID-19 situation, survey data could not be collected directly from the field. Data was collected from the respondents by using tools where survey was conducted through Kobo Toolbox, and interviews and FGDs were conducted by using phone and video conferencing software like Zoom/Skype/Google Meet. The methodological approach to this research was designed as quantitative and qualitative in nature, thus data analysis included quantitative and qualitative approach. For quantitative data, statistical analysis was used that mainly used descriptive statistics to describe the basic features of the respondents. In order to analyze the qualitative data collected from diploma graduates in FGDs, Instructors, TVET provider, policy makers and employers, data-driven thematic analysis was incorporated. The study tried to follow all the necessary ethical checking including clear explanation of the study objectives to the respondents and taking verbal/written consent before data collection, no force to the respondents for providing information, commitment to keep the privacy of their information and source of data as well as put heartiest endeavor to be unbiased in collecting data.

Findings

Study findings suggest that diploma in engineering program is serving the graduates as a valuable pathway for socio-economic mobility by providing the technical skills needed for employment in industry and service sectors as most of the graduates in polytechnics found to be graduates are from rural areas (69%), though the sector is male dominated (84%). However, after completing diploma program, graduates would have to face daunting employment prospects as job search performance among polytechnic graduates has been considerably below expectation. Only about a third of the polytechnic graduates would land a full-time or part-time job within two (02) years of graduation. It would be far below the expectation of polytechnic students who chose to enroll in polytechnics with the hope that technical diploma qualification will help them find good jobs in future. Apparently technical diploma certificate would not be adequate in many cases to find the kind of jobs that polytechnic graduates are typically looking for. As a consequence, around one-third of the graduates would remain jobless even after two (02) years of graduation. Two (02) years of unemployment would render whatever skills they learned in polytechnics outdated and

rusted. Furthermore, unemployment is significantly more common among graduates who went back to rural areas where jobs that require technical skills are fewer. As such, job search would be an uphill battle especially for students who have no or few reliable family networks in urban areas where most of technical jobs exist.

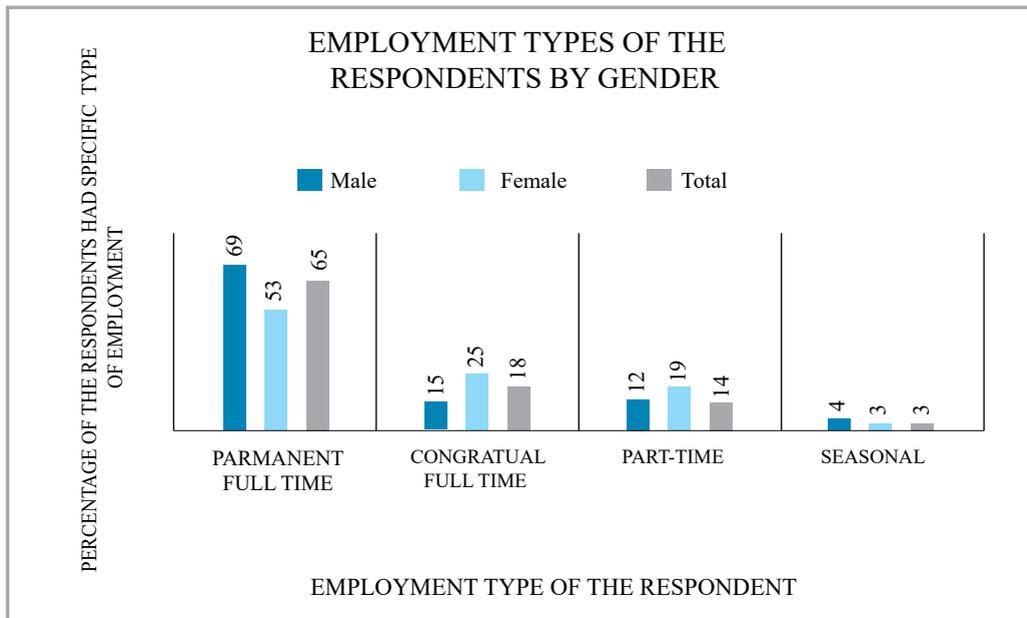


Figure 23: Employment types of the respondents by gender

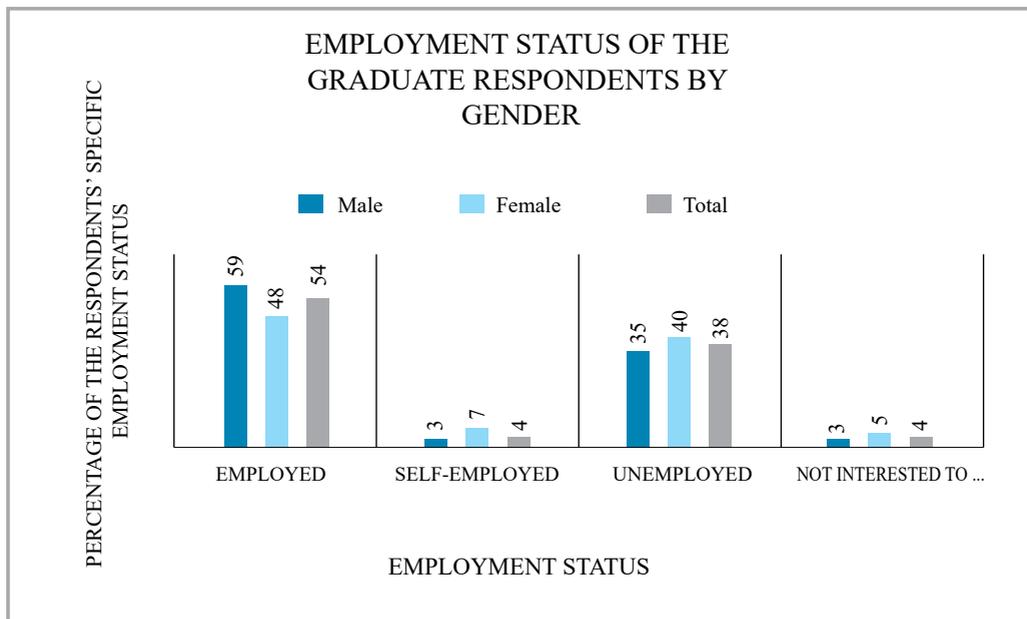


Figure 20: Employment status of the graduate respondents by gender

Female polytechnic graduates are facing far worse condition than their male peers in job placement outcomes. The Government's efforts to increase the number of female enrollment in TVET has so far resulted in a steady increase in the share of females in polytechnics; however, the employment status of female polytechnic graduates seems to offer no comfort. Around forty percent (40%) of female polytechnic graduates remain unemployed after three to five years of graduation, which is considerably higher than male graduates. Male and female graduates are equally likely to look for work, but would face completely different job prospects. This would be extremely discouraging for girls who might consider taking technical training for their post-secondary education, and betray the image of technical training as a quicker way to employment.

To make matters worse, job options for female graduates appear to be rather limited compared to males as around a third of wage employed female graduates found jobs in education and training institutions, which is three (03) times higher than wage employed males. Female students are also more likely to rely on informal personal and family networks and on the institutions for job search. They are far less likely to find jobs through open advertisements than their male counterparts. In this sense, not only they are less likely to find jobs within more limited options, but also their job searches are more likely to be subject to pure chances in terms of how reliable their family network is or how capable their institution is to support them.

Among the employed, female polytechnic graduates are at a disadvantaged level compared to their male peers in terms of quality of employment. There are stark gender differences among polytechnic graduates over the entire range of employment conditions and entitlements, including stability of contract, wage level, and wage increases. Female graduates are more likely to be put on less secure contracts, including part-time and contractual employment rather than full-time permanent employment. Wages are also suppressed for female graduates. Female polytechnic graduates are on an average earning only seventy to eighty percentage (70%-80%) of income of male polytechnic graduates of the same age without controlling occupations. This is by no means limited to polytechnic graduates, and is a prevailing feature of the Bangladeshi labor market. However, if remunerations are to be based on the principle of merit and individuals' work performance, highly trained female workers with sound technical skills should be remunerated more equally as highly trained male workers. Discrimination against females' technical skills would not only discourage female graduates in workplace performance but also send secondary school students and their families a strong negative signal that skills training for females will not be worthwhile investments.

Self-employment as an alternative strategy for employment has yet to prove to be a viable option for polytechnic graduates. Advocates of TVET often claim that technical skills would open up a new possibility of self-employment for unemployed youth. While this success story does come true for some of the technical training graduates, the likelihood of becoming self-employed appears to be minimal. Only four percent (4%) of the graduates are found to be self-employed. Even among the unemployed, only a handful are considering going into self-employment as an alternate option. What makes self-employment unviable for polytechnic students are not immediately clear; however, one reason would be a lack of access to capital. Another plausible reason would be a lack of business skills among polytechnic graduates. Polytechnic curriculums do have a course on entrepreneurship; however, it does not seem to be imparting adequate practical skills for building and managing businesses.

Once stuck in unemployment, prolonged joblessness seems to haunt many of the polytechnic graduates. This is an extremely worrying sign. It appears to be indicating a challenging scenario that Bangladesh is about to encounter by producing a generation of unemployed educated youths. Even after spending two and five years after completing polytechnics, around 40 percent of graduates still remain unemployed. Most of them are not unemployed because of job changes. Such prolonged unemployment would make youth lose hope in job search and degrade their hard-earned skills, which would make their chance of finding jobs even slimmer. However, they seem less willing to explore different occupations or lower paying jobs that do not meet their expectations. Also, the idea of going into self-employment seems to have fallen off their mind. The main perceived reason for their remaining unemployed is a shortage of good jobs in their localities, and they seem to remain confident about their technical skills. As graduates of post-secondary education, they seem to maintain certain high expectations about the kinds of work they would do and the levels of income they would accept. Many of them also reported they would consider pursuing further education and training to improve the chance of employment, which would further stretch out the period of their de facto unemployment and would create greater financial pressure on their families. Many of the unemployed polytechnic graduates seem to be deep in limbo where their hard-earned education qualifications are not leading to jobs that they thought they would be eligible for, but they are yet to be willing to compromise on their expectations.

For those who are fortunate enough to be wage employed, the majority are working as technical staff in private enterprises of varying sizes in a wide range of industries, particularly in manufacturing and construction businesses. If polytechnic graduates manage to land themselves wage jobs, they seem to be working in positions that are suitable for polytechnic graduates (i.e. technicians, engineers, and professionals). They typically start their career as assistant engineer/technician and move up the ladder. In this sense, polytechnic institutions are successfully supplying skilled professionals to fill out intended positions in the labor market.

Manufacturing businesses absorb the highest share of wage-employed polytechnic graduates, followed by construction enterprises. There are the growing industry sectors in Bangladesh economy today. Polytechnics are demonstrably a valuable supply source of technical skills needed in such booming industries. Firms in ICT business – another emerging industry in service sector – are also employing a good share of polytechnic graduates, both male and female. It is noteworthy that most of the employment for polytechnic graduates are found in private for-profit enterprises while employment in public entities are rare. While this is undoubtedly a disadvantage for polytechnic students in term of available job options, it also makes the role of polytechnics unique and distinct as a supplier of skills for industries. This would only strengthen the case for furthering the partnership between polytechnics and industries and integrating industries' demands in training programs in more substantive manners.

Graduates' levels of satisfaction over the quality and relevance of polytechnic education and training is generally high. Graduates responded quite positively about the relevance of training contents and quality of technical skills trainings at polytechnics. The fact that the responses from graduates, who would be more aware of requirements of the real world of work, are consistent with the students' positive views suggests that training programs at polytechnics are indeed meeting the basic technical skills demand of industries, at least at the foundational levels. Employers' opinion also corroborates this. Practical technical skills are found to be one of the areas that employers of polytechnic graduates value highly.

At the same time, more efforts are urgently needed in modernizing facilities and equipment of polytechnics, updating teachers' technical skills, nurturing soft skills such as communication skills and problem-solving skills, and strengthening ICT skills for work. Conditions of facilities and equipment at polytechnics are seen as least satisfactory by graduates. Teachers' technical skills are also rated less satisfactory.

Despite the generally positive responses towards the quality and relevance of training programs, graduates seem to see weaknesses in the institutions' capacity of training delivery. Polytechnics are often deprived of investment in modern equipment and tools for training in spite of the rapid evolution and advancement of technologies in today's industries. Many of the polytechnic teachers are also severely underinvested in terms of continuous professional development and exposures to the latest technologies. Employers also want to see more improvement in practical skills of polytechnic graduates. MoE should continue its efforts towards upgrading the infrastructure for polytechnics, expanding training and industry exposure experience for teachers, and incorporating a greater range of practical skills training. Soft skills such as communication skills and problem-solving skills are seen by students and employers as another area for improvement in polytechnic training. The nature of today's technical works increasingly requires workers to be team workers, efficient communicators, and active problem solvers. In addition to traditional technology-focused subjects, polytechnics should also teach students some basic soft skills that would make them more productive workers. MoE should enhance the quantity and quality of soft skills training at polytechnic institutions.

A third of the polytechnic graduates move on to enroll in other education institutions, typically universities and faculties of engineering to pursue higher-level qualifications; an engineering diploma from polytechnics may not be an adequate qualification for some industries. Completion of the four-year diploma course at polytechnics makes graduates eligible to apply for universities. It is evident from the finding that a substantial proportion of polytechnic students are using polytechnic education as a stepping stone towards admission in universities. Around twenty nine percent (29%) of the graduates did not engage themselves in job search and moved straight to the next academic career. One of the common coping strategies for unemployed graduates is to pursue additional education and training opportunities. It is also noteworthy that a significant part of the 'employed' polytechnic graduates are considering obtaining higher education degrees in technical and engineering fields.

Taken together, it seems to indicate that polytechnic diploma is no longer seen by many as terminal qualification for many technical professionals. Rather, be it for job search or for career promotion, modern industries in Bangladesh today are increasingly demanding their technical staff to have higher education degrees in relevant technical fields. Whether such pressure for higher qualifications is stemming from excessive labor market competition (i.e. oversupply or mismatch of skills) or from technological advances is not immediately clear. What is clear is the fact that around a third of the polytechnic students will move ahead with higher education after graduation, and career guidance at polytechnics would need to take account of the entire ranges of options available to students, including not only job market but also possible higher education options most suitable for students' aspirations and capacity

Conclusion

This study has generated much insights and evidences that shed lights on the strength and weaknesses of polytechnic education in relation to graduates' skills acquisition and employment.

So, it sets forth some recommended policy alternatives and educational strategies which would enhance the quality and relevance of training and ultimately, the job market outcomes of graduates.

Place graduates' employment firmly and squarely at the center of efforts for improvement of the polytechnic system. First and foremost, employment prospects of polytechnic graduates need to be improved if polytechnics are to continue to be a meaningful career pathway for students. The employment- centered approach would encompass the entire spectrum of polytechnic system's actions, including governance structure, institutional planning, monitoring and evaluation, curriculum design, teacher management, industry linkage, teaching facility and equipment, and job placement services; and should gear them strategically towards achieving better employment outcomes. The polytechnic system needs to be more thoroughly committed to making its training relevant to the industry needs and being more accountable to the employment outcomes of its students.

Give greater emphasis on higher-order cognitive skills and soft skills training such as problem-solving skills and communication skills in pedagogy and curriculum in polytechnics; embracing fully competency-based training should be a priority to pave the way for a more flexible demand-driven curriculum. It is recommended that the Board and polytechnics introduce in their curriculum special training programs specifically with an aim to impart essential soft skills to students (e.g. communication, team work, problem solving, critical thinking, etc.). To respond to the skills needs of industries, it would be beneficial if Bangladesh's polytechnic system fully embraces the competency-based training model.

Invest more to upgrade the technical and teaching skills of teachers as well as equipment and facilities. Partnership with industries may well play a role in increasing the opportunity for teachers to have industry exposure to the latest technologies. Teacher training for polytechnic teachers, both pre-service and in-service, should be strengthened to improve their pedagogical skills. TVET teacher training policies as well as roles of Technical Teacher Training College (TTTC) have to be reviewed. More financial resources from the government are apparently needed to modernize facilities and equipment to keep up with the basic requirements of modern industries. To diversify sources of financing, MoE and polytechnics should consider possibilities of 'revenue generation' as part of the activities of polytechnics through the provision of life-long training and skills assessment to workers in their localities. Special attention should be paid to soft skills training. A new curriculum can be developed and implemented to introduce soft skills development programs in polytechnics.

Further strengthen partnership with industry in an effort to improve the quality of education and promote graduates' employment. Repeated recommendations have been made countless times about the importance of forging strong partnership with industries. Industry partnerships are widely known to be extremely useful to ensure the relevance of training programs. Furthermore, industry partners are also potential employers. As found in this survey, establishing and maintaining regular communication channels with them would likely contribute to enhancing the chances of polytechnic graduates finding jobs with those employers.

Expand and improve job placement support services to students at the institution level. It is found that most of the services provided so far have been counseling and advisories. While those will undoubtedly benefit students, more systematic and institution-based support services are yet to

take root in many of the polytechnics. For instance, institution-wide actions such as organization of job fairs and career seminars, partnering with industries for preferential job placement, and establishment of alumni networks are still not frequently done, but would have a substantive impact on raising institutions' capacity to support students. Moving forward, polytechnic institutions should emphasize on how they can institutionalize employment cells and job placement support services at the institution level. In particular, public polytechnic institutions have a lot of work to do.

Strengthen graduate tracking programs at the institutional level to support more systematic and active job placement support. Tracing the whereabouts and job status of former students is essential for designing and implementing functional high-quality job placement support strategies for polytechnics. Proper identification and analysis of the employment pattern and history of past graduates would offer valuable clues as to what the best strategies might be for the future graduates. Employment cells should introduce and institutionalize a graduate tracking mechanism. Already some of the private polytechnics have such a system in place where staff in charge of the employment cell maintains and update regularly a database of graduates and their current status mainly through contacting them over phone periodically.

Institutionalize periodic tracking surveys of polytechnic graduates at a national level by Directorate of Technical Education. The central skills development agency has a critical role in ensuring the availability of relevant public knowledge about how skills training rendered by polytechnic institutions are benefiting the labor market. To do this, it is essential that updated systemic data are available that demonstrate how diploma graduates are faring in the labor market and how employers are viewing the skills of the graduates. Conducting periodic graduate follow-up surveys and establishing a graduate database should be part of the regular task of DTE. Information obtained through the follow-up surveys would be the evidence base for designing of courses and strategizing job placement services. Tracking can be done in different ways with different cost implications.

Forge stronger ties with industry communities who would accept female technical specialists and technicians to boost job outcomes for female graduates. The disappointing state of female graduates' job placement that this survey found call for tailored and targeted interventions to uplift the employment outcomes of female students. Given the differences in job search strategies between male and female students, job placement support for female students may well be somewhat different from that for male students. Female students are more likely to find jobs through networks (i.e. through personal and institutional references to potential employers). Polytechnics have a bigger role to play to refer their female students to companies which are receptive to the hiring of female technical workers. More companies need to be brought into partnership with polytechnics for finding posts for female graduates. In this case establishment of a web based internship and job placement platform can support the purpose as well as reduce the cost and labors.

Provide special training programs on entrepreneurship and business management to encourage entrepreneurship for polytechnic students. Expanding self-employment and entrepreneurship is certainly one of the ways to achieve greater job creation and a vibrant economy through skills development. A range of skills and know-how are useful for potential entrepreneurs, including skills such as how to identify business opportunities, raise funds, market your services, and manage accounts, etc. These skills would be of significant values not only for graduates who would start up

businesses soon after graduation but also for those who may become entrepreneurs after gaining some years of work experience. Current programs for entrepreneurship at polytechnics are not so conducive or practical. DTE/BTEB, working with the partners, should develop and implement practical entrepreneurship training programs for polytechnic students.

Further strengthen the evidence-base in technical education to drive evidence-based discussion and policy making towards more and better employment. It would be necessary to conduct comparative analysis with employment opportunities and skills segments for graduates from other types of institutions such as general academic stream, colleges, and universities. More in-depth analysis on types of skills that employers are seeking from technicians and engineers would also be essential for future efforts to improve employment outcomes. A much better understanding of the skills demand and influencing factors is needed to analyze the reasons for high graduate unemployment despite the persistent claim of skills shortage in industries. Job markets are often imperfect, and knowledge on job market frictions and ways to alleviate them would be extremely useful. Insight into career progression and mid-career training opportunities for professionals, engineers and technicians would be crucial to design suitable training programs for upskilling needs and mid-career trainings. Moving forward, further investigations in the technical education sector are warranted to build a stronger evidence-base to steer policy discussions to the improvement of polytechnic education and graduates' employment outcomes.

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English Language Learning at TVET Institutes of Bangladesh: Women's Perception, Participation and Aspiration

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Abstract

For both women and men, in TVET sectors in Bangladesh, English plays a significant role in ensuring gateways to higher education and better career opportunities. Women face more challenges and hindrances in accessing opportunities because of the prevailing perceptions and practices in the male-dominant society. At the backdrop of such reality, the present study narrows down its focus to explore the status of English in women's perception, participation and aspiration at TVET institutes. In doing so, the study adopts a qualitative approach to collect data by conducting seven (07) focus group discussion sessions with thirty nine (39) female diploma students studying in different polytechnic institutes across the country and twenty three (23) in-depth interview sessions with teachers, head teachers, employers, policy makers and alumni. Data reveal that teaching learning method, resources, teachers' as well as students' limited English skills are the major obstacles to provide efficient English learning experiences at TVET institutes. The study ends with a set of suggestions regarding an effective and TVET appropriate English language learning model for technical and vocational education institutions.

Keywords: TVET, English Language Learning, Gender

Introduction

English plays an important role in broadening opportunities to education and employment for all. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is highly replete with English terms and expressions. To ensure the goal of the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) towards achieving SDGs and graduating from the category of the least developed countries in 2024, there is no alternative to ensuring the participation of all citizens, including women in all sectors of education and employment, especially the TVET sector. At the backdrop of such contextual reality,

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it is necessary to systematically study the nature of relation between English, TVET and the empowerment of women which is limitedly addressed in earlier research-based study. With a view to exploring their roles, relations and extents, the present study intends to investigate the issues to identify the challenges, and come up with a set of suggestions to overcome them.

Along with the gender roles, social structures are also fundamental in determining who gets access to English education and who is deprived of this opportunity (Rahman, 2017, p.2). As most female workers in Bangladesh are primarily involved in the informal sector of the economy, their contributions are often overlooked, undervalued and most importantly, unpaid. However, women's share in economic activities is increasing at a faster rate (the female labour force participation rate increased from 29.2% in 2005-2006 to 36.0% in 2010), resulting in changing the traditional scenario of male dominance (Bangladesh Bureau of Statistics, 2010). Their increasing participation in income generating activities is gradually transforming the traditional values and gender roles of women in Bangladeshi society. In particular, social attitudes towards women are changing and creating more opportunities for them to take part in the decision-making processes. In such changing context, there is a lot of optimism about the role of TVET and English language that may create new possibilities for development and help women to overcome traditional barriers.

In the present context, this study attempts to bring out to what extent English language and TVET can contribute to uplift the socio-economic status of Bangladeshi women. The research also sheds light on the challenges women face to access TVET and English language skills and the possible ways to overcome those challenges.

Statement of the problem

With a view to empowering women and increasing active participation in the economic activities of the nation, the Government of Bangladesh (GoB) has adopted certain measures and provided guidelines to emerge as a middle-income country by 2030. In addition, the GoB has also realised the importance of TVET in fulfilling its target and adopted workplan and strategies to reach the target. Though almost 50% of the population is women, their participation is comparatively low in TVET. For empowerment of the population, the first requirement is the successful attainment and completion of education. However, it is known that every year a notable portion of students are unable to pass in the SSC and HSC examinations for their poor performance in English e.g., nearly 11.63 lakh students appeared in the HSC examination in 2017 and 2.17 lakh students failed in English only ("Poor show" 2017). Further, the role of English in empowering women in Bangladesh has not been studied adequately earlier regarding both general education and TVET. The study focuses on women and TVET as the GoB considers both these issues are highly operational in achieving economical goals of Bangladesh. The findings of the study are likely to serve as a point of departure for the GoB for strengthening English language training for students of the TVET sector and encourage female students to go for studying in the TVET sector.

Objective(s) of the study

The objective of the research is to understand the existing English teaching learning practice at TVET institutions. The study, in a very specific way, narrows down its focus on investigating the status of English in women's perception, participation and aspiration in TVET sector.

Literature Review

As almost half of the population is women, the issue of female participation both at the national and the international levels remains as a major challenge. Along with globalization, the rapid growth in online connectivity and dependency; successful access to both the multinational companies and the global market require proficiency in English irrespective of gender,

In addition, the citizens of the developing countries are often found to have a preference for white collar jobs whereas the reality is the country's financial mobilization requires the combined contribution of citizens employed in both white collar and blue-collar jobs. TVET usually leads to blue collar jobs (UNESCO_UNEVOC, 2006) which are held in less superior esteem as career options, for all in general, for women in particular. It is also found that the gender disparities are more prevalent in some fields like science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills and knowledge globally where the representation of women account for 35% of STEM students in higher education (UNESCO 2017, p.11). Even in Bangladesh, particularly in TVET, the participation of women students is less in most of the stages of education in different proportions. Under such circumstances, Bangladesh National Skill Development Policy, 2011 and National strategy for promotion of gender equality in TVET, 2012 have been formally formulated to enhance female participation in TVET and gender equity in this regard (Ministry of Education, 2011).

English has been identified as an important soft skill for supporting economic development particularly in the field of technology industries, information and communication technologies, and business process outsourcing (Economist Intelligence Unit Report, 2015). The changing socio economic context of the world and the process of globalization have enhanced the status of English in the world economy. The impact of globalisation and economic development has made English the 'language of opportunity' and a vital means of improving prospects for well-paid employment' (Howson, 2013). Following the same line of argument, Sergeant and Erling (2011) highlighted the main purpose of the projects like 'English Language Teaching Improvement Project' (ELTIP) in 1997, English in Action' in 2008, and the language teaching approach like CLT in 1997 which were introduced for enhancing the human resource development and developing human capital. Coleman (2017) argues that proficiency in local languages and social multilingualism play an important role in the economic growth at the national level. However, Erling (2017) found the relationship of English and economic in Bangladesh to be complex though she found English to have impact on individual's life to a limited extent, and hence warns the policy makers to realize such complexities and not to hold English "as a panacea for employability and poverty" (Erling 2017, p.402). Even though Erling et al. (2012) found only limited evidence showing a relationship between them, perceptions about the English language and development are found to be strong in their study as well.

Growing number of studies are done in understanding the role and relation of English in higher education and employment resulting in development in different countries e.g., in Malaysia (Malakolunthu & Rengasamy, 2012), in Bangladesh (Hamid, 2016; Hamid & Erling, 2016), its standing with relation to imparting and receiving TVET has rarely been explored, particularly in the case of women participation and employability in this sector. One such study by Rahman (2017, p.201) found that English has potential to open a number of new avenues to enhance socio-economic development of women in Bangladesh. The earlier study (Erling, Hamid & Seargeant, 2010) implicitly indicate development in relation to white collar jobs like career in civil service

or academic, however the role that English plays in the case of blue-collar jobs has hardly been explored e.g., Vietnamese youth graduating from vocational institutes could use a foreign language like English independently (Hamid & Nguyen, 2016). The study, hence, intends to investigate the standing for English in women's participation in TVET and employability in blue collar jobs (if there is any). The study deliberately chooses women as its sample, aspiring that the implications of the findings based on the data from the most marginalized group might be more conveniently generalizable for other privileged groups as well. The study intends to come out with implications for sustainable capacity building, for further necessity for exchange of dialogues of stakeholders, for bringing in effective curriculum re-adjustment and innovative intervention strategies, with a view to empowering women participation in TVET and their employability in blue collar jobs.

Methodology of the Study

The present study is a part of a large-scale project. A qualitative study was employed to explore the existing English teaching learning practices at TVET institutions. To collect data a purposive sampling technique was used to select the participants for the study who would provide information-rich data for the researchers. Here, semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussion are adopted as the means of collecting data. The data were collected from seven (07) districts including Dhaka, Tangail, Barishal, Bhola, Rajshahi, Bogura, and Chattogram. In total, 23 in-depth interview (IDI) sessions with teachers (5), head teachers (3) and alumni (15) and seven (07) focus group discussion (FGDs) sessions with 39 female students were conducted. With the permission of the participants, all these sessions were audio-recorded and then the oral data was transcribed verbatim. The participants of the study include (i) female students enrolled in TVET diploma programmes, (ii) teachers, (iii) heads of the institutes (iv) employers, (v) alumni, (vi) the recruiting agents sending human resources abroad, (vii) concerned personnel working at the policy making level e.g., people working in The National Skills Development Authority (NSDA), (viii) Directorate of Technical Education (DTE), (ix) Bangladesh Technical Education Board (BTEB), (x), Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) (xi), Bureau of Manpower Employment and Training (BMET), and (xii), International Labour Organisation (ILO).

The study also reviewed existing resources and information through secondary data analysis and literature review. Secondary information and resources are sourced from Project Team, existing documents online, job advertisements, and/or third party if and where applicable. The desk review covers not only the existing researches and project documents, but also the existing policy scenario and some job advertisements.

Findings and Discussion

In this section, the findings from the IDI, KII and FGD are presented thematically. The section ends with an overall critical discussion.

The extent of use of English in the classroom

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers (principals or vice principals) and teachers were asked about the use of English in the classes. Their responses showed mixed reaction about the use of English. The head teachers said that the books that they used were not originally written in Bangla;

rather they translated from English to Bangla. The head teachers were found to agree that English was hardly used in the classes as both teachers and students were more comfortable in Bangla. Teachers did not like to use English in front of the students as it might produce difficulties for the students to understand. The syllabus by technical board prioritized the fluency instead of accuracy and they were trying to emphasize the use of English as a medium of instruction. In this regard, RHT1 commented:

We do not usually use English. Most of our students get admitted here after passing SSC. Moreover, our students are not very intelligent in terms of their results, I mean, students with low grades get admitted here mostly. So, using only English in delivering lesson can create difficulties for them to understand the subjects. That's the reason, even though our teachers are competent to teach in English, they do not use English in the class.

However, the head teachers believed that the use of English in classroom would help the learners in building their communicative competence and it was necessary as English played an important role in the job field of TVET. In this regard RHT1 said:

It is good to use English in the classroom along with Bangla. English is less used in classroom. We use English only for the technical terms. We make questions in Bangla and students answer the questions in Bangla. So, the use of English is rare.

BgHT1, another respondent, further clarified:

For technical engineering sector, English is undoubtedly very important because its origin and the terms are in English. So, whenever they are going to work and they need to explain the terms, they need English. And if I consider the foreign context, I think English is even more important than Bangla. From multinational companies to foreign workplace, English is necessary everywhere.

NHT1 further added:

However, as the medium of instruction at the B.Sc. level is English, good use of English at the diploma level can help a lot for higher education in future. Moreover, we usually get students with below average standard. Hence, they are usually very poor in English. Sometimes, they don't even understand if we say something in English. Therefore, it would be beneficial for them if they could upgrade their skills in English.

In this regard, BgHT1 said:

We have nine (09) departments in total and among them there is Department of Tourism and Hospitality where we are focusing on fluency in English. Here are many students who can communicate well in English. They have more tendencies of speaking in English. For tourism, we have emphasized the communication part instead of making Mathematics, Physics and Chemistry compulsory.

The teachers were asked the same question and they expressed the similar opinions like the head teachers. Most of the teachers opined that English is hardly used in the classroom as a medium of instruction or in any other form. The new information that they provided was the habit of using mother tongue in the classrooms and lack of interested colleagues and students to converse in English.

The only use of English is in the specific courses of English languages. Both teachers and students were more comfortable in using Bangla in the classroom as students understood better in Bengali. Hence, one teacher (BgT1) strongly recommended the use of English in the classes and books, saying:

Because the Diploma Engineering course cannot be successfully completed without English, I feel strongly that English is essential in the classroom. Since the available textbooks nowadays are in Bangla, the students are getting disinterested in English day by day. If it is possible to make English compulsory for teaching, learning, and assessing the technical knowledge in this field, the students will use English more effectively.

In this regard, BhT1 commented:

Just after passing SSC, the students get admitted to the diploma level. So, students lack right level of language proficiency. For this reason, we cannot even if we wish to use the English language in the classroom that much. We use Bangla to make the students grasp the concepts in the the relevant field learn better. Though most of the books are written in English, we teach students in Bangla.

TT1 added:

If we try to make English conversations with our students, often we cannot reach their level because we have students from different backgrounds. Whenever I have tried to speak with them in English, I have received less response from them. Since they are not habituated in speaking English, they do not feel comfortable in using English.

In the FGD sessions, the students were asked about the use of English in the classes. They gave a negative picture regarding the use of English in the classes. They regretted the fact that most of the time the use of English was absent in their classes. They also talked about the issues they have to face due to the absence of use of English in classes. The participants expressed their concerns about the unfavourable attitude that they might have to face from the employers (which they came to know about from their alumni) because of their lack of English skills. The importance of speaking skills and practicing of this skill in class was also one of their major concerns. The teachers kept the use of English to a minimum level making the lesson intelligible to the large classroom. Only 15-25% English was used in the classrooms in English classes. The questions mostly resembled the questions of S.S.C level. In other departmental classes, use of English was completely absent. Sometimes the English classes were inadequate in number. In this regard, BhS1 commented, “. . . learning English in the classroom is very important. It will be beneficial for us if we can learn English in our classes. I think English should be taught in every class”.BgS 6 pointed out to the sad decline of their English skills due to the lack of its use in the classroom. She said:

We are using Bangla as the medium of instruction in the Diploma programme, but when we will finally go for higher studies in BSc Engineering, we will have to use English. Because of using only Bangla in Diploma for a long period of time, our English proficiency suffers. Hence, we face difficulties in coping with the BSc studies which requires better English proficiency.

DS5 specifically mentioned:

In our Computer sector, there are different groups including software group, networking group. When we are learning and practicing the tasks, we feel difficulty in understanding the English terms and instructions. It is because our subject is computer which is completely based on English. If my command over English is poor, then it creates a series of problems.

The usage and necessity of English varied depending on the departments as revealed by BoS7:

Since Department of Tourism is new, there is no particular book or material available on tourism. We order foreign books based on our syllabus and all these books are written in English. The Basic English and the Communicative English courses that we are taught in the first two semesters cannot provide us with a strong base for our departmental studies. So, we face difficulties in understanding our departmental text. We require a lot of help from our teachers for translating and understanding the materials.

It is evident from the responses of the head/teachers and students that English is important for technical education at the diploma level though the students taking admission do not have readiness for that kind of English medium instruction. The use of Bangla is not systematically implemented in textbooks and the lack of English creates a kind of 'divide' among the diploma students and general education background students when they compete for BSc admission. It is also obvious that in certain subjects like networking, softwares, English is mostly needed. Therefore, all subjects should not have similar kind of weightage or credit for English. Need-based syllabus design for English is called for.

The way English is used in the classroom (including method, materials, medium, tasks, assessment)

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and teachers were specifically asked about the use of English in the classes. Their responses of the head teachers revealed that the use of English was limited to the technical terms only. Power Point presentations were designed in English and lectures on them were delivered in Bangla. Only a few enthusiast teachers used English. BgHT1 said,

Since the technical terms are in English, our English usage is limited to that. There is use of multimedia projectors. The Power Point slides are in English sometimes. But we deliver the lecture in Bangla. So, the terms are in English, but the explanation is in Bangla.

Teachers also presented similar kinds of findings. English was used only for Power Point presentation and in terms of describing any technical terms. Though the books were mostly in English, those were taught by verbally translating the contents. English was used just to make students understand the topic, not to make them communicatively competent. Students only used English for designing the cover page of their assignment and sometimes to write about the technical items (Ex: Input Device, Output Device). In this regard, DT1 commented:

We use Power Point presentations in our class where the slides are mostly in English. But our medium of instruction is mostly Bangla and sometimes mixed English terms. The students have the

freedom to write in Bangla, or in English or even in Banglish (Bangla and English mixed) in the assigned reports or in the examination scripts. However, maximum students write in Banglish. For example, if a student writes 'input device' or 'output device' in English or in Bangla, I will give marks for both of these, because there is no instruction in particular regarding the language use.

In the FGD sessions, the students were asked about the use of English in the classes. Their responses revealed that in English classes, mostly grammatical rules were taught using mostly Bangla as the medium of instruction. Pair works, presentations, group works, speaking practices were a rarity. Mostly English was taught at the word level for subjects other than English. DS4 shared an important piece of information as she said:

There were supposed to be presentation and other activities in our English courses. In the 3rd semester, we had two presentations on pre-discussed topics so that we could be comfortable while speaking in English, and each student was allotted 5-7 minutes for delivering their speech. Teachers used board for writing the topics. After teaching a topic, they tried to assess our learning through written tests.

However, rarely there were teachers who tried to incorporate communicative techniques in classes. CS1 said, "In our class, we have one teacher who prefer to teach us in English, and he assigned us different tasks in English". CS2 added, "In English courses of first semester, we are assigned to make banners, festoons on recent issues and have presentations on them. This sort of presentations was completely conducted in English". Bo7 also talked about one of these rare occasions when roleplay, group work and pair-work were incorporated in their English classes. She said, "In the communicative English classes, we were assigned for role-play, group work and pair work. English was used as the medium of instruction and in responses during these tasks".

English was used in a limited way in the classes. Unsystematic use of English and Bangla was also observed. Translation was used heavily in helping students comprehend the concept. Often English was used to understand certain technical concept, not to enhance communicative competence. Explicit teaching of grammar was mentioned and the English classes were not communicative at all. Often unsystematic assessment was also mentioned.

Challenges faced by students while attending classes in English

In the IDI sessions, the head teachers and teachers were asked about the challenges faced by students while attending classes in English. Their responses of the head teachers revealed that the main challenge of using English in the classroom was the lack of interest from the students. Most of the students came after the completion of SSC and were not so skilled in English. In this regard, BgHT1 comments:

The main challenge is students' reluctance in communicating in English . . . We cannot conduct the whole class in English because we have students from different background. Almost 95% students came directly from SSC and 1-2% from HSC. So, they have different levels of competency.

Teachers also expressed the similar opinion. They further added that it became a habit of the teachers as well to use Bangla as the students were more comfortable in Bangla. It was also challenging to lecture in foreign language in a large class of 100 students. Students failed to understand the lecture if the lecture was given in English only. Even if they did not understand the English lectures, they did not admit it at the very moment. But their shallow understanding

of that lecture usually affected their performance in the examination. DT1 asserted the same proposition, saying:

We cannot focus on English because our students are from rural area. So, their base of English already remains weak and the English they learn here is not very rich also. So, they do not understand the lectures delivered in English. You can consider these English courses as survival language course.

In the FGD sessions, the students were asked about the challenges they face when the classes are conducted in English. Their responses revealed that they had problems in understanding the lessons when they were conducted in English. They also faced difficulties when they were asked to speak in class due to lack of vocabulary. They talked about the problems of having a large classroom with poor logistic support. They also felt mentally intimidated when English was used in class and they presupposed that the lesson would be difficult for them to understand. In this regard, TS1 pointed out, “While teaching a lesson, if the teacher uses English for a long time or if he/she uses English that is a little difficult, the lesson automatically becomes inconceivable for us”. CS3 felt that all of them (the students) were good in writing but they had serious problems with speaking due lack of vocabulary and proper pronunciation. She said, “Along with listening, we all face difficulties when speaking in English due to lack of vocabulary”. BoS12 shared her struggles when the classes were conducted in English:

When the teachers highlight the use of English in our lessons, we get nervous thinking that we may not know it or understand it. In the communicative English courses, the teacher used English fluently in the class but we could not understand most of his explanations.

It was found that both taking classes and attending classes in English were challenging due to the lack of teachers’ interest, habit, students’ incapacity to understand, fear, poor logistic support etc.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The study reveals that women participants often shy of participating in classwork because of their weakness in English. As female students do not have or get the opportunity to enrich their English. Lack of proficiency in English prevent female students in comprehending the concepts taught in the classes. Competence in English builds confidence among students (Kalanzadeh, Mahnegar Hassanejad, Bakhtiarvand, 2013). As for jobs, women, good in English, are doing better in freelancing, government jobs, specific TVET jobs like hotel receptionist, garments sector etc., and especially in the mid and higher level official and executive positions. English also helps them get jobs with more job security, e.g., the less chance of being fired, the chance to get maternity leave, the scope of getting respect from colleagues and employers, and finally the less chance of being harassed. These findings aligned with other cross-country studies and in such sense, English empowers women in particular in service sectors in a sustainable manner, securing their job status, benefits, and wellbeing (Haghighi, 2014; Hussain, Ahmed & Zafar, 2009).

The use of English needs to be maximized in academic activities in appropriate way, keeping in consideration the demands of the industries, job markets, global demands and subject requirements (Syakur, Zainuddin & Hasan, 2020). It is found that all streams of TVET are homogeneously perceived and similar kind of English is offered to them.

For TVET diploma students, both Communicative English (English for General Purposes) and subject oriented occupational English (English for Specific Purposes) are required for students to produce efficient workforce, capable of dealing with machinery mostly made in foreign countries. Hence, specific textbooks need to be written and teachers need to be trained so that they can teach the books accordingly. English books written for general stream education should not be used in TVET curriculum as their needs are different. In fact, students in the technical field need more English and a different kind of English that will empower them occupationally but the English taught to them is far from the reality. Hence, innovation needs to be brought about both in syllabuses, textbooks, teaching methods and assessment systems. English needs to be taught as a medium of instruction and more credits and credit hours need to be assigned. Social attitude towards English is positive and this needs to be reflected in the curriculum and syllabus.

The present study indicates that the use of Bangla translation needs to be done in a principled way. The use of low-quality books and translated books in Bangla are the major sources of teaching learning materials in TEVT sector. Other than books, language teaching-learning requires special logistic support including classroom facilities, language laboratory, and scope for extracurricular activities in English. Using technology-enhanced language learning and teaching resources is a growing trends in English learning activities (Shadiev & Yang, 2020). Audio visual instruments, for example, an essential language learning support aids for developing listening and pronunciation skills. In addition, appropriate measures need to be taken to recruit qualified teachers in this sector as well.

Awareness raising activities among the people regarding women's participation needs to be increased. Despite the government's attempts to promote female participation, occupation and gender segregation remain high in TEVT sector due to societal attitude, family restrictions, nature of work, co-education, gender bias, lack of security at work place (Buehren & Salisbury, 2017). The government has taken many effective measures including offering minimal fees, scholarship and stipend for the female students (Khan, 2019). The importance of English in TVET is realised by both national and individual level in terms of building skilled workforce, increasing and extending share of overseas jobs market.

Despite all challenges and negative perceptions, women are reported increasingly involved in TVET work place. Hence, specific work strategies need to be taken to promote females' participation in the technical and vocational education and employment, offering them better opportunities and security of all sorts.

Implications for further research

The field of TVET is diverse both in sense that it has many streams, courses are of different lengths, courses are taught by different institutes, and these institutes are governed or administered by different bodies and ministries. It seems, there is a lack of coordination among these bodies. People seem to be unaware of the opportunities in this sector; rather, they seem to have a negative notion towards TVET. In many Asian countries including Vietnam and Philippines, women are in a more privileged position in TVET sector (Mehrotra, 2017). Since there are a lot of similarities among the Asian nations in terms of cultures and value systems, further research is needed to find out why women in Bangladesh are lagging behind in this sector. Research also needs to

be conducted to find out if streamlining different authorities controlling TVET sectors will bring about maximum benefits for the nation or not. Research also needs to be conducted to reveal what contributed to the formation of negative attitude towards TVET among the people and how to change it towards positivity.

The present research, conducted during the pandemic, can be replicated on even larger scale when normalcy returns and it can be replicated in other fields like vocational secondary education or higher secondary education, to get a more comprehensive picture. Research-based informed knowledge would ensure utmost benefits to the stakeholders of TVET.

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Scope of Fostering Democratic Skills through Student Centred Pedagogy in Bangladeshi Secondary Schools

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Abstract

This research investigates the scope of fostering democratic skills using students-centred classroom activities to the secondary school students in Bangladesh. Empirical research suggests that student engaging classroom activities has the potentiality to help students equipped with some required democratic skills. Semi-structured interviews and Focus Group Discussion (FGD) are the sources of data instruments in this paper. Eight (08) secondary school teachers, both from rural and urban schools, took part in the interviews. Four (04) FGD sessions with the students of Grade viii and ix were recorded. Findings indicate that teachers and students hold positive mind set up towards the requirements of democratic skills. Students appear to be keen to acquire those democratic skills, and teachers though eager to help students but lack confidence about the actual practices. Findings also are suggestive of some external and internal factors as impediments for a seamless facilitation of democratic skills to the students. While outside school environment emerges as major external factor; large class size, hectic workload, relatively limited time slots for a large class size appear as some internal factors. Pedagogical implication here adheres some training provisions for the teachers which will enable them to come up with specific teaching strategies to help students foster democratic skills.

Keywords: Democracy, democratic practice, secondary schools, student centred pedagogy, teaching strategies.

Introduction

To the school goes first societal experience comes in the schools (Bisland, O'Connor, and Malow-Iroff, 2009), this sparks a key point that nature of classroom culture impacts the learners' mind shaping as far as their perceptions and practices of civic sense and democratic values are concerned. As literature suggests, the quality of democracy is intertwined with the quality of education (Biesta, 2007), and education has the potentiality to enable a 'culture of democracy' (Acemoglu et

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al., 2005). Realizing the connections between education and democracy, for the last two decades, educators and researchers portray an array of visions on the features of democratic education within different nation states. Focus of interests of the mentioned educators centre on the contribution of school in developing democratic cultures in a given society. While some educators think of promoting democratic values and attitude through the course contents, others put forward the ideas of teaching the students to participate actively and constructively in the democratic processes (Roth, 2003). Consequently, as a means of option, student-centred pedagogy was introduced in diverse contexts globally because of its promises of making learning more democratic (Sriprakash, 2010) and potentials to promote democratic citizenship among the learners (Anderson-Levitt, 2003).

Likewise, since mid-90s policy makers of Bangladesh brought changes in the curriculum with a view to better teaching-learning, and subsequently embraced student centred pedagogy, which in a sense opens up an opportunity here to explore the scope of inserting the democratic norms, values, and skills to the learners through student centred pedagogy. For an emerging democracy like Bangladesh it is certain that learners need to know and practice of democratic culture; and classroom should be a key hub to acquire those skills. As discussed in Nath and Chowdhury (2009) moral, civic and democratic value laden competencies are required for a democratic society in Bangladesh and those should be prioritise since the primary schooling.

As a matter of fact, teachers can play a pivotal role in ensuring democratic education (in terms of facilitating democratic cultures) in schools (Thornberg and Elvstrand, 2012; England, 2006; Dworkin et al., 2003). In classroom activities under the rule of student centred pedagogy it is possible that along with the intended teaching-learning content teachers will guide learners acquire knowledge relevant to democratic participation (Reich, 2007). Interestingly, many features of student engaging classroom activities are quite common under the level of student centred pedagogy in Bangladeshi secondary education (at least as stated in Bangladeshi secondary curriculum), and hence opens up the opportunity to investigate those practices in relation to fostering democratic norms to the learners.

With a view to facilitating vibrant classroom atmosphere student-centred pedagogy that constitutes teaching-learning strategies such as group/pair work, collaborative learning, debate, peer checking etc. have been incorporated in the Bangladeshi school curriculum. Teachers also seem interested in using these teaching strategies, but the opportunity to maximise the learning outcomes in form of teaching democratic practices appear to be undermined. In a recently concluded study Gomes (2020) found that school teachers here in Bangladesh seemed to have a very minimal understanding of democratic, moral civic and citizenship ideals. A critical look reveals the fact that practicing school teachers of Bangladesh are unaware about the philosophical underpinnings of such student engaging activities, they rather espouse a 'technicist' view (as conceptualised by Halliday, 1998) of teachers' role relying heavily on the taught subjects.

Bangladesh hold student engaging classroom activities as only to tap learners' content-oriented critical insights undermining the good social impacts embedded in those activities. Thus, applications of a narrow variety of those activities (such as group/pair work) are evident in the Bangladeshi context. As the studies (Altinyelken, 2015; Sriprakash, 2010) suggest, classroom activities with such strategies (e.g. group/pair work) may potentially open up opportunities for the learners to practice various facets of democracy (e.g. eagerness to understanding and accepting different perspectives) in the classroom along with what they intend to learn. In addition to this,

although in the Bangladeshi National Education Policy (2010) it is clearly stated that one of the aims of education is “to show tolerance for different ideologies for the development of a democratic culture and to help develop a life-oriented, realistic and positive outlook” (clause 9), yet at the implementation level, for example, in the curriculum or in teachers’ manual no such indication was illustrated. Hence, teachers seem unsure and reluctant about the ways to help the learners with teaching democratic norms; whereas it is apparent that learners need to learn democratic practices before one expects from them. Therefore, it is imperative that empirical research is required to examine the scope of facilitating democratic practice among the learners through the existing student engaging classroom activities. It should be mentioned beforehand that the secondary education context has been investigated for this research.

Empirical research across the states (e.g. China, Turkey, India etc.) has been conducted to date to understand the relationship between student centred pedagogy and democratization process (Jacobs and Power, 2016; Kennedy, Kuang, and Chow, 2013; Sriprakash 2010). Compared to global literature, a few research (Gomes, 2020; Sultana, 2014) was conducted in Bangladesh to understand teaching practice of democratic values and skills to the school students. For example, Gomes (2020) tried to identify understanding, existence and practice of democracy related values at primary schools in Bangladesh. However, no research in Bangladesh is done so far to examine the potentiality of student centred classroom practices in relation to facilitating the teaching of democratic practices, though globally an array of research has been accomplished. As it appears, this research project eventually will fill one significant research gap, and in doing so this paper will address two research questions given below:

- i. To what extent the current practice of student engaging classroom activities are conducive to facilitating democratic practices to the secondary students in Bangladesh?
- ii. What are the embedded cultural, social, and political context that support or impede the teaching of democratic norms, values and skills to the secondary students in Bangladesh?

Literature review

Relationship between-student centred pedagogy and democratic practice

Pedagogy ultimately relates to power relations within classrooms and beyond, and to the differential unequal positioning of teachers and students. In many countries, relationships within classrooms tend to be hierarchical, teachers enjoy an unquestionable authority position. Student-centred pedagogy or at the least student engaging classroom practice questions the substantive forms of such teacher authority, and endeavours to change these power relations so that students and teachers relate to one another on a more equal footing. Learning in student-centred pedagogy is defined as a co-construction, a joint effort between students and teachers rather than a one-way transmission from teachers to students. That is why student-centred pedagogy has often been associated with the promise of child-friendly, participatory and democratic learning environments. It has an in-built potential to promote democratisation of classrooms. Hence, it is not difficult to see the resonance of democracy with student centred pedagogy among educationists and policy-makers (e.g., Schweisfurth 2013; Sriprakash 2010). Dewey (1966), the pioneer among the influential intellectuals, who advocated democratic education and provided much theoretical inspiration to the development of progressive pedagogies, is of opinion that democratic learning environments can

be created and stimulated by facilitating participation of all students and organising group activities to allow students to engage with each other towards a common purpose.

Research that focuses on the correspondence between classroom activities and democratic practices seems to state that teacher-students' mind set up and academic environment create an advantageous situation for better learning. For example, a study (De Baessa, Chesterfield, and Ramos, 2002) investigated the relationship between pedagogy and democratisation in school. The authors examined the extent to which an active learning environment through student engaging activities helps to promote the democratic behaviour of rural children from different cultural backgrounds. This study points to a positive relationship, suggesting that active learning helps children to take part in their own learning and contributes to democratic behaviour through participatory activities. They conclude that classroom environment can have a significant influence on democratic behaviour (e.g. helping behaviour, turn taking, directing others, expressing opinions), and participation in student-directed small groups is particularly seen as key to this process. However, another research (Sriprakash, 2010) of the similar in nature comes up with a different finding, and clarifies that there remains an ambiguous relationship between student-centred pedagogy and democratization process.

Jacobs and Power (2016) identifies seven key elements (learner autonomy, teacher as co-worker, focus on meaning, alternative assessment, learning climate and think skill, student-student interaction, and motivation) of student centred learning and relates those with some significant phenomena (e.g., decision making, knowledge generation, understanding, evaluation, embracing diversity, cooperation and motivation) of democratic societies. For instance, decision making process of a society has been associated with learner autonomy of student centred pedagogy of classroom practices. While learner autonomy in classroom pedagogy refers to student can take part in decision making process or can solve a problem by themselves; adversely the absence of it certainly exposes a top down teacher centred practices. Likewise, embracing diversity in student centred practices has been linked to rich social climate and thinking ability. While social climate refers to respect for diversity in its any form and ability grow a mentality for the respect of diversity; absence of it reveals a disruptive attitude towards difference of opinion. As a matter of fact, it goes without the question that student centred classroom practices can help fostering democratic skills to the learners.

Teachers' beliefs and its relevance to classroom teaching practices

To explore the scope of teaching of democratic norms, values, and skills to learners it would be worthy to record teachers' beliefs on democratic culture as well as their beliefs on teaching those skills. Teachers' belief system comes under the concept of teachers' cognition and teachers' cognition refers to teachers' mental states, which encompasses teachers' self-reflection, beliefs and knowledge about teaching, students and content of teaching; and awareness of problem solving strategies in classroom teaching (Kagan, 1990). Empirical literature (Sampermans, Reichert, and Claes, 2021; Sugesti, et al., 2020; Knowles, 2018; Sanchez and Borg, 2014; Bisland, O'Connor, and Malow-Iroff, 2009; Phipps and Borg, 2009; Borg, 2006) examined the correspondence between teachers' beliefs and their actual or reported teaching practices, and findings suggested mixed results depending on teaching contexts, taught subjects, and disciplines. For example, Knowles (2018) found a positive co-relation between teachers' beliefs about citizenship education with their actual teaching strategies. Whereas, on the other hand, Bisland, O'Connor, and Malow-Iroff (2009)

concluded that the teachers' beliefs were not related, disconnected, inconsistent, or misaligned with teaching practices in social studies. Those findings were similar to Phipps and Borg (2009) who observed both consistency and inconsistency in the teachers' beliefs on English grammar teaching with their actual teaching. Contrary to this, Sugesti, et al. (2020) in a study at the Indonesian context claimed that there was a relationship between teachers' experience with their cognitions about their English language learner. That is, teachers' experience affects teachers' beliefs, and these beliefs eventually affect what teachers' do in the classrooms. Apart from those perspectives, Phipps and Borg (2009) also defined core and periphery belief systems of the teachers and argued that while core beliefs are almost static in their existence, periphery beliefs can change due to emerging educational factors.

Research design

This exploratory study is qualitative in nature, and data was collected using Focus Group Discussion (FGD) and semi-structured interviews. All the sessions of FGDs and interviews were conducted in Bangla, audio recorded and transcribed later for the purpose of data analysis. The data-driven thematic analysis were done for the purpose of data interpretation. The raw data were categorised based on the concept of the existing theories and then developed the new theme considering the existing situation and then constructed the thematic map (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2011). The major themes, then, were unfolded into sub-themes and tended to aligned those with the key objectives of the study.

Focus Group Discussion

A total of four (04) FGD were conducted with students from four secondary schools. The participants in each FGD session were ranged from 5 to 7 students comprises of both male and female, and were students of grade viii and ix. Three (03) groups of FGD were from urban schools and one (01) group was from rural secondary school. The researchers arranged the sessions in a venue convenient to the participants. To maintain the ethical issues of the participants, oral consent was taken from the parents as well as the students. No actual names and gender of the participants were disclosed in this study. In this research participant students have been identified as S1, S2, and so on and so forth.

Semi-structured interview

For the interview, eight (08) secondary school teachers (both from urban and rural contexts) were selected purposively in order to understand their classroom practices as well as to get an in-detail explanation of the responses of the students. Participant teachers have the teaching experience of a minimum period of 5 years; and they primarily teach either English or Bangladesh and Global Studies. Discussions in the interviews primarily centred round the issues related to their understanding of democratic practice, and use of student centric classroom activities to facilitate democratic values to the students. Oral consent was taken from the participant teachers prior to interviews. No actual names and gender of the participants were disclosed in this study, and the participant teachers have been identified as T1, T2, and so on and so forth.

Findings

The subsections are organised on the basis of key themes emerged from the analysed data of semistructured interview and FGD, and those are as follows: (i) A positive mind set up towards democratic practices, (ii) References of how student engaging activities reflect democratic practices, (iii) Necessary condition required for fostering democratic practices, and (iv) Required pedagogy for fostering democracy.

A positive mind set-up towards democratic practices

Data retrieved from FGD as well as from interviews reveals that the participant teachers and students hold a positive mind set up regarding the democratic norms and values. While students talk of benefits of having democratic practices, teachers narrate the ethical obligations of not having democratic practices during classroom activities.

For instance during FGD, couple of students expressed their understanding of benefit of group work in classroom activities by stating that-

“We all don’t think alike. What I will think, not necessarily other will think the same. Therefore, when we will solve a problem using different thoughts coming out from among us, it would be better comparing to do something alone” [S5] and

“When one will realize that everyone in the class is listening to her, she may feel empowered and encouraged” [S2]

It is interesting to note that the mentioned above statements are relatable with Jacobs and Power (2016).

While the statement of S5 qualifies some key phenomena e.g., embracing diversity and cooperation of democratic societies; the statement of S2 qualifies learner autonomy and motivation as argued in Jacobs and Power (2016).

Again, another opinion of a student surely reflects Kumaravadivelu’s (2001) idea of transformative practices when he stated that “we are not going to stay at school forever, right. So, it (argue logically, listening to others) going to help us in real life situation. Practicing those at school surely will help to develop our mentality” [S3]. The utterance of S3 shows his attitude to acquire skills for real life purposes.

All the participant teachers agree with the necessity of democratic practice (if possible at all) in classroom during student engaging activities which seems to be similar with the findings of Knowles (2018). For example, in response to a question “why student should listen seriously to each other during debate or discussion” here is one statement made by a teacher:

“It is important that when one will say something other will listen, or atmosphere will be chaotic. Besides, it is unethical not to value others’ opinion” [T3]

This above statement on part of the teacher is significant in the sense that this reflects a teacher’s belief. Research on teachers’ belief claims that a teacher is usually guided by his belief system and it influences his/her teaching (Knowles, 2018; Sanchez and Borg, 2014; Phipps and Borg, 2009). Phipps and Borg’s (2009) idea of core-peripheral belief can be associated with the teacher’s statement as he ideally believes the importance of democratic practice (here in form of listening to others’ opinion) but not sure he can maintain that in his own classroom for all the time.

Reference of how student engaging activities reflect democratic practices

When asked to narrate their actual classroom activities that can be referred as analogy for democratic practice reflective activities all the participants speak of group work, pair work, debate, problem solving activities. One teacher's explanation is worth mentioning:

“During group work when one speaks the other listens and collecting all the members' opinion the team leader summarizes their point of views and that essentially reflects all the members' opinion. I guess, it's a good example of democratic practice” [T1]

It is interesting to note that this above stated saying is reflective of Dadvand (2015). Dadvand (2015) maintains that to foster democratic practices teachers can create collaborative learning environment, adopt dialogic approach to pedagogy, develop learners' critical thinking abilities, and manage power sharing in classroom decision making process.

Students also appear to enjoy narrating their experience of group work. For instance, one student during FGD said that “among us, one will write and another one will read it out in front of the class. While some of us will provide ideas, and some can consult books. Again, one can be assigned to gather new ideas from other groups” [S2]. This is a good example of classroom experience that can easily be linked with Jacobs and Power's (2016) illustration of cooperation in democratic society.

Necessary condition required for fostering democratic practices

Participant teachers during interviews put forward their insightful views on the required condition for ensuring teaching of democratic skills using day to day student engaging classroom activities. While most of the teachers talked of educational settings and educational environment; one teacher from the rural context specifically spoke of socio-political condition in which the school is situated in discussing necessary condition required for fostering democratic practices. Relevant analysed data exposes both external and internal factors as the required condition.

External factors

Borg (2006) provides a framework to demonstrate how external factors (e.g., teachers' economic stability, health condition, wellbeing, community where they live, etc) mediate and influence inside classroom atmosphere and their teaching. The similar issue, here more specifically Socio-political atmosphere, seem to echoe in the statement of a teacher given below:

“to my mind, democracy depends on overall condition of the state as well as of the society. For example, whether a teacher can express his views to students without any hesitation or not... if teachers are afraid to be opiniated that will eventually influence the students. I think, to ensure democracy it is highly required that practice should begin from the top” [T4]

This particular statement is crucial for the matter that it reflects a particular teacher's belief about existing democratic culture along with his/her beliefs about teaching of democratic norms and values to the learners; and these beliefs are likely related to how that individual teacher socialise young learners via preferred modes of teaching (Sampermans, Reichert, and Claes, 2021).

Internal factors

Current practice of English teaching in Bangladesh is marred by existing educational factors (Rahman, Pandian, and Kaur, 2018). As mentioned, most of the teachers thought that less workload, small class size, 'not hectic' class schedule can ensure a school condition if wanted to foster democratic skills through daily teaching, which can be regarded as internal factors of an educational setting. One example is given here:

“immense workload and large class size are key issues in actualizing those... if teachers can feel relax

(by taking relatively little number of classes) they can enjoy what they are doing...” [T2]

Researchers such as Sinprajakpol (2004) and Sugiyama (2003) discuss how varied internal factors such as large class size, sitting arrangement, resource and logistics influence and impacts classroom teaching.

The mentioned statement of teacher is identical with the researchers.

Required pedagogy for fostering democracy

When teachers were asked to respond whether they need anything additional to help students make democratically skilled most of the teachers talk about time management issue. For example, according to one respondent:

“Time management for a teacher would one issue. Teacher needs to be really active for all the time. If teacher remains active, all the students will be active too. Besides, a monitoring on part of the school administration can be needed” [T5]

Some of the respondents though talk about training facilities to be equipped with some specific strategies to facilitate democratic norms and values during regular teaching. Given below couple of statements are reflective of that:

“... a precise lesson plan will be needed. How am I going to arrange group work, and how am I going to monitor activities, something like that” [T6] and

“Some training would be helpful. Say, some specific techniques will be learnt, and then can apply during teaching” [T7]

Interestingly, no participant teachers pointed out the curriculum or textbook issue in their discussion, which is contradictory to the findings of Altinyelken (2015). Altinyelken (2015) did research in the Turkish context where teachers put great emphasis on the quality of textbooks as primary requirement.

Conclusion and implications

From this research it can be argued that, from the psychological point of view, both teachers and students of Bangladeshi secondary schools are ready to a larger extent for the practice of democratic norms, values and skills within the existing student centred classroom activities. Teachers' statements indicate that student engaging classroom activities can be used for facilitating and teaching of democratic norms and values to the students. Also, participant students seem to value the necessity of democratic norms and values. Many of the students expressed the value

of the ability to listen to others, or of the collaborative learning, which are aligned with Jacobs and Power (2016). Nonetheless, some internal factors in form of classroom settings, overloaded workload, and limited class time need to reconsider prior to teaching democratic skills to the students. However, one particular teacher's (T4) utterance displays the necessity of socio-political condition within which the school is situated.

Key pedagogical implication of this paper calls for a change in the existing teacher guide (TG) of the secondary education of Bangladesh. Unless it is clearly stated some of specific teaching strategies to teach democratic skills to the students in the TG, teachers cannot practice those confidently. Nath and Chowdhury (2009) in their study demands the same for the primary education of Bangladesh. Besides, Gomes (2020) found that teachers here in Bangladesh are not well aware of democratic values required for the students thereby frequent workshop can be arranged to make aware the teachers.

Future directions

Significant number of research is required for further exploration of teaching of democratic skills to the students. For example, a research can only be done to record the necessary democratic values and skills required for the Bangladeshi young learners with a view to enrich them with critical citizenship. Further research is surely needed to develop a training module full of teaching strategies essential for teaching democratic skills

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