

Quality Education in Bangladesh; Lessons from the United Kingdom Strategies and Reforms; A comparative study

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Abstract

This paper addresses the comparisons of the education system of Bangladesh and the UK from six dimensions i.e. education and training authority, educational structure, curriculum formulation, assessment and evaluation, supervision and management, and teacher education and training. The results revealed that alongside all these six dimensions, similarities and differences exist within all divisions of Bangladesh, but these are relatively more prominent while comparing the four states in the UK: England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. In England, national curriculum tests at different grade levels are statutory; both in England and Wales teachers' induction and inspection of schools are more structured than in Ireland and Scotland. The length of first-degree programmes is usually one year more in Scotland than in the other three states in the UK. In Bangladesh, education system is relatively more alike across the seven divisions due to uniform national curricula and policy formulation at national level. The continuous assessment system from grade 1-12 is relatively more structured in Dhaka. The overall achievement level of students is relatively high in Khulna, Barisal and Chittagong lie in the middle; and newly division Rangpur and Sylhet ranked at the lowest. Low achievement in English and mathematics is a common feature in Bangladesh and the UK. This study conducted basically secondary sources to measure international standard and quality of education in Bangladesh and find out gap between UK and Bangladesh in terms of quality education.

Keywords: *Education system, inter-Divisional, inter-countries comparison.*

INTRODUCTION

Education in its general sense is a form of learning in which the knowledge, skills, and habits of a group of people are transferred from one generation to the next through teaching, training, or research. In Bangladesh a plan for sustainable development should address the issue of education because it plays a vital role not only in expanding further educational opportunities but also in fostering basic intellectual abilities such as literacy. That is why education has received a great attention as a developing nation of Bangladesh even in conjunction with the Article 15 (a) and 17 (a,b) of the Constitution of Bangladesh, education is a fundamental right and providing education to all its citizens is one of the responsibilities of the state.

In respect to Bangladesh education three main levels Primary, secondary and tertiary education has received as vital. Bangladesh's Primary Education (Compulsory) Act of 1990 mandated the provision of public education and the enrollment and attendance of children between the age of 6 and 10 years. In secondary level education, girls are getting full free studentship & stipend from 1994 (funded by World Bank, Asian Development Bank, Govt of Norway and Bangladesh through FSP project) to encourage their access to education.

The 1990 World Conference on Education for All (EFA) in Jomtien, Thailand, further focused Bangladesh's primary education priorities and the country developed its first National Plan of Action to achieve EFA (Ahmed et al 2007). Recent education policy in Bangladesh has centered on EFA and Millennium Development Goal (MDG) targets. With just 2.4 percent of GDP expenditure on education, Bangladesh ranks in the bottom tier on government spending for education internationally, and most of the cost for primary, secondary & higher education are met by families.¹ Bangladesh's recent economic performance is impressive. Its expected annual growth exceeded 6% in 2011 despite global economic woes, and the incidence of poverty fell from 57 in the early 1990s to 40% in 2015 (World Bank 2011b).

Despite these gains, "close to 30 percent of the country's 164 million population remain below the poverty line earning less than US\$1 a day" (ibid p. 1) and there are persistent rural-urban and socio-economic disparities for entry and participation in primary school that makes a pyramid shape in gradual secondary to higher education. In recent years, the government and international donors have made significant investments in education expansion. To date, Bangladesh has reached over 90% net enrollment for primary-school aged children and its schools have achieved gender parity.² However, these impressive achievements have not been paired with a corresponding increase in education quality and barely half of children complete the primary cycle and finally reach to higher education 2% or 3%.

There is a great disparity between bottoms to top. Given the improvements in enrollment over the last few years, the opportunity now exists to shift resources from expanding education to focusing on education quality improvements and redefining education priorities to target those who continue to be excluded from education, especially poor and marginalized communities. Forms of exclusion range from physical inaccessibility for disabled children and those living in remote communities to virtual exclusion of enrolled students who are not learning.

This paper on equality education complies on planned curriculum, qualified teachers (denotes as (i) accurate subject knowledge (ii) knowledge and efficiency in education science (iii) mentality of teaching) and favorable environment of Bangladesh in context of International level especially UK standard is an endeavor to realize diverse indicator in the context of quality education and to make a reality check between the promises stated in the National Plan for Action (NPA-ii) and National Education Policy (NEP, 2010), so that we can have a clear image to generate evidence and insights which can be used to formulate policy.

- 1) Chowdhury & Nath (2009) cite an average government expenditure of 1253 TK (or US\$17)/student/year at government and registered non-government schools, whereas the household costs are estimated to be 2500TK (or US\$34)/student/year.
- 2) Primary school in Bangladesh as defined as the first five grades of school, from Class 1 to Class 5.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Bangladesh runs one of the biggest education administrations in the world. From independent Bangladesh has been trying to make sophisticated educational infrastructure to increase educational standard for equal footing with west. In this regard, the educational system in Bangladesh is three-tiered and highly subsidized. The government of Bangladesh operates many schools in the primary, secondary, and higher secondary levels. It also subsidizes parts of

the funding for many private schools. In the tertiary education sector, the government also funds more than 15 state universities through the University Grants Commission.

The education system of Bangladesh is divided into 5 levels: Primary (from grades 1 to 5), Junior Secondary (from grades 6 to 8), Secondary (from grades 9 to 10), Higher Secondary (from grades 11 to 12) and tertiary. The five years of lower secondary education concludes with a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination but since 2009 it concludes with a Primary Education Closing (PEC) Examination. Also earlier Students who pass this examination proceed to four years Secondary or matriculation training, which culminate in a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination but since 2010 the Primary Education Closing (PEC) passed examinees proceed to three years Junior Secondary, which culminate in a Junior School Certificate (JSC) Examination. Then students who pass this examination precede to two years Secondary or matriculation training, which culminate in a Secondary School Certificate (SSC) Examination. Students who pass this examination proceed to two years of Higher Secondary or intermediate training, which culminate in a Higher Secondary School Certificate (HSC) Examination.

Education is mainly offered in Bengali, but English is also commonly taught and used. A large number of Muslim families send their children to attend part-time courses or even to pursue full-time religious education, which is imparted in Bengali and Arabic in madrasas. Bangladesh conforms fully to the Education For All (EFA) objectives, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and international declarations. Article 17 of the Bangladesh Constitution provides that all children between the ages of six and ten years receive a basic education free of charge. Universities in Bangladesh are mainly categorized into three different types: public university (government owned and subsidized), private university (private sector owned universities) and international university (operated and funded by international organizations).

Bangladesh has some thirty-four public, over one hundred private and two international universities. National University has the largest enrolment amongst them and University of Dhaka (established 1921) is the oldest university of the country. In addition six Engineering and Technology University, eight science and technology universities, Islamic University of Technology, commonly known as IUT is a subsidiary organ of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), etc. Bangladeshi universities are accredited by and affiliated with the University Grants Commission (UGC), a commission created according to the Presidential Order (P.O. No 10 of 1973) of the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh.³ In association with, current Status of primary Education in Bangladesh Two-thirds of students in Bangladesh attend schools administered or assisted by the government.

3. Education in Bangladesh from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In 2005, the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education reported that there were 37,672 government primary schools, 19,862 registered non-government schools, and 8,329 primary schools attached to high madrasas⁴. The system serves more than 16 million children, evenly attended by boys and girls⁵. Despite this development education poses a daunting challenge because of inaccessibility and resource constraint. Still now, Bangladesh has a low literary rate in compared to international standard, estimated at 61.3% for males and 52.2% for females in 2010⁶. At the same times more than 20 percent of children in Bangladesh never enroll in primary school.⁷ Children from rural or poverty-stricken environments are significantly less likely to be enrolled. Of all students initially enrolled, 25–33 percent did not complete primary

school.⁸ Girls and children in rural areas are significantly less likely to complete primary school. The average student is older than 14 upon graduation from primary school,⁹ taking an average of 8.7 years to complete the five-year cycle. The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education requires children to master 27 cognitive competencies through primary education, but only 1.6 percent of students do. Boys achieve 16.7 of these competencies on average; girls average 15.3. The Campaign for Popular Education estimates that 66 percent of children in Bangladesh do not even achieve basic literacy and numeracy.¹⁰

Bangladesh's 41 percent adult literacy rate ranks at the bottom of eleven low-income Asian countries.¹¹ The Education Development Index reflects this poor performance, ranking Bangladesh 105 out of 121 countries in terms of educational outcomes.¹² In addition, with the chief motto 'Literacy is freedom', according to UN, more than 800 million people of the world and almost sixty percent of the people of Bangladesh does not know what this 'freedom' is. The ratio of girls to boys in primary school is 103:100 in Bangladesh (BBS & UNICEF, 2010).

- 4 Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. (2005). School Information: Different Types of Primary Level Institutions. Retrieved February 20, 2008, from http://www.mopme.gov.bd/School_info.htm
- 5 Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. (2005). Students Enrollment: Number of Students Enrolled in Primary Schools and Percentage of Boys and Girls. Retrieved February 20, 2008, from http://www.mopme.gov.bd/students_info.htm
- 6 Education in Bangladesh from Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
- 7 Campaigns for Popular Education. (2003–2004). Education Watch 2003/4: Quality with Equity, The Primary Education Agenda. Retrieved February 20, 2008, from http://www.campebd.org/content/EW_20034.htm 8
- 8 Statistics vary slightly between Education Watch and the government's Bureau of Education Information and Statistics. The former is more likely to include non-formal schools in data collection.
- 9 Ministry of Primary and Mass Education. (2003). Education for All: National Plan of Action II 2003–2015. Retrieved March 4, 2008, from http://www.sdnpsd.org/sdi/issues/education/Document/education_for_all_2003-2015.pdf
- 10 Campaigns for Popular Education. (2003–2004).
- 11 United Nations. (2007–2008). United Nations Human Development Report. Retrieved April 28, 2008, from http://hdr.undp.org/en/media/hdr_20072008_tables.zip
- 12 UNESCO. (2006). Education for All Global Monitoring Report. Retrieved March 29, 2008, from <http://portal.unesco.org/education/en/files/43352/11321334255tableA1.2.pdf/tableA1.2.pdf>

Although Bangladesh has achieved a good progress in basic education over the past decade, the overall situation of various education related indicators is not satisfactory. The enrolment in primary schools has been increasing in recent times and the government has been spending a good amount on the education sector. However, instead of such measures, little progress has been noticed in the primary education sector over the years. Additionally, there have been problems of inequality and access. Several factors contribute to the poor state of education in Bangladesh: inadequate resources, insufficient and unqualified teachers, lack of

stakeholder involvement, and corruption. All implies National Plan for Action (NPA-ii) that has determined some targets to ensure education for all and the National Education Policy 2010 was adopted by the government to ensure inclusive education.

Moreover, International comparisons in education and training are of great importance to understand the recent innovations and developments in countries. Bangladesh has a territory disparity with no provincial autonomy. On the other hand, the UK is a union of four countries – England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland, with an English Parliament a central government, but with Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland having devolved powers. All the four countries have many common features with some differences. No doubt, some studies exist regarding inter-comparisons of the four countries in the United Kingdom; a few are available on interdivisional comparisons in Bangladesh. But perhaps no study is available from the Board of Education, Division of Education, University of Education etc. So, we have no clear idea about our educational standard in context of international. This invisibility of our education sector remains motionless.

Now some initiative has already been taken through our national education policy 2010 where included some curriculum so as to increase creativity both student and teacher together to meet the international standard. But the reality of innovativeness is not fruitful for some reasons; i) politicization of Managing committee, ii) teacher to teacher variations i.e maximum teacher has no clear idea about the current curriculum especially the teacher those who are SSC passed. Most recently some masters pass teacher has recruited in primary school, but they are in frustration for no variation between qualifications even they compel to work with some SSC pass headmaster with poor management quality. In these circumstances the qualification gap creates an odd environment; in one side the teachers who are qualified fall in frustration and trying to switch over the job. And the other side tries to dominate them greatly to accelerate the switch over. The result is the students who want to enlarge their knowledge through brilliant teacher fail to reach in the goal instantly they shift their decision and choose the alternative ways for instant private school, kinder garden, English medium school etc. It also depends on economic conditions.

The parents who could spend sufficient for education of their children immediately they are contagious the way and unable parents compel to continue their children education into this poor management school. So, from the beginning is creating a gap between rich and poor. No change we have ever found here. Having no realistic monitoring and evaluation in this regard from the administration, only has a poor and insufficient. Of course, to minimize the gap to international level Government has formulated education policy -2010 where included teacher training, creative education curriculum, home care in education system of school etc. But all are going to dogs for odd politics. Now in Bangladesh odd politics helps to recruit nonqualified persons as teacher and officer in education sector, in administration the officials who are neutral and qualified have often face to harassment from political persons and even below rank officials and teacher who have link with politics.

These are available picture now in Bangladesh. The picture started severely from 1991 and is increasing spirally to date. All are inner news of education sector of Bangladesh. No promotion has occurred without political link, merit and qualification is a vague issue in present education sector of Bangladesh. The odd politics another meaning is cancer of Bangladesh that are destroying not only the education sectors but also all pillars of our foundation. So, in this study we will try to find out the place of our parking in context of international level, what is our problem and barrier? As well as our meeting capacity and have needs to meet the goal. To

clear about the structure of Bangladesh education the three major streams that we added into figure: 1

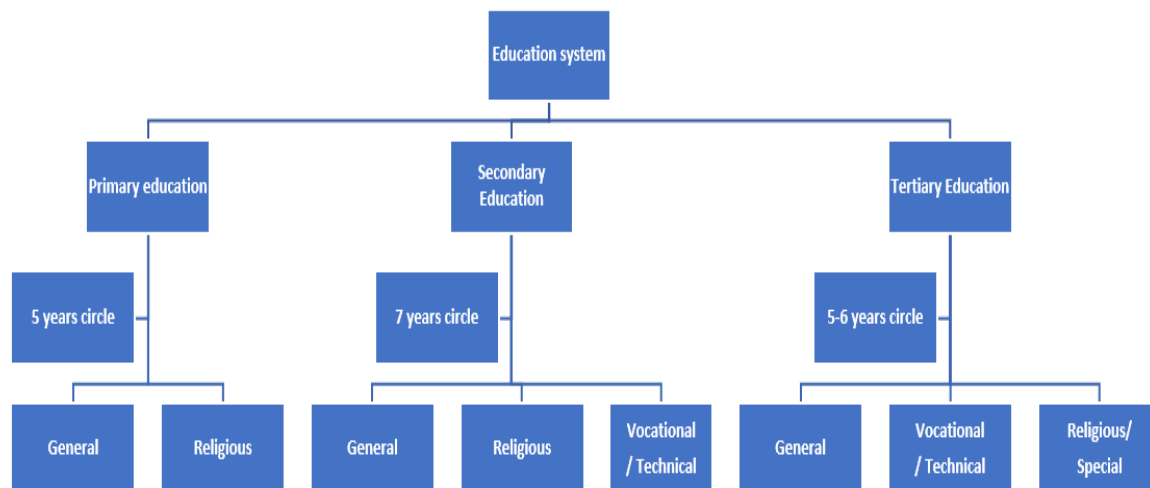


Figure: 1 (Different streams in education system in Bangladesh).

Research Questions

1. How do education systems in Bangladesh and the UK alike and different regarding the six dimensions of education?

Objectives of the Study

Education System of Bangladesh and the UK considering triangular comparisons:

- 1) Inter-divisional as well as inter Board comparison in Bangladesh.
- 2) Inter countries comparison in the UK;
- 3) International comparisons between Bangladesh and the UK,

And this is the core objective of this study. The comparison is delimited to six key dimensions i.e. responsibility of education, educational structure, curriculum, assessment and evaluation, inspection, supervision and management, and teacher education and training.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology used in this study basically secondary sources to measure international standard and primary sources to measure quality of education in Bangladesh. Secondary information was collected mainly by reviewing official publications both national and international, published and unpublished papers, working papers, seminar and conference proceedings, online resources as well as ethnographic observations of the researchers. Moreover, about 20 articles from different countries, several official reports (national and international), and several online resources were studied, reviewed, retrieved and consulted. Then, the findings were classified thematically to get a picture of quality education in international level especially in UK and its comparison with the present education system in Bangladesh.

For primary sources, the study uses a mixed-methods approach, blending ethnography with analysis of quantitative and qualitative data from participant observation and interviews with head teachers, the upazila education office, and NGO education officials. Finally, the raw data was compiled and cleaned to make it suitable for statistical analysis to analyze and interpret the data scientifically.

Component Base Comparison Between Bangladesh and United Kingdom in Regard to Quality Education

- **Responsibility of education and training:**

In Bangladesh, education is a vital function. There are two ministries of education in Bangladesh one a Ministry of primary and mass education and another is ministry of education, which formulates the policies and plans at national level for education. It involves the education commission in the formulation of national education policies and plans. The ministries develop their own plan and execute according to their situations and available resources in the light of national education policies. For primary level, since the introduction of partition of primary and mass education from education sector in 1990, most affairs of the school education are dealt with the Director General (DG) of Directorate of primary and mass education. For example, policy implementation, supervision and monitoring of schools, recruitment and transfers of teachers are the main function of the Director General is supported by district education officers (DPOs) and Thana Education officers (TEO) and other staff.

The other key roles and responsibilities like policy formulation, teacher training, and budget allocation to largely district level is still with the ministry of primary and mass education. At national levels, the administrative heads of the Education Department are two ‘Secretaries’ designated as ‘Secretary (Primary and Mass education) and the other ‘Secretary (Education)’. They are supported by several additional and deputy secretaries and other staff. In the UK, on the other hand, education is the responsibility of each country.

In each country, there is a separate institution which deals with all the affairs of education, though the role and functions differ. For example, in England, there is a Department for Education and Skills (DfES); in Wales, Welsh Office; in Scotland, Scottish Executive Education Department (SEED); and in Northern Ireland, the Department of Education. There are some other bodies in each state like the Training and Development Agency (TDA) in England; there is no such agency in Scotland, rather the General Teaching Council (GTC) undertakes all such functions. Each country is responsible for framing its own policies and plans.

- **Duration of education on the basis layer:**

In Bangladesh, the education system is three-tier: primary (grade 1-5), secondary (grade 6-10), and tertiary or higher education, after 12 years’ schooling. Elementary education is split up into primary (grade 1-5) and elementary/middle (grade 6-8) and is catered in primary and elementary schools. Education is a compulsory or statutory requirement, even at primary level in Bangladesh, and hence has resulted in low literacy rate and participation rate at all levels. This can be seen from that over 15.884 million children (age group 6-10) are of school age (Website, DPE, Bangladesh). In primary or elementary schools, the children are usually enrolled at the age of five; but this is not statutory as in England, or even like Scotland where though children’s entry is at the age of five, but not statutory like England. In Scotland, as Matheson (2000) states unlike England, there is rarely a hard and fast cut-off dates for the so-

called 'rising fives. In the rural schools of Bangladesh, children sometimes join a primary school at the age of six or even more. In some countries of the UK, primary level is further split up into two stages like in England and Wales, the six years primary is split up into Key Stage 1 (year 5-6) and Key Stage 2 (year 7-11).

In Scotland, primary education lasts for seven years, as Matheson (2000) states 'The Scots always have to do seven years primary school and there are no middle schools as compared to the English having, in general, six years of primary except where there are middle schools. In the UK, 14-16 years education is compulsory, which does not exist in Bangladesh. A striking difference between Bangladesh and the UK can be seen regarding resources in state schools. In comparison to the UK, Bangladeshi educational institutions lack in trained teachers, and handful teaching and physical resources (Hayes, 1987; The British Council, 1988; Farooq, 1990; Saeed, 1997; Mahmood, Ghafour & Saeed, 2003).

Secondary education in Bangladesh lasts for five years (grade 6-10). It is catered for in government secondary and higher secondary schools; most of these schools have middle classes as well. In all the divisions almost the same types of schools and colleges exist to cater for secondary classes. In the UK, secondary schools generally cater education of age group 12-16 or sometimes 12-17 or 18 wherein students join A-Levels. In Northern Ireland, difference in institutions exist in the context of religious communities/sects; schools are managed by three groups – Protestants, Catholics and parent/community-supported (integrated schools), as stated by Dunn (2000) 'the characteristic of the education system in Northern Ireland is 'segregation' by religion which is not seen in other countries of the United Kingdom (p. 88).

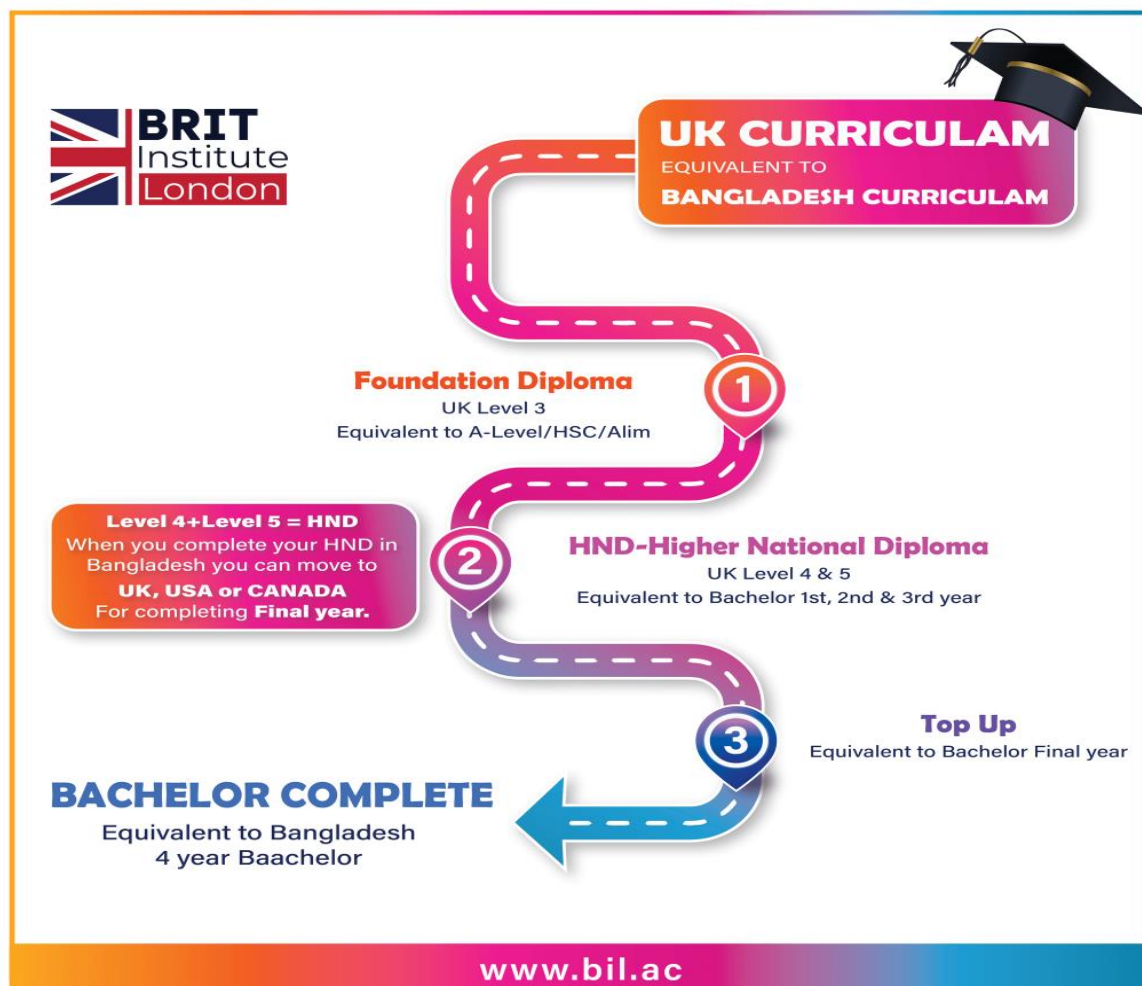
The parental attitude to sending children in schools of other religions is rarely seen in Northern Ireland. English education system allows Anglican, Jewish, Muslims and Roman Catholic schools. In the public sector, the uniformity or little diversity of the schools in Wales is more like Bangladesh. In Bangladesh, all state schools are primary, elementary, secondary, higher secondary; there are some comprehensive, pilot secondary and technical schools, but all comprise a little proportion like Wales where in among the 2048 schools in 1994, few specialist schools for drama and 15 Grant Maintained (GM) schools, altogether constitute a fewer less than 1% compared to more than 4% in England (Halpin et al, 1997). The organization of secondary education is selective in Northern Ireland (Wilson, 1987) whereas in Scotland, Wales and (a little more equivocally) England are comprehensive (Raffe, 2000, p.11).

The infrastructure in some good private schools in Bangladesh can be considered at par with the UK Higher education in Bangladesh starts after the completion of grade 12. It is carried out in universities, colleges and other such institutions. The universities and degree awarding institutions are autonomous but are characterized by their respective Board and the University of Bangladesh. In the UK, like Bangladesh students on the completion of secondary education enroll in universities or other general or professional colleges. The degree programmes vary in duration across the different countries. For example, in England first degree programmes are usually of three years for full time students (part-time students might take up to five years to complete their first degree), but in Scottish universities the Honour's degree is of four years.

As Matheson (2000) states 'until recently, it was a common practice in many of Scotland's universities for students to take an ordinary degree before proceeding to Honors'. In Bangladesh, the first degree under the traditional or conventional stream is of three years, but under the new stream this is of four years. The degree programmes in medicine and pharmacy are for five years; the duration of first degree in agriculture and engineering is either

four or five years in different universities. In the UK, master's degree is usually of one year, but in Bangladesh, master is of two years for degree pass student and one year for honor's pass student. In both Bangladesh and the UK, the duration of PhD is at least three years; and mostly routed through M.Phil in the relevant discipline.

A feature of Uk Curriculum converts to Bangladesh Curriculum.



- **Curriculum: Nature, Formulation and Responsible Authority:**

In Bangladesh, school curricula for grades 1-12 is the responsibility of the Curriculum & Textbook Board under the Ministry of Education, Dhaka. In each division have education board except Khulna and Rangpur and the Curriculum Bureau of textbook or Curriculum Research and Development Centre (CRDC) which provides academic support to the Ministry of Education, Dhaka. Curriculum formulation is a lengthy process, as the ministry must take expert opinions from all regions of the country. The curriculum draft is finalized by the National Curriculum Review Committee, Dhaka. Thus, uniform curriculum of each subject is followed all over the country, although textbooks in different subjects may not vary across the division or boards. The higher education curriculum in Bangladesh is the function of the respective departments of the universities or colleges. The title of courses and broader framework are usually discussed in the faculty, and then each teacher plans in his/her own way to impart instructions in the classrooms. In the UK, curriculum formulation process varies across the four countries. For instance, in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, there is a

statutory subject-based national curriculum, from the age group five; the details of the prescribed curriculum vary to some extent across these three countries. In Scotland, the curriculum from 5 to 14 is based on five broad curriculum areas, and from 14 to 16 on ‘eight modes’ of study (Croxford, 1999), or as stated by McPherson and Raffe (1988) ‘curriculum is just guidelines, but not prescriptions. In practice, differences are more pronounced in primary than secondary schools, where subjects dominate the curriculum in Scotland, as they do elsewhere. At secondary education level, again the principal difference is between Scotland, where the curriculum comprises shorter academic courses (Higher) and vocational modules, and in the rest of the UK it comprises longer academic courses (A Levels) and vocational programmed leading to group awards.

Partly, the post-16 tracks are weaker in Scotland than elsewhere (Raffe, 1993). Spours, Young, Howieson and Rafee (1998a) also found that “The English and Welsh systems represent tracked systems and the Scottish system and intermediate ‘linked system’ although three countries are moving along a continuum in the direction of a more unified system”. Comparing the curriculum formulation across Bangladesh and four countries of the UK, it is found that school curricula are centralized in Bangladesh, and largely in three countries of the UK - England, Wales and Northern Ireland, but not in Scotland which is more flexible and is either school or teacher-centered. At higher education level, the universities are totally autonomous bodies to develop their own curricula in the UK, but in Bangladesh to a lesser extent, as HEC is fixing minimum standards for each degree programme in terms of minimum credit hours, nature and weight age of core and other courses, and mode of assessment.

- **Assessment and Examinations: Grading and Certifications:**

In Bangladesh, assessment and examinations from grades 1 to 12 is the function of the Board of education. In the past there was no national curriculum tests at primary and lower secondary or elementary level in Bangladesh. The tests at the terminal stages of primary (grade 5) and elementary or middle (grade 8) have recently been introduced and are conducted by the Board of Education. Progression of elementary grader students to the next class/grade is based on continuous assessments; the system introduced under Examination Reforms (2010). It was based on six assessments per academic year which was later revised and now it is based on four assessments in an academic year: three assessments during the year, and one at the end of the academic year. There exist compulsory examinations at the end of grade 10, 11 and 12 throughout the country, which are conducted by Autonomous bodies called Boards of Secondary & Higher Secondary Education (BSHISEs) spread throughout the country.

BSHISEs award Secondary School Certificates (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificates (HSC) after successful completion of examinations at grade 10 and 12 levels respectively. To maintain quality assurance and uniformity across these BSHISEs, there exists an Inter-Board Committee of Chairmen (IBCC) in Dhaka. Almost all the uniform grades are followed by all BSHISEs from A+ (Extraordinary) to F (Fail). In the UK, national curriculum tests are statutory in England; there are no such statutory tests in Scotland, rather these are at the discretion of teachers in the age group of 7 and 11. The national curriculum tests in England are conducted at the final stages of KS1 (age 7), KS2 (age 11), KS3 (age 14) and KS4 (age 16). In Wales, the primary school SATs have been abandoned as being unhelpful in raising standards (Reid, 2007). In England and Wales, the student’s assessment through term-wise tests is more structured than the other two states, and based on these assessments, students are promoted to the next class/grade. Unlike Bangladesh, a little difference exists regarding the award of certificates, e.g. in England, Wales and Northern Ireland, students are awarded GCSE on

passing examinations after 16 years schooling, but in Scotland it is awarded on the completion of 17- or 18-years schooling. Differences exist with regard to grades, for example, in England, the highest performance grade is A* and it goes on to E (Raffe, 2000; p. 13); in Wales somewhat like England, but go from A* to G; and in Scotland there is no GCSE examination like English, rather there is Standard Grade, administered by a single examination board, the Scottish Qualification Authority (SQA). Standard Grades start from the higher of 1 to the lowest of 7. Between 1993-97 All Wales Modularization and Credit Based Development Project developed CREDIS, post-16 credit framework for education and training below higher education (Fforwm, 1997).

CREDIS has been criticized from different angles, e.g. it has reduced divisions between academic and vocational learning to the level of learning experience of students. This contrasts with the relatively flexible post-16 curriculum based on Higher that is found in Scotland. In England and Wales, the qualifications of A-Levels and GNVQs (General National Vocational Qualifications) are also seen. Unlike Wales, in England credit systems have only developed in areas such as Leicester where Open College Networks are strong (Raffe, Spours, Young & Howieson, 2000). One of a common feature between Bangladesh and the UK, especially England and Wales, that the comparative gap of performance of boys and girls is increasing (Stobart, Elwood & Quinlan, 1992; Arnot, David & Weiner, 1996), and the apparent under-achievement of boys is concentrated at the lower end of attainment (The Observer, 1998; The Times Educational Supplement, 1998). In the context of England and Scotland, the Third International Mathematics and Science Survey little distinguishes the attainment of Scottish 9- and 13-year-olds from those in England as far as mathematics are concerned, both England and Scotland achieved relatively low mean scores (NFIER, 1998; Semple, 1998; TMISS, 1998a). At age nine, England performed above average in science while Scotland was above average at age nine and at the average at age 13 (TIMMS, 1998a, 1998b).

According to the latest available data, at KS 2, in 2005-6, 13% of the schools in England were below the floor target in English, a reduction of 37% (1,064) from 2002-3 baseline; and in mathematics, 19% of the schools were below the floor target, a reduction of 28% (1,015) from the 2002-3 baseline (<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/aboutus>, accessed on 9-1-2007). Inter-Board comparisons in Bangladesh show some differences and similarities. Research revealed that overall, the students of Dhaka Board rank at the top; Jessore and Rajshahi rank at the lowest; while students of Chittagonj and Barisal perform better but are placed after Dhaka (Multi-Donor Support Unit, 1995; Khan, Shah, Ahmad, Amin, Khalid & Malik, 1999). The girls generally perform better in languages (English) while boys perform better in mathematics and science; in other subjects no marked difference is seen at primary and elementary levels (Perez, 1995; Saeed, Gondal & Bushra, 2005). Better performance of girls in language, and better performance of boys in mathematics also reflects international trends (Abideen & Jones, 2000).

- **Educational inspection, supervision and administration:**

In Bangladesh, the supervision and management of school education is mainly the responsibility of Secretary (Education) and Secretary (primary & mass education); the Secretary (Education as well as Primary & Secondary) is the focal person to look after all affairs of primary, elementary, secondary and higher secondary schools and higher education. Under the DG (Education; primary & mass as well as secondary) there are DEOs (Elementary Education) and DEOs (Secondary Education). At Primary level, there are District Education Officers (DPO), Thana Education Officers (TEO) and Assistant Thana Education Officers

(ATEO) to smoothly supervise and monitor the public primary and elementary schools. Secondary schools are supervised and monitored by their respective DEOs (SE). Private schools are only inspected at the time of their initial registration by the respective DEO or any officer on his/her behalf, or these are visited on some special occasions or if a complaint is received against any school. However, all these schools follow the same national curricula, except some school systems in the private sector like Grammar, City and Beacon house, which follow SSC and/or O-Level and A-Level qualifications. To monitor the public-sector school affairs, now the Directorate General of Education has established Monitoring Cells comprised of mostly senior officials of secretariat. In addition to, for higher secondary have education board and for higher education have University Grand Commission (UGC) to monitor and supervise the overall situation. But the overall management, supervisory and monitoring system of Bangladesh is weak, as quoted by Bregman and Muhammad (1998) 'there is lack of accountability and sound management system' (p. 68).

In the UK, the system of school inspection is more structured, especially in England and Wales. In Scotland, SEED maintains the relationship between central and local government of education, and this is one of the partnerships rather than one of the centralized authorities exerting its will where it likes (McPherson and Raffe, 1988). Scotland has no Office for the Standards of Education (OFSTED) but rather maintained Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools (HMI), as the only body which can inspect schools. On the other hand, in England the OFSTED inspections usually include so called 'lay-people', HMI visits are always conducted by civil servants (Matheson, 2000). Scottish possesses a General Teaching Council, modeled on the General Medical Council, which controls entrance to the school teaching profession. The GTC decides who can teach what in secondary schools. Unlike England, Scotland has no Training and Development Agency (TDA). Hence GTC in Scotland enjoys more powers than GTC in England. Unlike England and Wales, Scotland has no school governors as such.

- **Teacher education training:**

In Bangladesh, teacher education is of two types: per-service or initial teacher training, and in-service training. Induction is almost absent throughout the country. However, some private good school systems make some arrangements for the training of teachers at the time of induction, but this is not a regular practice. Pre-service or initial teacher education is the responsibility of university departments/institutes of education and research, and the teacher training colleges. All over the country two types of teacher education colleges exist: Government Colleges for Elementary Teachers (GCETs), which prepare teachers at primary and elementary/middle level; and Government Colleges of Education (GCEs), which prepare secondary level teachers. There was a total of 90 GCETs, 16 GCEs and 9 university departments/institutes of education and research in the country (Government of Bangladesh, 1998).

GCETs are now the affiliated colleges and GCEs are constituent colleges of the National University, Gazipur. In Bangladesh, the universities mostly offer master, M.Phil and PhD programmes in Education; in a few universities the newly introduced four year BA/B.S (Education) is also in progress. One year traditional B.Ed is offered only in Open University of Bangladesh, Gazipur, not in GCETs. Admissions in various teacher education programmes rest with the institutional test and/or interview at B.Ed level and master level. But at M.Phil and PhD levels, usually the candidates have to qualify in written test by university authority for M.Phil and for PhD needs at least two publications and research outline approved by supervisor. It also varies from university to university.

I of course highlighted here the requirement of Dhaka University. In the UK, apart from the traditional one year Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) at primary and secondary levels, there are four year B.Ed or BA Education with QTS (Whitty, Furlong, Whiting, Miles & Barton, 1997). Particularly in England and Wales, along with these most popular streams of teacher education, some universities introduce flexible teacher training programmes like PGCE (work-based) and even ITT is organized through HE-school partnership under title School-Centered ITT (SCITT). These programmes have been introduced to provide an opportunity for those serving people who due to some family commitment or job cannot join regular PGCE.

Another reason for this is to attract the employees towards the teaching profession to meet the shortage of professionally qualified teachers. Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) is a must for all such flexible routes of teacher training; the duration of these flexible routes is one and a half years. The quality assurance of the primary level teacher preparation courses rests with the Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education (CATE) (Reid, 1993). The duration of these in-service training courses varies according to the nature of training and the trainees' level. On the other hand, in England, INSET is statutory for five days in an academic year; in other three countries, though INSET is not statutory, but teachers are encouraged to attend in-service courses and seminars organized by the schools and local education authorities (LEAs).

CONCLUSION

The study reveals inter-Boards and Universities little differences and marked similarities in Bangladesh, but in the case of the UK, differences across the four territories are relatively more prominent than similarities. In Bangladesh, INSET is an institutional or authority function, while in the UK, INSET is either school based or managed by the respective LEA. Teachers' mentoring is structured in the entire UK, but in Bangladesh this is almost lacking in both public and private sectors, with fewer exceptions. In view of the above discussion, it is concluded that inter-Board and University differences in Bangladesh are less in comparison to inter-countries differences across the four countries in the UK. Comparing Bangladesh with the UK in the context of the six dimensions: education and training authority, educational structure, curriculum formulation, assessment and evaluation, supervision and management, and teacher education and training, prominent differences exist across the two countries. With the devolution of seven educations Board in Bangladesh in 2001, administrative and supervisory control of schools is decentralized to the district levels, in the different countries of the UK. Both Bangladesh and the UK employ formative and summative assessment at all levels of education, but relatively with more structured form in the UK. With the recent changes regarding duration of first degree and fixing minimum standards for curriculum of various higher education programmes, the gaps between Bangladesh and the UK education systems are expected to be minimized.

SUGGESTIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Quality education depends on planned curriculum, qualified teachers and favorable environment. To be a qualified teacher one needs (i) accurate subject knowledge (ii) knowledge and efficiency in education science (iii) mentality of teaching. So, the State needs to ensure the environment.

- Teacher of Bangladesh is in vulnerable situation regarding remuneration. So, Govt. needs to special attention on it to build up knowledge-based society.
- Teaching is a noble and service-based profession. So, Govt. should make the policy avoid nepotism for teacher selection to match with teaching mentality.
- The present era is based on information technology. So, Govt. needs to include Technology application-based education in all spares of education.

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