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Centre for Development Innovation and Practices (CDIP)

**EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT KEYNOTES**

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# Editorial

Centre for Development Innovation and Practices (CDIP) is committed to eliminating poverty and ensuring betterment in rural life through financial services, education support, primary health care services and other measures for the disadvantaged, marginalised and working poor people. CDIP, as its name suggests, seeks new paths and tries to translate new ideas into practices for the ultimate goal of improving people's lives. We, therefore, engage ourselves in some intellectual debates regarding education, health and other basic rights for the poor population and try to share our ideas, innovations and strategies for development with people concerned about these issues inside and outside our organisation. Besides a good number of books covering vital issues of development, our regularly published *Shikkhalok*, the organisation's Bengali bulletin on education and related issues, is a sign of our commitment to this, besides a good number of books covering vital issues of development.

KEYNOTES, a CDIP bulletin in English on education and other development issues, is a new step forward in this direction of looking for innovation and translating this into the development practices of the organisation and beyond. The need for bringing out such an

English language publication arises from our desire to deal with some development issues more deeply in order to connect with 21st century global ideas as well as to reach the civil society members and policymakers.

This first issue of KEYNOTES includes an extremely valuable article, delivered as a speech at the press conference in 1947, by Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, the legendary leader of the movement for Indian independence from the British rule and the first education minister of the independent India. Its philosophical and intellectual appeal is as strong as before and also relevant to today's circumstances here as well as elsewhere.

This issue of KEYNOTES has dealt with education and development issues that CDIP works with and may interest many others besides us working in this field.

Let KEYNOTES itself prove the justification of its coming into being through its contents and quality and clarity of its presentation of intellectual matters regarding education and development.

*Muhammad Yabiya*



# EDUCATION AND NATIONAL RECONSTRUCTION

MAULANA ABUL KALAM AZAD

Press Conference, February 18, 1947

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It is universally recognised today that a system of national education is one of the fundamental tasks which faces any government. Not only is the existing condition of society determined by the quality of individuals composing it but its future as well. Nothing has a more important bearing on the quality of the individual than the type of education imparted. A truly liberal and humanitarian education may transform the outlook of the people and set it on the path of progress and prosperity, while an ill-conceived or unscientific system might destroy all the hopes which have been cherished by generations of pioneers in the cause of national freedom.

India is today on the threshold of freedom. It is therefore imperative that we survey the prevalent systems of education in order to find out how far they meet our national requirements. There can be no denying that the existing system of education was shaped by non-nationals in non-national interests. Macaulay is primarily responsible for our existing educational methods and ideals. He never concealed the fact that his chief aim was to create in India men who in training, outlook and loyalties would be devoted to the interest to Great Britain. Nevertheless, the great services which the existing system of education has rendered to the Indian people need not be denied. It opened to them a new world of science and modern technology. It inculcated a

progressive spirit and brought Indian educational standards in line with the standards obtaining elsewhere. It has led a reawakening of the national spirit and a growth of modern and progressive outlook in all affairs of the world. There is equally no denying that this system has led to the creation of a small intelligentsia separated from the mass of the Indian people. It has also at times tended to divorce the educated class from the currents of Indian traditional life. Dazzled by the achievements of the West, it has at times encouraged a tendency to disown or look down upon our national heritage. It has also tended to encourage fissiparous tendencies. The greatest charge against the present system of education is that it has not led to the development of a national mind.

Macaulay's contempt for oriental studies is well known. History has not justified the sweeping condemnations which Macaulay extended to them. Nor can history justify the method which Macaulay adopted for the promulgation of learning in this land. Macaulay's contention that Sanskrit and Persian were unsuited to be the medium of instruction in India is no doubt correct, but English could serve the purpose no better. It is true that the different Provincial languages were not at the time sufficiently developed to serve as the medium of instruction but there can be no doubt that a National Government would have taken these languages in hand and gradually developed them to serve the purpose. In any case, the Indian languages today have attained a development where they can serve as the medium of instruction up to the highest stage. The experiment of imparting instruction in the mother tongue up to the matriculation standard has already been tried with success and the time has come when the process must be extended further and all education in land made accessible to the people in their own language.

All such development, however, presupposes a sound system of basic education. If the foundations have not been truly and firmly laid, no abiding superstructure can be built. The whole edifice of education and culture ultimately rests upon the teaching imparted in the early stages. In India this has been unfortunately neglected in a way which cannot be too strongly condemned. Education has often been left in the charge of persons who do not possess the minimum qualifications for it. Nor can they be blamed, for the

profession of teaching has been debased against the best traditions of the land. In the past the status of the teacher in Indian society was an exalted one. He might not have been wealthy but his comparative poverty was compensated by the need of respect and prestige which the profession of teaching carried with it. Today unfortunately all this has changed, and the teacher, especially in primary stages, is considered as hardly better than an inferior servant. Any programme for reconstruction of education must therefore place in the forefront the task of improving the status and condition of teachers, and I am confident that the new National Government of India will recognise this as one of its first and foremost tasks.

It is most necessary to go into the details of the scheme for reorganisation of basic education as that has already been sufficiently discussed in the press and on the platform. It will suffice to say that the basic scheme of education will go a long way towards meeting some of the points indicated above. This report popularly known as the Sergeant Report not only ensures an improvement in the status of teachers in all stages but also lays down the criteria along which education for citizenship should proceed. The emphasis on the development of education through the mother tongue has also been sufficiently recognised in that scheme. It is a matter for pleasure that the provinces are making arrangements for giving immediate effect to the scheme and have requested co-operation from the Centre. The Educational Advisor has received invitations from most of the Provinces and is shortly going out on tour. I propose to call a conference of Provincial Ministers and representatives of universities in order to plan out a comprehensive programme of work.

One question on which the Report has not come to any definite conclusion is that of religious instruction in schools. I know that there is a sharp difference of opinion among experts on this question. Two committees appointed by the Central Advisory Board of Education have submitted contrary reports. In the past a majority of educationists placed the emphasis on purely secular education. This was true of Great Britain and in Russia, after the Soviet Revolution; there was a positive anti-religious temper in educational policy. Those who hold a different view emphasise that experience tends to prove the futility of education from which religion has been divorced. Today in Great

Britain a system of education has been evolved under the supervision of the State. It is reported that Russia also has in the recent past recognised the value of religious instruction and taken steps to that effect.

The Government will have to give proper weight to both these points of view and come to a decision on the question. One thing, which, however, has to be remembered, is that in India the emphasis on religion has been and is greater than in other countries. Not only the past traditions of India but also the present tempers of the people tend to emphasise the importance of religious instruction. If the Government decides that religious instruction should be included in education, it seems imperative that the religious instruction offered should be of the best type. The religious instruction often imparted in India in private institutions is of a kind which instead of broadening the outlook and inculcating a spirit of toleration and goodwill to all men produces exactly the opposite results. It is likely that under State supervision even denominational teaching can be imparted in a more liberal spirit than under private control. The aim of all religious teaching should be to make men more tolerant and broadminded and it is my opinion that this can be more effectively done if the State takes charge of the question than if it is left to private initiatives. I will indicate the decision of the Government on this question at an early date.

Another point on which I want to express my opinion is in respects of the educational activities of missionary societies. Friends from England have sent me cuttings from papers in which this question has been raised. There is no doubt that missionary societies have played a very important part in the dissemination of modern education and the development of modern outlook. This is true not only of India but of other countries of the east as well. I can speak with personal knowledge of the Middle East countries. Before 1907 the only institution imparting modern higher education in turkey was Robert College run by the American Mission and its contribution to the awakening of Turkey can never be forgotten. Modern education in Syria was largely the work of missionaries who founded three colleges in Beirut of which the most famous was the American Missionary College (Al kulliyatussuria). Higher education in Iraq is similarly indebted to 'kulliya Qudais Yusuf', i.e. St. Joseph's college. The

same story is repeated in Egypt. It is true that Mohammad Ali the great founded in the first quarter of the 19th century overseas scholarships for Europe under the name of 'Irsaliat' but most of the important personalities in Egyptian renaissance are products of the missionary college of Beirut. The well-known modern Arabic author, George Zaidan, whose history of Islamic Civilization has been translated into English by Nicholson, was a student of missionary college of Beirut. The Sarroof Brothers, well-known editors of 'Al Muqattam' and 'Al Moqatataf' also received their education and their inspiration of service from the same missionary college.

These missionary societies helped not only in the spread of modern education but, what is more, contributed greatly to the development of indigenous languages. They were also in many cases the pioneers in Oriental research and scholarship. Vondyke came as an American missionary to Beirut when he was only 18 and devoted himself to the development of modern education in Syria. The scientific series which he published under the name of 'An Naqsh Fil Hajar' is one of the best scientific works in Arabic of the 20th century. Perhaps the best modern book on astronomy in Arabic is his work entitled 'Al Hai-at'. I do not want to dilate here on the services they have rendered in China, Japan and other South-East Asian countries.

New education in India also began with the work of the missionary societies. The East India Company had at first been in favour of Oriental education and it was through the efforts of the Serampore Mission that the foundations of European education in India were laid. Since that time missionary societies have kept up their educational work and brought learning to millions who, but for their help, would have remained immersed in illiteracy and ignorance.

Their work in the development of Indian languages has also been of the greatest value. One of the first standard works in Urdu prose is a translation of the Bible that they completed in the beginning of the 19th century. Urdu has made tremendous strides in the last 150 years and yet this early translation of the Bible remains a standard of Urdu prose.

With such valuable examples of the work done by the missionaries in the past there is no reason why their work on the same humanitarian lines should not

receive equal appreciation in the future. It is only in respect of one problem that difficulties arise at times. This is on the vexed questions of conversions and especially conversions en masse. World opinion has undergone great changes on the question and responsible missionaries have themselves come to recognise that mass conversions are in reality no conversion at all. Christ himself emphasized the baptism of the spirit rather than formal baptism by water, and missionaries would be true to the spirit of Christ, if they preached His message of humanity instead of attempting to convert people to the dogma of a Church. If all missionary societies adopt this enlightened outlook, there is no reason why independent India should in any way hesitate to accept the services which it is theirs to offer.

I would like to say a few words about another problem. The Deputy Educational Advisor (Resettlement) informs me that during the war two million soldiers were made literate by the army through the use of the Roman script. Experience showed that they could acquire a working knowledge of Hindustani in three to six months time. I am told that this would have been impossible to achieve if the Devanagri or the Urdu script had been used. Roman has thus solved the problem of finding alternative for men of different provinces. If these men who have been made literate during their service in the army are not to lapse into illiteracy, we must provide them with suitable literature in Roman Hindustani. There is a great demand for such literature and the Department is considering how to meet this demand.

It is desirable that every Indian should learn both Devanagri and Urdu scripts. This will, however, take time and till this is achieved, it would be worth considering whether the use of Roman as a supplementary script, in addition to Devanagri and Urdu, in Central educational publications may not be a temporary expedient. There are millions of Bengalis, Madrasis, Oriyas, Assamese and many speaking other languages who can understand Hindustani and pick it up quickly but find an impediment in their progress because of the script. This, however, is a question which ought to be considered by educationists all over the land.

I will now indicate some of the main items which may be taken up in the near future:

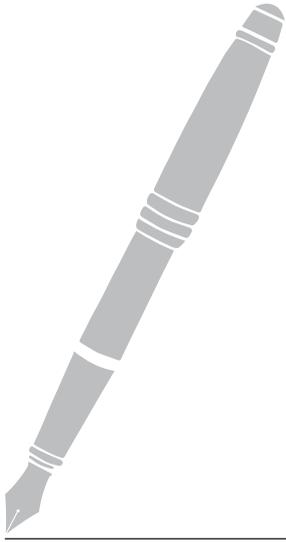
1. The time has come for setting up a National Museum where the finest representations of Indian philosophy, literature and art may be preserved. The first step in this direction will be the setting up of a National Cultural Trust as proposed recently by the Central Advisory Board of Education.
2. There should be provision for fundamental research work, and for this, definite sums should be allocated every year. It is obvious that there can be no advance in either industry or technology without fundamental research work. The scope of such research should, however, be extended and cover not only the scientific subjects but also the Humanities including philosophy, the Social Sciences, Anthropology etc. The Co-ordination Committee of the Cabinet has approved, in principle, of a grant of Rs. 75,000 for fundamental research work in the next five years.
3. (a) There is also a proposal for the appointment of a Committee to prepare a guide for teachers for the new scheme of education. While the Central Government do not wish to impose uniformity but to leave the greatest possible margin of freedom to the Provinces, there should be some indication of the general lines on which this education is to be imparted. (b) The question of preparing some kind of generalised curriculum may also be considered. Any fixed curriculum has the tendency of imposing rigid uniformity and therefore the preparation of this curriculum should be undertaken with the greatest possible care.
4. The Government of India are considering the question of making grants to educational experimental institutions without waiting to verify the results of such experiments. There are not many institutions of this kind and most of them have been unable to give their best as financial difficulties hampered them from the very outset. It is not suggested that the Government of India should be lavish or careless

in making grants but wherever genuine efforts of this kind are in evidence, the Government should come to the help of the institution at the initial stages so that lack of funds may not hinder the institutions from carrying out their experiments. Two institutions of this type which have recently received Government help are the Jamia Milia University, Delhi, and Santiniketan in Bengal. It is, however, obviously impossible to mention all such institutions.

5. Another field which requires immediate attention is the development of Archaeological Studies in India. We have as yet no complete history of India and it will have to be reconstructed from the monuments and other archaeological remains which are scatterover the land.
6. Disraeli very rightly recognised that a democracy has no future unless it educates its masses. In India, the problem arises with even greater intensity. The problem of mass education here is of vast proportions and will require time for its solution. It cannot, however, wait and modern science has placed in our hands effective instruments in the form of broadcasting and the film. I am considering schemes by which they may be utilised to the fullest extent for broadening the mind of the masses and opening up a new world of knowledge to them.

I will conclude by stressing once again the imperative necessity of reforming and expanding our system of education. Education should have the highest priority in our national budget and should take its place immediately after food and clothing. In fact, the proper system of education is necessary in order to tackle satisfactorily even these problems. I have every hope that we shall be able to make up our leeway by a determined and concerted effort and place education in India on a par with education in other civilised countries of the world.

*The writer is the legendary leader of the movement for Indian independence from the British rule.*



# QUALITY IMPROVEMENT AND INCLUSION IN EDUCATION

SHAJAHAN BHUIYA

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A person is born free, but cannot remain so for the values, beliefs, norms, standards, institutions, customs, traditions and so on in the society set the limits beyond which the new-born and the care-givers cannot go. But, the existential human cravings tend to erase the limiting parameters that stand in the ways of their freedom, liberty and pleasure that invigorate the life and living. So, the very purpose of education has to set the children free from ignorance and negative emotions manifested in fear, anger, hatred, annoyance, etc. from the very beginning and gradually equip them over time with the means of physical existence along with the intellectual, ethical-moral and spiritual development. In short, education is the means as well as the process of liberating the learners with the real knowledge. And knowledge is simply actionable information.

Liberty and freedom is the inherent core value of humanity as has been evidenced in the process of unfolding of human history. So, we are told that “ontological and historical vocation of mankind is their liberation.” (Freire, P, 1972) Individually, a human being after the birth as a free baby in the society has to wage the struggle for freedom from ignorance, fear, insecurities of life and livelihood, suppression, oppression, dehumanization and so on. A society of educationally enlightened people which is dreamed by the peace-loving and

democratic people all over the world will have the power to liberate them from crimes, vices and sins that lurk in many present-day societies to hinder their inalienable rights to live as human beings in their respective societies and states. The education that liberates intellect, unlocks imagination, enables perceiving the reality and is fundamental to self-respect through the process of interesting and pleasing support, engagement and challenge necessary by an education system in society is, perhaps, the most desired.

British empiricist philosopher Bertrand Russell says that a human body is a sensitive recording instrument. (Russell, B, 1992) In one perspective, a human being is in fact a sensible biological instrument. Why? The sensorium in it captures the stimuli in the environment for their sensations, perceptions and interpretations. The eventual consequences are either pleasure or pain felt by a person. It is the natural tendency of a person to maximise the pleasure and avoid the pain as far as possible.

Generally, motivation is the dynamics of human behaviour. Dynamics means energies or forces which produce motions in physical bodies. So, motivation is viewed as energies or forces working behind the need satisfying human behaviour. Positive motivation is the outcome of positive incentives. There is a need to maximize the feelings of pleasure by individuals. This creates a demand condition in them to be addressed by the supply of positive incentives for engagement and work devoid of fear, threat, coercion, punishment, exclusion and so on either by themselves or others. The tonic feelings of pleasure arise out of positive incentives like love and affection, care and share, praise, comfort, freedom of choice, flexibility, involvement, voluntary engagement, etc.

Knowing itself is fulfilling the need of knowing to do the work for survival, growth and development. So, knowing gives satisfaction and feeling of pleasures. When the environment of knowing is created conducive to learning with provision of positive incentives, it motivates the learners in the same way that the nectar of flowers motivates and attracts the butterflies towards them. It is assumed that the loving and affectionate relations between the learners and their teachers are one of the core elements of motivation of learning.

Like adults and parents, children as human-beings have the natural inborn tendencies to seek the feelings of pleasure and avoid the feelings of pain. Any work that gives them feeling of pleasure is very highly desired and demanded by them for their deeper engagement whereas they avoid the work the consequences of which are nothing but the feelings of pain and frustration. In the environment of fear, punishment, anger, coercive control, suppression, oppression, loss of total liberty and freedom, humiliation, deprivation, exclusion and so on, the children close the doors and windows of their minds in order to avoid the feelings of pain and frustration.

In learning matters too, such psychology is assumed to be at work. Humans learn by activity. Learning is not a passive process of absorption. Rather, a very active process of reacting. Observation, memorising, acquiring skill, etc. involve reactions. The reactions are strengthened by practice. One of the laws of learning is the law of effect. This law states that a successful reaction gives satisfaction to the individual, tends to be repeated and stamped in as habit. So, the acts causing annoyance and discomfort are not so easily fixed. The acts and deeds which cause annoyance, discomfort and dissatisfaction in the learning climate should be consciously avoided to make learning a pleasure for learners, particularly the children. (Sinha, J, Dr., 1963)

Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore has emphasized making the learning pleasurable for holistic development of children at the very beginning of their institutional learning. In his writing on education problem (shikkha somossha), he has deplored saying that “what we understand by a school is rather an education producing machine. The teachers are a part of this factory. This factory is opened at ten-thirty in the morning by ringing the bell. When the machine starts functioning, the tongues of teachers start running. The factory is closed at four in the afternoon and the teacher-machines stop their tongues simultaneously. The students go back home with two-four pages of machine-husked knowledge. After that, grade-mark is stamped upon them by evaluating the knowledge through the examination.”

He has further said that in such condition, the school turns into machines which supply commodities instead of lively souls of children for their holistic

development as human beings. He has also deplored saying that displeasures start at the very beginning of their life-journey by arranging their learning in an environment surrounded by walls, closed by gates, secured by gate-keepers, pricked by punishment and driven by bell. He has advocated a system which pleases and motivates them. (Tagore, R, 1313 Bengali year)

So, the learning arrangements for the children should be so developed that they have the tonic feelings of pleasure and sense of spontaneous motivation to keep them engaged in their learning for their present and future development. It is further assumed that children so developed have the potential to possess the enhanced cognitive power to create, innovate and contribute towards building the non-violent smart society as envisioned by the peace-lovers. Perhaps, this is the pre-requisite for further meaningful human existence, survival and development on earth.

### Bangladesh Constitution, Bangladesh Perspective Plan, SDGs and current situation

The Article 17 of Bangladesh Constitution states: “The State shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of –

- (a) a uniform, mass oriented and universal system of education and extending free and compulsory education to all children to such stage as may be determined by law;
- (b) relating education to the needs of society and producing properly trained and motivated citizens to serve those needs;
- (c) removing illiteracy within such time as may be determined by law.” (The Constitution of The People’s Republic of Bangladesh, 2010)

In Chapter II on Promoting Human Development, the Perspective Plan Bangladesh 2010-2021 states that over the next decade, Bangladesh’s human resources development

will encompass three broad processes. One of these is ensuring education for all. The targets for attaining this goal in the light of government’s vision 2021 are: (a) net enrolment at the primary level will be increased to 100% by 2013;

(b) illiteracy will be removed by 2014; and (c) by 2021, there will be significant improvement in the quality of education with emphasis on science and technology.

In respect of literacy, the plan provides the facts and trends on attaining the target of literacy in Bangladesh. By considering the net primary school enrolment rate, Vision 2021 has set a target of 100 percent enrolment and literacy rate after 2014.

On primary education, it states, “... the duration of primary education will be from class I to class VIII. Quality of education will be ensured in all schools irrespective of locations, rural or urban. A core curriculum will be followed by all types of schools irrespective of medium of teaching to ensure that all children in the country have basic grounding in key national characteristics including language, culture, history, and geography as well as in science including mathematics and information technology. Girl students shall be protected against discrimination, harassment, or violence. A child friendly pedagogy will be followed in all classrooms in an inclusive manner.” Related to this, one of key issues and challenges as stated in the plan is “ensuring inclusiveness and access as the duration of primary education is extended from the present class V.”

The plan also includes non-formal/mass education targeting out-of-school children, school-dropouts, adolescents and young adults, street children and children of urban slum-dwellers’ engaged in hazardous occupations. For their skill development, the plan emphasizes on vocational schools with wider choice of subjects rather than formal education for one reason or other. (Perspective Plan of Bangladesh 2010-2021)

SDG 4 of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development states: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.” In a global system, Bangladesh is a sub-system requiring integration with the global one. Global SDGs are the super ordinate common shared goals of nations which require alignment of national goals and goals oriented activities. SDGs effective 2016 have 17 goals with 169 associated targets and 230 indicators endorsed by all nations of the world.

Bangladesh is credited for satisfactory achievements of many goals and targets of MDGs which ended in 2015. So, Bangladesh is well poised to meet SDGs. It has been informed that in the formulation process of the 7th Five Year Plan and other policy documents of Bangladesh, goals, targets and indicators of SDGs have been taken into consideration for necessary alignment and synchronization. So, primary education in Bangladesh is in the process of its evolution and progress in the light of national goal of ensuring education for all and the SDG 4 of the Global Agenda for Sustainable Development. (Planning Commission, 2017).

The need for understanding the present status of primary education in Bangladesh in the context of national as well as global goals demands some necessary discussion on some relevant facts, figures and statistics indicating achievements so far and problems impeding the desired progress.

At present, the institutional arrangement for primary and mass education in Bangladesh under the constitutional obligation, provisions of Primary Education (Compulsory) Act, 1990 and relevant other laws as well as policies and plans functions in the following hierarchy - (a) Ministry of Primary and Mass Education at the apex, (b) Directorate of Primary Education, Bureau of Non-Formal Education and so on at different administrative levels down to Upazilas and all primary schools at field level in Bangladesh.

As per Statistical Pocket Book Bangladesh 2016, there were a total of 94,133 primary schools (GPS, Regd. NGPS, Non-Regd. NGPS, Ebtedae Madrasah, Kinderten, NGO School, Community School, Attached to High Madrasah, Primary Sections of High Schools, BRAC Center, ROSC School, Sishu Kollyan primary school and other schools) in Bangladesh. Total enrolment of students in these schools was 1,47,63,737 in 2015. Of these, girls numbered 74,94,795 and the rest was boys. The teachers in these schools were 4, 27,924. In the public schools, the teacher-student ratio was 1:43 in 2015. (BBS, 2016, 2017).

In a nut-shell, the above statistics depicts a quantitative picture of primary school situation in Bangladesh. The system for unfolding desired potentials of enrolled students demands emphasis on quality rather than quantitative expansion of primary schools in Bangladesh. Quantitative expansion is

necessary in order to maximize the opportunities of all school going age girls and boys to get them enrolled in the primary schools. There is still need of quantitative expansion of primary education in the light of the need for covering every child in the primary schools. But an impotent quantity devoid of merit and capacity for playing cognitive gymnastics to face the challenges of twenty-first century and globalized world cannot help Bangladesh make an important stride for moving towards sustained progress and development.

## Quality and Inclusive Education

Quality and inclusive education is now a prerequisite for survival, growth and development of any citizen as well as a nation. Bangladesh has emphasized this need and taken steps towards meeting the demand of quality education for the enrolled students. All enrolled students, particularly the disadvantaged ones from the marginalized and poor families, have to be retained in schools and promoted to higher grades after necessary evaluation by the concerned teachers. This very act of retention has to be recognized as that of inclusion of those students who would otherwise have dropped out. But problems and challenges are so big that their identification and solutions require concerted efforts by all.

In order to have a clear understanding of the concept of quality education, there is a need to refer to a definition which is comprehensive yet simple for context specific conceptualization and application in practice.

While defining quality education, UNICEF says that “quality education includes:

Learners who are healthy, well-nourished and ready to participate and learn, and supported in learning by their families and communities;

Environments that are healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive, and provide adequate resources and facilities;

Content that is reflected in relevant curricula and materials for the acquisition of basic skills, especially in the areas of literacy, numeracy and skills for life, and knowledge in such areas as gender, health, nutrition, HIV/AIDS prevention and peace;

Processes through which trained teachers use child-centred teaching approaches in well-managed classrooms and school and skilful assessment to facilitate learning and reduce disparities;

Outcomes that encompass knowledge, skills and attitudes, and are linked to national goals for education and positive participation in society.” (United Nations Children’s Children Fund, 2000)

Although this definition of quality education seems to best fit in any political, cultural and economic context, some argue that context specific quality education should focus on learners in light of whole child approach, rather than give emphasis more on testing the learners and assessing how many words a child of age five can read per minute. In a whole child approach, “every child, in every school, in each of their communities and societies, should be healthy, safe, supported, engaged and challenged. Quality education should serve each child pedagogically and developmentally. Such education should be inclusive and structured to realize the potential of each child regardless of location or economic status.”

Given the foregoing definition of and discussion on quality education, Bangladesh has to go a long way to achieve the goal of providing quality education for its all girls and boys. Expansion oriented massified public primary education in Bangladesh still lacks desired level of general quality education, let alone quality needed for demassification, specific context and need. Massification has been a typical method used in production goods and services and their consumption by people with their limited and restricted choices during the modernization period. Demassification expands the horizon of choices for people and is a phenomenon in post-modern world of relatively more abundance and diversity of tastes and fashions of more people, particularly in the West. (Toffler, A, 1980) In a globalized competitive world, sustainable progress and development of Bangladesh is contingent upon context and need specific quality education.

In Bangladesh, general quality of expansion oriented primary education suffers due to many and varied reasons. Learners in urban and rural areas have different socio-economic backgrounds. So, the girls and boys coming from

the disadvantaged and poor families lack many facilities and amenities compared to well-off ones in terms of their health, hygiene, safety, educational family support and related many other things. Of them, the first generation learners are serious sufferers. They come generally from the relatively poor families. Their parents mostly do not know how to read and write though they have motivation to send their children to primary schools to change their fate and status in future. (Yahiya, M, 2017)

Now, an interesting phenomenon is evident in the society of Bangladesh. Both the rich and the poor have profound interest in educating their children. Like the rich parents, the poor ones do not lag behind in sending their girls and boys to the school. This positive attitudinal change of the marginalized and poor parents has ushered in a great hope for realizing the dream of inclusion of every child in necessary schooling—a pre-condition that changes the individual progress and development as well as the entire gamut of the nation.

In 2015, the dropout rate of primary school students was 20.4% as per statistics published by DPE (Directorate of Primary Education). It is assumed that girls and boys from the disadvantaged and poor families constitute the bulk of the statistics. Of course, statistics published by civil society organizations shows a little higher rate of dropout. The persistence of dropout rate, though reduced to a good extent, is indicative of problem in expansive primary mass education.

It has been earlier mentioned that the teacher-student ratio in the public primary schools in Bangladesh was 1:43 in 2015. The National Education Policy 2010 states Government intention to have a 1:30 teacher-student ratio by 2018. This is the average picture, but there are variations due to pressures from the supply sides in some places and neglect for compliance to quality norm.

It has been alleged that frequent changes in books and some of their topics necessitate new publication of books rendering the teachers incapable of coping with the knowledge and skills necessary for the changed new topics. All teachers are not equally competent in terms of their knowledge, skills, habits and motivation for quality education of students for their subsequent secondary and tertiary education. The motivated teachers have the tendency

to upgrade their knowledge and skills through their own initiatives and efforts. But, it has been observed that the number of value-driven teachers is not many in teaching profession.

Another important issue that needs to be critically examined is the process of education for the beginners in primary schools in Bangladesh. When the question is raised if the process is child-friendly in primary schooling, perhaps, the critical observers will not give any positive opinion on the question of child-friendliness in the schools. The worldview of most teachers is obsessed by the values developed from traditional belief of strong iron-handedness to enforce discipline by the teachers and motivation based on negative incentives. This is a problem and requires artful transformation of teachers to apply child-friendly teaching methods for the beginners.

Many of the teachers have received the necessary training on child-friendly methods of teaching. They have the knowledge that traditional “jug and mug” method of teaching is obsolete now-a-days for quality education of children in the schools. Instead of treating the children as objects to be filled with prescribed knowledge, skills and habits, they should be treated with love and affection and the relations of teachers with them have to be “subject to subject” rather than “subject to object” in order to replace the traditional “jug and mug” method.

Teachers like others are integral part of the larger society in Bangladesh. They interact with others in the society around them. They bathe twenty four hours in the prevailing culture of the larger society and conform to the norms and values of society and culture. They are more habituated with the prevailing norms and values in comparison with those acquired during their trainings for short period. Instead of playing the role for teaching the students with the newly acquired knowledge, skills and methods, they are afterward found to be infected with what is dominant in the society they live in and, perhaps, fail to do the needful for quality education.

The teachers cannot give necessary time to each student due to an average large size class and related other reasons. Ibrahim Sobhan, a campaigner for school-based inclusive education, in his *Biddalay-Kendrik Shikkha Poddhoti* (School-based Education System) has said that in a 35 minutes long class, the

class teacher is left with only 10 minutes for engaging all class students in actual and ideal learning. He has identified that most of the time is spent in roll-call, examining home-work and related tasks including disciplining the class-students.

The more interaction and subject to subject relations and communications of the teachers with the class students, the better is the teaching outcomes in their classes. It is assumed that absence of necessary motivation of teachers in many schools and their formed habits under dominant values and practices in the society stand in the way to internalization of knowledge and methods for desired practices by teachers in the field of quality education. It is observed that they load the students with home-work and fail to engage and challenge them in the meaningful way in the classes for quality education in Bangladesh.

Related to above discussion, one further important observation of Ibrahim Sobhan can be cited. He has observed that students coming from the disadvantaged and poor families suffer from the problems unlike their class-mates coming from relatively well-off families. The problems are: lack of preparation due to absence of pre-primary education, scarcity of light for home study at night, no sitting facility like table and chair in the residence, absence of calm and quiet environment, compulsion of involving in works for supporting family income and, above all, absence of study help due to illiterate poor parents. So, they need some special, but innovative educational support for quality education. (Sobhan, I, 2010)

Another important requirement for quality education is community support to and ownership of the schools in each respective community. In Bangladesh, the relevant policies and law (Primary Education (Compulsory) Act, 1990) require an Obligatory Primary Education Committee for each primary school. So, there is such a committee in every primary school. Apparently, these committees have been performing as per provisions of the law. Some of the provisions of the law require that it is the obligation of guardians of the listed children in the community to get their school age children admitted in schools.

The guardians of the listed children have also the obligation to ensure the presence of their children in their classes. Failing to comply with the

requirement of these provisions is punishable offences for the guardians. Statistics published by the relevant sources show that there is still drop-out of students in primary schools in Bangladesh. In the present reality, quality education for the children coming from the disadvantaged and poor families demand appropriate and innovative actions and arrangement to face the challenges of primary school dropout.

In the past, most of the schools in rural as well as urban areas had some type of play-grounds adjacent to them. Sports and games were regular activities for the students under the guidance of the assigned qualified teachers for the purpose. With increased urbanization and associated evils, schools particularly in urban areas are springing up without the facilities of play-grounds necessary for engaging the students for their physical growth and development. It is the common perception that a physically fit body is generally the best abode of a sound mind. In the whole-child approach, a child deserves to be healthy and safe. Play-grounds are an essential pre-condition to their contributions toward growth and development of physical and mental health of students.

Another important critical area for engagement of students for their overall development is socio-cultural activities aimed at their participation and confident self-expression. In the crowded classes of many primary schools in Bangladesh, teachers are generally incapable of engaging their students in the class-room oriented studies. They spend most of their allocated time in the activities which do not add any value to their cognitive development. Perhaps, the teachers as well as their students in such conditions cannot set their minds to be willing and creative to plan and implement cultural activities necessary for their humane development. Without qualities under humane development, a society is lurked by the danger of such people who are selfish to promote their individualistic well-being devoid of some selflessness on their part for the peaceful and balanced society.

While quality education promises to deliver desired basic skills and habits of students in terms of their literacy, numeracy and life-skill and necessary knowledge for growth and development through participation, cooperation,

non-violence and peace in the society, the primary education students can be better cared of if the quality education is methodologically whole-child centric as each child deserves to be healthy, safe, supported, engaged and challenged.

Bangladesh has still been in the quagmire of expansive mass-primary education with so many problems to solve and challenges to face. Quality education is the demand of the present local, national as well as global situation. Bangladesh has been striving hard to develop its human resources to best match its national and global goals. The inclusion of girls and boys from disadvantaged and poor families is a challenge in integrating and sustaining them in the desired march for quality primary education in Bangladesh.

There are still dropouts of primary school students. Such dropouts are assumed to be mostly from the students coming from disadvantaged and poor families. They need extra and special care for their continuation in education—the education which can transform them and change the conditions of their families. They need the education and the quality for their competence building which can make them capable of facing the life challenges and the competition from their privileged counterparts.

Another significant factor for thinking is faster future changes due to dominant role of information and communications technology and digitalized context. In such situation, one constant necessity is developing and upgrading skills of literacy, numeracy and using digital devices by the disadvantaged and poor to be at par with the emerging generations around them. These basic skills are the foundation on which the future of every individual in relation to other individuals in the society will revolve. Therefore, weaker foundation of students from disadvantaged and poor segment of society possesses a threat to realization of their potential for meeting local, national and global goals. There should be concerted efforts of all so that no segment of society lags behind.

## Conclusion

Considering the rapid changes in the technology, frequent disruptive innovations, competitive market, changes in the preferences and tastes of

community people, challenges of maintaining social equilibrium and environmental stability, need for sustained peaceful and democratic societies and so on, EFA (Education for All) is nothing but a critical requirement for the collective and sustainable survival, growth and development of all.

Providing quality and inclusive education to the disadvantaged, excluded, marginalized and poor is a challenge to the government and concerned agencies—public and private. Quality education support to this segment of students in the communities at the very beginning of their pursuits of knowledge has to be appreciated and supported by concerned everybody from the policy makers to the field-level implementers.

A strong educational foundation of students at their elementary level for their further development in future to meet all emerging multifarious challenges of societies and markets is such an essential prerequisite that a small neglect to necessary education has the potential threat to the collective and sustainable survival and development of any present societies and nations. The Government of Bangladesh is critically aware of this need and has been doing what is possible on its part. Non-government as well as private educational agencies have also been contributing to the education sector according to their abilities.

The process of the quality education for real knowledge by the learners is beset with the challenges and problems. It is not only retaining the quality ‘smart teachers’, establishing attractive, comfortable infrastructure and healthy environment, providing the learners with good furniture and fixtures, transport facilities, good libraries, lab-facilities, audio-visual support and so on, but also requires the teachers who are capable of creating finest human thirst among their learners to have real knowledge.

The real knowledge is to enlighten the learners to kindle lights in the minds of others anywhere and also to contribute towards inventions, innovations and plethora of many creative works that help sustain humanity on this planet.

An anecdote is given here to show the difference between the real knowledge and the ‘chauffeur knowledge’ for the learners in pursuit of real knowledge. In his international bestseller book *The Art Of Thinking Clearly*, Rolf Dobelli

has given the idea on what the 'chauffeur knowledge' is. In order to help readers understand it exactly, the relevant part is quoted below.

“After receiving the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1918, Max Planck went on tour across Germany. Wherever he was invited, he delivered the same lecture on new quantum mechanics. Over time, his chauffeur grew to know it by heart: ‘It has to be boring giving the same speech each time, Professor Planck. How about I do it for you in Munich? You can sit in the front row and wear my chauffeur’s cap. That’d give us both a bit of variety’. Planck liked the idea, so that evening the driver held a long lecture on quantum mechanics in front of a distinguished audience. Later, a physics professor stood up with a question. The driver recoiled: ‘Never would I have thought that someone from such an advanced city as Munich would ask such a simple question! My chauffeur will answer it.’” (Dobelli, R, 2013)

Real knowledge is that where the learners have committed a large amount of time and efforts to fathoming and understanding a topic. The poetic expression—deeper deeper let us toil in the mines of knowledge—is indicative of how the real knowledge is gained. The purpose of education system should be to provide the learners with the real knowledge to face the challenges of life and to be useful parts of their societies and the global system.

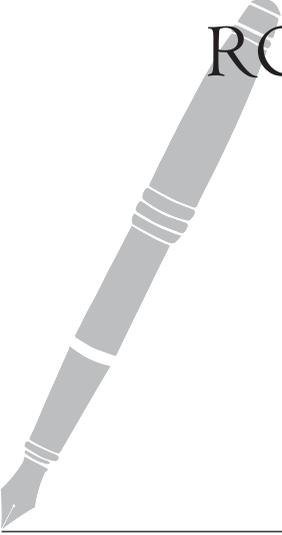
Bertrand Russell says that the best life is one which is inspired by love and guided by knowledge. Albeit, it is the real knowledge! Guidance of real knowledge enables the life to get the best and most out of less, thus contributing toward sustenance of families in the societies and that of humanity on the earth. Currently adopted paradigm by the world-body UN and most of its member states is sustainability and Agenda 2030. In the pursuit of real knowledge, this perspective must be present in minds of all.

One must bear in mind that the educational foundation of the learners at elementary level must be built very strongly so that the learners are able to blossom to their true potential in the future and are capable of internalizing real knowledge to face all challenges of life. The kids of social periphery in Bangladesh need special attention and treatment at the dawn of their educational journey to be at par with the privileged ones in the society.

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# ROLE OF EDUCATION IN THE SOCIO- ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT OF BANGLADESH

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Socio-economic development through the use of the human resource is a worldwide theoretically recognized concept. According to Psacharopoulos and Woodhall (1997), human resources constitute the ultimate basis of wealth of nations. Capital and natural resources are passive factors of production. On the other hand, human beings are the active agencies who accumulate capital, exploit natural resources, build social, economic and political organization, and carry forward national development. Many countries in the world have developed through translating this concept into reality.

Education plays the key role in transforming a population into human resources. The educated population with technology and innovation contributes to increasing national income and accelerating economic growth. Cities and countries such as Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan have achieved unprecedented rates of economic growth while making large investments in education. Education policies of East Asian countries could be a good example in this regard, as they have been successful in bringing about economic growth and attaining poverty reduction by investing heavily in basic human capital. China has been competing recently with Europe and America in the industrial field, thanks to its educational development and

technological progress. Japan is a good example for Bangladesh in this regard. Since long, the country has turned education into a big capital. With a hundred percent literacy rate, the wealth of the country consists of 1 percent natural resources, 14 percent material resources and 85 percent human and social capital, which has been achieved through education (Abedin: 2007).

Bangladesh is a developing country with a vast population of around 164 million in a small territory of 147,570 square kilometers with a population density highest in the world. After having a very low literacy rate for a long time, the literacy rate rose remarkably to 72.76% in 2016, according to data from the Unesco Institute for Statistics (UIS). Since independence, people have struggled for a better life, democracy, and human development. Despite several constraints, Bangladesh has been making progress in several sectors including agriculture, industry and trade. The country, nevertheless, could achieve more progress if policymakers had proper planning and the plans could be translated into action.

Bangladesh lacks natural resources. Therefore, development of the country depends mainly on the skilled work force. The World Bank (2002) particularly notes that Bangladesh has no more alternatives in order to gain development except properly utilizing its population. United Nations Development Programme (UNDP: 1999), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO: 2000) all report that Bangladesh urgently needs to utilise its over-crowded population for large labour market.

Education has been recognized as a priority sector by all governments since independence of Bangladesh. The constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh (1998) in its directive principle (Article 17) recognises the right to education for all and the requirement that the quality and content of education is to be uniform. Successive governments have claimed education as their top-most priority in various planning documents. The Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2008: PRSP) emphasised that the whole gamut of primary, secondary, tertiary, and non-formal education activities would establish a truly empowered knowledge-based society to meet the challenges of the 21st century (GoB: 2008).

Nevertheless, in reality, education has become a marketed commodity instead of a social transformation process (Ahmad: 2003). The recent democratic regimes have failed to address the issues of uniformity, equality and opportunity. The incapacity in the existing education system to effectively contribute to national development and social transformation process is largely due to the lack of a pragmatic plan at the policy level. Although Bangladesh government, its policy makers, educationists and intellectuals admit the need for a development oriented education system, there is insufficiency regarding policy relevance and quantitative research on this issue.

### Statement of the Problem

After independence, Bangladesh government formed the first education commission in 1972, named Quadrat-e-Khuda commission. That commission's report was comparatively well planned and intended for socio-economic development, but that policy could not be implemented due to lack of political consensus. After that, all governments formed various education commissions and committees, and the most of these commissions submitted their reports to the government but the change of political regimes put an end to the courses taken till the Education Policy 2010 was adopted and now being implemented in the country.

### Return from Human Capital Development

It is evident that a country's economic growth is positively correlated to initial human capital (Barro). Schultz describes how to transform the human beings into effective human capital. He identified five major types of human capital investment which improves the capabilities; among them he found that return to education is relatively more attractive than non-human capital. Psacharopoulos shows that among 3 levels of education, primary education exhibits highest level of social profitability and he argues that it should be the number one investment priority in developing countries. He also finds that educating women is more profitable than educating men. Gary Becker estimates the total investment in human capital and its rate of return from earning. His study reveals that unemployment rate is negatively correlated with the level of skills and also shows that abler persons earn more as they

invest more in educating themselves. All these studies explain the role of education in economic development considering education as an investment and measuring its rate of return from increase in earning or national income. Birdsall discusses the investment on social development which in turn contributes to economic development. She mentioned that countries like Indonesia and Korea have grown faster by spending a higher proportion of total education budget at the primary level. She also focuses on the impact of women's education in socio-economic development.

A number of studies on Bangladesh education system mainly focused on the major problems of the education system. Common problems which are identified by the studies are as follows:

1. Low educational budget,
2. Curriculum irrelevant to the job market,
3. Inefficient financing,
4. Lower investment in the primary education sector,
5. Poor teaching quality and teaching method, and
6. Inadequate facilities for science education.

Especially Alam and Asadullah worked on the rate of return from Bangladeshi education system. Both the studies show that though primary education contributes to social development, its economic return is very low here. Moreover, Alam also shows that as higher education consumes higher portion of public and private fund, socio-economic contribution from this sector is not satisfactory at all.

Rahman in his study analyses the education policies of East Asian countries, particularly Singapore, and identifies some lessons for Bangladesh. Among them considerable issues are: priority of primary education, strict merit based education system, higher budget allocation in education, emphasis on vocational education, good salary and motivation for teachers.

All these studies mentioned above focused on the problems and drawbacks in the education system and gave some recommendations.

## Bangladesh Education System in Brief

The foundation of modern education system can be traced back to the British colonial period. It was the British who attempted to develop a system of education with the intention of bringing European learning to the shores of their occupied territories. It successfully served their purpose primarily to rule the Indian subcontinent until their departure in 1947. Various changes were made in the whole system of education to make it modern in order to meet the demands of the newly independent state and society. This continued till the Pakistan period (1947-'71).

Subsequently, a National Education Commission was formed immediately after the independence of Bangladesh. The committee submitted its report in 1974 in recognition of the need to create awareness among all about the requirements of life and to develop abilities to solve problems. The report emphasised the formation of moral values, and respect for manual labour as central to educational development. The report touched upon almost all the issues relating to the requirements of developing a modern secular educational system. However, due to the political change of 1975 and owing to lack of support in favour of a secular education system, the dream of creating a secular and modern society was not realised.

In the following decades, a number of Commissions experimented several policies and programmes trying to develop a comprehensive education policy, but unfortunately, no tangible results were found as far as the development of the education system was concerned. It can be observed that various policy issues pertaining to different Commission Reports were not addressed in a systematic way through different plans and programmes. This problem stays more or less with the current Education Policy 2010, too.

There are the following major problems of the education system as the barriers to socio-economic development: First, there is no scientific, secular, planned and uniform education policy, but different types of education system. Second, low investment in education sector and the lion share is used for meeting the salaries of the teachers and staffs leaving very little for real educational development. Other notable major problems are irregularities,

mismanagement and centralised system. Quality of education is questionable as well which is reflected in the lack of proper curriculum and textbook, outdated teaching-learning method, only theory oriented education and the poor quality of teachers.

The main causes behind the problems are: lack of political consensus, historical legacy, failure of policy makers to plan uniform education system, economic and social disparity, and political compromise with the fundamentalist political forces. Lack of budgetary resources, too much dependence on government allocation and lack of strong political determination to invest more on education are also to blame for this situation. Moreover, education became commercialised, as policy makers lack concerns about the quality of education.

The country is, therefore, affected in many ways such as lack of social harmony and unity, educational potentials unrealised, outcomes wasted, and human resources underutilised due to lack of imparting appropriate skills and knowledge. There are various hampering efforts as well preventing modernisation of the society and economy, and for this rate of return from education is very low which indicates the unsatisfactory level of education.

### Contribution of Education to Economic Growth

According to Petty's law when a country develops, labour force shifts from lower income occupation (agriculture) to higher income occupation (manufacture, service, informal sector, etc.). Cross-country analysis of this study also follows the law and shows that GDP is negatively related to the agriculture labour force; for example, most of the developed countries (among the 8 countries) have the lowest agriculture labour share. In case of Bangladesh, the percentage of labour force involved in different sectors shows that agriculture labour force is being gradually decreased. According to Petty's theory and data analysis, it can be claimed that Bangladesh is proceeding towards economic development.

It is estimated that about 11% to 13% labour force from the agriculture sector should be shifted to other sectors during next 10 years, despite the fact that a large part of the population would still be involved in agriculture sector.

Agriculture sector, however, remains a very important sector with a satisfactory level of increased productivity in Bangladesh.

Due to land scarcity, poverty and unemployment along with other reasons, labour force shifting from agriculture to other sectors became a very common phenomenon in Bangladesh. This change is intermingled with the migration of population from rural to urban areas and also from native country to foreign developed ones.

Data from the labour force of different sectors and their productivity level show that during 90-2003, agriculture labour force decreased about 18%, but productivity increased. Labour force in industrial sector remains almost the same with a very high, dramatic change in productivity.

Most notable is the change in the service sector. Labour force increase is recorded from 16% to 35%, which is more than double but productivity level goes down unexpectedly. This result indicates that a major part of labour force from agriculture (rural areas) might be shifted to service sectors. Thus, service sector plays an important role by absorbing labour force and providing better job opportunities. But, on the other hand, lower productivity in this sector gives an idea about the mismanagement and the problem of policy implementation.

Study report on the rate of return from education sector by Alam has already mentioned that higher education consumes the highest portion of education budget, but the rate of return from this level of education is the lowest. This finding also tries to draw attention of policy makers to the issue that whether government should really need to spend much on getting post graduates, or higher education should be strictly merit-based. This consideration will not only give an access for primary education to more budgetary allocation but will also reduce the number of high-educated unemployed burden.

Results from trade sector analysis reveal that there are considerable export promotions in miscellaneous manufactured articles (+49.5%). Besides, two sectors (1) mineral fuels, lubricant, petroleum and related products (-9.5%), and (2) food and live animals (-6.8%) achieved mentionable import substitution. It is found that among these prospective sectors, in agriculture 58.7%, in fishing

69%, in manufacturing 47.3%, and in mining 50% of the workers have no education at all. Only, 15 to 20% people involved in these sectors have primary education and, therefore, this analysis clearly points out the necessity of modification in the education system for future economic development.

Barro made a cross-country regression analysis using 98 countries where he shows that the growth rate of real per capita GDP is positively related to initial human capital and negatively related to the initial level of real per capita GDP. Hence, he concluded that poor countries tend to grow faster than higher income countries, if they have high human capital in relation to their level of per capita GDP. The measurement of human capital was made by initial school enrollment rate.

Professor Otsuka made another regression model by following Barro's model to show the interdependence of education and economic development. He used data from 41 countries, which are categorised into lower, middle and higher income countries. Values used for these three different categories were also different in the regression analysis. Otsuka's (regression) model can be used to estimate a country's primary education enrollment rate (EDUP).

Results of regression analysis shows that EDUP is positively and significantly related to GDP and education spending. Whereas, Otsuka shows that educational achievement and economic growth are both mutually dependent by considering EDUP and GDPG both as dependent variable (separately) in different equation. School enrollment rate is often considered a measure of educational achievement in various studies. Our study proposes another new variable such as dropout rate or survival rate (EDUP-Dropout rate) together with the enrollment rate to measure educational development, particularly for the poverty stricken country like Bangladesh.

From the analyses it is evident that education is one of the major contributing factors for socio-economic development in Bangladesh.

## Conclusion

Contribution of education in economic growth is a worldwide accepted issue. Nowadays, education is considered an investment to transform the human

beings into human capital, which in turn brings enormous and faster economic growth. Japan, China, Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Malaysia are the examples of the practical implementation of this theory.

Bangladesh is a country with over population and deficit in land and natural resources. To achieve socio-economic development Bangladesh has no other option but to utilise its population as human capital. In order to develop an effective human capital, it is necessary to realise the present economic state and trend of society.

Planning and implementation of the education policy without considering the issues like important sectors contributing to GDP, percent of labour share involved in different sectors, change in labour share structure, prospective trade sectors, types of labour demand and required skills, etc. is not only incomplete, but also indecisive for society and a barrier to economic development.

The full potential of education for the national development has to be properly realised and policy measures have to be taken to unleash that potential taking into account the serious issues discussed above.

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# EDUCATION SUPPORT FOR FIRST GENERATION LEARNERS TO ARREST DROP-OUT

MUHAMMAD YAHIYA

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Poverty stared the people of Bangladesh in the face only a couple of decades ago. Majority people lived in a miserable condition back then. Condition of poor people in villages was worse. Literacy rate was low, child and maternal mortality rates were high, gender discrimination was sharp, social awareness level was poor and the rural poor had to struggle hard to meet their basic needs. Centre for Development Innovation and Practices (CDIP) began its journey in 1995 with the objective of developing the socio-economic condition of the poor people in villages through providing them with financial and organisational supports. But from the very beginning CDIP knew it well that people's overall development would not be complete until their education and health conditions were improved.

Education is a basic right to every child in Bangladesh according to our constitution and the government has been working hard to bring all children under its coverage, remove gender disparity and help every child to complete at least primary schooling with quality education. Government initiatives did not get a smooth riding in the 1990s for various socio-economic barriers prevailing in society. While enrollment rate was rising, the drop-out rate was doing the same keeping pace with it. We were deeply pondering over why so many poor children were dropping out from school without completing their

basic education and how we could help the country achieve its national and international goals of education for all. Then one day in 2005, we hit upon the truth that lack of parental support at home is one of the major causes of poor children's dropout from school.

### Problems faced by first generation learners

The number of schools in our country has increased but still less than what is necessary. Teacher shortage is another big problem. There are children either unenrolled or enrolled but out of school and student-teacher ratio is higher than the ideal level in many places. School rooms are often found crowded and teachers are seen struggling to pay adequate attention to his/her pupils. Classes are to be finished before students can understand their subject of study. Teachers can do nothing but finish their duty by assigning 'home works' to the learners. Children finish their 'home works' i.e. learn their classroom lessons at home and attend the class next day. Teachers become happy with those children who have learned the lessons at their homes and those who have failed to do their home works are not looked upon cordially. Now, those children who have literate parents or elders can get this home support to perform well in the classroom. And children whose parents are non-literate or so poor as to be unable to gather tuition support from elsewhere find themselves at sea. Unable to cope with the visible and invisible small and big insults that shower on them regularly in the classroom, they gradually begin to skip classes and one day stop coming to school altogether. Obviously these are children of poor families and poor social background. Having no literate elder person in the family before them, these children are first generation learners. Their homes are not education-friendly and schools are not welcoming the way they wish it to be. Drop-out goes on in such cases.

### From a small beginning into a movement

We set out for work on this back in 2005. At two CDIP branches in the Upazila of Brahmanbaria, we looked for a village girl who is literate and have at least 2 hours in her hand to spend in teaching 20-25 children and preparing them for the class next day. To our amazement we found several girls eager to do the work for a nominal honourarium from CDIP. In a day, 10 learning centres

were opened in the villages of Salimganj and Bholachong. All the teachers had to do was to be mentally prepared to take up the challenge, collect the poor children who cannot get any learning support from their families and select a space where those 25 children can sit together to read and write. More literate girls in villages began to come to us with their offer of opening such a school in their neighbourhoods. This was the humble beginning, a spark, which without much delay flared up into a movement, first in our work-areas and later across the country through other NGOs.

### How it works

The teacher collects 20-25 children of pre-primary, Class I and Class II from her neighbourhood. She selects a place and then collects plastic bags from various homes and sew these into a single piece for the children to sit on. The learning centre sits usually every afternoon, except weekly and national holidays, at 3 pm and closes at 5 pm. Learners usually sit in U-shape or in other ways preferred by the teacher for some logical cause. To the teacher, CDIP provides a blackboard and every month a packet of chalk pencils. She asks the children which lessons they are assigned in the classes and teaches these particular lessons so that they can perform well in next day's class.

As these poor children who have none to help at home in learning their lessons now begin to do better in the classes and also exams, they find pleasure in going to school. They are no more afraid of insults in classrooms and lose the reason for dropping out. CDIP teachers make the learning joyful to them by telling stories, jokes, etc. during the teaching period. One day in every week is reserved for singing, dancing, drawing, recitation and other creative activities by children.

CDIP gives a teacher an honourarium of Tk.800, including her travel allowance for coming to the monthly refresher programme at the branch office. Every teacher is allowed to receive at most 50 taka from each learner and families are encouraged to pay this small amount of money to the teacher. Yet, no child can be shut out from the class for his/her failure to pay. Every branch has 20 such learning centres and a female Education Supervisor, who looks after all the schools at the branch level and conducts the refresher

meeting. A parents' committee comprising of 20 mothers is set up, which sits once a month and discusses the particular problems and find out solutions for improvement of any learning centre. This is, in a nut shell, how the Education Support Programme works.

The progress is shown in the Table below:

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Branches	4	1	5	10	10	21	70	89	89	90	100	120	120	120
Learning Centres	50	20	100	400	331	550	1750	2350	2600	2600	1920	2420	2420	2420
Teachers	50	20	100	400	331	550	1750	2350	2600	2600	1920	2420	2420	2420
Learners	1250	400	2545	7612	7504	14013	40337	63450	75,000	75,000	50,000	60,000	60,000	60,000
Monitoring Officers	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	6	7	5	0	0	0	0
Supervisor	1	1	4	10	10	22	70	56	90	60	101	121	121	121
Budget (in lac)	1.22	.89	4.92	20.98	20.00	54.58	2.05	2.25	2.65	2.18	2.23	2.28	2.28	2.28
Yearly expense per learner	98	223	193	276	267	389	509	318	338	338	446	380	380	380

### Teachers devoted to a social service

The money a teacher receives every month from CDIP is very small. Yet, it helps some girls working as teachers to continue their study as it lessens the burden on their parents. Those who are housewives can spend it buying small things they like for themselves and their children. However, it is not the money they work for. Teachers enjoy doing the work. Many say they like to spend time with children and help them as far as they can. They say they feel proud when children address them as 'madam' or *apa* or sometimes even *Ma*. Being a teacher places them in a respectable position in the village. They enjoy hearing children say 'There goes our madam,' when they go somewhere walking along the street. When a teacher visits the house of a child to meet his/her parents, the respect she receives from the child's family is overwhelming. Some educated, unmarried girls of poor families now feel free of the bite of compunction that they are a burden of the families. This income, however small, provides them with a sense of pride. A major reason of teacher drop-out in this programme is that many families receive marriage proposals for their unmarried girls and often they are married off within

months of their becoming teachers. The identity of a Teacher in the society becomes a matter of great pride for most of the girls. Some girls later join the profession of teaching by improving their teaching quality working in this programme. All the girls employed in this programme do this work as a social service with their sincere devotion to it.

### Coverage

Education Support Programme (Shikkha Shahayota Kormoshuchi–SHISHOK, in Bengali) runs in 126 CDIP branches in 18 districts. With 20-25 children in each learning centre and 20 centres in each branch, there are nearly 60 thousand children now having their tuition support from the organisation. There are 2520 village girls working as teachers here and 120 girls work as Education Supervisors, many of whom are students. The Education Supervisors receive a 2-day long training at the beginning of the year preparing them for success in their career. If we take into account similar learning centres run by our friendly organisations, the total number of learning centres will add up to nearly 30 thousand and total learners 750,000.

### Felicitation to Senior Citizens, Hygiene Sensitization, and Cultural Week

CDIP teachers always see to it that their learners earn the regular habits of wearing clean clothes, brush their teeth daily, comb their hairs, and maintain hygiene in their daily lives. They remind the children to wash both their hands after coming from toilet and wash their hands before meal. Besides this, November is set aside as a month of hygiene sensitization. This month every day the teacher gives special attention to the cleanliness her learners maintain in their daily lives. Then every year a week between the month of November and January is fixed for celebrating a cultural fest across CDIP working areas.

On any day of this cultural week a learning centre organises a cultural programme on a courtyard or in an open field or in a school auditorium or on school premises, as each learning centre finds it suitable for itself. Sometimes two, three or more schools get together to organise one programme. Not all learning centres organise the programme on a single day. It is rather spread over the week with different schools organising the programmes on different days. Local people's representatives, school teachers and distinguished persons

in the village are especially invited as Guests to the programme. Some of the invited guests bring things like exercise books, pens, pencils, scales, ceramic plates, glasses, bowls, etc. as gifts for the children who perform singing, dance, recitation, drawing, etc. One or two sports like cock fight, biscuit race, pillow passing, etc. are also arranged. Boys and girls, youths, elders, parents and others in the village stay around the venue until the programme ends and enjoy children's performances to their heart's content.

In our country a situation is arising day by day in which old men and women are becoming victims of indifference, insults and mental tortures in society and families. In many cases they have few people to take care of them while they need it most. But our society is traditionally blessed with the culture of showing respect to senior citizens, which have been alarmingly dwindling nowadays. In order to revive that cultural practice of showing respect towards senior citizens and care for them in their days of miseries, felicitation to senior citizens has been made a component of our week-long cultural programme. One man and one woman who are senior most in the locality are invited to the programme. Children show respect towards them by standing up and showering flower petals over them. This turns into a rememberable event for many old men and women present on this occasion.

Usually every year during this programme across the CDIP work-areas:

- Around 30,000 marginalised children speak on microphone.
- Courtyard cultural programmes are held in around 1,000 villages.
- Around 2,000 senior citizens receive felicitation.
- 2,500 village girls working as teachers direct cultural programmes.
- Hundreds of thousands of villagers are enchanted with children's performances.

These outcomes increase in proportion to the increased number of learning centres every year.

### Mainstreaming the cultural activities

Bangladesh is rich with cultural resources. But these resources are diminishing day by day. People are becoming busy in running after money and everyone is

struggling for survival in the competition. They do not find much time for cultural practices. This is not good for maintaining a healthy social fabric. Roots of many of today's social problems lie in this situation. It is, therefore, necessary to revive the cultural temperament once again.

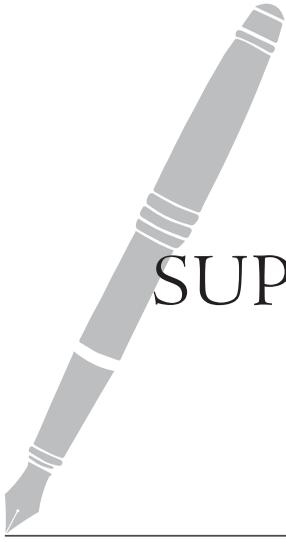
Children are the future of a country. If the cultural practices are made part of their education, a new generation enriched with a much liberal humanistic views will grow in the coming Bangladesh. Education Policy 2010 has put emphasis on this cultural side of education. Now if the government launches a cultural week at the end of the school year throughout the country, it will immensely contribute to achieving the education goals that the country pursues.

No person shall remain illiterate

This education support programme is an easy task; almost anyone can start it. One neither needs a lot of training nor a heap of money to be able to do this. And there are people in the village ready to welcome this initiative. Other organisations with wider network than ours across the country have become interested about such an education programme and have launched their own programmes modelled on this. One of these is Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF), the government-run provider of funds for micro-credit activities in the country. A number of officials from their partner organisations received training from us and they have started such learning centres in their respective localities. They with their partner organisations now have about 10 thousand learning centres across the country. ASA (Association for Social Advancement), one of the largest NGOs, got interested in this programme and sent their people to our work-areas to have practical knowledge about this. By now they have set up about 16 thousand such learning centres across the country. As per my estimate, about 2 lakh village girls can be partially employed through this programme. It can speed up the nation's efforts to achieve national and international goals in education by arresting drop-out from primary schools and thus is likely to fully free the nation from the curse of illiteracy.

We think this type of support is necessary for first generation learners of our country. It is similar to the traditional practice of an educated mother teaching her child in the evening. This programme has no contradiction with the mainstream education system. It is rather a mainstream primary school strengthening programme. It is a first generation education support programme. It has to be turned into a social movement in order to remove darkness of illiteracy from our society. If GOs and NGOs work hand in hand we shall see a day when our slogan *Kono Gaye Kono Ghor, Keu Robe Na Nirokkbor* (No person shall remain illiterate at any home in any village) will be a dream come true.

*The writer is Executive Director, CDIP*



# EDUCATION SUPPORT PROGRAMME OF CDIP

FAZLUL BARI

*PROGRESS FROM JULY 2017 TO MARCH 2018*

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## Introduction

Centre for Development Innovation and Practices (CDIP) was established in the year 1995 basically to assist the rural poor for their socio-economic upliftment. Its major focus at the beginning was to provide credit supports to those who were generally not entitled to receive such credit from formal financial institutions. CDIP started identifying such poor people at the village level and organising them into smaller groups to serve the purpose. For this, CDIP established its Branch offices at the local level. Till June 2018, CDIP was operating in 18 districts of Bangladesh. Gradually, with successful credit programmes, CDIP designed and extended its activities to include various other development activities for the wellbeing of the group members as well as for the members of their families. Over the period, CDIP had initiated programmes on innovative ideas like checking drop-out of students from the primary schools styled as Shishak (Education Support Programme), establishment of CDIP formal primary (Modern) schools, CDIP Health Support Programme (HSP) and Solar Energy programme and so on.

Shishak means *Shikkha Shabayata Karmashuchi*. In English the term used by CDIP is Education Support Programme (ESP). It is an innovative programme in the

field of pre and primary level education to arrest the drop out of students from primary schools. It has a background for designing such an innovative programme.

## Background of the Programme

CDIP is an NGO operating basically credit programme for the rural poor. In its course of actions, a group of CDIP officials including its Executive Director once came across an incident in a remote village. They found a bunch of children busy in playing games absconding from their primary school classes. On query, they could learn that they came out of school premises on the apprehension of being reprimanded or beaten by the teachers. The officials were surprised and when they inquired about the cause of such apprehensions, they came to know that they were not prepared with their class lessons. Why not? They informed that they had nobody to assist them in preparing their lessons. This struck the minds of the officials. They thought deeply over the problem and its possible solution. They had been thinking if the village youths, especially the females, could be of some use in this respect. Because, in every village there are some literate females, either married or unmarried, who pass their time without any professional work. Subsequently they looked for some such 'females' having some years of schooling in the village and talked to them if they would be interested to assist these elementary levels of children preparing them with their class lessons. They found that there were such 'females' who enthusiastically agreed to do the work. So, initially CDIP picked up some of them and assigned them the task of gathering some children from among the familiar families and teaching and preparing their class lessons. This forum was later known as 'Learning Centres' (LCs) . When such 'females' started the work of teaching these children, they started to be known as teachers. The unknown, unemployed, idle 'females' of the villages started getting an important work for themselves. Their 'titles' (teachers) were becoming more important and respectable to them than what amount of honourarium they had been receiving as remuneration.

## Formation of Learning Centres and Guardians' Forum

The programme started initially by engaging 4 female teachers who started 4 Learning Centres (LCs) in their respective villages in the year 2005. It was noticed that guardians, especially the mothers, used to bring their children themselves to the Centres where teaching took place and they used to remain seated in the surrounding places. It appeared that the mothers' interest in the LCs were in no way less than the children themselves. Since the LCs were run informally they used to observe their children performing in the LCs and when it was over, they used to take the children back home. This action by the young teachers drew the attention of other mothers having children of similar age, who started approaching these teachers to include their children in the LCs. The teachers felt encouraged and there were instances that the young females came up and started organising children voluntarily. These activities created awareness among the neighbouring villages also where LCs started growing gradually. The CDIP staff members also started sharing the experience in other areas where similar attempts were taken and number of LCs started growing. The expansion started taking place when the interested 'females' either approached CDIP staff or CDIP staff looked for 'females' in the villages willing to start an LC. Once such a teacher is selected, she is given an orientation on her role as a teacher and the expected performance by her by the concerned Branch Manager and the Education Supervisor. She is provided with the guidelines to perform her duties. This is how the LCs are being extended.

**Guardians' Forum:** Along with the growth of the LCs, it was also observed that guardians, especially mothers, everywhere were taking similar interest. Their continuous presence and interest in their children's participation and performances in the LCs indicated that they were not only the constant attendants and on-lookers of what was happening in the centres, but they also came forward to discuss informally with the respective teachers regarding the progress, performances and any specific problems of their children. This mutual discussion helped both the guardians as well as the teachers about the students' learning process. This role of the guardians prompted CDIP management to form a 'Guardians' Forum' and to institutionalise it by forming a committee with a chairperson and a secretary. Since all the guardians were not able to come all the days, this forum was formed so that all the guardians could

meet once a month. Here the guardians find the opportunity to discuss performances and progresses of learning of each child. The mutual discussions help both the teacher as well as the guardians to review the activities, discuss any problems and impediments and find solutions in the monthly meetings .

That this Forum serves as an essential activity is evident from some comments made by the guardians. For example, one guardian was saying, “the centre serves as a platform to attract the attention of the children towards reading and writing. Many children, at home, are reluctant to sit for reading and writing. But as you know, children by nature are fond of imitating or mimicking, so when they come to LCs, they automatically follow each other and become not only attentive but also enjoy reading together. This is the greatest benefit of these centres.” Another guardian (mother) said, “my son was not attentive in his study. Joining DLC, he started performing better in his classes. Being encouraged by his results and appreciations of the teachers, I now find hopes with him.” These comments and remarks are not sporadic but to a large extent it is of the majorities and these are evident from the picture that the meetings of ‘Guardians Forum’ are held every month in all 120 Learning Centres and these are attended, as per the report, by the guardians at a high rate.

### Eligibility of Children for Joining Learning Centres

Three levels of students are eligible to study at the LCs. As many students cannot prepare their studies at home resulting into drop-outs from the schools, CDIP decided to include students of pre-primary, grade I and grade II classes of the primary schools. This is done deliberately so that these students, if they perform better, will develop interest in studies and will not be likely to get dropped-out. It has been reported that children aspiring to get admitted into the pre-primary levels also have joined some of the LCs .

As evident from the description, there are three categories/levels of students in the same class, it will be interesting to know the composition of these 3 levels of students in each LC and the teaching techniques being followed by the LC teacher.

### Who are the Students in the Learning Centres

CDIP Learning Centres are open to any eligible child living within the village. Generally, the children living within the surrounding area of the teacher join the Centre. The guardians of the children, especially the mothers, take the initiative and contact the teacher for enrolment. As the number of seats are limited (20-25), it has been observed that the teachers are approached and requests come from the mothers much earlier than the schedule time of enrolment. Usually, the enrolment begins at the start of the year in January. Such instances indicate that there are demands from the guardians for such learning centres.

### What are being Taught in LCs

The subjects that are being dealt with the students of the Learning Centres may be divided into three broad areas. First is the class lessons of primary school students. The LC teachers inquire about the class lessons given to the students by the school teachers and then they try to prepare their lessons. If there are any home-works given, the LC teacher assists the students to discuss and prepare the home-task.

The second area of lessons that they deal with is the very elementary lessons being taught to the children who do not attend the primary school. The alphabets of both English and Bangla are taught to them. These children get the opportunities to prepare them for admission tests in the primary schools.

Third area is the extra-curricular lessons that combine a wide varieties of learning issues. These include first, reciting, drawing, story-telling, singing, dancing etc.; second, discipline (greetings, obeying rules, respect to elders etc.); third, health and hygiene (brushing tooth, cutting nails, clean dressing etc.) and fourth, study of nature (taking out the students nearby and introducing trees, crops, flowers etc. to them).

CDIP, of course, has been organising a week-long cultural festival during every winter season especially after the annual examinations of the students. The programme is being organised by every Branch in a local school or in a suitable place. The local community and the local school students take the responsibility of holding these cultural functions. Different cultural events mark the festival.

One of the unique features of the programme is marked by felicitating the oldest man and oldest woman of the locality with the slogan: 'we respect the elders.' The LC teacher prepares their students for the whole year in order for them to take part in different events of this annual programme extensively and enthusiastically.

## Education Supervisors

For better functioning of the LCs and to supervise and provide guidance to the LC teachers, one Education Supervisor (a female having a minimum of HSC) is engaged and attached to each Branch office where LCs are formed. Her main responsibility is to physically visit at least 2 LCs everyday and observe the teaching process and provide feedback to the teacher. While on tour, she also contacts 2 other nearby LCs in operation over her cell phone. Her duties also include to organise a refresher session of the teachers of her area every month at the Branch office and to assist each LC teacher in holding the monthly meeting of the guardians in the respective LCs. One more important duty of the Education Supervisor is to collect necessary information on the activities of the LCs, prepare a report and send it on-line to ESP management through the Branch Managers. All these activities are performed by her on the basis of a pre-planned and approved weekly plan.

## Operational Procedure

Over the years the Programme is growing big and is expanded to 18 districts. The pattern that has developed during these years is as follows.

- A female teacher organizes a Learning Centre (Shikhya Shahayata Kendra) with a group of 20-25 learners. They teach them in a suitable place at a suitable time. Usually it is in an open place in the courtyard or in a spacious room of an inhabitant and mostly in the afternoon time.

- She is paid a monthly token honorarium by CDIP. An optional subscription is allowed to be collected as 'fee', if contributed willingly by the students' guardians.

- A Female Education Supervisor, engaged by CDIP and attached to each of the Branches, oversees the activities of 20 such LCs. She undertakes visits every working day to cover at least two LCs of her assigned area.

- The Education Supervisor assists the LC teacher in holding and managing the guardians' monthly meetings on a regular basis. These meetings review the progress and experiences, and especially discuss the problems, if any, of individual learner. A teacher of the primary school or a prominent person of the locality is invited to attend the guardians' meeting.

- Each Education Supervisor spares one day in a month in the Branch office to attend a review session and submits a monthly report covering activities of 20 LCs of her area. She also discusses the progress of the activities and raises any problems she faces and ask for solutions from the Branch Manager.

- The Branch Manager sends her monthly report, through Zonal Managers, to the Head Office to the General Manager responsible for the implementation of the Programme.

- The Head office staffs, when visit the project areas also visit the LCs to see its operation and to provide guidance.

### Coverage of the Programme during 2017-2018

The Education Supervisors report the progress of LC activities every month through the prescribed formats prepared by the Head Office. With the increase of number of LCs, initially it became difficult and also time consuming to process the information manually and review them regularly on time. The CDIP management has recently felt the need for on-line reporting. For this, 'software' has been developed by the IT section of CDIP. The Female Supervisors are now reporting on some major indicators as per the 'Format' designed by the Head Office. Each Female Supervisor, responsible for visiting 2 LCs everyday in a month, prepares a progress report for all 20 LCs of her area. The monthly report mainly focusses on the indicators, such as, total number of boy and girl students that she finds present in the classes (the respective teacher also maintains a register book recording their presence or absence), number of students belonging to the families who had joined CDIP as its members, number of disabled students, if any, etc. She also collects information on the holding of guardians' monthly meetings and their presence. The following descriptions of the various activities of the LCs are based on the

reports submitted by the Female Education Supervisors during the period from July 2017 to June 2018.

During the reporting year, out of 141 CDIP Branches, Education Support Programme (ESP) was in operation in 120 Branches. At the rate of 20 Learning Centres in each Branch, there were 2400 Learning Centres with 2400 teachers spread over in the project area. Under CDIP administrative structure, the project location operates through 'CDIP Project Areas'. These 120 Branches are divided into 24 'CDIP Project Areas'. Since 'CDIP Areas' are formed as per their own convenience of administrative and management suitability, they do not necessarily correspond to the country's administrative structure, rather when administrative districts are concerned, each area forms part of the districts. So 24 CDIP Areas are spread over 18 districts of Bangladesh. These districts of CDIP project locations are expanded from the south-eastern district of Chattogram to the north-western district of Chapai Nawabganj. In each CDIP Area, there are 100 LCs working. The name of CDIP Areas with the name of districts and the total number of boy and girl students during the FY 2017-2018 are shown in Table I.

Table I: District-wise Spread of Number of Students in Learning Centres

Sl. No.	Name of CDIP Area	Name of District	Boys	Percent	Girls	Percent	Total Boys & Girls	Percent
1	Kuti Area	Brahmanbaria (part), Cumilla	977	5.24	935	4.5	1911	4.85
2	Salimgonj	Area Brahmanbaria (part), Cumilla(part)	999	.36	1117	5.38	2115	5.37
3	Gazipur Area	Gazipur	969	5.20	1003	4.83	1971	5.00
4	Mohanpur (Comilla) Area	Cumilla (part)	593	3.18	692	3.33	1285	3.26
5	Moynamoti Area	Cumilla (part)	703	3.77	748	3.6	1451	3.68
6	Hajigonj Area	Chandpur (part)	1042	5.59	1090	5.25	2131	5.41
7	Chandpur Area	Laxmipur, Chandpur (part)	863	4.63	972	4.68	1836	4.66
8	Ashulia Area	Dhaka, Gazipur	885	4.75	1048	5.05	1933	4.91

Sl. No.	Name of CDIP Area	Name of District	Boys	Percent	Girls	Percent	Total Boys & Girls	Percent
9	Sonargaon Area	Narayangonj (part)	703	3.77	725	3.49	1428	3.62
10	Narayangonj Area	Munshigonj (part)	828	4.44	1003	4.83	1832	4.65
11	Munshigonj Area	Munshigonj (part) Narayangonj (part)	947	5.08	1134	5.46	2082	5.28
12	Feni Area	Noakhali (part), Feni	464	2.49	530	2.55	996	2.53
13	Nohakhali Area	Noakhali (part), Laxmipur (part)	692	3.71	814	3.92	1506	3.82
14	Bajra Area	Cumilla(part), Noakhali (part)	587	3.15	731	3.52	1318	3.34
15	Laxmipur Area	Laxmipur (part)	770	4.13	858	4.13	1628	4.13
16	Laksham Area	Cumilla (part)	755	4.05	920	4.43	1674	4.25
18	Chattogram Area	Chattogram	863	4.63	991	4.77	1853	4.70
19	Shahjadpur Area	Sirajonj, Pabna (part)	764	4.10	975	4.7	1741	4.42
20	Pabna Area	Pabna (part)	634	3.40	702	3.38	1336	3.39
21	Boraigram Area	Natore, Pabna (part)	693	3.72	781	3.76	1474	3.74
22	Natore Area	Rajshahi (part), Natore	347	1.86	397	1.91	744	1.89

## Number of Students & Gender Segregation

Based on the monthly reports sent by the Education Supervisors for 12 months from July 2017 to June 2018, it was found that during the period monthly reports were received from an average of 103 Supervisors (all supervisors were not able to send the reports on line, this being the first year). However, from the obtained data, it was found that monthly reports were sent for an average of 2060 (85.8%) LCs. According to the reports, the total number of students in the LCs was 39,411. Out of them, 18,641 (47.3%) were boy students and 20,770 (52.7%) were girl students. If the non-report-

ing LCs were considered, the estimated number of students in all LCs would come to 45,916 with 21,718 (47.3%) boy students and 24,198 (52.7%) girl students. Therefore, it could be said that each teacher used to teach an average number of 19 students where there were an average of 9 boy students and 10 girl students. The month-wise details for the year 2017-2018 could be seen in Table 2.

Table 2: Month-wise Number of Boy and Girl Students of Shishak in the Year 2017 – 2018

Month	No. of Centres Reported	Boys	%	Girls	%	Total
July	104	19314	47.8	21132	52.2	40446
Aug	101	19100	47.6	21033	52.4	40133
Sep	102	17879	47.3	19939	52.7	37818
Oct	105	19063	47.1	21387	52.9	40450
Nov	106	18230	47.8	19901	52.2	38131
Dec	107	18780	47.1	21054	52.9	39834
Jan	104	17716	47.4	19646	52.6	37362
Feb	100	18730	47.5	20708	52.5	39438
Mar	100	18730	47.5	20708	52.5	39438
Apr	100	18670	46.7	21277	53.3	39947
May	101	18221	46.8	20741	53.2	38962
June	109	19255	47	1717	53	40972
Total	1239	223688	47.3	249243	52.7	472931
<b>Average per Branch</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>18641</b>	<b>47.3</b>	<b>20770</b>	<b>52.7</b>	<b>39411</b>
<b>Average per LC</b>		<b>9.0</b>	<b>47.1</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>52.9</b>	<b>19.1</b>

### Attendance of the Students in Learning Centres

There is a system of recording the attendances of the students who joined the Learning Centres. The reports received from the Education Supervisors showed that in 90% LCs, the average attendance by the students during the last 12 months (2017-2018) exceeded 70% while the attendance was lower

than 70% in cases of 10% LCs. The month-wise break-up of the attendances varied from a minimum of 82.1% in August 2017 to a maximum of 98.0% in February and March 2018. This is an evidence of the importance that, perhaps, the guardians attach to such teaching opportunities. It appeared from the attendances that the guardians, especially the mothers, were serious about the teaching of their children. A number of LC teachers informed that guardians' seriousness about LCs was so high that they had booked seats in advance in their classes for the next year. The month-wise break-up of the attendances of above 70% and below 70% was shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Percentage of Students' Attendances within the Reported Centres and their Monthly Break-up

Month	No. of Centres	Centres Reporting <70% Attendance	Percent	Centres Reporting >70% Attendance	Percent
July	104	86	82.7	18	17.3
Aug	101	89	88.1	12	11.9
Sep	102	87	85.3	15	14.7
Oct	105	94	89.5	11	10.5
Nov	106	91	85.8	15	14.2
Dec	107	96	89.7	11	10.3
Jan	105	100	95.2	5	4.8
Feb	100	98	98	2	2.0
Mar	100	98	98	2	2.0
Apr	100	97	97	3	3.0
May	101	93	92.1	8	7.9
June	109	93	85.3	16	14.7
Total	1240	1122	90.5	118	9.5
<b>Average</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>9.0</b>

### Attendance of Guardians in Meetings

As told earlier, Guardians of the LC students meet at a meeting every month for each LC. The guardians formed a committee consisting of I chairperson and I secretary to run the forum. It is observed that the meetings of the guardians are held regularly and the attendance of the guardians, on an

average, is 64.01% varying from a minimum of 59.5% to a maximum of 68.4%. See more details and monthly break-up in Table 4.

### Participation of CDIP Families in LCs

CDIP LCs are open to any eligible child living within the village to get admitted. CDIP however prefers that CDIP members' families take the advantage of the LCs. The data collected for the year 2017-2018 showed that out of 39,411 students, more than one-fifth 8,009 (20.7%) students belonged to the members of CDIP families. However, it was not known how many families lived in the localities and how many of them had eligible children suitable as LC learners.

Table 4: Students of CDIP Families, No. of Disabled Students and Guardians' Attendance in Meetings

Month	Total No. of Students	No. of Students of CDIP Families	Percent	No. of Guardians Attending Meeting	Percent
July	40446	8559	21.2	24076	59.5
Aug	40133	8334	20.8	25244	62.9
Sep	37818	7549	20	23584	62.4
Oct	40450	8400	20.8	25365	62.7
Nov	38131	7961	20.9	24103	63.2
Dec	39834	8746	22	24117	60.5
Jan	37362	6975	18.7	24117	64.5
Feb	39438	8352	21.2	26960	68.4
Mar	39438	8352	21.2	26960	68.4
Apr	39947	7995	20.01	26722	66.89
May	38962	7593	19.49	25389	65.16
June	40972	7287	17.79	26102	63.71
Total	472931	96103	20.32	302739	64.01
<b>Average</b>	<b>39411</b>	<b>8009</b>	<b>20.32</b>	<b>25228</b>	<b>64.01</b>

### Replication of the Concept of Learning Centres

The idea of CDIP's innovative work of ESP has been, in principle, appreciated by other NGOs. PKSF has taken an initiative to replicate the idea by some NGOs

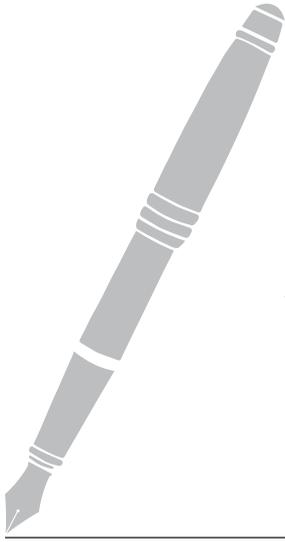
and is providing fund for the purpose. So a number of NGOs are doing the similar work. ASA – the largest micro-finance institution have accepted the idea and is largely replicating it in its operational area.

### Comments and Recommendations

The innovative idea of preparing the class lessons for pre-primary and primary level students by using the village girls or mothers or housewives is a praiseworthy work. It is praiseworthy for at least three reasons. One, it is not only to stop drop-out of the children from schools but also to assist the children in getting into the habit of attaining education. If this is done, this will take him or her to an unlimited stage in future. It is important that a child gets enamoured to education. That is the job being done through ESP by CDIP. Two, the programme opens the opportunity of reviving the acquired education and skills of the teachers and applying many other innovative thoughts by themselves that they think good for their students. This is what the educated females had been missing while staying at the villages having no chance of doing any professional work, and CDIP enabled them to bring it to light. They are now in a position to sharpen their unutilized and unexploited talents whatever they possess. This is a great job being done in Shishak programme by CDIP. Three, CDIP is encouraging the teachers and many of them are getting the habits of writing their personal experiences with their LC students and these are being published by CDIP in their regularly published quarterly magazine, Shikkhalok' (a CDIP education bulletin).

Another point needs to be mentioned. This article gives a narration of CDIP ESP, whatever could be learnt from secondary reading materials and from some field observations. A thorough and in-depth study on the basic information about the students as well as the teachers on the functioning of the programme is needed that will enable the management to provide better directions to improve the quality of the programme.

*The writer is former Director, Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Cumilla.*



# Happiness at Workplace and Value of Work-Life Balance

SALEHA BEGUM

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## Introduction

Happiness at the workplace refers to how satisfied people are with their work and lives. The idea of happiness is related to individual's subjective well-being. Happiness at the workplace is crucial for improving productivity in any organisation. Workplace happiness is a very new concept.

In the management system in earlier days happiness and workplace weren't strongly associated with each other. The reason behind their coming together is that the present world is changing at an increasingly rapid pace with new economic relations being present and new technologies introduced regularly to cope up with new realities. To fulfill the requirements of the organisation, the employees have to work hard and stay under stress situation for quality output creating new social and economic relationships, and as a consequence a new political and administrative environment. (Aye 2010)

Again, employees earn money to lead their life with family and society and thus there is an interactive relationship between these two domains along with the need to balance between work and family. Work-life balance is a term commonly used to describe balance that a working individual needs between time allocated for work and for other aspects of life. Areas of life other than work-life include family and social or leisure activities that should not be

limited to personal interests only. Thus, happiness is viewed by a growing number of scholars and senior executives as one of the major sources of positive outcomes in the workplace. One of the most important lessons that many leading companies have learned is to encourage and foster a work environment that inspires employees to enjoy their work which can yield enormous benefits for the employees.

Organisational behavior looks at the application of knowledge of how individuals or groups act within an organisation. The concept is interpreted in terms of the entire social system and used in maintaining good organisational culture ensuring positive employee-organisation relationship. Management's philosophy, goals, visions and values will determine how well an organisation's culture is maintained.

The purpose of this article is to review the opinion of various eminent researchers and to discuss the issue for dissemination of the idea.

### Importance of Happiness at Workplace

Improving the happiness levels of the workforce has important social and economic effects, since it brings benefits to both the employees and the organisation, and influences an individual's social behavior, employment relations and productive performance in the workplace (Wesarat et al., 2015).

High levels of psychological wellbeing at the workplace allow employees to flourish and achieve their full potential for the benefit of themselves and their organisation. The employees feel happier when they are properly valued and engaged in their work. The driving factor in this kind of employees' happiness is good relationships. Team members want to work in an environment where they are connected to their colleagues and leaders in meaningful ways. These kinds of relationships create higher levels of engagement and collaboration allowing a more lively and flexible organisation to emerge. Studies show that happiness can protect heart, strengthen the immune system, reduce stress, decrease aches and pains in the short-term and long-term, and even lengthen lives. With more emphasis on mental well-being as well as physical health, happiness has become not just an individual matter but team works are tackled as well. Happiness begins and ends with strong internal relationships and genuine communication.

According to McKee, a big part of happiness stems from having an aligned vision between the company and individual employees. Team members want to know where they stand in the company's big picture, giving them a pathway and goals helps create a business that is made up of empowered people working towards the same vision in their own individual ways. Investing in happiness begins and ends with strong internal relationships built on a foundation of genuine communication.

## How to Create Happiness at Workplace

Organisational culture represents the internal work environment created for operation of an organisation. How employees are treated by their bosses and peers are part of it, too. An effective organisation should have a culture that takes into account employees' happiness and encourages employee satisfaction. (Bhatti, et al., 2007) Although each individual has unique talents and personal preferences, the behaviors and beliefs of the people in the same organisations show common properties. (Schneider et al., 1975) This, to some extent, helps organisations to create their own cultural properties. As such ownership feelings will be created among them. The employee will feel satisfied not through comparisons with other peers, but through his/her own happiness and awareness of being in harmony with their colleagues. Happy employees tend to be more engaged, loyal, creative and productive than their less-satisfied counterparts. Creating a positive culture that engages employees and boosts satisfaction levels enables companies to remain competitive and directly impacts the bottom line.

Happiness is very important both professionally as well as personally. In personal terms, people seek to achieve happiness in many ways; for many people, it is the basis of a 'good life'. Happy individuals act differently from others, and this can lead to corresponding activities and reactions from other people that in turn encourage more happiness among the group. For many people, reduction of unhappiness is a primary concern. For academics, scientific understanding in this area is crucial both in its own right and for groundwork, professional actions and organisational policies.

## The Interactive Relationship between Happiness and Positivism

There is a growing demand for optimising cognitive abilities to enhance positive change in the organisations. Studies show that happiness is more realised when

thoughts, perspectives, feelings and actions are utilised for creating more inspiring models that would directly influence the employee's quality of life and wellbeing. Some key points how happiness enhances the quality of organisation and it's employees' wellbeing are discussed in the following:

- Happy employees are successful employees.

Employees who genuinely enjoy their work are more productive, happier, and more successful. This increases self-confidence and inspires greater performance and greater success for both employees and employers.

- Happy employees encourage their colleagues to be happy.

Happy employees, who enjoy their work, make excellent role models for their fellow workers and encourage them to enjoy their work too.

- Reducing stress increases productivity.

Stressed-out employees are distracted employees. This can have a devastating effect on productivity. Eliminating stress and worry can lead to an instant productivity boost.

- A positive work environment encourages risk-taking.

Business is about taking the right risk for the right rewards. Happy employees are more likely to take calculated risks, while unhappy employees are more likely to play it safe.

- Happy employees support each other.

Positive, fully engaged employees are more willing to support fellow workers and to provide positive support and encouragement for group projects and are more likely to ask for support if it is needed.

- Happy employees are not afraid to make mistakes.

A supportive work environment encourages team members to learn from their mistakes rather than fear them. Mistakes can be a powerful learning tool that can lead to unforeseen successes. Workers who are afraid to make mistakes will miss important learning opportunities.

- Happiness inspires creativity.

Innovation is the lifeblood of any business, and happy employees are inspired, creative employees who will create the solutions a business needs to succeed.

- People like to work with happy people.

Happy workers are more willing to work together for the common good, more likely to encourage company loyalty, and more likely to encourage the strong team building that is vital to a company's success. As such, work can yield enormous benefits by improving relationships between both employees and the employer.

- Happiness at workplace has its effect on productivity.

A happy employee is truly a productive employee and the secret for an organisation is to make its environment happy for all employees. In an organisation, if we don't have happy employees, the productivity of the organisation will be reduced. Research has been conducted across the world to determine the impact of happiness on productivity of an employee and it shows happy employees have: a. 31% higher productivity; b. 37% higher sales; c. 19.2% increase of operating income; and d. A happy employee is 87% less likely to leave the organisation. (Argyle M., 1987)

## Work-life balance

Work-life balance is a state of equilibrium, characterised by a high level of satisfaction, functionality, and effectiveness while successfully performing several tasks simultaneously. (Tausig, et al. 2001) The non-work activity is not limited to family life only but also to society. One's life is composed of various occupations and activities. Scholars and popular articles have started promoting the importance of maintaining a work-life balance beginning in the early 1970s and these have been increasing ever since. (Carponi, P J. 1997) Studies suggest that there is a clear connection between the increase in work related stress and the constant advancements in digital and telecommunications technology. The existence of cell phones and other internet based devices enables access to work related issues in non-working periods, thus, adding more hours with work load. (White, M., et al., 2003) This actually improves productivity. Work-life balance encourages social collaboration, which leads to increased creativity, ideas, and productivity.

Respondents of World Life Happiness Report stated that autonomy is directly linked to job satisfaction. The ability to control your actions and schedule impacts

your happiness and efficiency levels. People who feel they have freedom at work are more engaged with their work overall.

A decrease in the time allocated to non-work related activities and working non-standard shifts has been proven to have significant negative effects on family and personal life. The immediate effect is a decrease in general well-being as the individual is unable to properly allocate the appropriate amount of time necessary to maintain a balance between the two spheres. Therefore, extensive research has been done on properly managing time as a main strategy of managing stress.

### The future of work and happiness

Management plays an important role in an employee's job satisfaction and happiness. Feelings, including happiness, are often hidden by employees and should be identified for effective communication in the workplace. Ineffective communication at work is not uncommon, as leaders tend to focus on their own matters and give less attention to employees at a lower rank. Employees, on the other hand, tend to be reluctant to talk about their own problems and assume leaders can figure out these. As a result, both leaders and employees can cause repetitive misunderstandings.

There are many reasons that can contribute to happiness at work. However, when individuals are asked with regards to why they work, money is one of the most common answers. (Jurgensen, C. E. 1978). Work provides people with sustenance, security and privilege. Locke, Feren, McCaleb Shaw and Denny argued that no other incentive or motivational technique comes even close to money with respect to its instrumental value. (Locke, et al., 1980) Warr put stress on future career possibility as well as directly increasing the skill development. (Warr, Peter 2007)

Turnover of the organisation can be considered as another result derived from employee happiness. In particular, it is more likely that individual employees are able to deal with stress and passive feelings when they are in good mood. As people spend a considerable amount of time in the workplace, factors such as employee relationship, organisational culture and job performance can have a significant impact on work happiness. What is more, Avey and his colleagues

use a concept called psychological capital to link employee satisfaction with work related outcomes, especially turnover intention and actual turnover. However, their findings were limited due to some reasons. For example, they omitted an important factor, which was emotional stability. Additionally, some researchers have pointed out that the relationship between work happiness and turnover intention is generally low; even if a dis-satisfied employee is more likely to quit his/her job than the satisfied one. Therefore, whether or not employee happiness can be linked with an employee's turnover intention is still a moot point.

Psychologists have suggested that when workers have control over their work schedule, they are more capable of balancing work and non-work related activities. The reality of constant increase in competition and economic uncertainty frequently forces the employee to compromise the balance for the sake of financial and job security. Therefore, work/life balance policies are created by many businesses and are largely implemented and dealt with by line managers and supervisors, rather than at the organisational level for the well-being of employees. The development of any professional expertise and practice needs an awareness of key theory and underpinning best practices. This is to ensure that some of that theory and best practices are integrated into professional group sessions within the organisation.

### Role of Leadership

A leader who aims to nurture employees' happiness must develop operating systems and a culture that reinforce the role of the individual within the context of that organisation. If each individual employee is unaware of their organisational culture and how the organisation measures their value, the organisation will fail to have capable, dedicated and committed work force to strengthen the organisation upto its expected level. Leaders should view the organisation as a set of communities with individuals as the key components. Hence, the nurturing of communities—both sub-segments of the firm such as work-groups or divisions and the overall community of the firm—is a key task for leaders. The drivers of happiness explain why social events such as staff picnics, employee fund raising initiatives, holiday parties, award banquets, intra-firm sports and tournaments are not insignificant, but rather essential. They

define and enhance communities providing a vehicle for generating the value of individuals and representing an important component of their happiness.

In relation to the work place, successful leadership will structure and develop relationships amongst employees and consequently, employees will empower each other. Kurt Lewin is often recognised as the “founder of social psychology” and was one of the first to study group dynamics and organisational development. A Review of General Psychology survey, published in 2002, ranked Lewin as the 18th-most cited psychologist of the 20th century. (Buss, D 2000)

## Conclusion

It has been discussed above that work-life balance can be maintained if the employees have the opportunities to schedule their work around their life. This actually improves productivity. Work-life balance encourages social collaboration, which leads to increased creativity, ideas, and productivity. The strongest form of work-life balance tends to stem from flexible work options that enable employees to pursue their personal life. People who feel they have freedom at work are more engaged with their work. Happy employees bring their happiness from the office to their home; likewise they also transfer their happiness from their home to the office. This suggests that there is a possible close interrelation between an individual's work and life.

Positive consequences range from higher job performance to job satisfaction and enhanced general well-being, which are related to the concept of happiness at work. The condition in which work performance is negatively affected by a high level of stress is termed ‘burnout’, in which the employee experiences a significant reduction in motivation. Time management, prioritising certain tasks and actions according to one's values and beliefs are amongst the suggested course of action for managing stress and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. (Isaac, R G et al., 2001)

Creating a happy workplace involves looking at all aspects of workplace system: hiring employees who are emotionally intelligent, who have a positive mindset, and then providing development and growth opportunities, teaching employees how to give and get feedback positively, and ensuring that there is an atmosphere of psychological safety, so employees feel encouraged to take the risks needed for

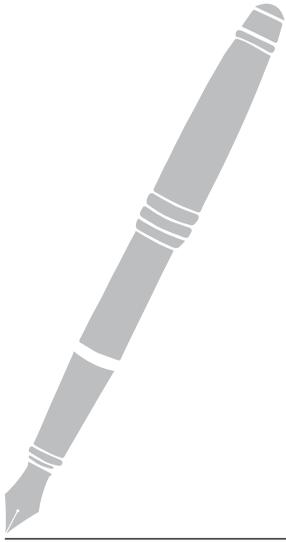
creativity and innovation. If this wisdom is borne out, then keeping employees happy while they are at work is a fundamental challenge for employers.

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# WHERE SCIENCE MEETS ARTS

ASHRAF AHMED

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Our usual concept of 'science' is completely different from that of 'arts'. Thus, a student of arts or literature thinks of science as full of formulae and theories which are difficult to understand. On the other hand, a science student may consider arts as full of unreal thoughts. We often forget that the ideal culmination of science and 'arts' as seen in the stage shows, movies and television programs, play the same roles in the lives of artists and scientists. If one defines art as 'visual expression of one's mind', then a scientist is also an artist. A careful analysis will show that a successful scientist must have an artistic mind and likewise, a successful artist must have knowledge of science to make his/her art appreciated.

## The Art of Science

The work of a scientist is usually of practical importance. Whatever we know of science, it is an outcome of highly imaginative mind with the goal of achieving something that has not been known to us. One must 'dream' of any knowledge that is nonexistent in a particular time. Usually such a dream has a purpose of understanding an unexplained phenomenon or of solving a problem that he considers will improve the lot of the mankind or satisfy his curiosity. Once a scientist has such a dream or vision, he then tries to rationalize its practicability. He uses his knowledge of theories or properties of matter (as formulae, math, etc.) to make his dream come true. The result is

a piece of work that is 'beautiful' for mind and mankind.

For example, the writer, statesman and inventor Benjamin Franklin first must have had imagined that lightning and electricity are the same. He then went to prove it with his knowledge of conductive nature of electricity. The pianist Alexander Graham Bell, son of a deaf mother, must have had dreamt of sending his voice through wire. He then used his knowledge of the properties of metal in transmitting waves to make his imagination a reality. Many a time, a theory born from a scientist's head may not be proven during his lifetime. For example, some particles called 'Bosons' 'mathematically imagined' almost 90 years ago by the late Dhaka University physicist Satyendra Nath Bose, helped two US scientists win Nobel prize 80 years later by proving their physical existence!

### The Science of Art

Imagination of an artist although can be very uncertain, it is nonetheless influenced by the particular environment he experiences. When we look at a painting or sculpture and become glued to appreciate the beauty of the work, we forget that the artist used his knowledge of properties of paints, clay and stones to express his mind. A painter must have had a detailed understanding of creating a complex colour from mixing the basic ones, and of the suitability of paper, board or cloth to use with ceramic, water or oil paints. These are his knowledge of chemistry and science without complex scientific formulae. A sculptor must have learned or experimented with clay or rock and the tools he used to curve a figure. These are subjects of science technology. A singer must have knowledge of sound effects, and a stage actor must have knowledge of lighting and visual impact to create a successful impression on the audience. These are knowledge of physics. If you had watched the inauguration displays of the last Olympic games in Beijing you can have an appreciation of the friendship of arts and science. Our appreciation of art, therefore, is the result of a combination of the imagination of the artist and his knowledge of science.

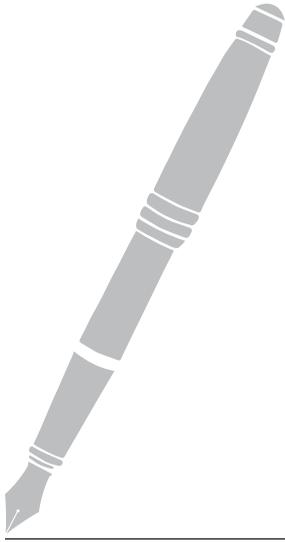
An artist's imagination may also inspire scientific discoveries and improvements. A nineteenth century artist had a painting showing many delicious foods emerging from pipes out of a petroleum mine. Our dependence on petroleum products today for supplies of food from

industries is a testimony to the artist's contribution to the advancement of science. An artist's depiction of spaceships and space stations are not uncommon. Imaginary scientific gadgets in Hollywood movies become a reality several decades later.

## Conclusions

The creations of artists and scientists both are pieces of art. It is the emphasis of Science or Arts that make them different. There, however, is a basic difference. An artist's imagination knows no bound. A scientist's imagination is restricted within the context of available knowledge.

*The author, a former Dhaka University teacher, is a biomedical scientist working in the USA.*



# A CULTURAL FEST THAT ENTHRALS RURAL KIDS

MANZUR SHAMS

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It was a great pleasure for the rural kids. Kids who prepared themselves round the year for the next day's class lessons; competed with the classmates for a bright result; at a time helped their parents in the crop-fields, fish-ponds, caring family pets, attended small family shops, kitchens, kitchen-gardens; their backs bent under heavy school-bags and always struggling with lots of home-works - get a tremendous space of enjoyment and self-purification. Also, they adorn themselves with patriotic spirit to face the new-year challenges by marching boldly with truth and beauty.

Future of the nation obviously depends on them. Rabindranath Tagore says, 'Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.' Nelson Mandela utters boldly, 'There can be no keener revelation of a society's soul than the way in which it treats its children.' If we can foster our kids sincerely and grow them up as healthy and educated citizens, a bright and prosperous future will be achieved for our nation. But the woeful truth is that, most of our kids are not getting the opportunity of proper education, let alone cultural support. Education is a right, like the right to have proper food or a roof over one's head. Article 26 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that "everyone has the right to education." Education is not only a right but a passport to human development. It opens doors and expands opportunities and freedoms. It contributes to fostering peace, democracy and economic growth as well as improving health and reducing poverty.

CDIP (Centre for Development Innovation and Practices), a self-funded non-government organisation of Bangladesh, realized that in order to develop our nation, educational support to the kids of depressed and illiterate family is crucial. Their social commitment attracts and then involves the rural mass in their working areas in the programme. The most positive achievement of their programme is—they managed to involve the rural people with their various activities.

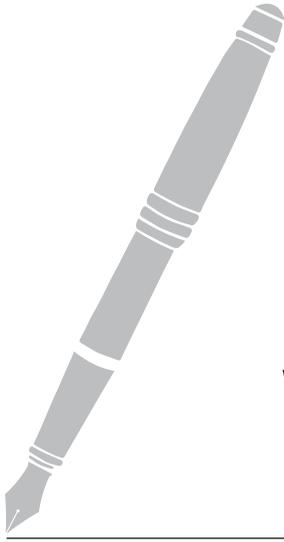
CDIP first began this programme in March 2005 to address the drop-out problems at primary school level in rural areas. Success in this regard inspired them to take more positive steps. They include healthcare practices, cultural activities, respecting the elderly people and nature study for the kids. As Albert Einstein says, 'Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better.'

CDIP included Nature Study in its Education Support Program in 2016 in order to make children familiar with the nature around them and to learn from it. They also enjoy the day of their Nature Study playing in the field or under trees, knowing the names of trees, birds, fishes, animals, flowers, fruits, engaging in creative activities like making fancy things with leaves, flowers, buds, etc. Children of the organisation's 2,400 Learning Centres practise it once a month throughout the year.

Cultural programme for the rural kids enhance their positive thinking and activities. The kids of disadvantaged families of the rural areas gather at their respective learning centers on the scheduled day much before the scheduled time. They help their teachers to arrange the programme, welcome the oldest woman and man with flowers. The blessing hands of the oldest guardians of the village bestow good wishes on them. In the meantime all the guests arrive and take their seats on the stage. Then the teacher announces the commencement of the cultural fest. The kids recite, sing, perform sports, dress as they like, dance and play. Soon after the kids' performance, they are given prizes, sponsored and arranged by the villagers.

This cultural programme by CDIP will certainly have a great positive impact upon the future generation of the nation.

*The writer is a researcher.*



# A UNIQUE STORY OF PRIMARY HEALTH SERVICES

ALAMGIR KHAN

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Piggyback Social Marketing Strategy for Health Program, a book this year published by CDIP (Centre for Development Innovation and Practices), identifies the strategy the NGO has adopted in order to carry its health services to the marginalised people in villages of Bangladesh. Addressing health problems is a major issue for poor people in our country. Bangladesh, however, has earned some successes in providing some basic health services to its people despite many other health problems have remained unaddressed. Despite the successes the country still has to go a long way to provide basic health services in full to its people. CDIP has taken a small step in this direction.

The running of CDIP Health Service Program has met with considerable success since its launching only a few years back. Though it stumbled at the beginning when it started a health programme for its micro-credit borrowers employing MBBS doctors. In 2013 after this initial failure, a new health programme began with SACMOs (Sub-assistant Community Medical Officers) starting first in two branches at Kutu and Dharkhar in Brahmanbaria. At present CDIP is running this programme in 77 branches (it was when the book was written, the number is more now) in different districts. This provision of some primary health services to people at a

nominal cost required a strategy which is thoroughly discussed in this book by Shajahan Bhuiya, a soft development professional with the long on-the-job experiences of working in non-government, government, private organisations and Missions under UN systems.

The initial objective of writing such a book as this was to “search for strategy formation for CDIP HSP which is now self-reliant and sustainable as well as effective and useful in addressing the primary health care needs of the disadvantaged, excluded and poor community people,” as is written in the preface by Muhammad Yahya, Executive Director of CDIP.

Mr. Mizanur Rahman, PhD, Senior Research Advisor, MEASURE Evaluation, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, USA, has praised the author’s application of techniques of development science in his comment on the book, printed on the flap of its cover, saying “The author has elucidated the theory of change in a lucid language and in layman’s vocabulary.”

The author has used three conceptual frameworks—McKinsy’s 7S Model, “Core Design” School Model of Strategy Formation and 4Ps of Marketing Mix—in his analysis of this health programme. He has, however, admitted that CDIP management did not follow these frameworks knowingly, yet in exploring and understanding its strategy formation the models were necessary fit for discussion.

In the HSP, credit borrowers can purchase health cards for an annual fee of Tk.200 and get primary preventive and curative health services for all the members of their families round the year. For an average five-member family the cost amounts to only 11 paisa per day in a year. They, however, need to pay some money for blood-sugar test, pregnancy test, ray-therapy, nebulization, etc. There are also free services for the members and paid-services for non-members at satellite clinics run by the outsourced physicians or specialist-doctors and the SACMOs.

The success of the programme is in employing SACMOs at the branch level because of their readiness to work with the existing set-up of the organisation.

The author has discussed in detail the curriculum, course period, strengths, weaknesses and problems of SACMOs. Though SACMOs are the backbone of the program, it runs on the back of the micro-credit set-up of the organisation.

Abbas Bhuiya, PhD, Member Board of Trustees, ICDDR,B, and Senior Associate, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, says in his comment on the flap of the book's cover, "The author has successfully captured the essence of CDIP's innovative approaches for inclusive development with focus on primary healthcare."

This review can be concluded agreeing with Mr. Bhuiya's apt remark that it is really very rewarding to read this book by Shajahan Bhuiya to have a clear picture of how a homegrown NGO operating without foreign money makes its primary health service programme beneficial as well as sustainable to our grassroots people.

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