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Editorial

National Academy for Educational Management (NAEM) under the Ministry of Education (MoU) is contributing to ensure quality and sustainability through innovative practices in the field of education in Bangladesh. NAEM strongly believes that the development of the ever-changing education system is not possible without holistic research and its proper documentation. Hence, NAEM has been publishing its journal consisting of research works that are in tune with the current trends to spread new knowledge and innovations to ensure better outcomes in the education sector since the Fiscal Year 2005-2006.

The world is changing rapidly with the growing advancement of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and thereof proportionately in the education sector. The government of Bangladesh has sincerely commenced different initiatives in the education sector to meet the multidimensional demands of time and situation and train its people as eligible human resources for both local and global markets. Besides, Bangladesh is marching towards becoming a digital and smart country attaining SDGs within the given time period. NAEM, therefore, focuses on modernization to be its goal for today's education system keeping the government's people-friendly and sustainable development plan in mind. Nevertheless, the research and documentation division of NAEM thoughtfully operates substantial research projects in education offering grants to the renowned researchers and academicians. NAEM also invites research articles on significant issues of education for journals with a view to assisting practitioners, learners, administrators and policy-makers to develop their professional skills and uplifting the existing education system.

This issue of NAEM journal is a double - blind peer reviewed half-yearly journal which consists of seven original research articles on various contemporary aspects of education including entrepreneurial education for youth empowerment, higher order thinking skills, development and practice of creative questions, Banglish: a new English variety, ICT master plan for teachers' professional development and the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on female education. I strongly believe that this issue of NAEM journal will serve as an encouragement for the researchers and all concerned stakeholders.

I sincerely express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Dr. Md. Nizamul Karim, Director General of NAEM and the Advisor of NAEM journal for his eventful support and encouragement to make this journal surfaced possible. I would like to acknowledge the authors, the editors and the reviewers for their constant and intellectual support to help materialize the ideas. Lastly, I am thankful to all our concerned staffs for their hard work in publishing this issue successfully.

I wish this journal all the success.

Roksana Bilkis
Director (Research & Documentation), NAEM
and
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Entrepreneurship Education for Youth Empowerment in Public Universities of Bangladesh

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Abstract

Bangladesh is a country of 163 million people, where 4.2% of the labor force is unemployed and the unemployment rate among the university graduates is even higher than less educated people. If the trend continues, the demographic dividend of the country will be changed and the economic system will be affected badly. Therefore, this qualitative study has shed light on entrepreneurial skills development in public universities in the country. Data has been collected from post-graduate students, teachers and entrepreneurs of public universities and from educational experts using FGD guidelines and key informant interview questionnaires. Following the data driven thematic analysis, data has been analyzed and findings have been presented in different themes. Data shows that, there are no curricular activities in any social science faculty of the sample public universities for developing entrepreneurial skills for youth empowerment, although some co-curricular activities help students develop those skills. Students and entrepreneurs found some courses and the university environment is helpful to some extent. All the respondents recommended to redesign the academic programs including some entrepreneurial courses in order to address the job markets and industry demands. Entrepreneurs and educational experts emphasized on redesigning the curriculum of the social science department for preparing graduates with contemporary knowledge and essential skills to survive in the ever changing global world.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Education, Youth, Empowement, Demographic dividend.

Introduction

Bangladesh is a developing country with an estimated of 163.05 million people (World Bank, 2019) out of which one third is youth between 18-35 years of old (MoYS, 2023). Youths are

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estimated to be around 52 million and youth labor has exceeded 57% of the total labor forces. Due to the lack of proper work facilities, a major part of the youth force is out of the mainstream of the national development process. By 2021, it is expected to be around 14 million people aged over 60 and that figure will reach nearly 30 million by the end of 2051 (Outline perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021, 2010). This indicates that Bangladesh is entering into a new phase of rapid growth of elderly population, with all its associated challenges. Projections show that even after reaching replacement level fertility, the population will continue to get older. Then the youth has to take the responsibility of this older population whereas youth unemployment is rising each year at an unprecedented rate (WB, 2014).

Youth employment crisis is a global challenge, though its social and economic characteristics vary considerably in size and nature from one country and region to another (ILO, 2012). In Bangladesh, a total of 54 million were employed and 2.6 million youth were unemployed in 2010 (BBS, 2011) and if the current trend continues, the employed population might increase to 64.6 million and the unemployed population to 3.3 million by 2015. The nature and extent of employment of the youth is an important indicator of the additional employment generating capacity of the economy. Alternatively, the extent of unemployment of youth labor indicates the failure of the growth process to create enough jobs for the new entrants to the labor force and, consequently, the loss of potential income and welfare (Bangladesh Bank, 2008). Unemployment of youth people especially graduates have reached an alarming height in Bangladesh. The economy is currently shedding jobs more than it creates. It is now the demand of time for looking carefully at entrepreneurship education as a way of exposing students to the knowledge of various skills and businesses while they are in universities so that after graduation they become self-employed rather than job seekers. Therefore, this study will explore the curricular and co-curricular activities in the public universities regarding entrepreneurship education and youth empowerment and ways of promoting entrepreneurship education among Bangladeshi youths.

Rationality

The quest for self-reliance through education has always been the desire of many nations especially in the present face of global economic downturn. This has convinced various countries to invest heavily in education as a gateway to better tomorrow. The most pressing need of the country today is productivity. Therefore, the time demands that we should forge a link between education and productivity. To achieve this end, one of the important resources is entrepreneurship education and ultimately to produce entrepreneurs particularly at the tertiary institution level to meet the needs of the present economy. Today the situation is apparently different. The rate of graduate unemployment has become a source of worry to the graduates, the parents, relatives and of course, the governments. This has become an economic, political and social problem in Bangladesh particularly among graduates. The zeal for tertiary education is gradually being eroded because of the discouraging wave of graduate unemployment. The tertiary institutions (university, polytechnic and colleges of education) were particularly established to train and prepare students for employment upon graduation. Similarly, the World Bank (2009) reported that tertiary education in general is fundamental to the construction of knowledge economy and society in all nations. Consequently, young ones struggle a lot to get admission into tertiary institutions and while their, efforts are made to enable them to secure jobs and contribute to the transformation of society. Unfortunately, many students complete their studies and come out with good grades without hope of securing jobs. In Bangladesh, seeking a job is fast becoming a job in itself. This is really counterproductive for a developing nation like Bangladesh.

This situation of graduates' unemployment is not unconnected with the type of education obtainable in Bangladesh. With the global dispensation and economic crisis, it therefore becomes imperative for the nation to have a rethink on our education delivery and policies in order to produce from our tertiary institutions' graduates who can be self-reliant and self-sustaining. There is a need for our curriculum to be tailored towards proper acquisition of entrepreneurial skills and drives for the empowerment of youths and sustainable development of the nation. Hence, this study aims to shed some light on the reformation of entrepreneurship education curriculum of Bangladeshi public universities for graduates' empowerment.

Statement of the Problem

Population becomes an asset if it is developed in a proper way. Bangladesh has this asset but the scope is limited to use them for economic development of the country due to many reasons and education is a crucial one among them. If this youth would become self-dependent and self-employed then the economic growth could be reached at the top among the countries. This opportunity lies between our young generations. The nation is presently experiencing challenges of unemployment; therefore the study will intensively focus on the way to empower the youth through entrepreneurship education. The objectives of entrepreneurship education includes equipping individuals and creates the mindset to undertake the risk of venturing into something new by applying the knowledge and skills acquired in schools. This study will take a critical look at the roles of entrepreneurship education such as provision of individuals with adequate training that will enable creativity and innovative relevance to skill acquisition which encourages self-employment and self-reliance.

Objectives

The main objective of this study is to identify the responsibility of selected public universities regarding entrepreneurship education for youth empowerment in Bangladesh. To meet this objective (04) four specific objectives have drawn as-

a) to review different policies related to entrepreneurship education;
b) to analyze the available course curriculum in selected public universities for entrepreneurship education;
c) to identify the responsibility of selected public university to youth empowerment;
d) to find a way out for youth empowerment through entrepreneurship education in the selected public universities of Bangladesh.

Literature Review

All over the world youth are considered as change agents for the communities as well as for the country. Together with opportunities to learn, work and participate in decisions that affect them driving change and claiming respect for fundamental freedom and rights, improved conditions for them and their communities. Besides, many youth are disengaged, at the extreme margins of society and have lost hope in the future due to persistent crises. More than ever, it is now time to improve investment in education, research, policies and programs to create an enabling environment for youth to prosper, exercise rights, regain hope and engage as responsible social

actors. The starting point is to consider youth as the solution and not as the problem. It is vital that they are fully engaged in economic development. Already their energy, creativity and critical spirit in identifying innovative solutions have been demonstrated in several regions of the globe (UNESCO, 2012).

Williams (1976) defines entrepreneur as "a risk taker, a man who breaks uncertainty, strikes out on his own and through native with devotion to duty and singleness of purpose, somehow creates a business and industrial activity where none existed before". On the other hand Odeyemi, Kehinde, Bankole and Abifarin (2004) defines an entrepreneur as a person who is able to look at the environment, identify opportunities to improve the environment, gather resources and implement action to maximize those opportunities.

The notion of entrepreneurship education gains its origin from the growing ideas that entrepreneurial qualities of man can be improved or new skills can be developed through special types of training and education. Thus the entrepreneurship education course includes the contents that help the students to be aware of economic opportunities, business environment, identification of project, preparation of business plan, improving motivation for achievement, techniques of enterprise management, self-development techniques and improving precision skill. Subsequently, other objectives are concerned with building self-confidence, opportunity sense sensitivity and analytical skills. The main purpose of the course is to develop or improve skills that are indispensably needed for self-employment as a career. In the same vein, Gana (1995) defines entrepreneur as the willingness and ability of an individual to seek out investment opportunities in an environment and be able to establish and run an enterprise successfully based on the identified opportunities whereas Kehinde and his colleagues (2008) define entrepreneurship as a process whereby an entrepreneur organizes the factor of production i.e. land, labor and capital to transform a business idea into profitable reality.

The issue of empowering the youths through entrepreneurship education has now taken the center stage of every development discourse. In the face of the global economic crises and increase in the level of unemployment and poverty, especially in developing economies, the importance of a workable and functional entrepreneurship education cannot be overemphasized. So, the need for its proper integration and articulation in our educational curriculum is a desideratum. Ifegbo (2000) noted that entrepreneurship education is the training that emphasizes the acquisition and development of appropriate knowledge and skills that will enable an individual to maximize the resources around him and within the limits of his capability. Similarly, Osuala (2004) described entrepreneurship education as a specialized training given to persons to acquire skills, ideas and management abilities necessary for self-reliance. Okoye (2004) puts it that entrepreneurship education consists of ideas, information and facts that help learners develop competencies needed for firm careers commitments such as setting up business, marketing services or being productive employees of an organization.

What makes entrepreneurship education distinctive is its ability to imbue in the learner the urge and drive for self-sustainability and creativity. However, entrepreneurship education in Nigeria is relatively nascent and has experienced considerable growth in just a decade of existence. It is becoming a major topic of debate among curriculum developers and stakeholders in education. Hence, Oloide (2010) remarked that the absence of a functional entrepreneurship curriculum is an impediment to sustainable development which if not checked or tackled will continue to incite and

increase the incidence of unemployment among the Nigerian youths. Entrepreneurship education is designed with emphasis on realization of opportunities. According to Abdulkadir (2011), through entrepreneurship education, success and innovation habits are imparted as the person develops entrepreneurial integrity and skills in the process. Indeed, entrepreneurship education will enable potential entrepreneurs to create businesses, manage, market and sustain them into the future.

Entrepreneurship education is a potent tool in the fight against youth unemployment. However, the system of education in Nigeria has been structured in such a way that it is employment oriented to the detriment of employment generation by the individuals. Hence, youth unemployment is soaring increasingly in Nigeria. However, if the entrepreneurship education curricula of tertiary institutions are properly reformed and reviewed to keep in touch with the current economic trend, youth unemployment would certainly nosedive into the dustbin of history. Similarly, the paper gave an overview of entrepreneurship education and its curriculum issues. Based on the discourse, a conclusion was drawn and it was recommended amongst others that there should be a bridge into the gap between curriculum of theory and curriculum of practice to make it more practical oriented (Onyesom and Uwaifo, 2013). Entrepreneurship is one the measures embraced by the government to reduce mass poverty and unemployment in the country. This study is not established to evaluate past measures of poverty reduction in Nigeria, but aim at investigating the effect of entrepreneurship training on poverty alleviation. Entrepreneurship education and training entails philosophy of self-reliance such as creating a new cultural and productive environment, promoting new sets of attitudes and culture for the attainment of future challenges (Arogundade, 2011). Entrepreneurship education is a structured formal conveyance of entrepreneurial competencies, which in turn refers to the concepts, skills and mental awareness used by individuals during the process of starting and developing their growth-oriented ventures. Another view of entrepreneurship education is the term given to someone who has innovative ideas and transforms them to profitable activities (Omolayo, 2006). The importance of entrepreneurship education and Training for motivating educated youth to self-employment is recognized by development economists, planners and policy makers, as well as government of the most countries of the world.

Entrepreneurship education is the development of entrepreneurial skills, effective and efficient application of the skills in management of business to create a significant difference from other business, recognizing the skill and allowing it to function effectively (Ogundele, Akingbade, and Akinlabi, 2012). The empowerment of youth and consequently eradication of poverty is highly interlinked with the education system and youth development of a country. The curriculum at all levels of education should be entrepreneurial based and that all stakeholders and government should provide an enabling environment for the development of entrepreneurship education needed for economic enhancement and youth empowerment (Ojo, Abayomi and Odozi, 2014). Similarly, entrepreneurship education is a potent tool in the fight against youth unemployment. However, the system of education in Bangladesh has been structured in such a way that it is employment oriented to the detriment of employment generation by the individuals. Hence, if the entrepreneurship education curricula of universities are properly reformed and reviewed to keep in touch with the current economic trend, then youth unemployment would certainly nosedive into the dustbin of history. This is the main thrust of this study.

Methodology

The qualitative method has been followed to explore the objectives of this study. The qualitative data were collected through related document review, FGD and KII schedule. Document analysis was the prime strategy to explore the first two research objectives by reviewing different policies related to entrepreneurship education and exploring the available course curriculum in selected public universities for entrepreneurship education. Along with this, FGD with the university students was conducted to explore their perceptions, experience and expectations regarding youth empowerment. Furthermore, KII was applied to reveal the teachers' and education experts' opinion towards entrepreneurship education.

Research approaches/Design

The study is exploratory in nature and therefore, the information presentation of is based on both primary and secondary data. It integrated qualitative approache to explore the study concern areas based on all data and analysis. Special emphasis has been given to the participatory approach in all aspects of the study. Triangulation approach was employed to ensure the validity of data by collecting data from different sources.

Study Population

All of the universities both public 34 and private 53 Universities (UGC, 2012) and some national university-affiliated post-graduate institutes and colleges are the targeted population of this study. All the teachers and students were also the target goups.

Sampling of the study

Institution sampling

Four (4) public universities were selected as the purposive sample for this study. These higher education institutions were selected considering the geographic coverage of Bangladesh from 4 divisions namely Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi and Chittagong. The name of the institutions were University of Dhaka, Khulna University, Rajshahi University, and Chittagong University, which were selected purposively.

Faculty, Institute and Department sampling

In this study, the Faculty of Social Science Institute was selected as a sample, as science and business graduates study on subject based education was dering the market demand. One department/institute under Social Science faculty from each university was selected purposively as the sample.

Teacher Sampling

Two teachers from each department and institution were selected for KII. Two teachers were from two designated posts e.g. Professor and Assistant Professor. Stratified sampling strategy was employed for teacher sampling. There were two strata:

- Strata-1: One of the teachers were selected who had 0 to >8 years teaching experience and

- Strata-2: One of the teachers who had more than 10 years of teaching experience in the department or in the institute.

Thus, both less experienced in teaching and long experienced University teachers' were included in this study.

Learners/Students sampling

Ten postgraduate students were selected as sample conveniently from each department and institution. Those ten students were taken on availability and their interest.

Table-1
Sampling at a Glance

Category of Sample	Higher Education Institution & Respondents	Number of respondents
Teachers	4 x 2 x 2	16
Students	4 x 1 x 10	40
Education Experts	2	2
Entrepreneurs	4	4
Total		62

Note: Based on Primary Data

Sources of data and method of data collection

Data has been collected from primary and secondary sources. The primary sources were the department and institution itself, teachers and students of four public universities. The prime method of data collection was mainly participatory field investigation. FGD with the students was conducted personally and views were collected from them. The semi-structured interview for the teachers, and KII for the experts and entrepreneurs were conducted and recorded. The secondary source of data was analysis of education policy related documents, curriculum and review of related literature.

Tools of Data Collection

Comprehensive semi-structured interview schedules were developed, piloted and used for gathering data from the teachers and entrepreneurs of respective higher education institutions and from the education experts. A FGD guideline was developed to collect data from students. These instruments were prepared, revised and finally developed by the researchers. The piloting of tools were conducted on the respondents without sample of the study before finalizing the instruments.

Table-2
Data Collection Tools and Strategies

Tools	Respondents	Strategies
FGD Guideline	Students	Personally administer
Semi-structured interview schedule	Teachers	Conduct & Recording
KII Questionnaire	Education Experts	Conduct & Recording
KII Questionnaire	Entrepreneurs	Conduct & Recording

Note: Based on Primary Data

Data Analysis and Presentation

In order to analyze the qualitative data collected from Teachers, Students, Education Experts and Entrepreneurs, data-driven thematic analysis was incorporated (Braun and Clarke, 2006). It is a systematic process of reading the data several times in order to come with some words, phrases, sentences and/or paragraphs that researchers can code in purpose of developing some themes or concepts that summarize the similar contents of the data (Thomas, 2009; Braun and Clarke, 2006). In addition, in this process researchers can organize the raw data into some conceptual categories and develop candidate themes or concepts and construct thematic maps (Neuman, 2006; Cohen, Mannion and Morrison, 2011, Braun and Clarke, 2006). Moreover, the major themes were incorporated with some specific sub-themes based on participants' responses regarding specific research objectives where data triangulation was done to merge multiple approaches. Alongside, from the interviews and FGDs with the participants, ideas emerged which could be analyzed under different themes that make sense. Thematic analysis focuses on identifiable themes and patterns of similar opinions of potential respondents collectively. For this reason, the data-driven thematic approach suggested by Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87) was followed to undertake the qualitative analysis (see figure 1) part. Data was analyzed in a systematic way that fed into quantitative findings for explaining probable reason behind quantitative findings and led to convincing conclusions of this study.

Figure 1

Data-driven thematic analysis cycle
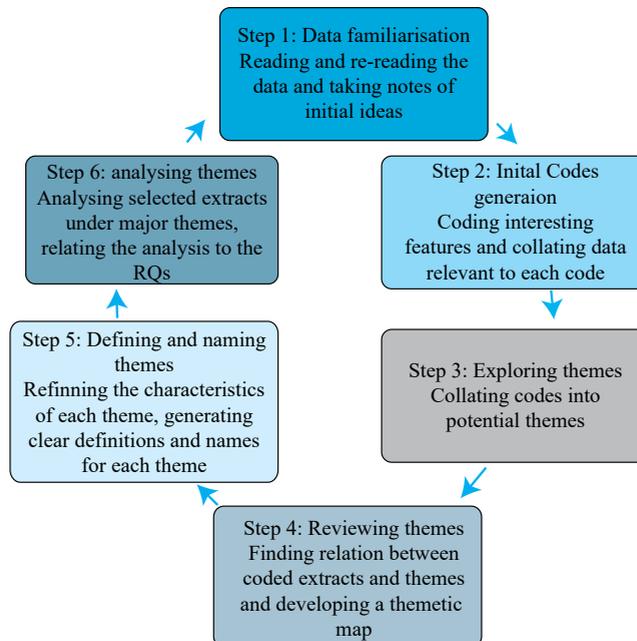
Note: Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 87)

Along with this, different tables, charts, figures, diagrams and graphs were used for presentation of findings.

Findings of the Study

Entrepreneurship Education in Bangladesh: What does policy say?

The purpose of higher education is to generate and innovate knowledge, at the same time to build up a skilled manpower. It further mentions that science and technology, sociology, literature, arts, economics and other subjects are becoming interdependent.

In this education policy (2010), business studies (no other faculties) has been treated as an integrated formation of necessary branches of knowledge that are required to conduct the activities of industries, trade and services organizations.

It is clearly mentioned in the policy (2010) that one of the aims and objectives of business study education at various levels is to impart necessary knowledge to become a successful entrepreneur (p. 34).

In addition to this the national youth policy (2017) of the country mentioned that through the education process youth should be encouraged to invent and innovate.

However, the public universities failed to understand the essence of providing entrepreneurship education to the graduates and limited the opportunity for the students to reach their potentials. In the meantime, the University Grants Commission (UGC) of Bangladesh has approved the bachelor degree in this specified area and the Daffodil International University (DIU) Bangladesh has commenced a Bachelor of Entrepreneurship Development (BED) Program focusing on the opportunity to gather knowledge and skills which will help them flex their minds into becoming a successful entrepreneur.

Entrepreneurship Education through Curricular Activities

Data shows that there is no specific course in social science faculties in any of the universities that directly focuses on entrepreneurship or addresses entrepreneurial skills. However, there are multiple courses which are indirectly related with entrepreneurship. One of the students from Anthropology of a university mention that understanding multiple things e.g. human, society and policies is important to become an entrepreneur, which is taught by the teachers. Teachers and students confirmed that the departments offer expertise and insights to understand different phenomena in an in-depth manner through several courses, not to become entrepreneurs but to become familiar with diversity and other issues, which in turn help in their later lives. In addition to this, entrepreneurs found some courses like English, ICT/Computer, leadership and management, and policy studies useful to develop their communication, management and critical thinking skills to some extent. As one of the entrepreneurs stated,

> "English courses helped me in developing and improving my communication skills in English, which is very important for better communication in all levels."

On the other hand, teaching and learning methodologies and processes were found effective by other entrepreneurs. For instance, an entrepreneur reflected on his graduate program and stated that,

> "University education, specifically group work, helped me to learn how to manage a team. I learned team management and leadership skills through that process. Also the university environment helped me broaden my mindset regarding gender, socio-economic status etc. I can work easily with my fellow colleagues using a gender neutral lens."

Current students identified correlations between entrepreneurial skills and the subjects they are being taught, though the relations are informal and indirect. There are some courses in every department or institute which directly address the social issues, for example, courses of Anthropology i.e. Economic anthropology, Political anthropology, Business anthropology, Public policy; courses of Education i.e. organizations and management of educational institutions, education in Bangladesh, ICT in education etc.; courses of Development Studies i.e. Trade and globalization, ICT, economics and especially English Language, and courses of Sociology like Organization and Planning.

Apart from that students are taught, the experience of being a university student helps to learn some intangible skills like how to interact, communicate and negotiate with people. Besides, the experience of staying at a university residence helps to become compassionate and empathetic about others. Even the identity of a graduate of a certain university, helps to get access easily to many people, as an entrepreneurs reflected-

> "I capitalized my university education using my identity. My identity as a university student, I had easy access to the buyers. That helped me in my business. Before starting my start-up, that time my boss was very supportive as I was a student of the same university he studied in. As a student of Dhaka University, I got support from many people."

Students argued about the rigidity of the university education program of Bangladesh. They mentioned that if one wants to become an entrepreneur one must study in business related discipline, which is also supported by the national education policy 2010. Therefore, to become an entrepreneur, some students get admitted to MBA rather than the Masters of their own department because they want to be skilled in that sector. They further argued that it is not encouraged or easy to do a regular Master's in another discipline in the same university at the same way they do in their own departments. Students demanded the flexibility in study, especially in higher study, where one can pursue any knowledge they see fit.

Entrepreneurship Education through Co-Curricular Activities

None of the respondents mentioned that there is any scope for practicing or developing entrepreneurial skills in the department or institute. Some said their teachers were helpful and supportive, their friends were also helpful, but the university or department was not. However, current students pointed out that some voluntary organizations and different clubs organize different events and programs, which are helpful to get real life experience through different social works. Students considered these organizations or groups are helpful for developing entrepreneurial skills. For instance, a graduate student of Rajshahi University mentioned, "there are some specific clubs in my university, like career club, RUMUNA, Rotaract Club, which are concerned about careers. However, almost all of those are concerned with jobs as careers."

Universities do not support or help students develop entrepreneurial skills also. As students mentioned in a FGD,

> "One of my friends has tried to start a fish business by leasing one of the ponds of university, but the authority did not allow it. Another tried the same for mango business, but he too failed to get the permission."

Apart from that, some teachers often encourage students to start their own business, or take their own initiatives, but these are personal and informal. As an institution, university does not help students in taking any entrepreneurial initiative, even does not encourage them.

Although it was argued by some the teachers that developing entrepreneurs does not match with the philosophy of the university. Universities are to create new knowledge and disseminate them to the students. Also education experts questioned this referring that most of the universities in the country are simple teaching universities rather than research universities. Some students pointed out very fundamental questions asking that,

> "If there are no specific jobs for a particular department, then why opening a department? In other countries, we know that, departments are opened and closed based on the demands of the economy and state, but that is not the case in Bangladesh."- A student in a FGD

However, all the universities have different types of volunteer organizations for different purposes that are helping students develop different entrepreneurial skills. These organizations organize programs like seminars and workshops for the students to develop their skills and to motivate them.

Whenever it is mentioned as entrepreneurial skills, it is meant that the skills are identified by the entrepreneurs and students essential to become a successful entrepreneur. Students also identified the skills essential for an entrepreneur, which are as follows-

a. Communication skills
b. Perseverance
c. Critical thinking
d. Creativity
e. Management and organizational skills
f. Marketing and branding skills
g. Risk taking skills
h. ICT skills

In addition to this entrepreneurs have mentioned some skills are essential to become a successful entrepreneur, which are as-

a. Business communication skills, especially in English
b. Analytical thinking
c. Digital literacy
d. Clear vision

As changing curriculum is a very internal issue, entrepreneurs cannot help in that. However, they want to contribute to their Alma Mater in any ways the department or the institute or the university wants them to. Education experts also emphasized on this for the universities to develop an updated curriculum and create internship opportunities for the graduate students.

Responsibility of selected public university to youth empowerment

Most of the respondents argued that universities should be responsible for the empowerment and employment of their graduates. It is also clearly mentioned in the "Higher Education" chapter of national education policy 2010 and in the national youth policy 2017 of Bangladesh. Education experts and teachers suggested that redesigning the programs and curriculum of social science faculty can be done by incorporating skills demanded by the job market and by working closely with the industry.

Entrepreneurs mentioned that it is time to revisit the philosophy and purpose of the university as the unemployment rate is skyrocketing. Students repeatedly argued that there should be a scope of practicing skills in the curriculum besides theoretical knowledge.

Some teachers and one of the education experts stated that universities' role is not to ensure jobs for the graduates, though they thought that the unemployment of the university graduates should be taken care of by the university. They suggested that redesigning the programs could be helpful in this regard.

Teachers from different universities as well as the education experts mentioned that if the government and state aim to produce entrepreneurs from the universities, the whole structure would have to be reshaped to meet that end goal. On top of that, society still does not value entrepreneurs as much as they value, for example, government job holders. The entrepreneurs are also part of this society and state, and if those entities despise them, discourage them, the already difficult path of entrepreneurship would turn into a harder one. Therefore, a tremendous shift will be observed when the mindset of society and state will change towards entrepreneurship and entrepreneurs.

Recommendations

Students, teachers, entrepreneurs and education experts suggested some changes to combat the unemployment of the country through higher education. The recommendations are as follows:

- Redesign programs and curriculums considering youth empowerment and employment so that the graduates can get a job easily or create jobs through entrepreneurship.

- Organize Seminars, workshops and experience sharing programs for the current students inviting successful entrepreneurs in the university so that they can be motivated and can consider entrepreneurship as a career opportunity.

- Incubation center in the university premises will help students to implement their ideas and test them. They can work on different social problems besides studying the theories and come up with solutions.

- Strengthen industry-academia relationship to keep the programs updated and make the graduates ready for future job market.

- Continuous market analysis and research would help the universities to rethink and revisit their purposes to serve the nation.

- Change the beliefs of the society by setting examples and promoting successful entrepreneurs. In this regard the government can play a vital role to shift the mindset of the people towards entrepreneurship by supporting them with different financial schemes.

- Introduce entrepreneurial skills in the primary and secondary curriculums so that students can come to the university such mentality mentally preparing.

- Interdisciplinary programs could help to develop skilled graduates. One can major in a specific subject and at the same time can take minor courses on math or business according to his/her interest.

Conclusion

Across the globe, entrepreneurship education is considered as a vital component of higher education to bring innovation and invention for developing a nation financially very strong. This study also reveals through respondents' opinions that everyone in the system considers this as an important issue, though the reflection is absent in the curriculum and practice in the social science faculty of some selected public universities of Bangladesh. Students show their interest in entrepreneurship education to be empowered with necessary skills and to become employed with the education they get from the universities. Teachers also mentioned that they should take the unemployment issue very seriously and revisit the purpose and philosophy of higher education. Entrepreneurs and experts emphasized on redesigning the curriculum of the social science department for preparing graduates with contemporary knowledge and essential skills to survive in the ever changing global world. At this point, this research would be helpful to get an understanding about the situation for the teachers, researchers and policymakers of the country. This small study would be considered as food for thoughts, which might guide further in-depth study to explore the situation and generate a framework of entrepreneurship education in universities, especially in the social science faculties.

Acknowledgement

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Challenges of Implementing Higher Order Thinking Tasks in Bangladeshi Secondary English Classrooms

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Abstract

To make our students think critically, the practice must begin from their schooling years across all subjects of study, and it can be nurtured by implementing Higher Order Thinking (HOT) tasks in classrooms. This exploratory study reports on the challenges that some selected English teachers of secondary level of mainstream schools in Bangladesh faced problems while implementing higher order thinking tasks in the classrooms. In the first phase of the study, total 13 teachers were invited to be a part of a teachers' training that guided them about how to use the techniques on English for Today book in English classrooms. In the second phase of the study, the teachers implemented the techniques in real-life classrooms and in the last stage, the participants were interviewed by the researchers. It was found that some of the students did not participate well in the group thinking tasks and looked for ways to fit in rote learning information from the text. The number of students and class size were some other hinderances in executing the HOT tasks completely. The findings opened on avenues for incorporating critical thinking tasks in Bangladeshi English classrooms that are expected to contribute in preparing future citizens who are able to think critically.

Keywords: Critical Thinking Skills, Secondary English Classrooms,
Higher Order Thinking Tasks.

Introduction

One of the common skills that all employers look for in 21st century employees is the ability to think critically (Kumar & James, 2015). The necessity of infusing critical thinking skills at every level of education makes it imperative for teachers to design curriculum across disciplines in such a way that allows graduates to understand a particular subject in the context of real-life experience and motivates them to think deeply (Alismail & McGuire, 2015). However, often teachers find the teaching of critical thinking skills challenging because today's students are highly dependent on

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modern technologies such as the internet (Oliver & Utermohlen, 1995), that fills them in with an overflow of information. Often, most of these students receive "pre-chewed chunks of ideas and opinions", and do not even try to think critically about it. Here, teachers can play a transformational role by "promoting cognitive challenge, collaborative learning and metacognitive discussions" in the lesson plans (Klímova, 2009, p. 101). In other words, rather than concentrating on the learning outcomes on mere pen and paper, they should bring change in the teaching method that encourages thinking as opposed to learning as the sole goal of studying from the very beginning of schooling years to the tertiary level (Thompson, 2011).

Like any other field of study, the teachers of English language are challenged with the task of implementing critical thinking techniques in the language classrooms. Bangladeshi education system is predominantly dependent on students' skill of memorisation. Zahra (2012), in a study on Bangladeshi twelve (12) grade students of both urban and semi-urban higher secondary institutions, has found that majority of the students relied on teachers' feedback and textbooks for gaining knowledge, while they neither considered class discussions nor independent brainstorming as an important medium of learning. The impact of such practices in schools make the students concentrate only on the functional aspects of language learning at the tertiary level language courses where they focus "not on the critical understanding of the language as a medium of thought operations, but on reproduction" (p. 41). These students accept what the teacher has to offer without raising any question and avoid discussions (Mannan, 2016). Rupa (2013) suggests that Bangladeshi children are not encouraged to complete problem-solving tasks at home or at schools, which results in a lack of critical thinking ability in class. A survey among 88 (eighty eight) faculty members who headed Higher Education Quality Enhancement Projects (HEQEP) under the University Grant Commission (UGC), Bangladesh, revealed that the respondents felt that there is a dire need of improving curriculum and assessment system that fosters critical thinking skills among tertiary level students (Mazumder, Karim & Bhuiyan, 2012). Islam (2017) agrees with the findings and emphasises the fact that the absence of critical thinking skills in Bangladeshi classrooms and evaluation system affects students' academic writing, reading, listening and speaking as well. In this regard, a World Bank report on a project that aims at ensuring education for all Bangladeshi children highlighted that the present teaching and testing approaches in Bangladeshi schools depend on rote learning that rewards students with poor reading, writing, and critical thinking skills (World Bank, 2016). Such examples of Bangladeshi education system do remind us about the fact that memorising passages and sentences in English often hinder learners' critical thinking skills in English classrooms.

Bangladesh introduced Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) based curricula for teaching English at the secondary and higher secondary level in 1997 (Sazzadue, 2004; Das et. al. 2014). However, even after two decades of adopting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) based curriculum, most of the school graduates are not able to use English competently (Rahman, 2015; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Consequently, these students cannot perform well at the tertiary level of education in terms of reading or writing texts critically.

Such circumstances raise the question whether our current CLT-based English textbooks are sufficient for making global citizens who are able to think critically and communicate well in English. Most of the group or pair works given after the text excerpts in these books are not implemented by teachers which are designed to help students to develop communication skills,

stated by Marufa, a student of secondary level (Marufa, personal communication) which they often do not complete because of limited class time. On top of that, thinking about an issue critically is never emphasised in these classes at all because teachers are not aware of the importance of teaching critical thinking skills across disciplines. Also, they face some challenges when they try to implement some of the critical thinking tasks.

The study thus reports on the challenges some of the Bangladesh English teachers faced while implementing Higher Order Thinking (HOT) tasks in the secondary English classrooms. The teachers were given training on how to implement the HOT tasks through a two-day workshop series on implementation of higher order thinking skills in English classrooms. The study aims to answer the following research questions:

1) What problems did the teachers face while implementing higher order thinking tasks in the English classrooms?
2) What possible solutions did the teachers suggest for implementing the higher order thinking tasks in English classrooms?

Methodology

Research Approach

In this research the qualitative study adopted multiple case study approach to answer its research questions. As such a research design is adopted when the context of the research differs for different people (Baxter & Jack, 2008), the researchers found it suitable for the current study where each of the teacher was considered as a single case. Each participant or case's opinion and experience of using higher order thinking skills in their English classrooms differed and those were added to the data of the study. In addition, Yin (2003) emphasises that a case study aims to answer the questions of "How" and "Why" of a study and they understand the context where the phenomenon is taking place. So, each teacher's experience of using the higher order thinking tasks in this study depended on their respective contexts which was explored in this study.

Selecting the Participants

The researchers selected 13 secondary English language teachers teaching in schools located in the capital Dhaka through purposive sampling technique. This technique helped the researchers to obtain information-rich data from the participants (Patton, 2014). The criteria of choosing the participants were:

1) They have to be English language teachers of mainstream secondary schools in Bangladesh,
2) They have to be familiar with the *English For Today* book designed by the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) for secondary classrooms
3) They have to complete the workshop series under this study and participate in the post-workshop interviews.

All the names of the participants and schools are pseudonyms to maintain anonymity of participants. The profiles of participants are given below.

Table 1

Profiles of the Participants

Serial No.	Name, designation of Participants	Schools' name	Age
1.	Md. Sazzadur Rahman Senior Teacher, English	VCN School and College	50-55
2	Md. Zabir Ullah Assistant Headmaster	BWU High School	50-55
3.	H.M. Karim Khan Assistant Teacher, English	RUB High School	45-55
4.	Rajan Paul Chowdhury Assistant Teacher	GM Higher Secondary School	50-55
5.	Md. Rabbi Islam Senior Teacher, English	WE High School	45-55
6.	Md. Shamim Islam Assistant Headmaster	SAK High School	50-55
7.	Md. Ramiz Ali Lecturer, English	QRT School and College	40-45
8.	Alauddin Sikder Assistant Teacher, English	MAK High School	28-35
9.	Rukaiya Begum English Teacher	SAP School and College	40-45
10.	Md. Arib Islam English Teacher	SAP School and College	30-35
11.	Ali Fakir English Teacher	SAP School and College	28-35
12.	Rubana Hasan English Teacher	SAP School and College	28-30
13.	Faisal Mahbub English Teacher	SAP School and College	28-30

Note: Based on Primary Data

Workshop Series on Implementing HOT Tasks

The selected teachers were invited formally through an invitation letter to join a two-day workshop series on using higher order thinking tasks in secondary English classrooms, held at the Department of English and Humanities, BRAC University. Ahmed and Mohd Asraf (2018) have used workshops as a qualitative research approach in educational research and this study also followed that. Within the two-day workshop, the teachers were trained on how to combine Higher Order Thinking (HOT) questions (Krathwohl & Anderson, 2001), with critical thinking group tasks such as Plus-Minus-Interesting (PMI) model (Bono, 2010), and Fishbowl (Bean, 2011). The group tasks were further extended to individual thinking tasks as Mindmapping (Bean, 2011) and One-Minute Paper (Bean, 2011) (please see workshop session details in Appendix A). The teacher participants practised these techniques with the peer workshop participants and were asked to implement in their real-life English classrooms.

The researchers scheduled observation sessions with the participants to find out how the students responded to the HOT tasks. In qualitative research, observation is used often as a reliable technique for collecting data. The observer's degree of involvement can be placed on a scale of low to high on the basis of five types of participation such as "complete", "active", "moderate", "passive" and "nonparticipant" (Spradley, 1979, p. 58). Here, the researchers were participant observers in case of teachers' workshop series and non-participant observers when then went to observe real-life classrooms. Both the workshop series and class observations were video recorded with the consent of participants.

In the final stage of the study, the teachers were invited for attending interview sessions to share their experience of using the techniques. They brought in a self-reflection form that they had completed after teaching the classes, students' individual task sheets with them as specimen of data. The semi-structured interview questions were made with Castillo-Montoya's (2016) Interview Protocol Refinement (IPR) framework.

Data Analysis Framework

For analysing the data of this study, a trained research assistant transcribed the interviews' audio recording verbatim. The transcriptions were then coded and categorised for qualitative thematic analysis. According to Stake (1995), there are four forms of data analysis and interpretation methods for case studies. The first form is categorical aggregation or collecting nuances or instances from the data to look for relevant meanings. The second form of analysis is the direct interpretation which is a process where the researcher looks at a single instance and makes meaning out of that. In the third form, the researcher looks for patterns of themes that emerged while analysing the data. The last form of analysis refers to generalising the pattern of themes for similar cases which is called naturalistic generalisation (Stake, 1995). In this regard, Creswell (2007) prefers that a researcher begins with a detailed description of the case and its locale. Creswell (2007) suggests that various sources of data should be analysed to see how the case fits into the specific setting. As the study follows the characteristics of a multiple case study approach, it has adopted a combination of Creswell (2007) and Stake's (1995) data analysis framework.

Themes generated from the coded and cartegorised data were sent to two experts of the field for inter-rater reliability. The percentage of agreement between the two raters was 85 which establishes the reliability of the data. Moreover, the transcriptions of the interviewers were sent to the participants by email for member checking. The participants confirmed that they had shared the same information in the interview sessions and this is how the trustworthiness of data was established.

Findings and Discussion

Challenges in Implementing HOT Tasks in English Classrooms

Eight teachers among the 13 teacher participants could implement the HOT tasks in their classrooms. The second research question of the study aimed at finding out the challenges the teachers faced while implementing the HOT tasks in English classrooms. When the teachers were asked about it in the interviews, the most prominent theme that emerged was the management of space and time for group task in the classroom. The number of students was too many which

made the classroom noisy, stated Rabbi regarding another problem that the teachers faced. This was the same reason why teachers in Rasul's (2016) study could not execute interactive tasks in English classrooms.

Ali, Sazzad and Rukaiya mentioned that the students had to be instructed constantly to be familiar with the new tasks. Sazzad said in the interview, the students were a bit confused about the new task and took time to participate. But as I helped them with explanation and monitored from time to time, they began to do the task. So, one of the challenges for the teachers was that the students required detailed instructions to complete the new tasks.

Rabbi, Rajan, Ali and Faisal also pointed out that some of the introvert students did not like to participate in the group tasks. Some of the students preferred to do the task individually which was his/ her personal learning style (Brown, 2000). Here, the teachers had to encourage them to complete the task. According to a study conducted by Alrabah, Wu and Alotaibi (2018), Kuwait college students have dominance of global, extroverted, hands on and visual learning styles. To encourage these learning styles in the class, the authors suggested to give clear instructions to the students for every step of a group task. In this regard, Billah (2015) refers to the fact that majority of Bangladesh's mainstream schools' students are very passive to participate in class tasks. In such cases, teachers must be creative to engage students in a variet interactive task (Rasul, 2016). So it can be observed that students' learning styles have affected the way they responded to the HOT tasks employed by the teachers and it can be adjusted through teachers' discription and more practice of such tasks in classrooms.

Another reason for students' preference to complete HOT tasks individually could be that they were not good in communicating and collaborating with others which is required for carrying out any group learning (Brown, 2000). The teachers of the current study also mentioned that handling mixed ability group was difficult. In a mixed group of students, good students complete the tasks quickly while weaker students struggle.

The teacher participants emphasised that the students were more comfortable with the idea of rote learning and that is why they kept going back to prescribed information in the English For Today book while completing the HOT tasks. Here, Zahra's (2012) study on mainstream college classrooms is worth mentioning where she found that majority of the students do not think by themselves and depend on the textbooks and teachers as the sources of information. Rasul (2016) comments on this issue that the students in Bangladesh's mainstream English classrooms are forced to take notes from teachers' lectures and "gulp down" (p.25). Rote learning emerges as one of the prominent challenges in implementing HOT tasks in English classrooms.

Solutions to the Problems

The participants of the study proposed a few solutions to the problems of introducing HOT task in English classrooms of secondary schools in Bangladesh. First of all, they opined that when the students are introduced to the HOT tasks for the first time, the teachers may instruct them more than once to clarify any aspect that they do not understand. The teachers believed that they should also motivate students to participate in the tasks.

Shamim, a participant of the study mentioned that he had asked the student of first bench to flip to sit face to face with the students of the next bench. In this way, he made groups of six students while setting them the group task. Such an innovative way of changing the seating arrangement solves the issue of space in implementing group tasks. In this regard, Ali Fakir mentioned that if the school has the facility to use multimedia, that can be used to show a video on HOT tasks and what they have to do in the class. All of the participants agreed that more practice of such tasks can encourage students to think critically and change the habit of rote learning. In this case, if the students are not able to express their generated ideas well during the tasks, teachers may work as a facilitator as well.

Conclusion, Implications and Recommendations

The study findings may guide the policy makers of Bangladesh in taking the decision of implementing HOT tasks in English classrooms at the mainstream schools. The students of Bangladeshi mainstream schools tend to memorise the information of textbooks and cannot use English communicatively and creatively in day to day life (Rahman, 2015; Rahman & Pandian, 2018, Rasul, 2016). The HOT tasks will help them to change the habit of rote learning and generate new ideas on any topic on their own. This practice will help introvert students to interact with peers in group work and present their own opinions to others. In such a way, we will be able to have critical thinking citizens who are able to compete in the international arena.

Another participant, Ali said, through this method they will not only learn about various issues, they will be practicing, and so their answers will be more creative, more informative and more engaged. This comment highlights the fact that all the students who had participated in the HOT tasks were happy to see a change from the traditional lecture mode of teaching English. The aspect of the students reverting to rote learning can be tackled if these techniques are used all the year round.

All the participants remarked that they would like to implement the techniques in their classrooms in future. They are looking forward to more teacher trainings like this from the policy makers. Also, they suggested that the teachers who have already had the training could share their knowledge with colleagues and disseminate their gained knowledge.

Acknowledgement

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Teachers' Conception, Practices and Attitude to Creative Question: A Study on Some Secondary Schools of Old Dhaka City

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Abstract

The key intention of this study is to investigate teachers' knowledge, practice, and attitude to creative questions of selected Secondary schools located in old Dhaka city area. A cross-sectional survey design was used in this study. Positivist and constructivist views were more prominent here as quantitative and qualitative data were generated to get a better and more credible understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The research was designed based upon a questionnaire survey and Focus Group Discussion (FGD). A total of sixty (60) randomly selected teachers from four (4) purposively selected schools located in old Dhaka city were constituted the sample of this study. The findings from this study indicate that many teachers of old Dhaka city schools do not have clear conception about creative question. Additionally, many of the teachers did not receive any training on creative question yet, albeit they have to prepare creative questions for their school examination. Findings also revealed a gap in teachers' knowledge and understanding of creative question. It is expected that the findings can provide some guidelines for researchers, education experts, and policymakers, which they can recommend to use in future policy formulation on creative question.

Keywords: Creative Question, Bloom's Taxonomy, Mixed Research Approach, Conception, Practice, And Attitude.

Introduction

Mounting attention is visible in creative questioning in recent years in Bangladesh to improve the thinking ability of the learners and the teachers at primary and secondary levels. The significance and value of creative thinking in education has long been recognized. According to Carson (2010), creative thinkers are the asset, and creative thinking is a vital quality and skill in life for the 21st century that support us in socialization as well as to adapt with different circumstances of personal life, education, business, and for the community as a whole. Critical thinking is closely related to problem-solving, communication, and collaboration, as well as creativity and innovation. The students should acquire the

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ability of critical thinking from the classroom under the guidance of the teachers. Therefore, the role of the teachers in the classroom should be as a manager, who will advocate the activities essential for the learners to develop their critical thinking skills. Classroom will not only disseminate information but also develops the inner quality of effective thinking, problem-solving, novel decision making etc. In a classroom, the teachers must have a sharp intension on holistic development among the learners. According to Ekvall's (1996), creative climate is supportive for the teachers to introduce creative environment in the classroom. Critical thinking focuses on '*how to think*' instead of '*what to think*' (Sinek, 2009).

In Bangladesh, a new pattern of question known as 'creative question' has been followed since 2010. Initially, this new system of questioning is introduced at the secondary level of education and gradually later in junior and primary levels with a vision to develop students' critical thinking skills and to solve their life-oriented problems with a better solution to develop their innovation skills. The skills of creative thinking should be cultivated from the classroom. Therefore, the teachers must be well prepared and skilled over creative questioning and to influence the students to participate in critical thinking activities.

How to define Creative questions?

From 2010 onward Bangladesh government has been implementing creative question in the evaluation system at the secondary level of education (MoE, 2016). Creative means being generative, producing, and disrupting knowledge and letting others produce knowledge (Khan, 2014). The idea of Bloom's Taxonomy is generally used in developing creative question (Hasan, Naomee & Bilkis, 2013), where emphasize is given on each of the six steps belong to cognitive domain. Bloom's taxonomy, a framework developed by Dr. Benjamin Bloom and his collaborators in 1956 to categorizing educational goals: Taxonomy of Educational Objectives. The framework elaborated by Bloom and his collaborators consisted of six major categories, as given in the following figure 1.1: knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation, which is later upgraded into remember, comprehension, application, analysis, evaluation, and creation. The categories after knowledge were presented as "skills and abilities" with the understanding that knowledge was the necessary precondition for putting these skills and abilities into practice (Armstrong, 2015).

Figure 1
Bloom's Taxonomy
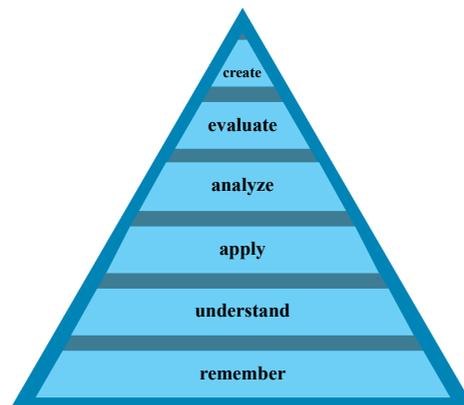
*Note:*Adopted from https://cft.vanderbilt.edu/guides-sub-pages/blooms-taxonomy/ (2020)

Following this in a creative question of Bangladesh, education system, each question starts with a stem relating to the textbook contents. Based on the stem, a question splits into four parts with some weights as given in the following table.

Table 1

Different Parts of Cognitive Domain

Parts of cognitive domain	Value weight
• Cognitive	1
• Analytical	2
• Application	3
• Higher Ability	4

Note: Based on Primary Data

Evaluation is an essential part of teaching. The final evaluation system in Bangladesh has made through 'Structured Question' or 'Critical Question.' So, the quality and skill of the teachers in this issue is not compromising. Thus, the government of Bangladesh is following strict rules and regulations for creative question and claimed that most of the teachers in the country have already been trained for the new system (Qatar tribune, 2013). However, teachers are still confused about the development and applicability of creative question system (Billah, 2016). The author (ibid) also claimed that 99% of teachers do not have clear idea about how to develop creative questions. Furthermore, the planning and development unit of the Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) mentioned in one of their reports that 30% of school teachers are unable to prepare creative question for the students. 1443 institutions out of 4810 sample institutes still cannot formulate questions following the creative method (Billah, 2012). Habib (2016) explored from the latest government report that teachers of more than 40 % secondary schools still cannot set question in creative methods though seven years already have gone since its introduction. They either depend on question from outside or take help of fellow teachers from other institutions to prepare creative questions for their internal examination. He (ibid) also added that one of the weaknesses of creative question is, teachers are not adequately trained, and the duration of the training is also not sufficient. Tuhin et al. (2016) explored a survey on primary teachers' conception and practice about creative question. Findings of their study indicates that 13% of teachers do not understand creative method; 45% of teachers understand creative method, and 42% of teachers have trivial understanding, where 47% of teachers rely on guidebooks for preparing creative question. In a nutshell, creativity in education does not simply mean implicit questions in examinations but ensuring an actual creative space. Before making the examination system more creative or in Bengali term *'srijonshil,'* we need to ensure the creative space and assess creativity of teachers (Khan, 2014).

Focusing on the above literature, this study aims to explore teachers' conception, attitude, and practice of creative question, who are working in the schools located in old Dhaka city. The researchers believe that the current study will help to understand the level of teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practice of creative questions identifying their gap of knowledge and suggesting a possible solution to support the teachers to improve their knowledge, skill, practices, and attitude to creative questioning.

Research Aim and Objectives

The broader aim of the study was to investigate teachers' conception and practice of creative question. This study also attempted to explore teachers' attitude to creative questions. The objectives of the study considered to address the research aim conducted in some selected schools of Dhaka old city were -

1. to explore teachers' conception of creative questions (i.e., what is creative question? What are the steps of creative question? How to develop creative question?);
2. to identify whether teachers are properly trained on creative question;
3. to assess teachers' level of practice of creative questions; and
4. to measures teachers' attitudes to creative questions.

Methodology

A cross-sectional survey design was used for this study following a mixed research approach to generate information from the key informants. Mainly quantitative data were generated for this study. However, it was also incorporated numerous sets of qualitative data. A fundamental assumption to consider qualitative data in social science and the quantitative approach was that it might provide a better and more credible understanding of the phenomena under investigation than a dichotomous qualitative or quantitative approach (Cohen *et al.,* 2011). The teachers of some selected schools located in old Dhaka city were constituted the samples of this study. The sampling strategy considered in the current study was purposive sampling for selecting schools. Thus, four (04) schools were chosen purposively for this study. Simple random sampling was used while selecting teachers involved in teaching-learning activities in class VI (six) to X (ten) from the selected schools. Fifteen (15) teachers from each of the sampled schools were selected following random sampling rules for the study, where ten (10) teachers participated in the questionnaire survey, and the rest five (05) participated in FGD. Four (04) FGD sessions were carried out for this research. Data were generated in two different phases, i.e., quantitative data phase and qualitative data phase. The number of total schools and teachers selected for the study is given in the following Table 2. The questionnaire was administered to the 10 sampled teachers to generate data about teachers' knowledge, attitude, and practices of creative questions. Four FGDs were conducted for four selected schools (i.e., one FGD in one school). A code number for each of the schools and teachers in the sample to identify them with less effort. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS software that includes simple frequency counting and percentages. To analyze the qualitative data, simple frequency counting was calculated, and narrative forms of participants' views were used to present participants' opinions. Research ethics were strictly followed in every point of the research.

Table 2
Number of total schools and teachers with their code and name

School code	School Name	Number of teachers	
		Questionnaire	FGD
School sample 1	Pogos Laboratory School and College	10	5
School sample 2	Wary High School	10	5
School sample 3	Lalbag Model School and College	10	5
School sample 4	Central Girls' High School	10	5
	Total=60	40	20

Note: Based on Primary Data

Salient Findings and Discussion of the Study

Salient findings derived from the study are presented and interpreted in the following section.

Teachers' conception of Creative Questions

In order to measure teachers' conception of creative question, teachers were asked to indicate whether they are familiar with the term 'creative question'. It is clear from Table 3 that all teachers in the sample (60, i.e., 100%) claim that they are familiar with the term 'creative question'.

Table 3
Teacher's Familiarity with Creative Question

Teacher's familiarity with creative questions			
	Yes	No	Total
N (%)	60 (100)	00 (00)	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

In the next steps, the researchers asked them what the term creative question stands for. Findings achieved from analyzing open-ended questionnaire and FGD data are presented as follows in Table 3 According to teachers' views, creative question means a pattern or style of question where -

Table 4
Conception of creative question obtain from teachers' opinion

Teacher's conception about creative questions	%
• Students can create something new using their thinking and intellectualability.	50%
• Students can answer by their words about anything after gaining knowledge from their textbooks.	10%
• Students can express their thinking and ability to gain and organizing knowledge from their textbooks.	12%
• Able to answer using their intellectual and thinking ability rather than only through memorizing.	6.7%
• Teacher could not explain the term.	6.7%

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

To support the above statements, some teachers' voices found from open-ended questionnaires and FGDs are given below.

"Creative question means to create something new by the students after reading the text. Actually, with creative question we try to measure what students have learned, whether they can create knowledge. In short, to create something new is creative question". (Assistant teacher, Sample school 1).

"The term 'creative question' implies to create something by students' own words or to create something new using their thinking ability. It is possible to measure students' creativity through their own opinions or answers about the given question". (Senior teacher-1, Sample school 2).

Thus, it is clear from the findings presented in Table 4 that most of the teachers do not have very clear conceptions about creative question. Interestingly, 6.7% of teachers in the sample do not have any idea about creative question as they could not explain the term 'creative question'. Tuhin *et al.*(2016) also found similar findings in their study.

Are teachers of secondary schools properly trained on creative questions?

Table 5 portraits teachers training related information demonstrates that a large number of teachers (66.7%) of old Dhaka city schools are leg behind of getting any training on creative question after introducing the new evaluation technique known as 'creative' or 'srijanshil' question, which is in line with the findings of Yasmin et al. (2020). In contrast, 33.3 % of teachers reveal that they received training on creative question.

Table 5

Teacher received Training on Creative Question

Variable	Yes N (%)	No N (%)	Total N (%)
• Received training on creative question.	20 (33.3)	40 (66.7)	60 (100)
• I know the number of steps used in creative question.	60 (100)	00 (00)	60 (100)
• I use all steps while developing creative question.	60 (100)	00 (00)	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

After defining the term 'creative question' and revealing their training status, teachers were asked to indicate whether they know the steps of creative question. Interesting findings were found that 100% of teachers are familiar with the steps and use all steps while making creative question for school examination regardless of getting any training on creative question.

Teachers' conception about four different steps of creative questions

Findings indicate that teachers can name the four steps of creative question. In order to assess teachers' understanding level of the four steps followed in creative question, they were also asked to define the terms. Findings obtained from teachers' opinions are presented in the following section.

Knowledge: With this step, teachers assess students' ability to recall the facts and basic concepts learned from their textbook. Findings presented in Table 6 indicate that half of the teachers (50%) in the sample explaind this level of Bloom's taxonomy appropriately, which is used in creative question. In contrast, 50% (43.3%+6.7%) of teachers could not explain the term at all, though they use the step while developing creative question for their school examination.

Table 6

Teachers' conception about first step (knowledge) of creative question

Knowledge	N (%)
• Student can answer the question in short form.	4 (6.7)
• Define anything according to textbooks.	30 (50)
• Could not define the term appropriately.	26 (43.3)
Total	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Understanding: In this step, teachers measure students' level of comprehension about any ideas or concepts that they have learnt from their textbooks. Findings of Table 7 reveal that 60% of the teachers could explain this step precisely. In contrast, a good number of teachers (40%) in the sample could not define the term.

Table 7

Teachers' conception about the second step (understanding) of creative question

Understanding	N (%)
• In this level students can explain any topic (story, poem, content etc.) of the textbooks and we measure their level of understanding.	36 (60)
• Could not define the term.	24 (40)
Total	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Application: The main intention of this step is to assess whether students can use their acquired knowledge and understanding in a new solution. Findings derived from the teachers' opinion, as shown in Table 8, imply that 40% of teachers in the sample have conception about the term 'application'. However, they are in a bit confusion about the term, where as 13.3% (3.3%+10%) tried to explain the term, which did not reveal the exact meaning of application level of creative question. Ironically, 46.7% of teachers could not explain the term.

Table 8

Teachers' conception about the third step (application) of creative question

Application	N (%)
• Compare based on similarity and dissimilarity of the text content.	2 (3.3)
• Identify similarity and the dissimilarity between the given stimulus in the question and content of textbook.	6 (10)
• To apply achieved knowledge according to textbook in a similar situation.	24 (40)
• Could not define the term.	28 (46.7)
Total	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Higher-order thinking: Final step of creative question is the combination of the last three steps of Bloom's taxonomy, namely analyzing, evaluating, and creating. At this step, students are assessed whether they justify, analyze, synthesize, or produce new knowledge using their previous knowledge, understanding, and applying ability. While describing the term 'higher-order thinking', 59.9% (53.3%+3.3%+3.3%) teachers opined as given in Table 9 that with this step they measure students' analytical ability. Higher-order thinking does not measure only analytical ability but also measures students' capability of justifying, synthesizing, and producing new knowledge. However, again a large number of teachers (40%) could not explain the term as they have no clear idea about higher-order thinking.

Table 9
Teachers' conception about the fourth step (higher-order thinking) of creative question

Higher-order	N (%)
• Measures students' ability to analysis	2 (3.3)
• Students present their opinion with logic after reading textbook.	2 (3.3)
• To analyze in detail according to text content.	32 (53.3)
• Could not define the term.	24 (40)
Total	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

It is clear that teachers need more knowledge on different steps of creative question as the findings imply that more than 40% teachers in the sample do not possess very clear conception about four steps, i.e., knowledge, understanding, application, and higher-order thinking of creative question, which is alarming for quality teaching and education as well. Thus, proper training on the creative question is imperative to improve teachers' knowledge and skills in developing precise, valid, and reliable creative question.

Teachers' Practice of Creative Questions

To generate information regarding teachers' practice of creative question, they were asked to mention whether they use all steps of creative question while preparing their school examination question, use their knowledge acquired from the training, to what extent they use creative question for their examination, how long they spend time to develop their skills in making quality creative question at school and outside of school (i.e., at home). Findings derived from analyzing data are presented in the subsequent sections.

Teachers practice of creative question for school examination

Teachers in the sample were asked to mention whether they use their knowledge achieved from the training in developing creative question. It is observed from the findings given in Table 10 that 30% of teachers use their knowledge they received from training, and 3.33% of teachers answered that they do not use their achieved knowledge while preparing creative question for school examination. Interesting findings were found for a large number of teachers (76.67%) who prepare creative question, although they did not get any training on this issue from the schools or training offered by the government. Then they were asked (though this question was not included in the questionnaire) how they prepare creative question without any training. In favor of this point, they informed the researchers that using the instructional guide provided from the schools,

guide book available in the market, and sharing knowledge from senior and experienced teachers; they try to develop creative question for school examination, and the findings are in line with the findings of other researchers (Habib, 2016 &Tuhin et al., 2016). According to their opinion, this knowledge is not adequate for making creative question, and they need proper training on creative question for clear conception and understanding. It is important to improve the quality of their ability to make question and to improve education quality.

Table 10

Teachers use their knowledge received from the training in developing creative questions

Item Category	N(%)
• Yes, I use my training knowledge while developing creative questions for school examinations.	18(30)
• I prepare creative questions for examination following proper steps though I didnot get any training.	40(66.67)
• No, I do not use our knowledge.	2(3.33)
Total	60(100)

*Note:*Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Teachers'opinions derived from FGDs and open-ended questions about the practice of creative question in school examinations are given below, which is similar to the above findings generated from the survey questionnaire.

> *"I prepare creative question though I have not got any training on creative question. I do the task taking help from senior and experienced teachers who received training on creative question. Apart from this, I use the school guide/instructional book and guide book available in the market". (Assistant teacher, Sample school 1 and Assistant teacher, Sample school 2).*

> *"Yes, we all prepare creative question for the school examination. We do it because it is mandatory for all teachers as school authorities follow government order to practice creative question in the school examination". (Senior teacher, Sample school 1, and 2 Assistant teachers, Sample school 2 & 3).*

Teachers' practice of creative question for developing quality questions

Teachers were asked whether they use creative question in the school examination following all steps. The result indicates, as shown in Table 11, that all teachers use all steps of creative questions, while preparing question for school examination.

Table 11

Teachers' practice of creative question for developing quality question

Variables	Yes N (%)	No N (%)
• Do you use creative question in school examinations?	60 (100)	0 (00)
• Do you use all steps of creative question in your examination question?	60 (100)	0 (00)

*Note:*Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Looking at Table 12, it has been found that most of the teachers in the sample use creative question always (36.7%) and most of the time (46.7%) though a negligible number of teachers (16.7%) use creative question sometimes. It is important to note that most of the teachers in the sample informed the researchers that they have to do it as the teachers must use creative question at the school's examination.

Table 12

How Frequently Teachers use Creative Question in School Examination?

Variable	Always	Most of the time	Some-times	Seldom	Never	Total
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
• How frequently do you use creative question in school examination?	22 (36.7)	28 (46.7)	10 (16.7)	00 (00)	00 (00)	60 (100)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Creative question is still a new concept in Bangladesh. So, teachers need to spend some time for developing quality creative question. Findings present in Table 13 indicates that teachers spend on average 3 hours per week to improve their knowledge and skill on creative question at home (3.5 hours) and school (3.24 hours). Please note that most of the teachers in the sample informed the researchers that usually they do not get enough time to study on creative question at school for their excessive workload.

Table 13

Time for studying creative question at home and school (hour/week)

Variable	Mean	SD	Range	Minimum	Maximum	N (%)
• Home	3.50	2.56	9.50	0.50	10	60 (100)
• School	3.24	2.13	7	00	7	50(83.3)*

[Missing value= *10 (16.7%), Total sample= 60 (100%)]
Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

What teachers actually did to develop their skill on creative question at home and school, found from FGDs and open-ended questionnaires, are narrated below to support the findings as given in Table 13.

"Yes, I work out on creative question at home and school as well. I have to spend time developing appropriate stimulus for creative question. I usually study on average in a week 8-10 hours at home and 1-2 hours at school to develop quality creative question"(Assistant teacher 4, Sample school 3).

"I should study more on creative question to increase my skill, but I cannot spend more time studying creative question at school due to workload. I spend 2 to 3 hours on average per week to prepare creative question only. (Senior teacher 1, Sample school 2).

Teachers' Attitude to Creative Questions

Teachers' attitude to creative question was measured using an attitude scale. Teachers' levels of attitude to creative question were divided into five categories based on scale value. The minimum

scale value for attitude was 18, and the maximum value was 90. Table 14 represents teachers' level of attitude to creative questions along with a range of scale value. Looking at Table 143, it is clear that most of the teachers (80%) in the sample possess favorable attitude to creative question. So, it can be opined that teachers in the secondary school of old Dhaka city have easily accepted and coped with the newly introduced evaluation system familiar as 'creative' or *'srijonshil'* question though they are facing problems in developing creative question and many of them did not get any training on it

Table 14
Teachers' level of attitude to creative question and scale value

Level of Attitude	Scale value	N (%)
• Very unfavourable attitude	16-30	0 (0)
• Unfavorable attitude	31-45	2 (3.3)
• Moderate level attitude	46-60	6 (10)
• Favorable attitude	61-75	48 (80)
• Very favorable attitude	76-90	2 (3.3)
Total		58 (96.7)

Missing Value= 2 (3.3%)

Note: Adopted from Primary data collected from fieldwork, April-May, 2018

Limitation of the Study

1. Only four secondary schools located in old Dhaka city were included in the sample, which is one of the limitations of this study.
2. Sample size is important for generalization of findings. From this point, it can be said that sample size is also a limitation of this study as the study was carried out with the sample size of 60 teachers.
3. This study used questionnaire and FGD to generate information from the key informants. Other techniques like interviews, case study, and observation can be used to gather more in-depth information about creative question.
4. Information about the creative question was generated only from the teachers. If the researchers include students and parents in the sample, they could have obtained other dimensions of information.

Policy Implication

Creative questions have been introduced in the evaluation system of Bangladesh since 2010. It is an issue of debate among different stakeholders, for example, parents, students, teachers, education experts, researchers, and intellectuals. Researchers of this study believe that their findings have depicted the real picture of teachers' attitudes, conception, and practice of creative question that the educational policy makers can consider while formulating policy on creative question in future. Some policy implications of this study are given below.

- Most of the teachers do not have apparent conception about creative question. School authorities need to take immediate effective action on this issue, arranging short-term or day-long workshops to provide their teachers appropriate knowledge on creative question.

- School authority should arrange an introductory session on creative question for newly joined teachers before assigning them to develop creative question for examination purposes. This introductory session can be arranged inviting an expert or with the help of senior teachers, who have an outstanding level of knowledge about creative question.

- Many teachers (66.7% found from the findings) did not receive any training on creative question yet, they are obliged to prepare creative question for their school examination according to school rules. Paying attention to this point, school authority and policy makers should take some effective actions, like short-term subject-based in-service training programs. So, the teachers can get an opportunity to improve their knowledge, understanding, and skill about creative question.

Conclusion

Introducing creative question in evaluation system is an issue of debate for policy makers, education experts, teachers, parents, and students in Bangladesh. Students are not getting on with creative question in one hand, and the other hand, teachers are not well trained up on this controversial issue yet. So, there is a gap between knowledge and understanding in both of the groups. Most of the time, students face problems to answer the question following steps of creative question. Findings indicate that a significant number of teachers did not receive any training on creative question, though they have to prepare creative question for their school examination. They serve this purpose using a school guide book, guidebook available in the market, and with the guidance of senior experienced teachers, which absolutely not the proper way. So, school authorities should take necessary steps on this vital issue and provide them proper training. It is expected that teachers can improve their capability if they get in-service and short-term training on creative question. At school level, teachers should provide proper knowledge to the students during teaching-learning activities to remove all misconceptions about creative questions. Some teachers in the sample said that implementation of creative question in mathematics is not an easy job, and policy makers should rethink and take necessary action to compensate for this issue for the betterment of students' mathematical achievement. Summing up the discussion, it could be said that this study has identified some vital issues of creative question and provide some policy recommendations for policy makers and education experts to think about the issues while taking further development of creative question.

Acknowledgement:

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"Banglish": Emergence of a new English variety

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Abstract

A large number of English varieties are emerging day by day with the global expansion and use of English. Bangladeshi English which is formally known as 'Banglish' is one of the newest English varieties in the world of 'Variety of English'. The study is an attempt to gauge and analyse the Banglish from different linguistic levels. This study was undertaken to explore the scenario of Banglish (Bangladeshi variety of English) from Chandpur district of Bangladesh dealing with existing pronunciation, morphology, syntax and semantics style in a participatory approach. The study was qualitative by nature and the methods of data collection consisted of record keeping of words through direct interview, informal talk and FGD with Chandpuri local educated people, and reading some related journals, articles, books and passages. The results of the study explore that English variety in Bangladesh exists in terms of unique pronunciation, morphology, semantics and syntax system of Bangladeshi people and it also differs from standard British English. On the basis of the findings, some implications have been suggested for education, foreigners and language policy makers.

Keywords: English variety; Banglish; Linguistic levels; Chandpur; Participatory approach.

Introduction

Today there are about 6,000 languages in the world, and half of the world's population speaks only 10 of them (Kenneally, 2007). English is one of the most dominant amongst these 10. "Today English is spoken or written, with varying levels of fluency, by a third of the world's population" (Crystal, 2003:8). The rapid spread of English language across the world has created a number of English varieties. The Concise Oxford Linguistics Dictionary defines 'variety' as "any form of a language seen as systematically distinct from others" (Mathews, 2003, p.236). Language can vary not only from one individual to the next, but also from one sub-section of speech community e.g. family, village, town, region etc. to another (Varshney, 1977). As a language, English also varies from country to country, region to region. Variety of English refers to differences between the Standard English and other English's regarding pronunciation, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics in terms of regional or geographical setting. For instance, Indian English, Singapore

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English, Nigerian English etc. are the dominant varieties of English. The variation within a seemingly uniform language has become so great that some linguists (McArthur 1998, Kachru 1986, 1992) have considered it's necessary to analyse this diversity in greater detail and provided some systems of classification which would make the process of describing various aspects of English easier and more thorough (Dabrowska, 2012). This study is an attempt to configure the Bangladeshi English in the lens of variety of English.

In the context of Indian subcontinent and also in Bangladesh, English was introduced by the East India Company and spread out by the British Raj. The Minute of Macaulay (1835) aimed at creating "a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern- a class of persons, Indians in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinion, in morals and in intellect" (Kachru, 1983). After 1835, English was rapidly used all over the Indian subcontinent. Now-a-days, English is widely used in the multiple arenas like education, business and commerce, intra-national and international communication etc. in Bangladesh. This wide use has created room for Bangladeshi words in English sentence and context (Hossain, Hasan & Meraj, 2015) which helps to emerge Bangladeshi variety of English formally known as Banglish. Now Bangladeshi educated people in different districts are the preserver and upholder of Bangladeshi variety of English (Hossain, Hasan & Meraj, 2015). By considering the use and expansion of Bangladeshi variety of English, the researcher was interested to conduct this study.

Theoretical Framework

World English vs. World Englishes vs. Global English

World English: World English refers to the English language used in business, trade, diplomacy and other spheres of global activities as a lingua franca.

World Englishes: World Englishes refers to the different varieties of English and English based creoles developed in different regions of the world. On one hand, Kachruvian school of thought conceptualises World Englishes as a paradigm that "captures the dynamic nature of world-wide spread of the language" (Matsuda & Frierdrich, 2010, p.3).

Global Englishes: Alternatively, the term Global Englishes has been used by scholars in the field to emphasis the more recent spread of English due to globalization, which has resulted in increased usage of English as a lingua franca.

Standard English: Standard English (SE) is a synonym of good or correct English usage. Trudgrill & Hannah (1982) denoted that although Standard English is the kind of English in which all native speakers learn to read and write most people do not actually speak it.

Variety of English

Variety of English refers to the diversified forms of English which exist in the different regions throughout the world. Variety of English is mainly two types: native English variety and non-native English variety. American English variety, British English variety, Canadian English variety, Australian English variety, New Zealand English variety and Ireland English variety are generally known as native English variety. On the other hand, ESL and EFL speakers country's Englishes are known as non-native variety of English which merge Kachru in his three cyclic models.

Figure-1

Biraj Kachru's (1997) Three Circles of English (Retrieved from: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Files)

Expanding circle

Outer circle

Inner circle eg USA UK

eg India Nigeria

eg China, Russia Brazil
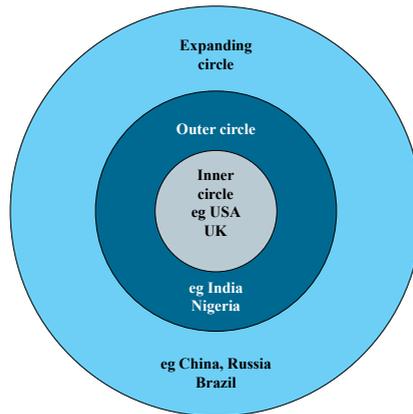
Note: Based on Primary Data

Each country of this circle has individual English variety.

Apart from these, Trudgill and Hannah (1982) identify four major features of variety of English which are: a) same word, different meaning; b) same word, additional meaning in one variety; c) same word, different in style, connotation, frequency of use; and d) same concept or item, different word.

The importance of variety of English is described mainly from communicational and pedagogical perspective. It is definitely used in an environment where native speakers of English are few. It is used in mass media, in creative function, in business, politics etc.- most often resulting in code mixing and switching (Proshina, 2014). So it is a crying need to know about different kinds of English variety.

As pedagogy is the science of teaching, a language teacher should have knowledge about the variety of a language for effective teaching and learning. It allows for a non-native variety to be viewed as an independent system, described in its own terms. Whether Platt, Weber and Ho (1984, p.2-3) stated that it can also be used in the educational system.

Different varieties of English

With the global use of English, English is losing its Englishness, and various varieties have emerged continuously which are described below in a short extent.

Hinglish: Hindi variety of English

'Hinglish', a combination of the words "Hindi" and "English" is an established English variety in India. To understand the Hinglish some example are exemplified here: I bought some small small things; Why you don't give them one one piece of cake? (Reduplication).

Chinglish: Chinese variety of English

'China' has also nurtured a new form of English variety which is known as 'Chinglish'. According to the criteria of judging a new English Platt et al. (1984:2-3), Chinglish could be new English, because: Chinglish has developed through the education system and it has become 'localized' by adopting some language features of its own. For example: 'The brother in the upper bed, 'who is your lover in dream?' (A boy student asked another student who was sleeping in the upper bed who his ideal girl was.)

Singlish: Singapori variety of English

Singlish as Singaporeans' colloquial language, to be used in informal situations among family and friends as a way to build solidarity. Brown (1999) states Singlish broadly as the local brand of English. Some examples of Singlish pragmatics are- Singapore, a nation strong and free, You want me to get lost, I will definitely not, Believe in yourself in who you really are etc.

Objectives

The main objective of the study was to explore the Bangladeshi English variety. To meet the main objective, the answers to the following questions were sought by this study:

1. What types of varieties of English is existed in Bangladesh?
2. How Bangladeshi English is different from standard British English in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics?

Rationale of the Study

Global spread of English happens to emerge a number of English varieties. After independence, in 1972 'Qudrat-e-khuda education commission' placed English as a second language which uplifted the usage of English language throughout the Bangladesh. Although 'Bengali language implementation act-1987' placed English as a foreign language but the usage and expansion of English is expanded day by day for its global needs. The large use of English throughout the country especially between the educated and literate persons forming a new English in the context of Bangladesh. To judge and measure the scenario of Bangladeshi English, researcher conducted this study. Besides, as a Bangladeshi, researcher also underwent the process in real life and noticed such English variety which attracted them to measure the situation.

Methodology

This study was undertaken examine the variety of Bangladesh English in a participatory approach. The study was mainly qualitative by nature and the methods of data collection consisted of record keeping of words through direct interview, informal talk and FGD with Chandpuri (one of the district of Bangladesh) local educated people, and reading some related journals, articles, books and passages with a view to gathering comprehensive idea about the context. The table 1 sum up the research tools, respondents, the total number of samples and sampling procedures.

Table-1
Scaffolding of the research study

Research Tools	Respondents	Total Number	Sampling Procedure	Research Questions
Direct interview schedule (one to one)	Chandpuri local people (Post Graduate, Graduate holder)	15 (5 from Chandpur Sadar, 5 from Faridgonj Upzilla and 5 from Horny Durgapur village)	Purposive	i & ii
Focus Group Discussion (FGD)	Chandpuri local people (Literate & Semi-literate people)	20 FGDs for 200 people (10 per group)	Purposive	i & ii
Document analysis	English variety related journals, articles, books and passages	135	Purposive	i & ii

Analyses of data and Findings

In this section, the Bangladeshi English variety is analysed from the Chandpuri local context. And how Bangladeshi English is different from the standard British English in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics are also presented on the basis of reviewing journals, articles, books and passages, informal talk and FGD with people and data from direct interview.

Phonological varieties

Pronunciation also contributes to generating new variety of English. In Bangladesh, people pronounce English in different tone that is directly noticed in this study. People here tend to pronounce the "per" cluster in "fer" for instance they pronounce the word "performance" and "perfect" respectively as "ferformance" and "ferfect".

The following table is the outcome of this study which captured the phonological differences between Banglish and standard British English:

Table-2

Selected words from informal talk, FGD and interview with Chandpuri local people

Word	Accurate English pronunciation	Bangladeshi English pronunciation (in Chandpuri context)
Know	/nəu/	/nɔ:/
Girl	/gɜ:(r)l/	/ga:rl/
Start	/sta:t/	/æsta:rt/
Literature	/litrətʃə(r)/	/litare:sar/
Much	/mʌtʃ/	/mʌs/
Say	/seɪ/	/se /
Bay	/beɪ/	/be /
Which	/wɪtʃ/	/huɪs/
Play	/pleɪ/	/ple:/
Form	/fɔ:m/	/frɒm/
Topic	/tɒpɪk/	/tɒfɪk/
Very	/veɪ/	/be:rɪ/
Deep	/di:p/	/di:f/
First	/fɜ:(r)st/	/fʌst/
Own	/əun/	/ɔ:n/
Chair	/tʃeər/	/sear/
Face	/feɪs/	/fe s/

Note: Adapted from: Hoque, 2011

Morphological variety

Some morphological words from different context of Bangladesh also showed a new variety of English. The morphological varieties of Banglish are described below from different aspects.

Religious and cultural words

Culture is reflected in their language, literature, religion, music, dress, cooking etc. for example, the celebration of any religious festival specially Eid in our country, celebration of "Pohela Boishakh", "Pohela Falgun", "Nabanna", "Sanghai", "Pandal", "Akherimonajat (meaning final prayer)" etc. are usually referred to as cultural practices in Bangladesh which helps to emerge new variety of English words in terms of morphology.

Localized or nativized words

By observing some news of English newspapers of Bangladesh, the researcher has found some Banglish characteristics like "Pohela Boishakh celebrated in a festive mood", "Hartal called by deprived people", "Ilish (meaning hilsha fish)", "Price hike", "Putul (meaning

inactive) president", "Cattle hut (meaning market) in Chandpur". It is found that four out of six newspaper headlines contain one or two Bangla words. This wide use of Bangla in English actually Englishizes the Bangla words and helps to generate a new variety of English that is more localized or nativized.

Variety in Noun

Some examples of Banglish in terms of proper or common nouns which are usually used in Banglish as English word:

1. Bengali proper name, English product name: Shamsuddin Sweetmeat
2. English proper name, English product name: Ecstasy Tailor's
3. English proper name, Bengali product name: Rocky Kabab Ghar

Some examples of Informal talks with Banglish

The following words make entity in the Banglish and contribute to create new words which are usually used in English in Bangladesh.

Table-3
Banglish word

Words	Origins of the word	Literal meaning	Intended meaning
Vabs	Bangla + English	Being moody	Moody in negative
Abar ask	Bangla + English	Asking something again	To ensure something/ to agree with someone
Offja	Bangla + English	To stop or off	To stop someone

Note: Adopted from Tinny, 2010

Syntactical variety

By conducting interview, FGD and informal talk with local people of Chandpur, researcher found some variety of English in terms of syntax from different aspects. Some examples of those arenas are presented below-

verbal inflexion

Utpal <u>argue </u>that we should call a spade a spade.

plural marking:

I am firmly sure that all <u>religion </u>will obey it.

Many <u>childrens </u>in the field

Then thousand of <u>peoples</u> suffering from dysentery will….

variety in the uses of proposition:

Water <u>on</u> the floor.

Jump <u>into</u> the roof.

Some other differences:

Table-4

Difference between standard British English and Bangladeshi English

Standard British English	Bangladeshi English (in Chandpur context)
He is going to market.	He goes to market.
The Bengali language is our dominant language.	Bengali language is our dominant language.
My mother exercises every day.	Everyday my mother exercise.
Water over the floor.	Water on the floor.
We are going to shopping.	We are going to marketing.
The sun rises in the east.	Sun rises in the east.

Note: Adopted from Authors (on the basis of data analysis)

Slogans and advertising:

- Seen on a coaching bulletin board in Chandpur:

    "The more you read, more you pursue."

    "We apply bamboo theory for the students for better output."

- Sign on a famous beauty parlour window in Gulshan:

    "Not tease the girl bank from here. She may be your mother or aunty."

- Others:

    "Dear, I miss you dearly, please come quickly."

An example of Banglish syntax through a rhyme:

"Flying down here, talking English, Banglish, English

And this category so funny- the brown shaheb!

But brown shaheb forgetting always he actually local

Why so much show-off, he not grow up with rice-daal?

In our heritage we saying crow trying hard, becoming peacock

Possible never, ever, never, he will be so much pain and shock!

But if he write a book winning the English language match

I will giving my honest salam, so much respect for that."

(Extracted from Ahsan Akbar, on December 11, 2014 at 12:01; Retrieved from:
http://www.dhakatribune.com/artsletters/2014/dec/07/haydhakabanglish≠sthash.It3L9f76.dpuf).

Semantic variety

The Englishization (a process by which any other language is used or uttered in English intonation) of Bangla words emerged new semantic variety. Indeed, some of Bangla words like 'Jotils' and 'Jhakkas' are uttered in English tone and these are referred to 'awesome' is the example of semantic variety. Sign at a barber's saloon in Chandpur: We need your mouth to wash the garbage (means you are invited to facial in our saloon) also presents semantic variety.

Same word different meaning

Table-5

Same word different meaning

Root word	Banglish	Standard British English
Master's	Also indicates 'teachers'	Only indicates 'post graduate'
Water	Only indicates 'water'	Also indicates 'extravagant'

Note: Adopted from Authors (on the basis of data analysis)

A select glossary of Banglish:

- Grameen bank = a village bank
- Four twenty = a cheat or fraud
- Tiffin room = snacks room
- Double roti = a loaf of bread (Kachru, 1986).

Some example of code-mixing:

The following code-mixing expressions were found in the participant conversations:

- We are looking for shotroos. ('We are looking for enemies.')
- Priya believe me ami tomake onek onek love kori. ('Priya, believe me, I love you a lot.')
- Ami bollam je that's good news. ('I said that's good news.')
- Raki math private pore. ('Raki takes private tuition for mathematics.')
- Baktigoto experience theke bolci. ('I told from my personal experience.')
- Tui to sala akta son of bitch. ('You are a son of bitch.')
- He enjoys giving adda. ('He enjoys chatting.'). The interested thing to notice here is the use of the English word 'giving' to make way for the Bengali word adda.

Major findings

After analysing data, the following major findings are found in this study-
- A moderate scale of English variety exists in Bangladesh.
- Bangladeshi English or Banglish has some individual characteristics.
- Bangladeshi English variety exists in terms of phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics.
- Bangladeshi English variety is different from the standard British English.
- All educated people use Banglish in their daily conversations and their daily activities.

- Semi-literate and illiterate people mainly use code-coxing (mixing of Bangla and English) in their conversations.
- Bangladeshi English variety mainly appears in speaking than writing.

Discussion of the Findings

Bangladeshi English variety is the new reality in the world of 'variety of English'. This study revealed that a moderate scale of English variety exists in Bangladesh. English has diffused deeply in the country. The people of Bangladesh use English in their daily life for various purpose like education, business and commerce, social communication, electronic mediated communication and whatnots. As a result, a unique version of English has originated in Bangladesh throughout their daily communication and conversation. This is known as Bangladeshi variety of English which is now also referred as Banglish. This similar finding was found by Hossain, Hasan & Meraj (2015) in their study where they asserted that Bangladesh is no exception in creating an English variety and English used by Bangladeshi speakers may be labelled as Bangladeshi English.

This study strongly referred Bangladeshi English as 'Banglish'. Today it is now popularly termed as 'Banglish' (Hassan, 2011). About this Hossain, Hasan & Meraj (2015) was defining it as Bangladeshi variety of English or Bangladeshi English or BaE. Generally it can be said that Banglish is an informal term for a dialectal mix of Bengali (the official language of Bangladesh) and English. According to Alam & Shafiq (2012) – "Use of 'Banglish' in which Bengali and English words are mixed seamlessly together is widespread, like 'Hinglish' in India, a combination of Hindi and English." In a brief, Banglish is the new emerging variety of English which is nurtured in Bangladesh.

As Banglish is a new variety of English so there has some individual characteristics which are mentioned here from different angels:

- Bengali words are making their entries. For example – Pohela Baishakh (Bengali New Year), Salam (greetings), Jonab (Sir) etc.
- Pronunciation variety largely appears in Banglish. For instance-

Figure-2
Example of pronunciation variety

British English	Banglish (in Chandpur context)
Schedule	Skedul
Vitamin	Vaitamin

Note: Adopted from Authors on the basis of data analysis

The pronunciation variety in Banglish is influenced by native tone. For example, 'Tomato' is pronounced in Banglish as 'Tomaatoo' (টমাটু), 'Sure' as 'Shiyur', 'Tiger' as 'Tigger' etc. Bengali words are infused in English gradually.

- English suffixes are being attached to Bengali words and vice versa;
- In syntactic level, there also appeared some kind of variety. Word order of English is changed in Banglish in some extent. For example: Do you know where is he?
- Literal translations of Bengali proverbs are being introduced. For example: Go Gorango

(By the name of God) is used by Chandpuri local Hindu People. Other examples include: Bikrompur Sweetmeat, Hasem Hair Cutting, Jamai-Bou sweets (followed by a Bengali phrase).

• Now-a-days, Banglish characteristics are also seen in rhymes.

"…………………………….

I hail from zamindar family,

Very honourable and nicely,

Trust me, my friends are also

…………………………….""

-[The opening lines of "A1 Elites" by Bangladeshi poet Ahsan Akbar (The devil's Thumbprint, 2013)].

This metrical line also represents the glimpse of Banglish.

One of the major findings of this study is that Bangladeshi English variety exists in most of the linguistic levels. It means Banglish exists in the phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. Although Bangladeshi English variety does not equally exist in these linguistic levels, but more or less Banglish is presented in most of the linguistic levels. In a similar fashion, Hossain, Hasan & Meraj (2015) study's result and detail analysis has brought out that syntactically, semantically and phonologically a new English variety is emerging in Bangladesh.

Every linguistic level has their distinct natures which make Banglish quite different from the standard British English. Banu (2000) affirms that over the years because of uncontrollable expansion of English use, "Bangladesh will have developed some special features of its own that can be described as systematic and recurrent devotions from the British English."

The native-like pronunciation (Bengali local tone) was widely reflected in the Chandpuri people pronunciation of English word which is quite different from standard British English. For instance, the word 'institution', 'special' pronounces respectively as 'inostitution' and 'especial' in Banglish which is showing differences with standard British English. Pronunciation of English has been influenced by Bangla language variety and thus created a new format of English pronunciations which are mainly understand and used locally. These types of pronunciations mainly make difference between Banglish and standard British English. In FGD, the participants opined that they use Bangla words to make English localized and comprehensible. Bangladeshi people may not understand the native utterances and that is why Bangladeshi pronunciation is needed, they mentioned. In this way, Banglish pronunciation is varying from standard British English.

'Pohela Baishakh' is a Bengali word but it is very often used in the Bangladeshi English, such as 'Pohela Baishakh celebrated in a festive mood in the whole country'. Here, the word 'Pohela Baishakh' has no equivalent word in English. So it has been accepted as an English word in Banglish. On the other side, 'Riding a cycle is good from riding a bike' instead of 'Riding a cycle is better than riding a bike'; reveals syntactical difference and 'He is going to marketing' used in Banglish instead of 'He is going to shopping' reveals semantic difference. These all are representing the unique norms of Banglish which are different from the standard British English. This study brought these into focus.

Most of the participant in FGD and interview schedule responded that all used Banglish in their communication and Bangladeshi expressions are also used in international media like BBC sometimes. These Bangladeshi expressions have become English because sometimes literature also uses these words, they further added. Hence, Banglish emerged as a new English variety.

While transcribing the radio, we have found some words like 'sweet dreams', 'vuut (meaning ghost) FM', 'our radio friends' and the RJs frequently pronounce Bangla words in English tone (Hossain, Hasan & Meraj, 2015). And this trend is also spread throughout Chandpur district within literate, semi-literate and illiterate people. One participant in FGD responded that "In present age, conversation is quite impossible without Banglish." That means they use Bangladeshi English variety in their daily conservations instead of standard British English. In this regard, Zulhas Ahmed (pseudonym), a teacher of English Medium School in Chandpur district explained:

"We are good neither in standard British English nor in Bengali, so we use Banglish when we are teaching English. So, we talk in a mix where we use both English and Bangla words together, like Singlish."

According to Kachru (1992) usually, the local variety is widely accepted by the local people and this acceptance helps to orginate a new variety of English. In line of this statement, the local acceptance of Banglish developed a new English variety. Therefore this new English variety might be figured as following figure:

Figure-3
Emerging of Banglish
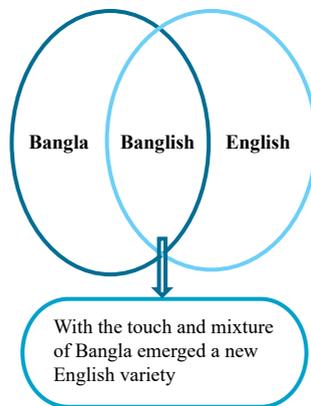
Note: Based on Primary Data

Implications of the Study

Although the study is in many ways exploratory, it raises several important issues. On the basis on findings some implication of this study are mentioned below:

Implications for Education:

Banglish can (and does) perform a variety of such functions:

- to draw students' attention to what they already know;

- to make students aware of new rules and items in the standard English variety;
- to help students 'notice the gap' and make comparisons;
- to motivate students;
- to build rapport with individual students;
- to establish a warmer, friendly atmosphere;
- to scaffold knowledge construction for pupils with limited Banglish language resources;
- to draw students' attention to the appropriate contexts of use for each variety.

Finally, the teachers should turn a monotonous class into an enjoyable one, change students' attitude positively and enhance their motivation through Banglish communication also.

Implications for Foreigners:

- as the study captured several linguistic levels for analysing Banglish, it helps foreigners to understand Banglish variety;
- this study has also allowed for the investigation of intelligibility firmly embedded in the Bangladeshi socio-cultural communicative context, and to be reconceptualised as a negotiated process which would be helpful for the foreigners.

Implications for Language Policy:

- it therefore allows for Banglish as a non-native variety to be viewed as an independent system, and described in its own terms that helps language policy makers;
- it also helps to understand Bangladeshi English variety from different aspects which play vital role in language policy.

Conclusion

At the eleventh hour, it can be said that the new emergence of English variety which ceremoniously known as Banglish exists in Bangladesh in most of the linguistic levels. Although it is not as established as Hinglish, or Singlish, it is obvious that Banglish is in its embryonic stage as a 'variety of English'. As Meiorkord (2012) mentioned that "Bangladeshi English is now predominant variety." According to Hossain, Hasan & Meraj (2015) this newly created variety of English has become a wing or independent variety or modified variety of world English. By this study, researcher attempted to find out the Bangladeshi variety of English from Chandpur local context and hope that the next researcher would work in the whole country in a large scale. The acceptance of Banglish in the national and international levels will be judged by the next researcher.

Acknowledgement

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Implementation Status of the Master Plan for ICT in Education for Secondary Teachers' Professional Development

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Abstract

Master Plan for ICT in Education is one of the key policy documents of Government of Bangladesh (GoB) to integrate ICT in education in Bangladesh. The study object was to analyze the teacher development status in Bangladesh in comparison to Master Plan for ICT in Education. A qualitative reserch approach was followed throughout the study. Forty respondents from 3 categories– planning and development, implementation, and beneficiaries were consulted during data collection through interview and FGD following purposive sampling technique. Both the interview and FGD guideline were focused on the planned activities regarding teacher development mentioned in the Master Plan for ICT in Education, and grouped in 8 different themes. It was found that ICT has been integrated in the teacher training curriculum mostly as facilitation tool, however, lack of Technological Pedagogical and Content Knowledge (TPACK) and skill of both the trainers and teachers is one of the key challenges to implement this effectively. On the other hand, more than 1000 master trainers developed though it seems not enough to train all the secondary teachers within the planned time. Moreover, several online courses have been introduced though lack of linkage between the courses and benefits, and recognition were revealed as key challenges. Since monthly installment basis laptop purchase facilities are introduced for teachers, most of them do not know about the facilities. Based on the findings, training on TPACK needs to introduce for trainers and teachers. Online courses should be developed through proper need analysis. Moreover, online courses for teachers would be developed partnering with academia and training providers. Benefits of online courses should be introduced to teachers to motivate them in online courses. Finally, campaign, promotional activities and official notice could be arranged for teachers to aware them about online courses, benefits and loan facilities.

Keywords: Teacher Training, ICT in Education, Master Plan for ICT in Education, Online Course, E-Learning, Distance Education

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Introduction

The Master Plan for ICT in Education illustrates the overall plan for integrating ICT in education sector from pre-primary to higher education which included teachers' professional development as well. Teachers' professional development is a key activity to ensure quality education. Recent technological innovations, pandemic situation and skills requirement for 21st century demand integration of ICT in teacher development process also. Moreover, Pelgrum (2001) mentioned that the success of educational innovations depends largely on the skills and knowledge of teachers. Teachers' lack of knowledge and skills is one of the main hindrances to the use of ICT in education both for the developed and underdeveloped countries (Mamun, & Tapan, 2009). Integrating technology in the curriculum requires teachers' knowledge of the subject area, understanding of how students learn and level of technical expertise (Morgan 1996). Considering these issues, the Master Plan was formulated in 2012 with some actions for developing teachers so that they can integrate ICT in teaching-learning process targeted to achieve in 10 years (by 2021).

Statement of the Problem

Since 2021 is knocking the door, it is important to know to what extend the planned activities are done and achieved, and what initiatives are need to be taken to achieve rest of the target. In this context, the study has taken to explore the implementation status of the secondary teachers' professional development activities in comparison to the Master Plan for ICT in Education.

Rationale of the Study

In education, the term professional development may be used in reference to a wide variety of specialized training, formal education, or advanced professional learning intended to help administrators, teachers, and other educators improve their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness. The top qualities of a great teacher are ability to develop relationships with their students, knowledge of learners, dedication to teaching, engaging students in learning. On the other hand, developing a good number of professionally skilled teachers is one of the indicators of the Sustainable Development Goal 4 - Quality Education.

For a country like Bangladesh, it will be a huge challenge to develop huge number of teachers from secondary level by face to face training. In this situation, ICT can play a huge role for developing teachers' professional skills. The government of Bangladesh introduced a Master Plan for ICT in Education in purpose of getting the fruits of ICT through incorporating technology in classroom teaching-learning process as well as professional development for different level of teaching. Moreover, it is expected that the Master Plan will empower teachers and create an enjoyable learning environment in schools. The study will explore the picture of implementation status of this Master Plan regarding professional development of teachers in secondary level.

The findings of the study may reveal a clear picture of the status of the professional development of teachers in secondary level by using ICT in various policies, which can be used for preparing an effective plan for integrating ICT in education. The study will investigate the challenges faced by the authorities in implementing the master plan, which might be useful for taking proper initiatives to face and mitigate the challenges. The result of the study may help the

educational stakeholders to understand the importance of integrating ICT in teacher development initiatives. For this, it can be easy to plan and implement any further ICT initiatives related to teachers' professional development.

The study might be helpful for designing any further activities on developing teachers. Moreover, the findings may be supportive to the policy makers that they may think of including realistic activities in teacher development. As a whole, the study may be convenient to the policy makers to rethink about different concerning factors of the implementation of Master Plan for ICT in Education specifically on professional development for secondary level teachers in Bangladesh.

Objectives of the Study

The general objective of this study is to analyze the implementation status of secondary teachers' professional development in comparison to the Master Plan for ICT in Education in Bangladesh. The specific objectives of the study are to:

explore Implementation status of the activities for secondary teachers' professional development in comparison to proposal of the Master Plan for ICT in Education; and

analyze the challenges behind the implementation of the activities proposed in the Master Plan for ICT in Education for secondary teachers' professional development.

Limitations of the Study

The study focuses on the implementation status of the teacher development activities planned in the Master Plan for ICT in Education. The study has not worked on the impact level changes to find the result of the planned activities since the duration of the activities is not end yet. Moreover, the study covered only 4 districts and 40 respondents which cannot generalize the findings. The study could cover more respondents from different stakeholders if the resource and time permitted.

Methodology of the Study

The study was conducted in between July 2019 and June 2020 period in Bangladesh. The study area mainly focused on exploring status of the secondary school teachers' professional development has per the planned activities in the Master Plan for ICT in Education. To explore this, the study will follow the qualitative approach of research method. Detail study methodology is given below:

Sampling

Since the study mainly focuses on the implementation status of the Master Plan for ICT in Education for secondary teachers' professional development, secondary school teachers were the primary population to know the practice of the Master Plan under this study. However, government officials from different bodies such as from planning and development level, implementation level and academic level/training providers were the population for this study since they have close relation to this Master Plan in the role of either planning and/or implementation. Thus, Aspire to Innovate (a2i) and Directorate of Secondary and Higher Education (DSHE) as planning and development level, Teachers Training Colleges and Upazila Secondary Education Office as

implementation body were considered in care of implementation level. The govt. officials from these organizations were the population for this study.

From the above mentioned 4 organizations, researchers selected 15 officers purposefully (9 from Upazila Education Offices, 4 from Teachers Training Colleges, 1 from DSHE and 1 from a2i) to know the implementation status of the Master Plan for ICT in Education. On the other hand, researchers selected 3 secondary schools from 3 districts (1 from each district) as sample schools for this study. Total 25 secondary teachers were selected purposively from these sample schools to know the implementation status of the Master Plan for ICT in Education.

However, the sample districts were selected purposefully and then one secondary school was selected from each district purposefully. From each school 10 teachers were planned to be selected, however, 8 teachers were found in 2 schools and 9 teacher in 1 school. Thus, total 25 teachers found from 3 schools. Total sample distribution and sampling techniques are given in the following table:

Table 1.1

Overview of sample and sampling technique

S/N	Sample	Sample Size	Sampling Technique
1	Assistant Teacher	25 (from 3 schools)	Purposively
2	Planning and Development Level Govt. Officer	2 (1 from a2i, 1 from DSHE)	Purposively
3	Implementation Level Govt. Officer	13 (4 from TTC, 9 from USEO)	Purposively

Note: Based on Primary Data

Data Collection

Two types of data collection tools were employed in this study – Focus Group Discussion (FGD) guideline and interview schedule. The FGD guideline was developed and used for conducting FGD sessions with the assistant teachers of the selected secondary schools. On the other hand, interview schedules were used to collect data from other respondents individually. The following table shows the participants, data collection methods and the related tools:

Table 1.2

Overview of respondents, data collection methods and tools

Samples	Respondents	Number	Total	Data Collection Technique/Tools	Sampling Technique
Planning and Development Level Govt. Officer	azi Officer	1	2	Interview	Purposively
	DSHE Officer	1			
Implementation Level Govt. Officer	TTC Trainer	4	13	Interview	Purposively
	Academic Supervisor	9			
Trainee Teacher	Assistant Teacher	27	27	FGD	Purposively
Total Respondents		42			

Note: Based on Primary Data

Methods of Data Analysis

The qualitative data were divided first into some identical categories or themes through giving codes. After that, the opinions and views were analysed according to the identified themes. In this report, all the data were presented under selected themes derived from the Master Plan for ICT in Education and collected data through descriptions and graphs.

Data Analysis and Findings

Data Analyses Themes

As the study was conducted in qualitative approach, the researcher analyzed and presented the findings through few themes generated from both the Master Plan and collected data. After analyzing the Master Plan eight themes were identified to address the study objectives. First theme is related to integration of ICT in teacher training curriculum. On the other hand second and third themes are related to develop adequate number of master trainers to train all secondary teachers in Bangladesh on ICT and digital content development skills. Moreover, fourth and fifth themes are related to introduction of distance courses, and certification and recognition of the courses respectively. Sixth theme is related to developing online course contents and module whereas seventh theme is related to recognition of online exams. The last theme is related to interest free loan opportunities.

Table 1.3
Key Themes for Data Analysis

1. Inclusion of ICT in teacher training curriculum.
2. Develop adequate number (at least 1000) of master trainers to train teachers on ICT and digital content development.
3. Develop ICT & content development skills of all the secondary teachers through pre-service and in-service training.
4. Distance course through radio, TV and internet to develop teachers' professional skills.
5. Recognition and certification of online courses on teachers' training.
6. Develop online course contents/modules for teachers' training.
7. Arrange online examinations and award, recognition & certification.
8. Provision of interest free loans for teachers to help them purchase ICT materials.

Note: Based on researchers view

Key Findings According to the Themes

Inclusion of ICT in teacher training curriculum and challenges

- A 12 day face-to-face training on ICT and digital content development skills has been developed.
- ICT has been integrated in the teacher training curriculum as a tool of facilitation.

- Both trainers and teachers have lack of ICT skills in the non-ICT training.
- Both trainers and teachers have lack of positive attitude to use ICT in non-ICT training.
- Sometimes ICT is used excessively (unnecessarily) in some trainings due to lack of TPACK skills within both trainers and teachers.
- Lack of facilities at training venues especially in the non-ICT training.
- Lack of monitoring on TPACK skills during training.

Figure 1

Challenges for successfully integration ICT in training curriculum
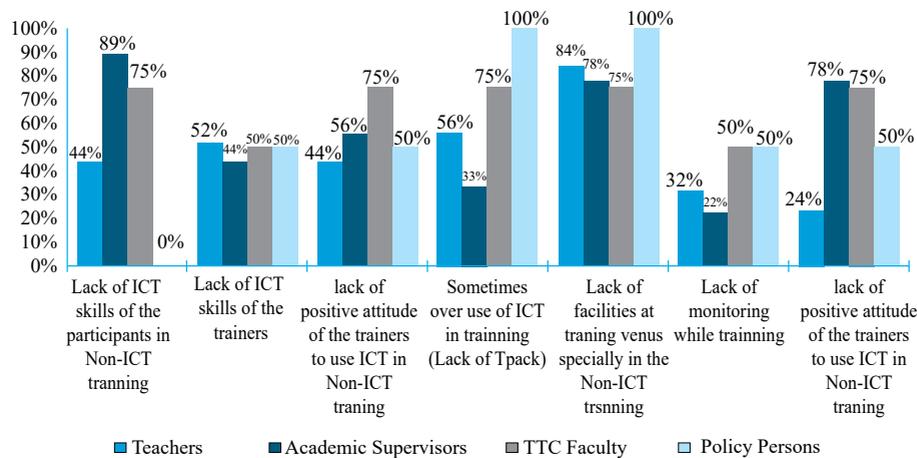
Note: Based on Primary Data

4.2.2. Develop adequate number (at least 1000) of master trainers to train teachers on ICT and digital content development and challenges

- 1000 master trainers have been developed to train teachers on ICT and digital content development skills though the number of master trainers are not adequate to cover all teachers at the secondary level.
- Both trainers and teachers have lack of TPACK skills.
- Lack of facilities at training venues with latest materials and software.
- Lack of monitoring on TPACK skills during training.

Figure 2

Challenges for developing adequate effective master trainers
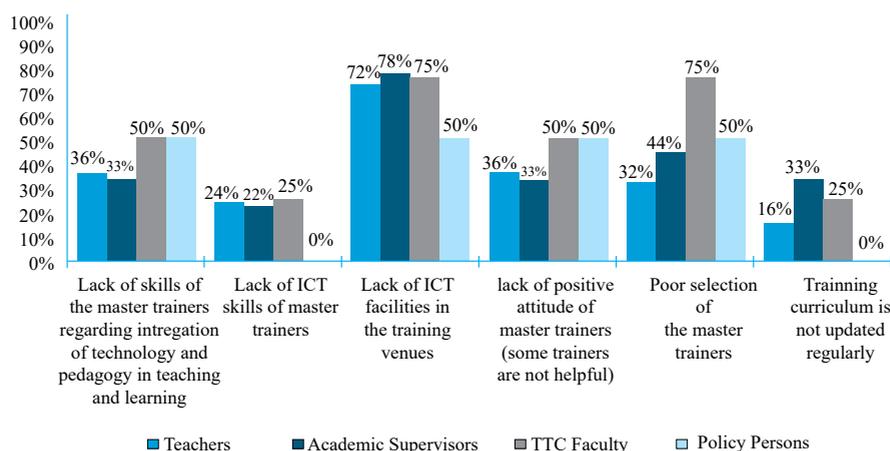
Note: Based on Primary Data

Develop ICT & content development skills to all the secondary teachers through pre-service and in-service training and challenges

- Around 200,000 teachers have received training on ICT and digital content development skills. Thus, around 100,000 teachers yet to be received this training so far. However, there is still time to cover for the rest of the teachers by 2021.

- "Upazilla ICT Training and Resource Center for Education (UITRCE) Phase-2" and "ICT for Education in Secondary and Higher Secondary Level Project-Phase 2" projects are supporting to achieve the target of developing all secondary teachers on ICT and digital content development skills.

- No pre-service training on ICT and content development skills for teachers is compulsory till now.

- Some trainees attended in the same training several times which indicates that trainee selection process is not efficient.

- Duration of the Master Plan seems not enough to develop all the teachers.

- There is lack of master trainers to develop all the secondary teachers professionally.

- Training curriculums are not updated regularly.

Figure 3

Challenges for developing all secondary teachers
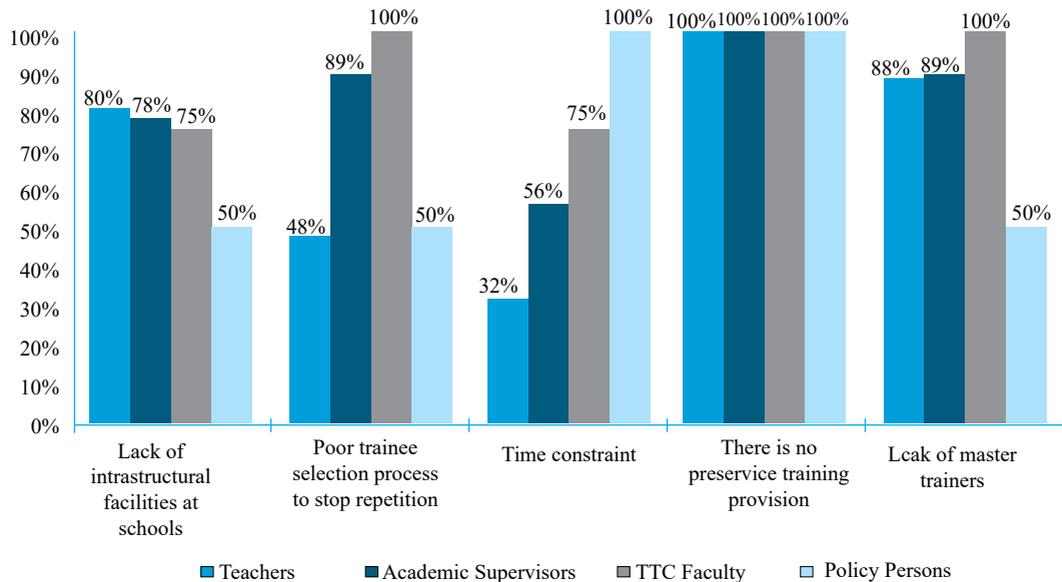
Note: Based on Primary Data

Distance course through radio, TV and internet to develop teachers' professional skills and challenges

- 16 online courses have been introduced in *Muktopaath* to capacitate teachers on different professional areas. Among these, 6 were developed by a2i and rest of the 10 were developed by development organizations.
- There is an online course in *Muktopaath* focusing on basic teaching and learning skills.
- Model classes were introduced in TV, but later stopped due to lack of TPACK skills.
- Lack of varieties of the online courses to develop different professional areas of the teachers.
- Lack of motivation of the teachers for doing online courses comparing to face-to-face training. The reasons behind this due to lack of linkage between course and incentives, i.e., honorarium, future training, higher study, etc.
- Busy schedule of the teachers is another challenge for doing online courses.
- Digital divices among the teachers is another challenge for participating online courses.
- Less scope of interaction within the online course compare to face-to-face training found as another challenge for teachers participation.

Figure 4

Challenges for developing distance courses successfully
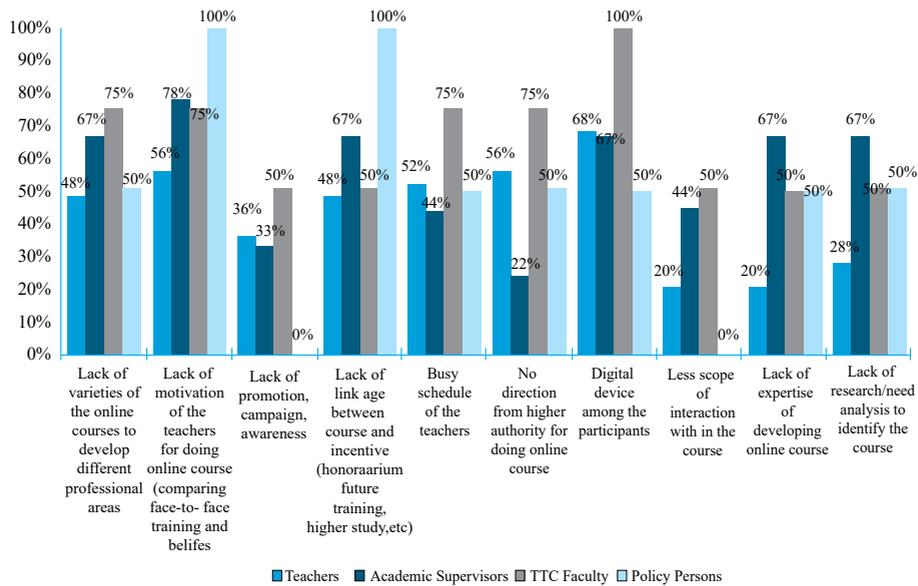
Recognition and certification of online courses on teachers' training and challenges

- Online courses are providing certificates though the courses are not recognized properly.
- Lack of partnership with national and international training institutes and academia is key challenge to increase recognition of the online courses for teachers.
- Lack of direction from higher authority for doing online course is another challenge.
- There is lack of research/need analysis to identify the updated courses required.

Figure 5

Challenges of recognition and certification of online courses
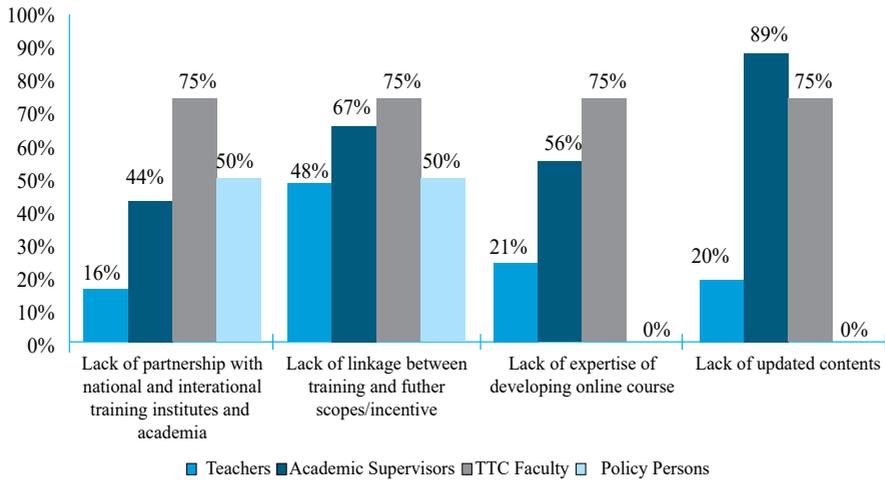
Note: Based on Primary Data

Develop online course contents/modules for teachers' training and challenges

- Online contents and modules developed for 16 are courses available in *Muktopaath*.
- There is lack of research/need analysis to identify the updated contents and modules required.
- Less scope of interaction within the online contents and modules are found in compare to face-to-face training module.
- There is lack of expertise found in developing online contents design and development.

Figure 6

Challenges for developing contents/modules for online course
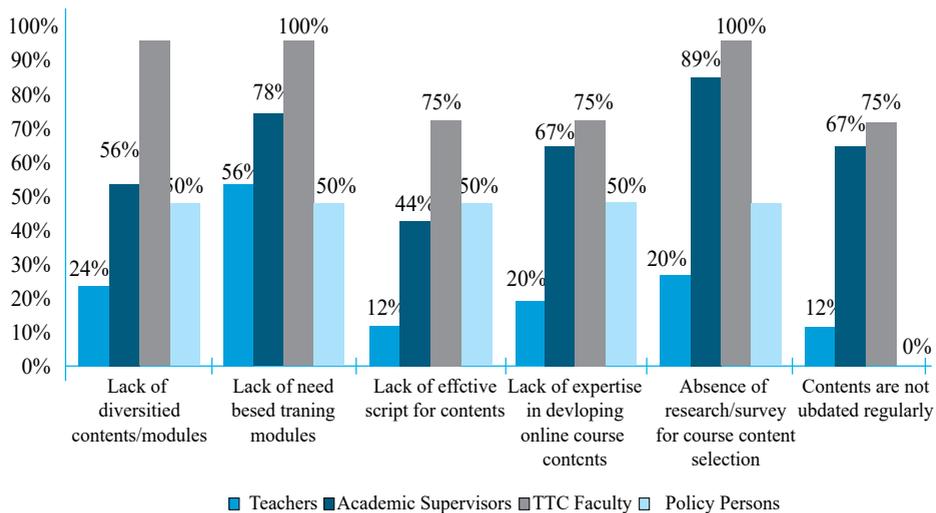
Note: Based on Primary Data

Arranging online examinations, award, recognition , certification and challenges

- No independent online exam is found though online courses have online exams.
- There is lack of expertise found in online exam design and development.
- No linkage found between exams and further benefits/incentives for teachers.
- Online exams for teachers are not linked with any academia or training institutes which is a key cause for less recognition of such online exam.

Figure 7

Challenges of recognition of online examination
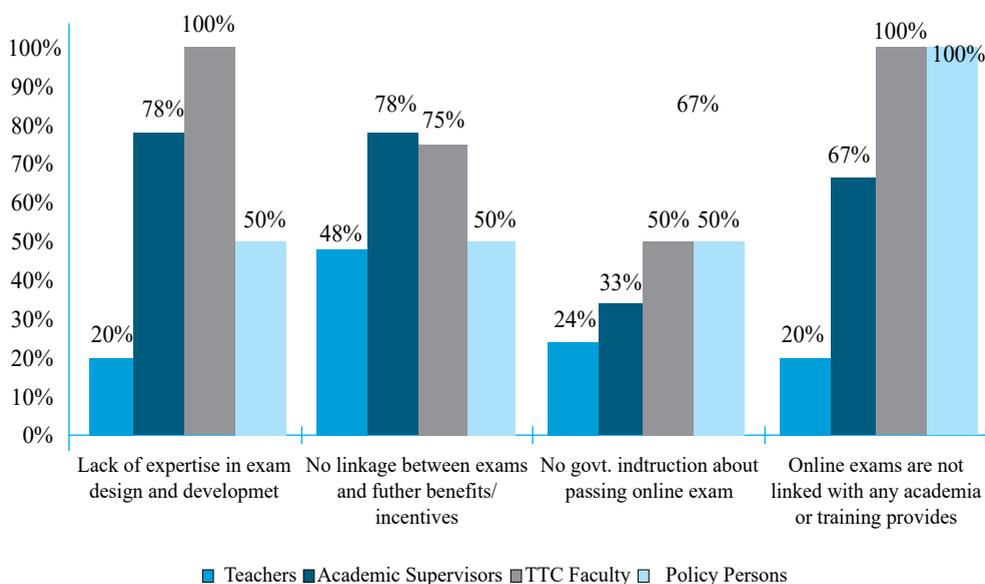
Note: Based on Primary Data

Provision of interest free loans for teachers to help them purchase ICT materials:

- Monthly installment provision for purchasing ICT materials has been introduced for teachers through making a partnership with Singer (a laptop seller company).
- Laptop and ICT materials are being provided as gift through best teacher award, best content developers award, best trainer award, etc. by a2i.
- Lack of awareness is found among the teachers regarding monthly installment facilities for purchasing ICT materials.
- Teachers also have lack of motivation for purchasing ICT materials.

Figure 8

Challenges for implementing interest free loan
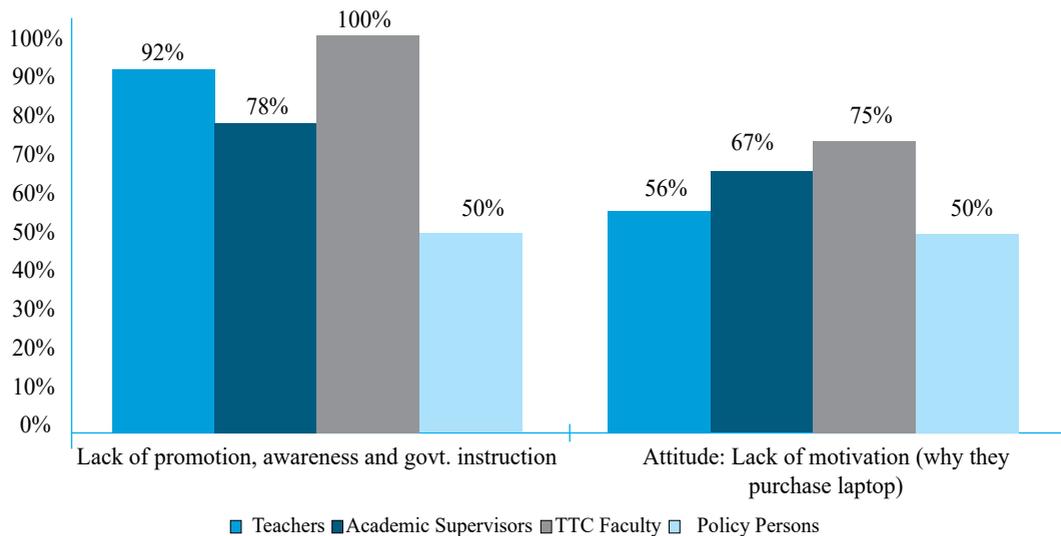
Note: Based on Primary Data

Recommendations

Based on the findings, following can be the possible measures for improving implementation of secondary teachers' professional development activities as planned in the Master Plan for ICT in Education:

- Technological, pedagogical and content knowledge (TPACK) and skills should be developed among master trainers and teachers so that they can effectively integrate/use ICT in their training and teaching.

- Training room should have a minimum standard with necessary ICT materials/facilities (number of laptops, projector, screen, internet, sitting arrangement, etc. so that non-ICT training can be delivered using ICT materials.

- Training monitoring should be increased and focused on TPACK skill.

- Master trainers should be selected through competency test.

- More master trainers should be developed to cover all the teachers.

- Training curriculum should be updated regularly to accommodate latest knowledge and skills.

- More online courses should be developed covering different professional areas of the teachers.

- A system should be developed to track trainees so that repetition can be avoided.

- Information regarding online courses, benefits and loan facilities of purchasing ICT materials should be disseminated to teachers through campaign, promotion or official notices time to time.

- Continuous research//need analysis should be conducted to identify professional development needs of the teachers as well as explore latest knowledge and skills for selecting and developing online coursed.

- Online courses should be developed by prominent experts in the field.

- Online courses should be linked with benefits, i.e., to get chance further face-to-face training, higher education, other responsibilities, cash incentive/honorarium, etc.

- Online courses should be more attractive, interactive and updated through engaging experts in the field.

- Partnership should be developed with national and international training provider and academia to add value/recognition of the course (certificate and recognition).

- Some basic trainings (online) might be set as pre-condition for teacher recruitment.

- Independent online exam should be introduced, i.e., to evaluate prior knowledge of teachers which might be helpful to recognize teachers' practical knowledge and experience in the field.

Conclusion

Teachers' professional development is a key to ensure effective teaching learning at schools and support for quality education. ICT plays a significant role in the teacher development process in recent days. The Master Plan for ICT in Education was planned in 2012 for developing teachers for use of ICT in teaching and learning. Though most of the planned activities are being done, however, some activities are facing challenges to be achieved due to some reasons. The study identified the challenges and made some recommendations so that the implementation of the Master Plan can be achieved. Moreover, some of the recommendations will help to develop next Master Plan.

Acknowledgement

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Evaluation of Multiple Choice Questions (MCQ) in Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) Examination

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Abstract

This study describes the importance of evaluation of MCQ in higher secondary certificate examination. The objective of the present study was to thoroughly evaluate MCQs of selected subjects in HSC Examinations. Qualitative & quantitative approaches have been followed and purposive sampling techniques were deployed in the study areas. Qualitative data was collected through Focus Group Discussion (FGD). For quantitative part, the primary data as well as secondary data were collected. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires and secondary data were collected from Dhaka education board. This study revealed that, the questions that were asked in each subject in 2018 had more difficulty and the percentage of 3 functional distractors were highest for 2018 than 2016. On the other hand, the discrimination power of the majority items were good in 2016 and the number of functional distractor were highest that of than 2018. In the case of 3 functional distractors, the percentage was lowest for Civics i.e. humanities and the overall percentage of functional distractors was highest for Physics i.e. science. Internal consistency reliability was good in 2016 and correlation between creative question CQ and MCQ were high in 2018. In cognitive level analysis according to Bloom's Taxonomy, it can be seen that in most cases the experts could not agree that the item what actually measures. FGD revealed that formative assessment was absent in all colleges, those who had received training do not have sufficient knowledge to construct MCQ, however many have not received training.

Keywords: Multiple Choice Questions, Difficulty Index, Discrimination Index, Functional Distractors, Non-functioning distractors, Focus Group Discussion, Internal Consistency Reliability.

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Introduction

The (MCQs) are widely used on classroom tests in colleges and universities and they often account for a substantial portion of a student's course grade (Mavis, Cole, & Hoppe, 2001; McDougall, 1997). A typical MCQ consists of a question, referred to as the stem, and a set of two or more options that consist of possible answers to the question. The correct or best answer is referred to as the keyed option and the remaining options are called distractors (Cizek, & O' Day, 1994). Function of a distractor is to attract students who do not know the correct answer while students who know the correct answer ignore them.

The MCQ format offers many advantages. It allows teachers to efficiently assess large number of students with minimal human intervention (McCoubrie, 2004); grading tends to be quick and easy, especially when students indicate their answers on an optically scanned MC response sheet (DiBattista & Kurzawa, 2011). Another important advantage is that a well-constructed MCQ test can yield test scores at least as reliable as those produced by a constructed-response test, while also allowing for broader coverage of the topics covered in a course (Downing, 2002; Bacon, 2003). Despite these advantages, MCQ testing is often criticized. Some authors have pointed out that MCQs are only capable of testing factual information and so are ill suited for testing higher-order cognitive skills (Walsh & Seldomridge, 2006; Masters, Hulsmeyer, Pike, Leichty, Miller, & Verst, 2001). However, it is clear that thoughtfully written MCQ items can serve to assess higher-level cognitive processes, although creating such items does require more skill than writing memory-based items (Buckles & Siegfried, 2006; Palmer & Devitt, 2007). Furthermore, MCQs can accurately discriminate between high-and-low achieving students (Downing, 2002; Schuwirth, & van der Vleuten, 2003).

Good item construction is critical since test grades affect students' educational outcomes and subsequent career paths (Tarrant, Knierim, Hayes, & Ware, 2006). However, well-constructed MCQ items are time consuming and difficult to write, and it is estimated that a good MCQ may require about one hour to construct (Farley, 1989). Teachers often spend a great deal of time constructing the stem and much less time on developing probable options. High quality MCQ requires the plausible options to be well-written (Haladyna, & Downing, 1989). Poorly constructed options or distractors frequently contain cues that allow students to guess the correct answer without the prerequisite knowledge and as a result, the item poorly discriminates between high-and-low achieving students (Downing, 2002; Biggs, 1999).

A functional or acceptable distractor is defined as an option with either a response frequency of ≥5% or a negative discriminating power. Conversely, a non-functional distractor is defined as an option with either a response frequency of <5% or a non-negative (zero or positive) discriminating power (Tarrant, Ware, & Mohammed, 2009; Ware & Vik, 2009). Di Battista and Kurzawa (2011) reported that as the number of functional distractors in MCQ items increased, discriminatory power increased and items became more difficult. They further reported that the discriminatory power of items fell off sharply as the number of distractors with a non-negative discrimination correlation increased, but discriminatory power was barely affected by the presence of distractors that were selected by less than 5% of examinees.

It appears from the above literature that there are many factors to consider when evaluating the quality of MCQs. One might examine the extent to which items conform to widely accepted item-writing guidelines (Haladyna, Downing, & Rodriguez, 2002). Another way to evaluate the

quality of MCQ items involves analyzing the responses that examinees make. MCQ testing has been a part of public examinations in Bangladesh. The first MCQ tests were included at the SSC Examinations. About 35 - 40% marks are currently allocated for MCQs on public examinations namely on JSC and SSC. These tests are developed by teachers teaching the courses. However, a few teachers have proper knowledge and adequate training in developing high-quality MCQs. Teachers either develop MCQs themselves or rely on MCQ test-banks as a source of questions, both of which may result in question quality which is less than optimal.

Statement of the Problem

HSC Examination is one of the most important public examinations in Bangladesh. It is very important to construct questions for higher secondary certificate examination. Many believe that quality of education has drastically fallen and one of the reasons is MCQs they claim. There are often substantial deficiencies in MCQ tests prepared by course teachers (Mehrens & Lehmann, 1991).

The present study aims to address the following questions concerning MCQs:

1. Are they reliable?
2. Are they valid?
3. Are they acceptable or optimum in difficulty level?
4. Are they able to mat up discrimination the key option?
5. Are distractors functional?

Rationale of the Study

Higher Secondary education is important to build up a career of the students. Government of Bangladesh has taken keen interest to improve the quality of higher secondary education. Quality at all levels of education has been a matter of growing concern for teacher's educators and policy makers in Bangladesh. It has been a talk of the town today that quality is gradually falling. Many believe that quality of education has drastically fallen and one of the reasons is MCQs, they claim. However, there is no known research in Bangladesh that has empirically addressed the issue. MCQs is a very popular type of assessment which is sometimes considered as easy tools for assessment and proper evaluation of the efficiency of the distractors will help the students to removes non-functioning distractors. The main purpose of this study, therefore was to examine the quality of whole test and individual items of MCQs on HSC Examination. Specifically, we analyzed MCQs on HSC Examination in 2018 and 2016 focusing on three key characteristics of individual MCQ: difficulty, discrimination, and effectiveness of the distractors.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of the present study was to thoroughly evaluate MCQs of selected subjects in HSC Examinations. The specific objectives were as follows:

1. To evaluate the effectiveness of MCQ items.
2. To examine reliability of MCQs.
3. To explore association between MCQs and CQs.
4. To assess reflection of curriculum intentions in MCQs.

5. To investigate whether criteria or guidelines were followed in preparing MCQs.
6. To suggest ways and means to improve quality of MCQs in future examinations.

Scope and limitation of the study

The present study examined the quality of multiple choice questions in HSC examination. There are 10 education boards (including Technical & Madrasha Boards) in our country. We selected only Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka among them. We got access to Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka for collecting secondary data. We also got the scope to look into the activities of Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education, Dhaka and also knew the scenario of the quality of Multiple Choice Questions and the numbers which are achieved by the students. In this research, only two years' multiple choice questions were selected. It is not enough for evaluating the quality of multiple choice questions at HSC level. It is so much time consuming that's why we could not select more years for this research purpose. Time and budget was not enough to do this research,

Methodology of Study and Data collection

Design

This study followed a mixed method research design involving both qualitative and quantitative approaches. For qualitative part, we conducted three Focus Group Discussion (FGDs) enquiring perception and experiences of teachers of urban, semi-urban, and rural colleges regarding Higher Secondary Certificate Examinations. For quantitative part, we collected primary as well as secondary data. To collect primary data, we used structured questionnaires which verified whether MCQs of HSC in 2016 and 2018 Examinations were prepared in accordance with Bloom's Taxonomy. Secondary data were collected from the board based on the following inclusion criteria.

Sampling

Complete responses of randomly selected 1000 students each in Bangla, ICT (Compulsory), Physics (Science), Civics (Humanities), and Management (Business) for 2016 and 2018 HSC Examinations were collected from Dhaka Education Board.

Inclusion criteria

1. Examinees who answered all the MCQs in selected subjects
2. Examinees representing male and female
3. Examinees representing urban, semi-urban, and rural institutions

Data Analysis

Apart from descriptive statistics (e.g., mean, standard deviation etc.), we conducted the following:

1. Item Difficulty Index
2. Item Discrimination Index
3. Distractor Functionality Index

4. Internal Consistency Reliability (Cronbach Alpha) of each set of questions.

5. Pearson product moment correlation between total scores on MCQs and CQs.

FGDs and workshop to assess reflection of curriculum intentions and to ascertain whether criteria or guidelines were followed in preparing MCQs.

The difficulty (or facility) of an item was determined by computing P. The P denotes the percentage or proportion of students answering an item correctly. The recommended range of P is 0.30 to 0.70 (De Champlain, 2010; Oermann & Gaberson, 2013).

$$P = \frac{No\,of\,students\,answering\,the\,item\,correctly}{Total\,h\,oof\,students} \quad \text{...............................(1)}$$

Item discrimination was determined by computing Upper-Lower Index (ULIC), point-biserial correlation (PBC) between item and total, and corrected point-biserial correlation (CPBC). The difference between PBC and CPBC is that the correlation in latter case is calculated between the item and the total excluding the item in question. This correction is made because total scores that have the item in question embedded within them will have a spuriously higher relationship (i.e., correlation). The following cut-offs were used in the present study where CPBC>.35 (excellent), .25<= CPBC<.35 (good), .15<= CPBC<.25 (fair), 0.0<= CPBC<.15 (poor), and CPBC< 0.0 (Miskeyed or Other Flaws).

$$ULI_C = P_{Upper} - P_{Lower} \quad \text{...(2)}$$

The upper group is made up of the 27% who are the best performers (have the highest overall test scores) and the lower group is made up of the 27% who are the poorest performers (have the lowest overall test scores) (Cureton, 1937). The difficulty of an item, as computed by using Equation 1, for upper group is subtracted from that for lower group determining ULIC.

When performance on the item is dichotomous, the product-moment correlation is called the point-biserial correlation, PB. When the dichotomous variable creates a distinction between those examinees who answered correctly and those who did not answer correctly, the formula is:

$$\boldsymbol{B}_C = \frac{M_C - M}{S} \sqrt{\frac{P_C}{1 - P_C}} \quad \text{...(3)}$$

Where Mc is the mean score on the criterion of the examinees who answered the item correctly; M and S are the mean and standard deviation on the criterion (total test score) of all the examinees; and Pc is the proportion of the examinees who answered the item correctly.

As for the correct answer, a dichotomous variable distinguishes between whether or not that distractor was selected (Millman & Green, 1989, p. 362). Distractor Discrimination Index was calculated in three different ways as follows:

$$ULI_D = P_{Upper} - P_{Lower} \quad \text{..................................... (4)}$$

Here ULI_D denotes upper lower index for distractor and P denotes the percentage or proportion of students selected a particular distractor. This is equivalent to Equation 2. The second index is equivalent to Equation 3 and was calculated as follows:

$$B_D = \frac{M_D - M}{S} \sqrt{\frac{P_D}{1 - P_D}} \quad …................................ (5)$$

Where PBD is the point biserial correlation for distractor, MD is the mean score on the criterion of the examinees who selected the distractor and PD is the proportion of examinees selecting the distractor. For most measurement purposes, an item which is deemed acceptable should have a positive PBC and negative PBD each (Millman & Green, 1989, p. 362).

When PBC is computed for the discrimination of the item as a whole, it forms a distinction between those examinees who answered correctly (i.e., chose the right answer) and those who did not answer correctly (i.e., chose one of the distractors). On the other hand, when PBD is computed, a distinction is made between those examinees who chose the distractor (i.e., answered incorrectly) and those who did not choose the distractor (some of whom answered correctly and some of whom did not). This distinction does not differentiate among examinees who answered correctly in contrast to those who did not.

A correct usage of PB for distractors is to change the two groups of examinees who are to be compared. One group should be those who chose the distractor, and the other group should be those who chose the correct answer. The dichotomous variable that would be formed would make a meaningful distinction between those examinees who answered incorrectly and chose this specific distractor and those examinees who chose the correct answer. If we call this index PBDC (for the comparison between Distractor and Correct choices), the formula for calculating it would be:

$$B_{DC} = \frac{M_D - M_{DC}}{S_{DC}} \sqrt{\frac{P_D}{P_C}} \quad …...(5)$$

Where MD is the mean score on the criterion of the examinees who selected the distractor, MDC is the mean score on the criterion of examinees who chose the distractor or the correct answer; SDC is the standard deviation on the criterion of examinees who chose the distractor or the correct answer, and PD and Pc are the proportion of examinees who selected the distractor and the correct answer, respectively. According to Attali and Freankel (2000), this modified version protects against type II error, i.e., from incorrectly rejecting a distractor whose MD is lower than MDC, but not lowers than M.

Distractor Functionality Index (DFI) or in other words Distractor Effectiveness (DE) was determined by using two indexes. A functional or acceptable distractor is defined as an option with a response frequency of ≥5% and a negative discriminating power (PBDC). Conversely, a non-functional distractor is defined as an option with either a response frequency of <5% or a non-negative (zero or positive) discriminating power (Tarrant, Ware, & Mohammed, 2009; Ware & Vik, 2009).

Findings, Interpretation and Presentation

The present study evaluated MCQs of Bangla, ICT, Physics, Civics, and Management of HSC examinations in 2016 and 2018. Please note that each question comprised of 4 options where one of them was the correct answer or key and remaining three were distractors. The number of questions given and analyzed in each subject is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

No of questions analyzed and given in HSC examinations

Code	Subject	2016		2018	
		Analysed	Given	Analysed	Given
101	Bangla	29	40	25	30
275	ICT	34	35	25	25
174	Physics	32	35	25	25
269	Civics	40	40	30	30
277	Management	38	40	30	30

Note: Based on Primary Data

While computing difficulty, discrimination and distractor functionality indexes, we analyzed only those questions having one correct option and excluded those having none or more than one correct option. The distributions of difficulty, discrimination, distractor functionality indices are presented in Tables and Figures.

Table 2

Range, Mean, Frequency, and Percentage of P values falling in each category of difficulty for each subject by year

Subject	Year	Range	Mean	$P < .30 =$ Difficult		$.30 <= P <.70 =$ Moderate		$P >.70=$ Easy		Total
				f	%	f	%	f	%	
Bangla	2016	.18 – .80	.55	02	6.90	22	75.86	05	17.24	29
	2018	.19 – .81	.49	06	24.00	15	60.00	04	16.00	25
ICT	2016	.13 – .98	.50	08	23.53	18	52.94	08	23.53	34
	2018	.19 – .78	.41	08	32.00	16	64.00	01	4.00	25
Physics	2016	.12 – .81	.50	03	9.38	26	81.25	03	9.38	32
	2018	.10 – .70	.38	08	32.00	17	68.00	00	0.00	25
Civics	2016	.15 – .95	.61	04	10.00	22	55.00	14	35.00	40
	2018	.05 – .97	.62	03	10.00	15	50.00	12	40.00	30
Management	2016	.00 – .99	.71	02	5.26	14	36.84	22	57.89	38
	2018	.10 – .97	.59	03	10.00	16	53.33	11	36.67	30

Note: Based on Primary Data

Table 2 shows that the majority of the items were in moderate difficulty (about 50% to 80%) across subject and year. Comparing across 3 streams namely science, humanities, and business, percentage of easy questions were highest for Management (36.67% to 57.89%), followed by Civics (35% to 40%), and lowest for Physics (0.00% to 9.38%). Comparing by year, 2018 contained

higher percentage of difficult questions than 2016; and physics was the most difficult in 2018. The results are presented in Figure 1 for easy understanding.

Table 3

Range, Mean, Frequency, and Percentage of CPBC falling in each category of discrimination for each subject by year

Subject	Year	Range	Mean	$^cPB_C > .35$ = Excellent		$.25 <= {}^cPB_C$ $< .35$ = Good		$.15 <= {}^cPB_C$ $< .25$ = Fair		$0.00 <= {}^cPB_C$ $< .15$ = Poor		$^cPB_C < 0.00$ = Flaws		Total
				f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Bangla	2016	-.21 – .50	.32	13	44.83	9	31.03	3	10.34	3	10.34	1	3.45	29
	2018	-.10 – .30	.18	1	4.00	7	28.00	8	32.00	5	20.00	4	16.00	25
ICT	2016	.00 – .45	.21	3	8.82	10	29.41	8	23.53	12	35.29	1	2.94	34
	2018	-.02 – .38	.18	2	8.00	6	24.00	8	32.00	7	28.00	2	8.00	25
Physics	2016	.00 – .56	.37	18	56.25	5	15.63	7	21.88	1	3.13	1	3.13	32
	2018	.04 – .41	.23	3	12.00	9	36.00	6	24.00	7	28.00	0	0.00	25
Civics	2016	-.09 – .38	.25	4	10.00	23	57.50	9	22.50	2	5.00	2	5.00	40
	2018	-.12 – .43	.24	5	16.67	10	33.33	11	36.67	2	6.67	2	6.67	30
Mana gement	2016	-.22 – .40	.23	6	15.79	12	31.58	15	39.47	2	5.26	3	7.89	38
	2018	-.30 – .37	.14	2	6.67	3	10.00	11	36.67	10	33.33	4	13.33	30

Note: Based on Primary Data

Table 3 shows that the majority of the items were in fair to excellent DI (about 50% to 90%) across subject and year. Comparing across 3 streams namely science, humanities and business, percentage of poor and flaws questions that means low/poor discriminating power were highest for Management (46.66%) in 2018, followed by ICT (36% to 38%), Bangla (36%) in 2018 and lowest for Physics (6.26%) in 2016. Comparing by year, 2016 contained higher percentage of good and excellent DI than 2018 and Physics was the excellent discriminatory power in 2016. The results are presented in Figure-2 for easy understanding.

Table 4

Frequency and Percentage of distractors falling in each category of Distractor Functionality Index for each subject by year

Subject	Year	Items with 3 FD DE = 100%		Items with 2 FD DE = 66.67%		Items with 1FD DE = 33.33%		Items with 0 FD DE = 0%		Total
		f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	
Bangla	2016	21	72.41	6	20.69	1	3.35	1	3.45	29 (100%)
	2018	14	56.00	11	44.00	0	.00	0	.00	25 (100%)
ICT	2016	26	76.47	5	14.71	1	2.94	2	5.88	34 (100%)
	2018	23	92.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	0	.00	25 (100%)
Physics	2016	24	75.00	8	25.00		00		00	32 (100%)
	2018	20	80.00	3	12.00	1	4.00	1	4.00	25 (100%)
Civics	2016	15	37.50	14	35.00	9	22.50	2	5.00	40 (100%)
	2018	10	33.33	12	40.00	5	16.67	3	10.00	30 (100%)
Manage ment	2016	7	18.42	14	36.84	11	28.95	6	15.79	38 (100%)
	2018	15	50	05	16.67	08	26.67	02	6.67	30 (100%)

Note: Based on Primary Data

Table 4 shows that the majority of the items were 3 functional distractors that means 100% distractor efficiency (about 50% to 92%) across subject and year. Comparing among 3 streams namely science, humanities and business, percentage of 3 functional distractors were lowest for Civics (33.33% to 37.50%), followed by Management (18.42%) in 2016 and highest for ICT (92%) in 2018. Percentage of 0 functional distractors were highest for Management in 2016 and lowest for ICT (0%) in 2018, followed by Physics (0%) in 2016. The results are presented in figure-3 for better understanding.

Figure 4.1
Percentage of questions falling in each category of difficulty index
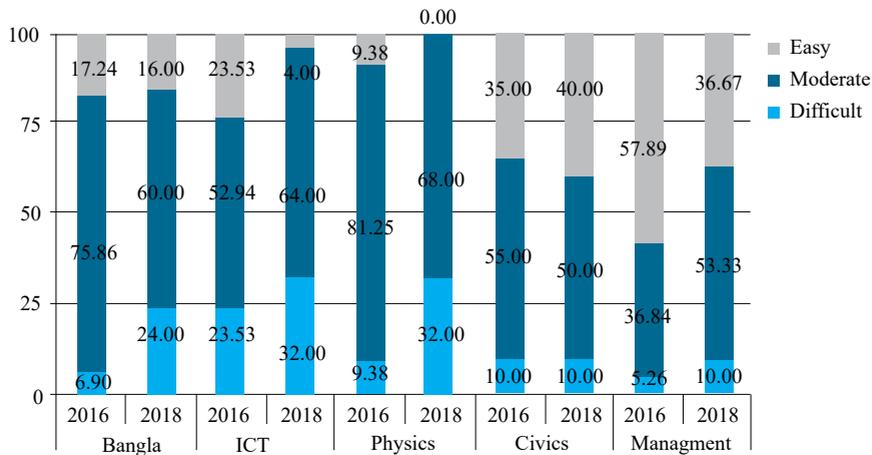
Note: Based on Primary Data

Figure 4.2
Percentage of questions falling in each category of discrimination index

Note: Based on Primary Data

Figure 4.3

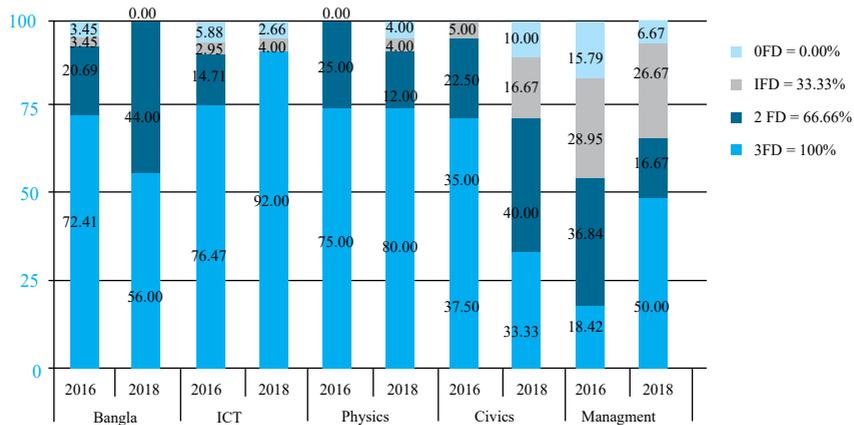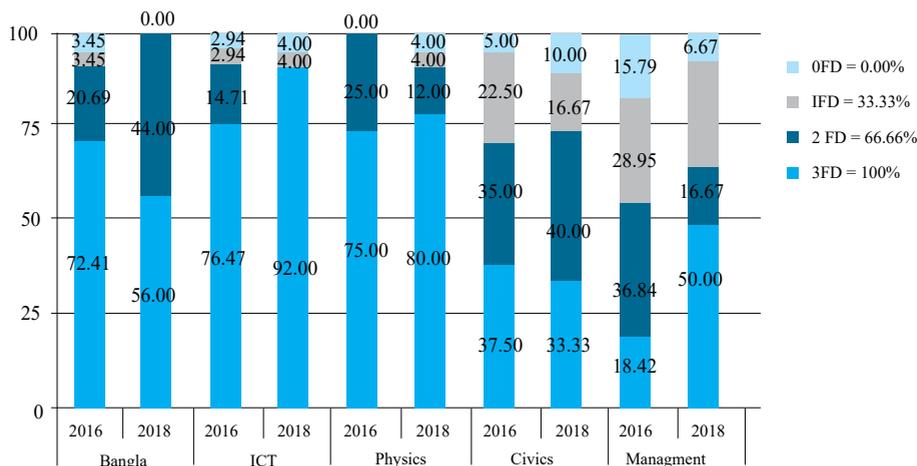*Percentage of questions falling in each category of distractor functionality index*

Note: Based on Primary Data

Table 5

Frequency and Percentage of distractor across items falling in functional (FD) and non-functional (NFD) categories

Subject		FD	FD %	NFD	NFD %	Total
Bangla	2016	76	87.36	11	12.64	87
	2018	64	85.33	11	14.67	75
ICT	2016	89	87.25	13	12.75	102
	2018	73	97.33	2	2.67	75
Physics	2016	88	91.67	8	8.33	96
	2018	67	89.33	8	10.67	75
Civics	2016	82	68.33	38	31.67	120
	2018	59	65.56	31	34.44	90
Management	2016	60	52.63	54	47.37	114
	2018	63	70.00	27	30.00	90

Note: Based on Primary Data

Table 5 shows that the majority of the items were in functional distractor (about 52.63% to 97.33%) across subject and year. Comparing across 3 streams namely science, humanities and business, percentage of functional distractor were highest for Bangla, ICT and Physics (about 85.33% to 97.33%) and lowest for Management (52.63%) in 2016. Comparing by year, 2016 contained higher percentage of functional distractor than 2018. The results are presented in fugure-4 for easy understanding.

Figure 5.1

Frequency of distractor across items falling in functional (FD) and non-functional (NFD) categories
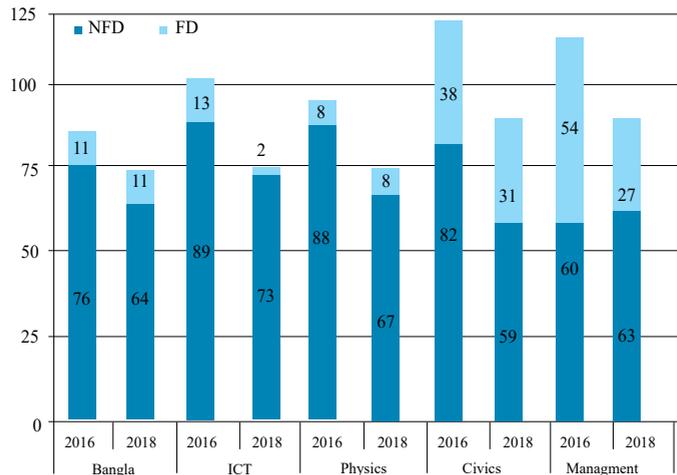
Note: Based on Primary Data

Table 6

Internal consistency reliability and Pearson correlation between total score on MCQ and CQ

Subject	Year	Cronbach Alpha	Remark	r (N = 1000)
Bangla	2016	0.81 (n = 29)	**Good**	0.55
	2018	0.59 (n = 29)	Poor	0.41
ICT	2016	0.69 (n = 29)	Satisfactory	0.46
	2018	0.60 (n = 29)	Poor	0.49
Physics	2016	0.86 (n = 29)	**Good**	0.48
	2018	0.69 (n = 29)	Satisfactory	0.62
Civics	2016	0.78 (n = 29)	**Good**	0.42
	2018	0.74 78 (n = 29)	**Good**	0.45
Management	2016	0.73 78 (n = 29)	**Good**	0.37
	2018	0.52 (n = 29)	Poor	0.34

Note: Based on Primary Data

Table 6 shows that internal consistency reliability of the 50% items were in good across subject and year. Comparing by year, 2016 contained higher internal consistency reliability than 2018. Apart table-6 also shows that the correlation between total score on MCQ and CQ were in moderate correlation but it was supposed to be high. Comparing by year, 2018 contained higher moderate correlation than 2016.

Figure 6.1

Frequency of functionality of distractors across items by levels (undecided, knowledge, comprehension, application, and higher order) as judged by experts
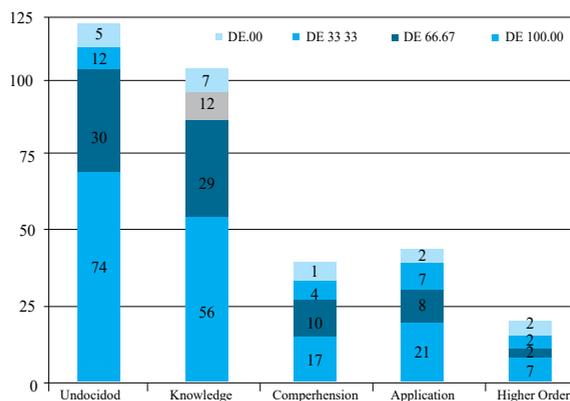
Note: Based on Primary Data

Figure 6.1 shows that the majority of the items according to levels (undecided, knowledge, comprehension, application, and higher order) were 100% distractor efficiency. Comparing by levels, percentage of distractor efficiency were highest for undecided questions and lowest for higher order questions which was not matched suggesting by the Board.

This research team also conducted an Focus Group Discussion (FGD) as a part of qualitative portion. The FGD portion describes the perception and experiences of teachers of college. The objective of the study was to access the reflection of curriculum intentions in preparing MCQs and to ascertain whether criteria or guidelines were followed in MCQs. FGD were carried out with teachers of rural, semi-urban and urban college. Through purposive sampling they were selected. The main findings of FGDs are given below:

- Study findings revealed that formative assessment is absent among all colleges and CQ and MCQ as summative assessment to assess the progress of the students but not for the purpose of providing students feedback.

- It appears that there is no similarities among colleges in terms of examination system as well as assessment strategy. Study findings revealed that most of the teachers of rural and urban colleges mentioned that they use both CQ and MCQ test in their internal exam. On the other hand, differences were found in the discussion with the semi-urban college where they mentioned that they use only CQ test in their internal exam except final exam.

- Based on the findings, there are several strengths and some drawbacks are fowned in using MCQs as a assessment. Those strengths were easy and quick scoring, time efficient to administer, easily cover the large range of curriculum and drawbacks were easy to guess and language complexity in case of few subjects.

- Constructing effective MCQ item requires a very deep knowledge as it is a difficult task (Flavio Tangianu, Internal Medicine, S. Martino Hospital, Oristano). This study revealed that except urban college teachers, most of rural and semi-urban teacher's knowledge about using guidelines seem not sufficient.

- It is also noted that, teachers who has training do not have sufficient knowledge for constructing an effective MCQ and non-trained up teacher mentioned that when they are asked to create any MCQ question, they just construct it by their own idea regards with some instruction of other senior teacher.

- This study revealed that many factors hinders teachers to practice to construct MCQ question items. It appears that teachers feel disinterest to make a new MCQ questions due to the availability of readymade question items of the guide. Some teachers mentioned that lack of time influence them to do this because they have teaching work load and other responsibilities.

- Study findings illuminated that lack of review and validation system of test item makes teachers more incapable to construct an effective MCQ question item. Except few urban college, there is no system of review and validation of MCQ question items is found in most of the rural and urban college.

- In FGD, it is revealed that online question bank could be a scope to construct an effective MCQ questions. From this discussion it is informed that there is initiated an online question Bank in Jessore Board in where all teachers input questions after creating questions all over the year. Teachers only can use that question when the question is reviewed and validated.

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendation

Multiple Choice Questions is one of the most reliable assessment tools which should be designed in this research following objective. If the objective is not clear, we would be unable to understand the assessment strategy and the research will be a failure. Multiple Choice Questions if properly written and well-constructed, are one of the strategies of the assessment tool that quickly assess any level of cognition according to Bloom's taxonomy. The difficulty and discrimination indices are among the tools to check whether the MCQs are well constructed or not. Another tool used for further analysis is the distractor efficiency which analyses the quality of distractors and is closely associated with difficulty and discrimination indices. A distractor used by less than 5% of students is not an effective distractor and should be either replaced or corrected as it affects the overall quality of the question (Hingorjo, R. M; & Jaleel. F).

The present study evaluated MCQs of Bangla, ICT, Physics, Civics, and Management of HSC examinations in 2016 and 2018. Each items comprised of 4 options where one of them was the correct answer or key and remaining three were distractors. Majority of the items were in moderate difficulty level across subject and year and comparing by year, 2018 contained higher percentage of difficult questions than 2016. Among 3 streams, science that means Physic greshion was the most difficult ones in 2018, since it failed to assess equally all the students.

On the other hand, according to discrimination index, across 3 streams, science that means Physics had the excellent discriminating power in 2016. That means, across each subject, through Physics was able to easily distinguish between good and poor students in 2016.

Majority of the items in our study was 100% distractor efficiency across subject and year. The number of 0 functional distractor were highest for Management in 2016 and lowest for ICT in 2018

and Physics in 2016. In other words, the number of functional distractors among 3 streams business was the lowest which reduces the difficulty level of the question and highest for ICT (compulsory) and science which increases the difficulty level of the question. A comparison between functional and non-functional distractors shows that the number of NFD was highest for Management in 2016 which raised the question of accurate and well-constructed MCQ question. This result is supported by the similar study of Hingorjo and Jaleel, which showed that the MCQs with more NFDs are easier than the MCQs with a lesser number of NFDs.

Internal consistency reliability determines how highly the test items are correlated and how well these items are predicted each other. In this research, the internal consistency of the 50% items were in good that means their score was above 70. The internal consistency of the MCQ items in 2018 was poor and the correlation among these items was low. On the other hand, in the case in Pearson product moment correlation, it was found that the correlation between total score on CQ and MCQ in 2018 was in moderate compared to 2016.

According to Bloom's taxonomy, in measuring the various skills of cognition, it was seen that the percentage of distractor efficiency was high for the undecided question for which the experts could agree less than 75% and low for higher order questions which was not matched suggesting by the Board.

Recommendation

Based on the findings the following suggestions are proposed:

Ongoing training on Guidelines of constructing multiple choice Test: Teachers' training is crucial. Teachers need to attend workshops and short courses on testing in order to get clear ideas about using guideline. Question Setters, moderators and invigilators along with subject teachers should be provided with the opportunity to attend training at regular intervals.

Need for the Establishment of Standardized and uniform assessment strategy: Teachers should be given clear guidelines about the assessment strategy.

Monitoring and Evaluation: Ongoing monitoring and evaluation on MCQ test item should be carried out. MCQ tests items of internal exam along with public exams need to be evaluated in the light of guidelines.

Ensure Fair environment in Exam hall: The government should take step to ensure the fair environment in the exam halls.

Online Question Bank: The Government should consider about the nationalization of Online Question Bank.

Post Test Evaluation: Post test evaluation should be done in regular basis which is not done despite the recommendations.

Conclusion

Finally, there were some limitations of this study. Data was not collected from multiple sources or participants due to time constraints as well as lack of financial resources. Therefore,

triangulation of data was lacking. There was dearth of published research in the Bangladeshi context in the relevant field. However, in several occasions in qualitative research, it is important to return to the informants twice or thrice to complete the interview in order to clarify certain aspects of the interview that were not clear. For this study it was not planned and for better understanding the data we felt its necessity.

Acknowledgement

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Marital Trend of Female Students during COVID-19 Pandemic in Bangladesh: A Causal Analysis

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Abstract

This study, is aimed to delineate the most recent matrimonial tendencies of female students during the lockdown period of Bangladesh. Since the theme is absolutely a new phenomenon to be explored by maintaining ethical concern in academic research, this article is deemed to contribute as a fundamental investigation. The study, in first instance claims that the inclination of female marriage is a causal effect of Covid-19. A mixed method is being followed in this study to unfold the causal variables behind the fact of the theme. The study is an empirically observational exploration, which mainly delineated a triadic sources of data and information viz, qualitative, quantitative and observational. It could be noted that the COVID-19 is a new pandemic, hence secondary data is insufficient. Thus, a substantial number of primary, secondary and observational data and information along with new real/normal life experience have been placed in this very recent thematic article. The Covid-19 is a worldwide lesson for all human beings irrespective of color, sex, creed, religions, ethnicity, racial and even national identity. There is no boundary and limit of horizontal boundary of Covid-19. It crossed all over the world without any schedule of time bound directions. Unfortunately, the pandemic already took away a total of 28,028 lives from Bangladesh (as of 12th December 2021) and total 5.31 million from the world during the same period. As we all are concerned that Bangladesh is over populated, moreover this early marriage would even create more causal complications within the next couple of years. This study found that a substantial number of factors instigated to both parents and new couples to live together by getting marriage instead of staying at least 6 feet away from each-other during the unsafe period of Covid-19, prescribed by the WHO.

Key Words: Marital Inclination, Female Students, COVID-19, Pandemic, Cause and Effect, Child Marriage, Early Marriage, Female Education.

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Introduction

The most downwind effect of the COVID-19 pandemic is a sharp increase of 'child marriage[1]'. Child marriage is often practiced to protect the physical security of girls, marriage at young ages can pose multiple threats to young girls' lives, health, and future prospects (UNFPA, 2009; WHO, 2015). The most devastating one is that female student pursuing child marriage instead of their family; it could drive the child marriage number even higher than expected. United Nations Population Fund's State of the World Population 2020 report estimate that COVID-19 will hinder the end of child marriage, and there will be an additional 13 million child marriages between 2020 and 2030, UNICEF said 10 million children will be brides for pandemic. Child marriage not only robbed childhood from the girls but also destroy their dream and potentiality of independence.

In Bangladesh 51% women got married before 18 years old and, the country belongs to the top ten highest levels of child marriage countries (UNFPA, 2020). Bangladesh government set out a target in Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) to eradicate the practice of early child marriage by 2030, but the marital inclination of female students during pandemic would make it difficult. Economic insecurity, school closures, lack of social security drives female students to marry off their early lives. There are many detrimental effects of early marriage, e.g., domestic violence, abuse, and early pregnancy, which results in end-up of education and their bright future. Without education, no nation can develop, so necessary measures should be taken to mitigate the drivers of female students' early marriage in Bangladesh.

1. COVID-19: A worldwide pandemic

At the beginning of December 2019, corona virus disease is known as COVID-19 (SARS-Cov-2) outbreaks in Wuhan, China. The 'WHO'[2] declared the COVID-19 outbreak a Global Health Emergency and Pandemic respectively 30th January 2020 and 11th March of 2020 (Hossain, 2020: 133). People can be affected by this virus via respiratory droplets of infected person coughs, sneezes or even talks or can be spread to people with close connections, and by peoples' touch or something infected by the virus and then touching the mouth, nose and eyes before they wash-up their hands. The initial symptoms of the corona virus are fever, cough and redness, shortness of breath, sore throat, and unexplained loss of taste or smell and in worst cases severe diarrhea. Most people recover from this disease without any hospital treatment, but 1 out of 5 affected people can suffer from severe breathing problems and need ventilation, especially aged people (50+). Doctors recommend that those patients must be admitted to a nearby hospital as soon as possible. WHO recommend social or 'Physical Distancing'[3] for not being affected by COVID-19 patients and 'Self-quarantine'[4] or self–isolation for COVID-19 affected patients to prevent the spread of the disease.

1. Child marriage clarifies the marriage that executes before the age of 18, is a significant problem faced by millions of girls each year Greene and et al., 2018), especially in Bangladesh.
2. The WHO which refers to the World Health Organization, was established for the attainment by all peoples of the highest possible level of health on 7th April 1948. It is a specialized agency of the UN.
3. Social/Physical Distancing means someone has to keep physical segregation from others. The WHO has been recommends keeping at least a 1-meter distance from one-another to minimize the possibility of COVID-19 infection.
4. Self-quarantine means refrain from others contact for two weeks who are not ill or affected in the time of quarantine. Now (at the time of writing) the period of quarantine has been reduced to 10 days.

2. The scenario of child marriage during COVID -19 in Bangladesh

The present Bangladesh government has been declared to eliminate child marriage by 2030 but the absolute figure of child marriage is really very alarming and concerning. The UNICEF stated that Bangladesh is a homeland of 38 million child brides, among them a total of 13 million married before they reach at the age of 15. The diagram (Cf below) illustrate the rate of married girls from different divisions in Bangladesh. Among all the divisions Dhaka is the home to highest child brides and they are 9 million and in each divisions i.e., Mymensing, Barishal and Sylhet has 2 million child brides; all of them marry before their 18th Birthday unfortunately.

Figure-1

Married girls below age 18 in Bangladesh during COVID-19

Note: Adopted from Bangladesh Child Marriage Report, UNICEF 2020. The data has been presented in the chart by the authors.

Due to C-19, female students marriage rate had increased significantly but this marriage failed to develop living standard of child brides rather worsen it. Female students could not continue their education due to their early marriage which illustrates in the following table-1:

Table-1

Educational background of married girls during COVID-19 in Bangladesh

Nature	Married within the age of 15	Married between 15-18	Married: 2019 - 2020
Nascence Rate (first view)	83%	18%	Do
Women Education: Above Secondary Level Secondary Level Below Secondary Level/Not Attending School	3 20 26	23 65 67	Do
Wealth Quintile: Poorest Richest	21 12	63 38	Do
Residence: Rural Urban	16 14	54 44	Do

Note: Adopted from Bangladesh Child Marriage Report, UNICEF, 2020. The data has been presented in the table by the authors.

Explanation: It is explicit that only a total of 83% girls got married at the age of 15 during pandemic period of 2019-2020 while 18% girls got their marital partners between the age limit of

15-18 in the same period. In terms of women education in 2019-2020, the table shows that only 3% can reach 'above secondary levels' and this rate increased up to 23% within the age range of 15–18. Only 20% girls reach 'Secondary levels' and this rate increased at 65% in the same range of age. In terms of 'Below Secondary Level or Not Attending School' only 26% female students attain at the age of 15 while this number increased up to 67% during 2019-2020.

In view of financial condition, at the age of 15, a total of 21% girls got married whereas this number increased to 63% within the age of 15-18. On the other hand, 12% girls of the rich families got married at the age of 15 and that is extended to 38% up to the age range of 15-18 during the danger period of COVID-19 (2019-2020). Finally, 16% married girls reside in the rural area (aged 15) while 54% girls at the age limit of 15-18 in the same area. A total of 14% child brides (age below 15) live in urban area and the number expanded on to 44% at the age of 15-18 in.

3. Reasons of female students marriage during the COVID-19 pandemic

There are several reasons behind the propensity of the female students' marriage during the COVID-19, which are shown at a glance in the following figure.

Figure-2
*Reasons behind the propensity of the female students' marriage*
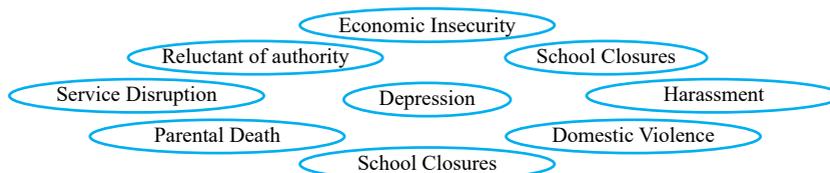
Note: This figure has been drawn based on various data collected from different sources.

■ **Economic insecurity:** In Bangladesh, early child marriage increases exponentially, and the harsh reason is economic insecurity. Center for Research and Information (an NGO), stated in recent research that a total of 38 million newly poor people emerged (1 in 5 persons) during the pandemic in Bangladesh.

A daily news portal, published from Dhaka (The Daily Vorer Pata, 2021) specified that the poverty rate increases almost 60%, employees are facing 25% salary cut, 14% of total population has been facing scarcity of food, whole economic system are at stake. Economic insecurity leads parents to marry off their girls because they cannot provide food and daily necessities. Nonetheless, most downwind effects of the COVID-19 pandemic faced by girl students who lost their primary income sources like home-based tuitions and a part-time job, with this income they usually meet the end. Now they are hardship which forced them for early marriage. The UNICEF report stated that more impoverished families are twice prone to marry off their daughter than affluent families at an early age. In pandemic, there are several reasons of economic insecurity in Bangladesh which are shown below:

Figure-3:

*Reasons of economic insecurity during the pandemic at a glance*
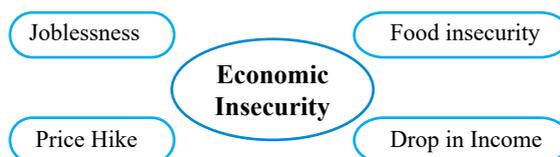
Note: The figure has been drawn by the authors from different available sources.

■ **Long time school closures:** School closers for Covid-19 significantly impacted on educational sectors and the social system as well. It severely challenges to combat child marriage in Bangladesh. It should be noted that all the students are detached from education and forgot their previous lessons; besides, these long-term school closures result in extra financial burden for those families who had been getting food and financial support from the school for their children education. Although some of the schools provided online classes but most of the female students were unable to afford these virtual devices, thus students were upgraded to new classes by auto pass.

Such system broaden session gap unexpectedly. School closures dissuade primary mechanisms for early child marriage, e.g., girl empowerment, social support and prospect of future career for girls. Not only that, parents are unable to manage their children for school closure; they do not consider any bright future for their girls, which inspire them for early marriage, indeed. However, the BRAC (2020) surveyed that 371 child marriage cases were prevented while 460 marriages were reported during January to September 2019. Again the ration were increased up to 638 (Prevented cases) and 778 were reported (got married) by January to September 2020 which is very alarming (Cf figure below).

Figure-4:
Prevented and reported of early child marriage during COVID-19
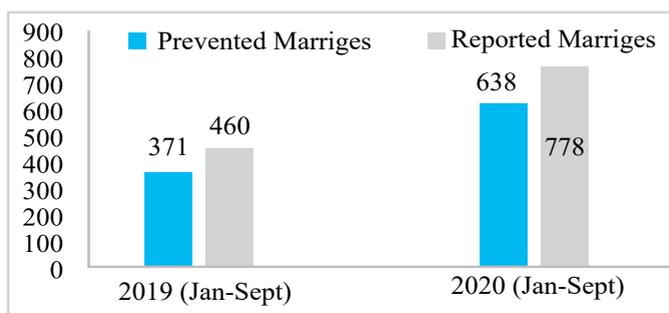
Note: Adopted from BRAC, 2020. The authors presented the data in the graph.

■ **Harassment and intimidation:** Many parents and their girls agreed for marry because of social security, harassment (physical and mental), and threats, including abduction, abuse or assault. Peoples mentality and prejudice make the marginal families' more vulnerable, so they cannot keep their girl unmarried if they wished to. Social norms indicate that they must give marry

their girl because their daughters are growing old or crossing limits for marriage. The marginal or low-income family cannot overcome this social restriction, and they cannot protect their daughter from society or criminals even they will not get help from police or local government authority. In Bangladesh, there are 3 million cases back logged in the Court related to women rights and safety (Cf Daily Star, 4th January 2021) and the procedures prolonged for COVID-19 related vacations or lockdown, lack of justice for rape and sexual harassment increases the fear among girls and their family which consequences female students' early marriage in Bangladesh.

■ **Depression:** The pandemic has a great impact on human mind which creates depression, and the marital inclination of female student's is its outcome. Female students are bored and home-bound, have typically lacked access to media, the internet and smart phones through which they could learn, and cannot move outside unnecessarily because their parents have forbidden them. The school closing effect is crushing; girls do not see any possibilities, jobs and opportunities and an overall bright future, creating depression. Girls do not find any viable way to overcome this depression without early marriage.

■ **Domestic violence:** Covid-19 pandemic increases domestic violence and various implications. Financial stress brings domestic stress, and the potential for violence grows; for lockdowns, many men are out of work and need more money to stay at home, for which pressure for dowry increased. Lockdowns escalate females work like cleaning, cooking, and maintaining home life; girls have to perform all this work with their mother, which is difficult for a daughter and brides who are still school-going students. Early marriage does not only put girls at higher risk of domestic violence and but it is also harmful to their mental health. Adolescent mothers have the risk of delivering pre-term and low weight infants, and the risk rate is 35 to 55% higher than older mothers; early pregnancy is the number one cause of death in girls aged 15-19 in Bangladesh. A recent study, from Bangladeshi NGO, "*Manuser Jonno Foundation*" illustrates that in June 2020, a total of 2,900 children were the victim of domestic violence in 53 out of 64 districts. The burden of women for dowry and workload increases domestic violence and encourage female students to early marriage as a solution to get rid of these problems.

■ **Service disruption:** The recent pandemic has upset the job market; small and medium industries and service companies, shops, private schools, and colleges shut down. Almost 13% of people lost their job in private sectors, most of the jobless were only income-generated persons who left their working place and went to the village and married a child bride. Despite this, another reason is that many foreign workers/migrants returned home for COVID-19, which provoked grooms and influenced girls and their guardians for early child marriage.

■ **Parental death:** The Corona pandemic has made the situation grave and heartbreaking all over the world. We have been fighting a ruthless war that has become indescribable; many families lost their beloved members so that many children lost their parents, some lost fathers or mothers. Because of losing guardians of the family, some has to decide to marry off their daughters early.

■ **Reluctant of authority:** In Bangladesh, different central and local government authority such as police, news agency, Court, and NGOs work to deter early child marriage, but for pandemic related lockdown concerns and officials were unable and reluctant to prevent child marriage, thus the families arranged child marriage smoothly. In addition, the concerned officials hide child marriage news because of the pandemic; only 20% of child marriages were reported while rest was hidden.

4. Positive effect of female students' early marriage during COVID-19

During COVID-19, positive effect of female students in early marriage was very limited in terms of its various implications. Low and middle income people were very much reluctant by setting their teenagers girls into marital performances/status due to various causes, noted above. However, the prime causes of positive effects of early marriage are delineated in the following manners:

■ **Social benefits:** Though the early marriage of female students has devastating impacts on society, there are some benefits of female students' marriage. First of all, those girls who lost parents found new guardians, family and shelter. Secondly, victims of social stigma and harassed girls and their families get physical security for marriage because the husband counts as a strong guardian in patriarchal societies like Bangladesh. 3. Thirdly, Social crime rate like eve-teasing, rape or abductions reduces.

■ **Economic benefits:** Most of the rural Bangladesh families are poor, they cannot fulfill their daughters' basic needs such as food, clothes, health care, and education, and the pandemic makes it worse than ever. Families are relieving from some financial burden to marry off their daughters. People can manage marriage at a comparatively low cost for pandemic situations, and the demand for dowry reduces, pushing low-income families to marry their daughters. Marry at a low cost or a little dowry sure of blessings for indigent parents.

5. Consequences of child marriage: present and future

The consequences of the marital inclination of female students during pandemic will be overwhelming for Bangladesh and will affect in various aspects of socio-economic and political life in the long run. Overall consequences of the marital trend of female students can be discussed in two parts, which are discussed below:

5.1. Prevailing Consequences:

Present effects of marital propensity of female students are not irreversible, but they can be visible within a short span of time. It will influence and create future effects of marital tendencies of the female students.

■ **Expanding population:** Although the Bangladesh government is committed to control the population growth but during the COVID -19 periods, female students' early marriage increase the rates population growth, resulting in early pregnancy and more birth. According to UNICEF report (Ending Child Marriage: A profile of progress in Bangladesh, New York, 2020), almost 5 in 10 Bangladeshi child brides bring forth before age 18, and 8 in 10 gave birth before their 20th birthday, 13% of child brides gave birth before 18 years old, whereas 83% gave birth at or after 18 years, the rate is sharply 70% higher, child brides give a birth average 3 to 4 children whereas women who married after 18 give birth 1 to 2 children on average. Hence, it would be difficult to control population for the pandemic because of female students' marriage.

■ **Rate of drop out increase:** UNICEF found that the married girls are over four times more likely to be drop out than unmarried girls and not return to school. Pandemic related school closures, travel restrictions and physical distancing increase the rate of drop out though the actual figure is unavailable due to lack of survey data.

■ **Rise of mortality rate and malnutrition:** Baby brides suffer from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and severe depression. In addition, miscarriages, labor difficulties, postpartum hemorrhaging and obstetric fistulas are also key causes for high rate mortality. It is estimated that 70,000 girls within the ages of 15-19 die each year from pregnancy and childbirth-related complications. A teenage-mother is at a significantly higher risk of infant mortality, with stillbirths and neonatal mortality rates 50% higher in adolescents than in older women. The lack of health consciousness, limited medical care, domestic violence and risk of early pregnancy are the main causal factors of premature death of both mother and baby in Bangladesh (Cf, the following chart).

Figure-5:
Trend of maternal, neonatal and post neonatal mortality rate
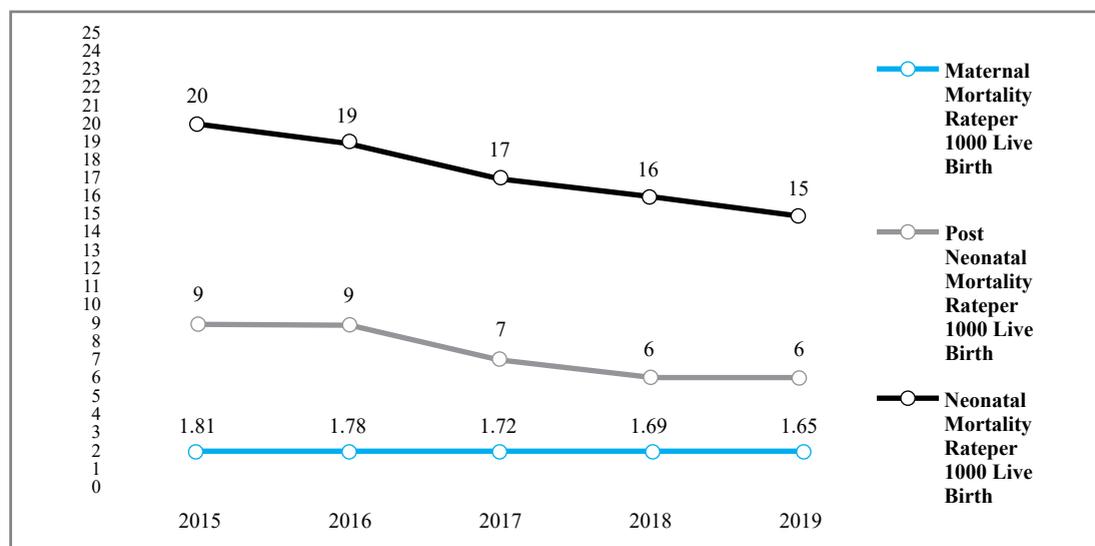
Note: Adopted from statistical Year Book of Bangladesh, 2020: 494-98.

The above chart demonstrates the maternal, post neonatal and neonatal mortality rate of Bangladesh; here the units measure in per 1000 live birth. The data have shown that the maternal mortality rate was 1.81% in 2015 and 1.65% in 2019, which indicates a slow decrease rate over the time. The neonatal mortality rate is significantly higher; in 2015, 20% died, whereas, in 2019, it reached 15%. In 2015, the post neonatal mortality rate was 9%, and it reduces to 6% within five years, though the rate is higher than expected.

■ **Termination of education:** Female married students always left education permanently because they have to perform household chores, look after children and family members, and pressure to have a baby or become pregnant, or they do not have information about family planning or no access to contraception. Even if they got divorce in early life, they could not continue study because of socio-economic and religious dogmatism. Child marriage always forces girls to abandon school and robbed their dream of being independent financially.

5.2. Future effect of marital propensity of female students during pandemic

Future consequences of marital propensity of female students during pandemic are enormous. The long-term effects of this matter is inevitable and that must cause destabilization the family

structure. Most of the middle and lower middle class family will be broken up because of the new family members. However, the key consequences are as follows:

■ **Domestic violence:** It has been observed during the pandemic that the domestic violence has been increased rapidly due to child marriage. Both the bride and grooms were immature due to tender age (most cases below 20). As a result they were unable to perform their family duties staying in family.

■ **Economic growth and equity:** Bangladesh and the whole world have been faced in an economic slowdown, economic growth reducing significantly, and the absence of equity. When female students are banned from accessing education, their economic opportunities and prospects are limited and trapped into a cycle of poverty, which will continue until the next generation. Illiterate or little educated women are not empowered in their families or society, so there is no social equity between men and women.

■ **Increase divorce:** Recent study found that women with a low level of education and married between ages 15-19 years are 50% more likely to experience spousal abuse and physical and sexual violence in their laws house throughout their life. The C-19 pandemic creates economic insecurity and depression which is one of the reasons behind high rate of divorce and domestic violence in Bangladesh.

6. Importance of female education

Napoleon Bonaparte stated that "give me an educated mother, I shall promise you the birth of a civilized, educated nation"- if you educated a man, you educated an individual, but if you educated a woman, you educate a nation. To prevent child marriage, gender inequality, violence against women, empowerment of women, education is mandatory. If we help our female students to continue their education, they will become our assets and contribute to the further development of society. In Bangladesh, female education is essential for sustainable development in all respects. It could be noted that half of the population are women in Bangladesh; sustainable development is quite absurd without their vivid participation. Generally, if the girls continue to study or go to school, it helps them delay marriage. Education can help them to build their strong future and make them self reliant and empowered. During this C-19 pandemic, many of our female students got married, some of them will become child mothers, some will become single mothers, and they will face difficulties of early marriage which can be prevented by proper female education.

7. Findings and future implications

Female students' trend of early marriage robbed their educational as well family life and future career. Most of them often isolated from family and friends. The trend of female students towards marriage has a devastating impact on society. This will slow down long term economic growth and keep the generation stuck in a vicious cycle of poverty. The economic hardship, authorities' reluctant, service disruption, shutdown of educational institutions, mental and physical harassment, anxiety and severe depression because of the staying in home for long time, domestic violence along with many others causal factors influenced the middle and lower class people to allow their female students to instigate marry during the pandemic of Covid-19 in Bangladesh. As a result, population and drop out of female students' increases, mortality and malnutrition rises, deteriorated of quality education, abuse of women, slow down of national economic growth and

finally increase separation and divorces during the pandemic period in Bangladesh. To overcome these problems, students and their families and responsible authorities must work together to see a better future for Bangladesh.

Acknowledgement

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