PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE ROLE OF HEAD TEACHER SECURING QUALITY PRIMARY SCHOOL0

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ABSTRACT

This study focused on the role and responsibility of the Head teacher in securing quality provision of the primary schools within a Bangladeshi context. Along with an investigation of quality, it is an attempt to explore the perception and practice of the practitioners in the primary education sector of Bangladesh.

Bangladesh has made considerable progress in primary education sector for example greater enrolment rate; massive reduction of dropout rates; better recruitment of quality teachers; rigorous training programs for teachers; comprehensive infrastructure development; widespread IT facilities and so on, despite this the country is working hard to address issues of quality.

This study has found that to ensure quality, the Primary School Head teacher plays the key role within and outside of the school. Effective planning for improving the quality provision of learning and teaching with active involvement of the wider range of community is necessary. Assistant Upazila Education Officer (AUEO) and chair of School Management Committee (SMC) also have to play vital roles in school planning and in securing better children's outcomes. It is found however that the issues surrounding accountability are less developed in improving performance.

A qualitative approach has been used in this study. This includes questionnaires, semi-structured interview and focus group discussion as data collection tools. Data was collected from primary sources from 20 primary schools in an Upazila of Bangladesh. Research findings show that primary school Head needs to be more organised and systematic in whole school improvement planning; in ensuring the effective participation of the wider range of community and in improving the quality of learning-teaching practice. Also, children's continuous performance data should be maintained to compare with the local and national level achievement and for effective planning. As a result of this work a number of recommendations have been made which are cost neutral and involve a reconfiguration of current practice, training programs for Head teachers and other educational officers.

KEY WORDS: Primary Education, Bangladesh, critical analysis, the role, Head Teacher, Securing, Quality, Primary School.

INTRODUCTION

As an introduction it becomes the first part of the research report, it provides an overview and importance of the study *(Kombo & Tromp, 2006).* In this area we discussed,

Background of the study

According to Campaign for Popular Education *(CAMPE, 2009)* it is acknowledged that education is essential to build a nation in fulfilling the potential of human life and central to this is the belief that primary education is the key foundation. It is also obvious that the Head teacher is the key role player in securing quality provision of a primary school. It is they who set the ethos, direction and purpose of their schools.

It is recognised by the article 26(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights *(UDHR, 1948)* that education is the fundamental right of human being. By the articles 15 and 17 the constitution of Bangladesh Government has determined free and compulsory primary education for all of its primary school going children.

But securing and enhancing the quality of primary education in Bangladesh remains a key issue for the country. Many reasons exist behind this issue. Bangladesh is an over populated developing country within a small area of land. Within 147, 570 square kilometre of land the country has about 19 million (19,067,761) children in all primary level schools (including Non-government schools; community schools; NGO schools etc.) and 527,798 teachers are engaged for in their teaching *(Annual Primary School Census, APSC, Bangladesh 2016).* Out of these 343,349 full Government teachers are teaching 18,602,988 children in 64,177 government primary schools *(APSC, 2016).* The Government is trying to minimise the teacher-children ratio; to build accommodation facilities for the rising number of children every year and other physical facilities to address the quality issues.

The Head teacher has a vital role to play in ensuring quality provision in the primary school. Logistic support; deployment of more manpower; building new infrastructures etc.

Considering that point of view, related area of interest is to investigate the roles and responsibilities of the Head teacher and accountability aspects in securing quality provision in the primary school in Bangladesh.

Research statement

The rationale in choosing the research topic is the current primary education administration of Bangladesh is dedicated to ensure better quality provision in all its schools. Recent research and statistics show significant improvements has been made throughout the country with some notable achievements. But in issues of quality, children's attainment demonstrated through terminal competencies remain one of the prime concerns *(Salam, 2015).*

This research intends to determine what makes a Head effective. One of the three key questions of the *ESTYN Guidance (2015)* for the inspection of primary schools in Wales has been devoted to the efficacy of the school leadership particularly the role of the Head. In that guideline the Key Question was 'How good are leadership and management?' The *ESTYN* report places great emphasis on the Head as the key individual who determines how successful the school is in securing quality provision. Research suggests that the effectiveness of Head's role has positive or negative impact on the achievement of the school *(Saiti & Fassoulis, 2012).*

The above ideas had great influence in selecting the research topic to investigate the practice, barriers and scope in terms of head teacher's roles and functions in securing quality provision of primary school. In this connection, the first aim is to analyse the current educational culture and practice of the Head's role within that primary education system. The second aim is to examine the gaps or barriers that prevent the enhancement of Head's role in the current climate and explore possible areas of improvement.

Many international studies have been conducted so far in investigating the Head's role and how could it be made more effective but little in a Bangladeshi context. This research places emphasis on developing the Head teacher role and responsibility in relation to development of learning and teaching pedagogy.

Significance of the study

In recent years, special concentration has been given to the issue of 'quality' especially in the discipline of primary education. Now it seems more important not only in Bangladesh but also all over the world that quality in primary education is essential for children's development. It is obvious, quality learning and teaching is very much related to the effective role of the Head teacher in any circumstance *(Ali, 2011).* This study, therefore, has a strong focus on the Head's role in securing quality provision within the primary school in Bangladesh.

This study assesses the opportunities of how effective execution of the Head's role can be done in a Bangladeshi context. Furthermore, the research may stimulate the strategic discussions of the Government policy makers as well as the practitioners to overcome the prevailing challenges of the schools to improve children's outcomes. This study examines a rethinking of the leadership concepts and current practices of head teachers in the primary schools of Bangladesh.

Scope of the Study

Culture or tradition in the primary education of Bangladesh has been established since independence. The country has already made significant progress in the primary education sector. But still securing quality remains

a major concern in the longer term. Though there is a big gap between expectation and practice, Heads and teachers are very willing to engage in strategies to improve quality. After so much development in the curriculum, infrastructure and funding now seems an opportune time to review current practice with expectations. This study is very optimistic that the role of the Head teacher can be enhanced further.

This study finds local education authorities and Heads tend to focus on issues of class size, the physical facilities and teacher supply rather than addressing the issues related to quality and performance. This study finds many good examples of initiatives within the existing system that could be incorporated and developed to enhance the role and day to day functions of the head teacher.

Objectives of the study

The general objective of this exploratory study is to explore the quality provision in the primary school of Bangladesh. In this connection this research aims to

- investigate existing status of Head's role;
- analyse the gaps between expectation and practice of Head's role;
- examine the assessment process of children's outcomes;
- discover the good practices and scope of improvement within the learning-teaching situation in classrooms;
- explore how effective involvement of the wider range of community could be ensured;
- evaluate the issues that prevent the enhancement of Head's performance;
- justify the provision of accountability of the practitioners.

Research questions

Research questions of this study are:

1. What is the current practice of head teacher in primary school in securing quality provision within the classroom?
2. How could the role of the head teacher be enhanced
    i.   in securing quality provision in class room in terms of children outcomes?
    ii. in making sure the effective involvement of teachers in quality teaching and better learning process?
    iii. in ensuring better teaching-learning environment through active participation of school management committee, parents and wider range of community?
3. What are the issues preventing the enhancement of the Head teacher's   role and possible strategies addressing them in securing quality primary   school?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality primary school

Quality primary education must be rights-based and child-friendly where children can learn to be a complete human being physically, mentally, socially, emotionally and psychologically *(UNICEF, 1999).*
The Ofsted framework and guidelines in the UK identify the key features for a primary school to be judged as outstanding *(Barksfield, 2015).*
A quality primary school is a combination of teacher's commitment, teacher's knowledge and also it is the responsibility of not just teachers but parents, school management committee and government policy with flexible learning spaces *(Neilly, 2016).* The word 'quality' is complex and comparative-it depends on the standard and expectation of stakeholders and to the country in which it is set. For instance, in Bangladesh only 1 teacher is deployed in pre-primary class irrespective of the class size *(National Pre-Primary Curriculum, Bangladesh, 2013).* In Wales, pre-primary education has a *teacher child ratio is 1:8 (Foundation phase curriculum, the Wales government, 2015).*

Quality primary education

What is 'Quality Education'-it is defined in a broader sense, that includes effective participation of the wider range of community and practitioners; Head's leadership quality; active engagement of teacher in mentoring learners; healthy classroom learning-teaching environment; considering the students in the centre of educational settings; and student's learning achievements.
Quality education is closely related with child-friendly schools that make certain every child, in an environment where they feel physically safe; emotionally and psychologically are safeguarded. To make sure these child-friendly school teachers have a duty to create an effective and inclusive classroom *(UNICEF, 1999).*
A child-friendly and rights-based primary school not only ensures quality teaching-learning but also makes sure many other essentials such as developing understanding by children of their rights and duties. The central role of the head teacher is to develop such a primary school. The head teacher is the moral agent that sets both vision and the direction. It requires effectual leader with high levels of commitment. The head teacher is an effective

manager to run all the concerns of a school proficiently by satisfying the anticipation of stakeholders through a collaborative approach *(Qutoshi & Khaki, 2014)*.

In search of head teacher's role

Numerous research work and analysis on the roles of head teachers in primary education have been completed especially in the context of the western education system. But, in the context of developing countries for example in Bangladesh, the roles and responsibilities of head teachers should be received much attention and supposed to be developed. *Spillane (2015)* explains, *'Leadership involves a social influence interaction in an effort to initiate change and transform existing ways of working in order to achieve some goal.'*

In the western context and in some educationally advanced developing countries, the head teacher is normally the senior teacher and leader of the school. He/she has the authority and responsibility to ensure education for all children as the main policy maker of the school. For example, in the UK, to be a head a person needs experience as a teacher, usually as a deputy head or some relevant other senior managerial experience *(Bill Laar, 2014, p 115)*.

In contrast, in Bangladesh the role of the Head teacher is regarded somewhat differently. In Bangladesh current recruitment policies do not require a head to have had previous teaching experience or training. It allows for recruitment of inexperienced graduates to be appointed as a head teacher *(MoPME, 2013)*.

Academic perspective

Successful head teachers are visionaries having an obvious sense of moral purpose. The Head teacher has many challenging roles to fulfil.

The Head teacher is responsible to implement government legislation whilst maintaining a focus on quality provision and outcomes within the classroom. It also sets future behaviours and directions for the school *(Sutcliffe, 2013)*. Being a leader, he/she has to be thoughtful and innovative; setting targets and inspires the team to reach them. Courage to do something innovative; passion for the profession; persuasion and judgment are also key qualities of a Head teacher *(Sutcliffe, 2013)*.

Numerous studies show, stages of learning in a primary school go perfectly if environment of classrooms remains in favour of quality teaching and learning. In contrast, if classrooms are disorganised and chaotic, very little academic activities take place *(Hanke, et al., 2014)*.

Distributed leadership

It is recognised that quality of primary education in the UK, depends greatly on the leadership qualities of the Head teacher *(Leithwood, et al., 2006)*.

Spillane (2014) says management activity improves current organisational arrangements and leadership activity which involves influencing followers to achieve the goal. Head teacher's leadership builds vision and direction that must engage with their teachers' perceptions of improving quality provision in the classroom.

'The Tannenbaum and Schmidt Continuum Leadership Model' illustrates the relationship between the area of freedom that a manager desires to offer to a team, and the level of authority used by the manager *(Tannenbaum & Schmidt, 1973)*. According to this leadership model, initially managers use high level of authority and a directive voice and if the team is successful then it can develop from direction to a more delegated leadership approach finally to the high level of freedom of the team and delegation of authority. In essence, the leadership approach can change from a directive style to a more participatory style *(Chartered Management Institute, CMI, 2015)*.

Challenges for Head Teacher

The role of a primary school head is challenging and all encompassing. The Head has to overcome many of barriers/challenges within the modern educational system if he/she wants to improve the quality of education. *Bill Laar (2014)* says head teacher should always look for new ideas and fresh approaches of problems. Challenges should be treated as opportunities not obstacles. In other words, problems and challenges may open new windows for a better focus or success *(Bill Laar, 2014 P, 63)*.

One of the major challenges of headship is identifying the strength and weaknesses of their colleagues to better understand how best to nurture and develop staff and so foster sound relationships with them *(Bill Laar, 2014 p.161)*.

Accountability

Accountability means not to say, 'this is your problem' but 'this is your problem, and try this way.' Effective accountability is perhaps easier to carry out when a school runs perfectly i.e. maintaining quality provisions/for the development of children. Whilst there are layers and levels of accountability for a primary school head then at first a charge is to be accountable to their children *(Bill Laar, 2014 p 97)*. In Wales Heads are professionally held accountable to the school governors and parents. Here governors are expected to play a vital role in supporting the head teacher in improving the quality provision for children's learning. In contrast, in Bangladesh

except in a minority of schools the SMC plays a minimalistic role. In the majority of schools, the SMC has little involvement and as a result has little impact on the directions and focus of the schools.

Qutoshi and Khaki (2014) shows in a Pakistani context that head teachers in community based primary schools are performing better than government owned school. They show, it is happening because their heads are working in an accountability system where the community and parents play an important part *(Moos, 2013)*.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research design

This research is carried out investigating the aspects of quality provision in the primary schools in terms of role and responsibility of the Head in a Bangladeshi context. Data were collected from primary sources by Interview, questionnaires and group discussion tools as parts of this process.

Research setting and sampling

This research was done in Bangladesh and data was collected from a range of primary schools in different locations of an *Upazila* of the country.

For data sampling population 2 teachers (1 male and 1 female) and the head teacher were chosen from each school (i.e. 20 head teachers and 40 teachers). As part of the teacher selection process liaised with an Upazila Education Officer (UEO) and Assistant Upazila Education Officers (AUEO). Also interviewed the UEO and 3 AUEOs from the Upazila.

Questionnaires

For this purpose, prepared 50 questions for head teachers. Out of these questions 32 questions were for addressing the teaching-learning issues and 18 for leadership and management aspects. To examine the perceptions and practice within the educational culture four scales such as 'strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree' were used in my questionnaires.

Interviews

Interviewed 10 people (including 3 Heads) who are directly involved in the school management and are all involved in leadership functions these included UEO, AUEOs, Heads and SMC chairs. All the interviews were audio recorded and duration of each recording was around 30 to 45 minutes.

Group discussions

In the group discussions participants were 9 parents, 9 students and 9 SMC members (3 from each 3 schools). Video recordings were done after receiving permission from the various participants.

Data analysis process

In this study data was collected on both hard copy and audio-video recordings and these were processed systematically.

Divided the transcribed text data into different themes relating to research questions.

The first step of data analysis is scoring the data, creating a codebook, cleaning the data and putting the scores in an excel spreadsheet for presentation.', Organised the text data into different themes and scored according to the scales mentioned in the questionnaires.

FINDINGS AND DICUSSIONS

The findings of this study to address the research questions.

The first research question tries to identify the existing practice of the Head's role in the strategic direction of the school. All 20 Heads and 40 teachers responded to these questions.

Table 1: Head's responses on 'strategy improving quality'

Survey questions for Heads	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I consult with teachers making strategy in improving the learning and teaching process on a regular basis.	35%	55%	10%	0%
My teachers always conduct classes with good preparation and they use appropriate learning teaching materials.	10%	45%	35%	10%
I prioritise parental consents and suggestions about teaching and learning.	20%	55%	20%	5%
I set realistic targets for teachers to enhance the quality of teaching.	10%	20%	50%	20%
I set realistic targets for teachers to enhance the quality of teaching and to enhance quality of students' learning.	10%	40%	40%	10%

Data source: Field data, 2017

Table 1(1): Teacher's responses on 'strategy improving quality'

Survey questions for Teachers	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Head teacher consults with me how to improve the quality of learning-teaching process on a regular basis.	12%	20%	28%	40%
I prepare plan in developing learning-teaching process and student outcome on a regular basis.	15%	22%	35%	28%
I believe students ask questions without any hesitation and provide feedback on their work on a regular basis.	20%	25%	35%	20%
I regularly use groups or peers in the class where appropriate and I believe learning in groups makes easier managing a big size class.	17%	23%	37%	23%
The Head teacher sets me targets to improve my teaching	7%	13%	45%	35%

Data source: Field data, 2017

Almost all Heads agreed that they consult with teachers developing strategies to improve the learning-teaching process within the schools. The greater majority of Head teachers listen carefully to parental comments. About half of them agreed that their teachers prepared well for the classroom.

Children's outcomes

Prior studies have noted that all school activities should be focused on improving children's outcomes. Here used a 3 statement type survey questions for both Heads and teachers to analyse their perceptions of children outcomes.

Table 2: Head's responses on 'children's outcome'

Survey questions for Heads	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe my teachers meet the learning needs of all our children.	17%	29%	32%	22%
I believe my teachers have a good relationship with our students.	30%	42%	20%	8%
I am satisfied with the achievement of learning competencies of the children.	12%	19%	47%	22%

Data source: Field data, 2017

Table 2 (1): Teacher's responses on 'children's outcome'

Survey questions for Teachers	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe I meet the learning needs of all my students	23%	57%	10%	10%
I believe students feel secure and comfortable in my class.	67%	27%	6%	0%
I am confident that my students are achieving their subject based and terminal learning competencies.	15%	26%	43%	16%

Data source: Field data, 2017

From table 4.3.2 only about a third of Heads agreed that they were satisfied with the learning outcomes of their children.

From table 4.3.2 (1) almost all teachers are quite satisfied that they have good understanding and relationship with children A greater majority of teachers are agreed that they achieve very little success in terms of meeting children's learning needs and achieving better learning competencies.

Engagement of teachers

Creative teachers, therefore make use of their individual creativity, to promote creative thinking and learning rather than just to interest and engage the children.

Table 3: Survey questions for the Heads on *'Engagement of teacher'*

Survey questions for Heads	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe my teachers are responsive to any kind of feedback regarding learning and teaching.	35%	50%	10%	5%

|				
I believe my teachers always try to improve their teaching quality and pedagogical knowledge.	20%	35%	30%	15%
I am satisfied with my teachers' engagement in ensuring children development.	25%	45%	20%	10%
I believe my teachers conduct classes to the best of their ability.	30%	40%	20%	10%

Data source: Field data, 2017

The survey finding on teacher engagement shows (table 4.3.3) that the greater majority of Heads are satisfied with teacher's response to the provision of feedback on their children's learning and their effectiveness in conducting classes.

Curricula and syllabi.

As part of this study a single question was asked to the Head teacher respondents how much flexibility is given in Bangladesh within the Primary Education Curriculum.

Survey question: *'In the curriculum I have flexibility to do what is applicable in my school to ensure children's better learning'.*
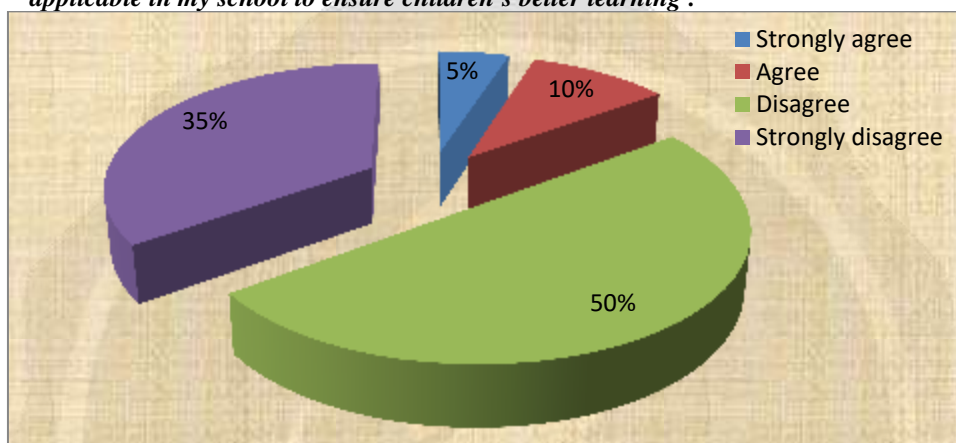

Figure 4: Flexibility in the curriculum
Data source- Field survey 2017

The above figure 4.3.4 indicates the overwhelming majority of head teachers agreed they need more flexibility within the curriculum and they feel that the curriculum restricts scopes and width of practitioners and at time can be viewed as a barrier to the individual needs of both the children and schools alike.

Survey question for Heads: 'I keep children's continuous   assessment and performance records'.
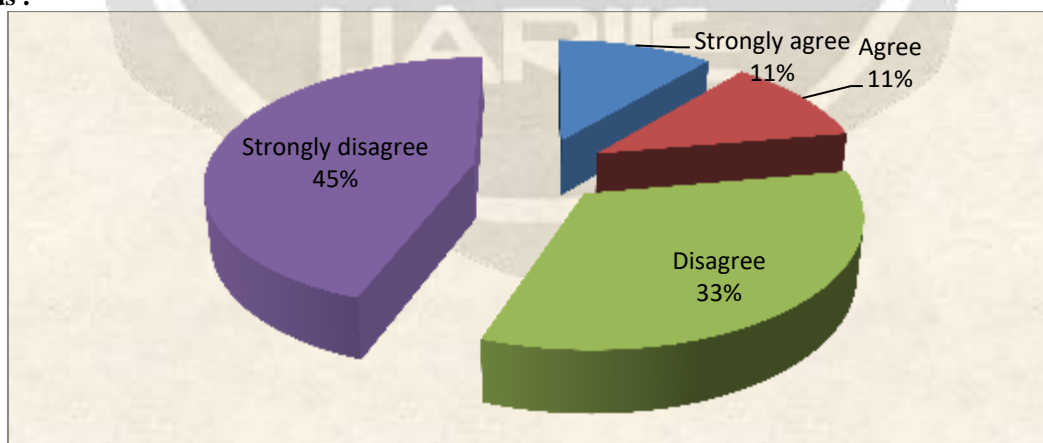
Figure 4.1 Head's responses in keeping children assessment and performance record
Data source: Field study 2017

Figure 4.1 shows that a significant minority of Heads agreed keeping assessment and performance records was important.

Finding shows that record keeping of children's development is not common practice within the existing culture of Bangladeshi primary education.

Classroom activities

This study examines this aspect data was collected from both Heads and teachers. To get a clear view, divided the theme into four separate but linked survey questions for the head teachers and in the same way provided three questions for the teachers. Below two tables presents the questions and corresponding responses:

Table 4.2: Survey questions for the Heads on 'classroom activities'

Survey questions for Heads	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I observe learning teaching process in the classroom on a regular basis	20%	30%	30%	20%
I collect reports from teachers of the classes they conduct on a regular basis.	5%	10%	30%	55%
I regularly assess students' outcomes by scrutinising their note books and exam papers.	5%	15%	35%	45%
I am satisfied with quality of teaching and learning in my school.	30%	40%	20%	10%

Source: Field data, (2017)

Table 4.2 (1): Survey questions for the teachers on 'classroom activities'

Survey questions for teachers	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Head teacher often comes to my class to observe the learning teaching process.	10%	20%	40%	30%
I submit a report to the head teacher on the learning outcome of my students on a regular basis.	5%	10%	35%	50%
Head teacher evaluates students learning outcomes through scrutiny of note books and exam papers.	5%	10%	35%	50%

Source: Field data, (2017)

The greater majority of Heads and teachers agreed they have little involvement in monitoring and evaluating the learning-teaching process.

So, the finding shows, in most schools, observation of classroom learning-teaching process by the Head is a major concern.

Strategic vision of school improvement

Within the heads' strategic vision, they need to explore new approaches to promote learning opportunities and so secure better pupil outcomes.

Table 5.1: Survey questions for the Heads on 'strategic vision for school improvement'

Survey questions for Heads	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I have a vision and a mission in improving high quality provision of students learning.	20%	60%	15%	5%
I provide a plan to the teachers and other authorities either on a monthly, quarterly, half yearly or yearly basis for improving the quality of learning of the students in my school	5%	15%	40%	40%
I understand the challenges for my school regarding improving the quality of teaching and learning	50%	40%	5%	5%
I understand fully the role of teachers in improving quality within the class room	35%	40%	20%	5%
I believe that I have a central role to improve the quality of teaching and learning.	30%	45%	15%	10%

Source: Field data, (2017)

From the above table 5.1 it is clear that the greater majority of head teachers realised that they have a central role for school improvement and are well aware of the central role in improving the quality of provision for learning and teaching.

From this response research finding is, preparation of strategic plan and distribution of work among the teachers and SMC by the Head for the overall improvement of the school especially the quality provision of learning and teaching are less practiced.

Resource management

Resource management, especially in a Bangladesh context is more significant because the country has to provide resources for around 65 thousand primary schools and close to 19 million children. So, it is a challenge for the Government to meet school requirements without the effective involvement of wider range of community.

Table 2: Survey questions for the Heads on 'Resource Management'

Survey questions for Heads	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I believe I can manage voluntary service from parents or SMC or the local community to support the learning and teaching process.	20%	50%	20%	10%
I believe that I have the opportunity to collect resources from the wider range of community to improve the quality provision of my school.	25%	45%	20%	10%

Source: Field data, (2017)

An interesting finding from the above table is that, almost three quarter of the head teachers agreed that they can manage voluntary service especially in the context of learning and teaching. In my group discussion I asked them, about their management of voluntary teachers to support their existing staff.

Professional working with teachers

When the relationship between Heads and teachers is professionally focused then the instructional behaviour of the Head becomes a major factor.

Table 5.3: Survey questions for the Heads on 'Professional working with teachers'

Survey questions for Heads	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I discuss the pedagogical aspects with teachers in staff meetings on a regular basis	30%	45%	15%	10%
I regularly arrange staff meetings on the quality of teaching for better learning.	35%	50%	10%	5%
I reassign my teachers to best ensure students' learning.	10%	30%	40%	20%
I believe my teachers are self-motivated in improving the quality of provision in teaching and learning.	15%	35%	30%	20%
My teachers have specific time-based action plans to improve the learning and teaching process of the classes s/he conducts	5%	20%	30%	45%
Through my planning I address the CPD needs of any teachers regarding improving quality	10%	25%	40%	25%
I believe my teachers feel comfortable to talking to me with any issue.	50%	35%	10%	5%
I analyse the challenges regarding improving the quality of teaching and learning.	30%	35%	25%	10%

Source: Field data, (2017)

Table 5.3 (1): Survey questions for the teachers on 'Professional working with teachers'

Survey questions for Heads	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The Head teacher regularly arranges staff meeting in developing quality of learning and teaching.	25%	40%	25%	10%
Head teacher redeploys teachers on the basis of pupil outcomes.	5%	20%	50%	25%
I have a good working professional relationship with my head teacher.	30%	45%	15%	10%
I feel confident to approach my head teacher about any teaching difficulties and the need for further training.	30%	40%	20%	10%

Source: Field data, (2017)

Both the above tables indicate that the working relationship between heads and teachers is generally good.

As a final point, this study found that almost in every school the working relationship between heads and teachers is good but this relation and understanding should be further developed to include a shared and planned way for improving the quality provision of learning and teaching.

Professional working with parents and SMC

A Head is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school whilst responsibility of the SMC Chair is to ensure that there is robust and rigorous performance management of the Head setting relevant targets.

Table 5.4: Survey questions for the Heads on 'Professional working with   parents and SMC Chair'

Survey questions for Heads	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Where appropriate I contact parents about their child's learning on a regular basis.	20%	40%	30%	10%
I believe I have a good relationship with our parents.	35%	50%	10%	5%
I believe my teachers have good relationship with our parents.	20%	35%	25%	20%
I believe parents of my school are cooperative and supportive.	15%	35%	30%	20%
In the SMC meetings chair and members attend regularly.	10%	20%	45%	25%
I arrange monthly SMC meetings with a specific agenda item on development.	20%	30%	40%	10%
I believe I have good relationship with chair and members of school management committee (SMC).	30%	45%	15%	10%
SMC chair and members are supportive of improving the learning and teaching in the school.	10%	30%	40%	20%

Source: Field data, (2017)

The study finding shows, the relationship between the head and SMC and parents is generally a positive one, therefore it is possible to engage them in improving the children's learning. It is an obligatory responsibility of the head teacher to utilise this relationship in securing quality provision of the school through effective planning, active engagement and distributing the tasks.

Issues preventing the enhancement of the Head's role

Through the third research question analyse the existing challenges that prevent the enhancement of Head's role in securing quality provision of the school. From group discussions with SMC members and parents and in-depth interviews with UEO, AUEO, Heads and SMC Chairs this study found that most of the primary schools are facing a number of challenging issues.

This study finding identified and consolidated the factors that are closely related in securing quality provision of learning and teaching. These are
- target oriented and task-based planning;
- training and awareness building;
- monitoring, evaluation and feedback;
- assignment based work distribution;
- cooperation and effective engagement of the wider range of community;
- accountability of the practitioners.

Provision of accountability

It is understood that accountability exists for financial and administrative activities; but challenging Heads on their pupil's outcome is not generally seen as part of the *'educational culture'* of the system. In addition, without the use of comparative pupil's performance data the extent of accountability will be limited both in scope and nature.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The Government of Bangladesh has made considerable progress in providing an education for all its children. Good progress has been made for in the provision of suitable accommodation, the provision of a national curriculum which is delivering basic levels of literacy and numeracy for all its children. The Government is spending and is committed to increased spending to further develop their goal of 'Education for All' and is mindful to now reduce class sizes within the provision of primary education and has already achieved success in

reduction in pupil teacher ratios in pre-primary classes creating and appointing new teachers. The Government will however need to know whether their spending has been cost effective.

If we require an education fit for the 21st Century all participants must play a greater role in delivering this as it cannot be delivered from a central precept. The Government therefore must have an assurance that standards are being raised in a cost-effective way and this can only be achieved through greater accountability of all participants working within the system.

This study, therefore, has a strong focus on the Head's role in securing quality provision of primary school in a Bangladeshi context.

Furthermore, the research may stimulate the strategic discussions of the Government policy makers as well as the practitioners to overcome the prevailing challenges of the schools to ensure children's outcomes. This study expects rethinking of the leadership concepts and current practices of head teachers in the primary schools of Bangladesh.

Key research findings are:

✓ **Existing practice improving quality:** There is a willingness of almost all primary Head teachers and assistant teachers to be engaged in the business of improvement.

✓ **Children's outcomes:** All Head teachers and teachers are willing to meet learning needs of their children and so achieve better learning outcomes.

✓ **Engagement of teachers:** More teachers need to be more actively involved in development of learning-teaching skills.

✓ **Curricula and syllabi:** The current 'competency-based' curriculum should be further developed to include elements of a 'skill-based approach'.

✓ **Children's assessment and performance records:** Schools currently are simply retraining their children's exam results to provide information to the next class rather keeping continuous assessment record for evaluating their learning outcomes.

✓ **Classroom activities:** In most of the schools, observation of classroom learning-teaching process and providing feedback and support by the Head is undeveloped.

✓ **Strategic vision of school improvement:** An effective strategic plan for the school are needed.

✓ **Resource management:** Almost all schools stated that there is a good relationship between the Heads, parents and SMC and they all agreed that they could play a significant role in managing voluntary service for teaching from the community and resources for improving their schools.

✓ **Issues preventing the enhancement of the Head's role:** the factors that are closely related in securing quality provision of learning and teaching are:

▪ An absence of a target oriented and task-based planning in school improvement including the teaching-learning process;

▪ A lack of CPD for Heads and teachers once appointed;

▪ Training on pedagogical issues;

▪ A lack of accountability through underdeveloped monitoring, evaluation and feedback process;

▪ A general lack of cooperation of the practitioners and effective engagement of the wider range of community;

Discussions

In terms of policy generation; regulation; monitoring and coordination; inspection and supervision; and implementation/execution the primary education system of Bangladesh can be considered as five major authorities of administrative units. These are

❖ **The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME)-** for policy generation and decision making;

❖ **The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE)-** for direction or regulation of the policy; **the Divisional[1] and District[2] level offices-** for monitoring and coordination;

❖ **The Upazila[3] level offices-** for inspection, supervision and achieving quality

❖ **The school level administration-** for implementation/execution

❖ **The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MoPME):**

▪ **Teacher recruitment policy:** Teacher recruitment policy needs to be revised. Certificate-in-Education (C-in-Ed) or Diploma in Primary Education (DP-in-Ed) qualification may be considered mandatory for

the candidates to apply for the post of a teacher. In addition, a six month of practice teaching in primary schools should be introduced as pre-qualification to apply.

- **An Assistant/Deputy Head teacher post:** An Assistant or Deputy Head teacher post may be created.
- **Career path:** Career path for teachers, Heads and officials should be given with due consideration.
- **Decentralisation of power and functions:** In respect of quality provision of learning-teaching and students' achievement the Upazila Education Office should become central to developing a target-based planning.

❖ **The Directorate of Primary Education (DPE):**

- **Curricula and syllabi:** There should be flexibility within the curriculum rather than over prescription to allow schools to develop new initiatives and what is appropriate for them at a local level.
- **Training, Monitoring and Support:** Rigorous training which includes AUEOs, head teachers and SMC (3/4 members) is crucial to ensure an effective partnership and preparing planning to ensure better pupil outcomes.
- **Planning and target:** DPE would collect yearly specific school improvement targets and planning from the UEOs based on quality improvement of primary education of an Upazila and District Primary Education Office (DPEO) would monitor and provide an overall district achievement report.
- **Performance management:** Performance assessment is essential in regards of quality attainment.
- **Record keeping regarding student's continuous development:** There should be a provision of student's continuous development record keeping rather than examination performance.
- **Involvement of the wider range of community:** For Resource mobilisation locally and effective participation of the SMC, parents and the wider range of community training and awareness building programs can be redesigned.
- **Accountability:** DPE needs to establish accountability culture of field level officials especially DPEO, UEO and AUEO and head teachers for their responsibilities and performances.

❖ **Divisional and District Office:** Divisional and district level officers' roles are inspection; monitoring; support and coordination; evaluation of performance; and ensuring the accountability of Upazila Education Officers.

❖ **Upazila Education Office:**

- **Planning:** UEO will collect planning form AUEO for each cluster of schools and AUEO will collect for each head teacher for individual school securing quality provision.
- **Provision of Sharing:** An AUEO can form groups of 6 schools (2 from best performing; 2 from average performing and 2 from poor performing). One teacher from each school will teach 4-6 weeks in another school within this group and AUEO will arrange experience sharing discussions.
- **Involving the SMC:** AUEO may analyse the issues and opportunities to establish a strong working relationship with head teacher and the SMC.
- **Classroom activities:** AUEO will continue observation of classroom teaching-learning and will follow up head teacher's observation.
- **Keeping records of student's learning outcomes:** Head teacher may maintain and preserve records of student's learning outcomes in prescribed formats provided by DPE.
- **Accountability:** UEO will monitor and evaluate AUEO's and head teacher's performance and achievement based on their planning on a regular basis and send the report to the higher authority with remarks.

❖ **School level administration:**

- **Community support:** Head teacher should ensure the effective participation of the SMC and the wider range of community in securing quality provision of the school.
- **Planning for improvement:** Head teacher needs to prepare planning to improve the necessary school infrastructure; learning-teaching environment; learning-teaching process.
- **Teacher's skills and pedagogical knowledge:** It is important to arrange continue a consultation culture on pedagogy among teachers on a regular basis and identify their training needs consulting with AUEO where necessary.
- **Classroom activities:** Head teacher must observe teacher lesson delivering process.
- **Accountability:** Head teacher must present every planning and performance report to the SMC and AUEO and s/he will be accountable to them for his/her performance and achievement.

Recommendations:

From the above discussions' recommendations are made for current implementations and identification of areas for further research.

For current implications:

R-1:   Restructuring the roles of the UEO and AUEO to include both a supportive and challenging role.

R-2:   Better training in learning pedagogy to be developed in Initial Teacher Training (ITT). This training also needs to be used for Head teachers, Assistant teachers and AUEOs who require updated knowledge of more effective pedagogy.

R-3:   SMC to be trained and supported at local level to take a more active and participatory role in whole school development planning and evaluation of pupil performance data.

R-4:   National and local collection of pupil performance data at set times to ensure that sets of comparative data can be used to support and challenge schools.

R-5   Most data are currently available but not collected or analysed at local level. Collection and analysis of pupil performance data will allow sets of comparative data to be produced. This data can be used by UEO and AUEOs in challenging the performance of schools.

R-6:   All schools should maintain updated records of pupil's performance throughout their primary stage of education. These records should be available for scrutiny at any time

R-7:   School to produce annual development plans which are collected and scrutinised at a local level. These plans should form the basis for District planning.

R-8:   AUEOs and Head teachers to instigate a performance management strategy and in doing so visit the classroom on a more regular basis to support and monitor learning and teaching practice.

R-9:   AUEOs need to develop their role in supporting the Head teachers in Whole School Development Planning. AUEOs should be present where Head teacher presents key reports to SMC.

R-10:   AUEOs to develop their role to support and challenge schools on the basis of the comparative performance data and their knowledge of the school. Reports of school meetings are to be collected at District level and 'Schools at Risk' to be identified via the current E-Monitoring System.

R-11   AUEOs need to identify schools that can be successfully clustered so to better support and develop practice. Clustering could include 2A, 2B & 2C category schools and this could result in setting a national target of an elimination of C category schools within a nationally agreed time frame.

R-12:   Head teachers to raise the priority of learning and teaching strategies through staff meetings and training days to include aspects of effective teaching. In addition, teachers must be encouraged to better support each other in their daily practice.

Areas for further research

This is despite the Government placing great emphasis on securing quality provision. In this situation, target-based planning; pedagogical contexts in the classroom; and accountability of the practitioners could be important areas for further research.

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