

**THE IMPACT OF GLOBALIZATION ON PRIMARY
EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH: AN ANALYSIS ON
MODERNIZATION THEORY**

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ABSTRACT

Education is fundamental issue for development. It is an integrated part of modernization process. Modern knowledge is articulated with the idea of global education. Globalization has definitely influenced on education system in different countries. It is also a key instrument of development. To achieve the target of Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) it is obviously important that right to education should be ensured from the elementary level of every country like Bangladesh. The globalization process has greatly influenced on the educational system of Bangladesh which is largely considered as an outcome of modernization process. However, the country poses multi-structural educational system in the lower level. More specifically, the primary level of education of the country has a different character which is regarded as foundation of educational structure. As the notion of globalization has great significant in educational modernization, therefore, the main objective of this paper is to explicitly discuss the impact of globalization on primary education in Bangladesh from point of view of modernization theory.

DEFINING MODERNIZATION THEORY

Modernization is one famous theory in educational science that is structurally based on, according to Kubow and Fossum (2007), structural-functional assumption. In terms of educational institutions, advocates of modernization theory argue that educational establishments get significant priority as the creation and maintenance of social institutions and human planning where 'modern values' are nurtured (Fagerlind and Saha, 1989). The definition has clearly emphasized on educational aspect that modern ideologies are practiced in educational institutions. In this context, Kubow & Fossum (2007, p. 44) have given an excellent definition of modernization theory that 'modernization is a socio-psychological process through which a country becomes modern only after its population has adopted modern attitudes, values, and beliefs'. However, modernization theory ties societal development to the level of the individual person. That's why; it offers arguments in favor of the educational roles within societies seeking to modernize.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON 'EDUCATION' AND 'GLOBALIZATION'

Defining 'Education'

Education is a way to become socialize in the society. Encyclopedia of Britannica has explained education in a broad sense that education means 'discipline that is concerned with methods of teaching and learning in schools or school like environments as opposed to various informal and informal means of socialization.' It also regards education as the transmission of values and accumulated knowledge of a society (Vol. 4, 1993. p. 372). The contextual theme of this definition is that discipline mainly related the methods of teaching and learning in an educational establishment that help to easily understand the lessons to the students. However, education is an intellectual and perceptual thing which happens in formal or informal approaches to know the unknown, to

learn new information, to get orientation with new environment and to distribute the acquired knowledge in the society through exchanging information and mutual interaction among the common entities.

DEFINING ‘GLOBALIZATION’

Globalization is a modern phenomenon. It is ‘a process (or set of processes) which embodies a transformation in the spatial organization of social relations and transactions – assessed in terms of their extensity, intensity, velocity and impact - generating transcontinental or interregional flows and networks of activity, interaction and the exercise of power’ (Held et al., 1999, p.16). It means that globalization does not indicate an unique form of impact but its influence vary in the form of extensity, intensity, velocity and impact using the forms of ‘flows’, ‘networks’ and ‘interaction’. Usher and Edwards (1995) argued that globalization portends the demise of national education and the national education system. It also argues the emergence of a borderless world (Ohmae, 1990). Although both Usher and Edwards have described globalization in a broad sense but have identified global education in a narrow sense. In this point of view, he has more specifically emphasized on local and traditional, social and cultural education system.

However, the extensive view of globalization means the internationalization process of communication that had begun during the colonial period. More generally, globalization does not only mean global economy but it has comprehensive and innovatory consequences in the field of political and cultural arena. In the age of globalization, education is regarded as one of the most effective remaining instruments of national policy. On the other hand, it turns into gradually important for national economic competitiveness in a global market.

FEATURES OF GLOBALIZATION ON EDUCATION

Globalization is a process of modernization and the concept is now widely used whole over the world especially excessively practiced by Western nations. However, the concept of globalization has obviously helped the internationalization of education. In this perspective, the following major global educational features are universally recognized:

- International comparison
- Quality of education
- Equity considerations
- Equal opportunity
- Cost and financing of education
- Information communication technology (ICT) and job oriented education
- Development program & classroom effect

PRIMARY EDUCATIONAL PHENOMENON IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh emerged as an independent sovereign nation state in December 1971 in the place of world map. Before that the foundation of the education system in Bangladesh was laid down during the period of British colonial rule. Thus it shares its educational history with India until 1947 and with Pakistan from 1947 to 1971. After independence, Bangladesh continued to follow the primary education scheme originally established by Pakistan. Later on, right to education has been recognized in its Constitution as 'Free and compulsory education' which declares that 'The state shall adopt effective measures for the purpose of –

Establishing 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 (*Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh*, Article 17).'

Even the Government of Bangladesh adopted different encouraging initiatives like the 1993 Compulsory Primary Education Act; the establishment of the ministry for Primary and Mass Education in 1992; Female Stipend program, for instance, the Food for Education (FFE) and the Primary Education Development Program II (PEDP) (Kalene et al., 2005. p. 4). All of these programs have obviously brought some positive changes in educational field of the country. As a consequence, 'girls have actually overtaken boys in rates of enrollment, completion, and attendance in primary school (Kabeer et al., 2003, p. 292). The government committed to implement Universal Primary Education (UPE) by 1986 taking the Second Five Year Plan (SFYP), 1981-1985 (Linda A. Dove). Unfortunately, in the Fifth Five Year Plan (FFYP) (1997-2002), the country yet to achieve the goal of Education for All (EFA) and cannot ensure the educational needs of 30 million adult illiterate (*Five Year Plan in Bangladesh*, p.62). As a matter of fact, huge number of people is still illiterate. It is quietly recognized that universalization of primary education for an over populated developing country like Bangladesh is a difficult task (Britannica, Vol. 18, 1993. P. 77).

Another major difficulty in education sector of the country is that its educational systems are not synchronized although all educational institutions more or less controlled by the Ministry of Education (MoE) of the country. Because the educational institutions of the whole country are normally divided into three categories, for instance, national educational system, *madrakah* educational system and English medium school and their medium of instruction including curriculum and text books are also different than others even in primary level. These categories are commonly used up to secondary level. The curriculum of English medium school is mostly different than national one and their medium of instruction is completely English. Whereas *madrakah*

educational system and its curriculum is largely different than others and Arabic is generally used as medium of instruction. General education system is mostly practiced over the whole country because of its classical attraction as a mother language of Bangla and it is oriented as government and as non-government primary school.

GLOBAL INFLUENCE ON PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

The primary education system of Bangladesh is multifaceted and has various dimensions. Basically all the primary education intuitions can be divided into two approaches like government primary school and other one is called registered non-government primary school (government approved & supported). Now the country has recently accepted 8-year primary education program. Children age 6+ are access to get enrollment for primary education. Although features of primary education institutions are different, nevertheless these are strictly administered according to the formation of the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MPME). Therefore, all the institutions relentlessly follow the given prescriptions of the Government. However, the impacts of globalization on primary education in Bangladesh are discussed below:

INTERNATIONAL COMPARISON

Policy formation and curriculum development are very important to make internationalization of education. For this purpose, the 10th National Education Policy 2010 was formulated which is commonly considered as scientific, methodological and very effective. In order to ensure, however, international comparison to primary education, different sort of student evaluation measures have been adopted such as student assessment is conducted by school authority for class I to II, while quarterly, half-yearly, annual examination from class III onward will continue. The final examination on completion of class V is conducted by thana/municipality/upazila level and finally public examination, of

instance, Junior School Certificate (JSC), for class VIII are conducted by the Education Boards (National Education Policy, 2010, p. 9). Moreover, further emphasis has been given as subject on mathematics and science curricula, in this case, English has got more importance as a foreign language and communication skills.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

Knowledge based information is precondition for ensuring proper education. In this perspective, teachers are the fundamental to educational delivery because quality of education largely depends on the quality of teaching and teacher effort. In order to improve the quality of primary education, the MPME are appointing a large number of teachers whose thirty per cent are female. To nurture the children in a better way teachers are trained up by Primary Teachers Institute (PTI) and some teachers are sent abroad to get be teachings experience. Besides, some measures like infrastructural development of the primary schools, suitable atmosphere, competent pedagogy, good understanding between teachers-students and rationale in favor of female education have been taken initiative. But political involvement of the teachers has been regarded as one of the major obstacle to ensure educational progress and to achieve quality of education. According to recently conducted published report on *madrasah* education in the country indicates that 92 per cent of its teachers and officials are involved in politics (Barakat, 2011).

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

The concept of globalization always emphasize on priority basis education where it is necessary. In this perspective, the country is still now remaining at vulnerable position in Human Development Index (HDI) although half of the country's population is women. Therefore, girls' education has been given priority to ensure fairness and to establish gender balance in context of global educational context. As an initiative, the Government has given priority for

female rather than male in teacher recruitment process for lower classes such as classes I to V where women get thirty per cent special quota. Female Student Stipend Program (FSSP) has also brought positive consequences in educational atmosphere of the country. As a result, girls student attendance in the class are increasing day by day and their performance in different examination are sometimes crossing male students.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

Disabled and underprivileged children get access to equal right in primary education in Bangladesh. According to the National Education Policy 2010, 'equal opportunities will be created to ensure access of all sections of children to primary education irrespective of ethnicity, socio-economic conditions, physical or mental challenges and geographical differences (pp. 4-5).' On the other hand, enhancement on equal rights has been included in the primary level of curriculum where positive and optimistic perception about women has been emphasized. Consequently, a practice of coeducation has largely been expanded throughout the country and number of girls students in primary education are gradually being increased day by day.

ICT AND JOB ORIENTED EDUCATION

Pre-vocational and technical education are taught from classes VI to VIII to enable students proactive, so that they can be easily employees and are not waited for long period to get job after completing their study. Even girls have been especially encouraged to vocational education in the primary level to ensure women empowerment and to contribute for overall economic development so that dropout girls' students can be easily self-dependent. For this purpose, an integrated science course has been added where computer is being used as an instrument of teaching for the students of classes VI to VIII at the primary level so that all students can be computer-literate before they reach the secondary level. This program is yet to implement at all primary school in the

country especially schools in rural areas. For that reason, students at primary level are being deprived from the facilities of global education.

COST AND FINANCING OF EDUCATION

International development agencies are financing and supporting making their partnership with the government and NGOs for developing educational situation and to ensure MDGs by 2015. The World Bank, for instance, is the largest external funder of education in Bangladesh. According to World Bank Report on Bangladesh Fact Sheet (2005-2006):

The World Bank is providing \$150m to PEDP II to reduce drop-out rates, improve teaching quality and ensure timely delivery of textbooks. The World Bank also provided \$51m to educate 500,000 currently out-of-school children. On the other hand, a \$53m credit is financing literacy education for non-literate citizens over school-going age.

Although the World Bank is playing significant role in promoting primary and secondary education in the country, but the problems are that these are very conditional and provisional which often become contradictory with the protection of local cultures and domestic values. It brings negative consequences to the country in long future. Basically these financings are considered as the way of dependency for the developing countries.

DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM AND CLASSROOM EFFECT

Programs for global development of education has greatly influenced on the premises of primary school in Bangladesh which has significant effect on the classroom performance. Drop out in primary level is considered major threat for educational development. For this purpose, some incentive measures like School Feeding Program (SFD) and Primary Education Development Program II (PEDP), have been adopted to encourage the student actively participate in the classes of the school. Since majority of the primary students in rural and remote

areas are poor, therefore, some further positive measures like free primary text book supply to low-income children have been introduced to ensure basic education for all. Besides, in last national educational policy (2010, p. 8), some special provisions like free admission, free education materials, free lunch at schools and stipends have been arranged to attract and retain primary children in the schools. Furthermore, effective measures have been taken for girls' safe protection within the schools.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Globalization is a modern phenomenon and global education is largely influenced by modernization theory. Science and technology are fundamental tools of global education. Therefore, knowledge and information based education is characterized as global education. By this way, globalization always promotes the concept of modernization. It never ignores the reality of global educational development. In case of Bangladesh, globalization has obviously positive effects on educational policy especially in the field of primary education. But its educational systems is not united which is the major obstacle to ensure modern educational development. Moreover, large number of people is illiterate and many of children are still not going to school regularly. Nevertheless, it is trying to be modern with formulating new education policy 2010 which is mostly characterized with the features of global education because the country strongly believe that only global education policy can change the socio-economic scenario of any nation. After long theoretical analyses, it should be better to go back again to modernization theory to clarify the current status of primary education of the state. As modernization concept understands that country becomes modern if its people and educational policy is modern. For this purpose, Bangladesh government is giving more and more emphasis on modern and updated knowledge of science and technology based basic education from primary level.

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APPENDIX-A

DEFINITIONS OF CONCEPTS USED / NOTES

NAEM- the National Academy for Educational Management is a governmental institution in Bangladesh which has been keeping very important and supportive role in the realm of educational field in the country like education management, training, and research and planning so as to ensure quality management of education at all levels of post primary education.

NGOs - Non-Governmental Organizations are legally constituted organization founded by the members of civil society. NGOs are different from any public institution but can run its operation independently with the permission of the government. NGOs get funds from various donor agencies. However, the NGO maintains its non-governmental status by playing its neutral roles in the field of development oriented activities. Now a days NGOs are working beyond the borders contributing valuable roles as non-state actors in national and international arena. The main activities of NGOs include human rights, the environmental issues, socio-economic activities, cultural programs, action for women rights and stand against violence and so on.

Upazila-UpazilaParishad (UZP) is called sub-districts of Bangladesh which is administratively controlled by district. Generally, the *upazilas* are the second lowest tier of administration. Recently, there are about six hundred *upazila* in Bangladesh.

Madrasah and ibtedayee madrasah- It is Arabic word which means school. *Madrasah*, in English, usually refers to the specifically Islamic institutions. Major services of madrasah education include to serve orphans and poor children for providing them religious education and teaching for a certain time. On the other hand, *ibtedayee madrasah* means religious primary school. In Bangladesh *ibtedayee madrasah* includes classes from I to VIII which are evaluated as like as general education in the country.