

Effective policy for Advanced Nursing Education: A Necessity for Healthcare Sector of Bangladesh

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Abstract— *Tertiary education in Bangladesh has been regarded as one of the key performance areas in the education sector of Bangladesh. The national education policy 2010, the prospect of post graduate education in health science has been highlighted as a possibility in the future. In recent years, the main areas of focus in the national budget are the health and education sector. It is noticeable that the competence level of health care and education professionals are not up to standard. The necessity to develop competent human resources and engaging them in education and health care is also important. Even though there seems to be an abundance of resources in both sectors; the main concern is the development of infrastructure. In this study, the main focus has been drawn towards developing career prospects in nursing at post graduate level and also the different factors that are sought to be the impediments of education development in Bangladesh where the scope of infrastructural development and quality of education and teachers have been the main concerns in recent years.*

Index Terms—, Bangladesh, Education, Health science, Infrastructure, Nursing, Policy, Quality

1 INTRODUCTION

The research project aims to critically study the National Education Policy (NEP) 2010 and its alignment towards development of prospects of education development in the health care sector of Bangladesh (Habib, 2014). Bangladesh is a nation rich in human resources, boasting 160 million people and has readily acknowledged that a solid and sustainable development of its human resources can bring about immense benefits and make a profitable impact on the socio-economic conditions of the country. A nation which is largely dependent on agricultural resources (World Bank 2013) and contributing largely to the nations GDP has been very adamant towards development of human capital when raised as a concern to the government and other authorities. Over the past three decades, the government and other governing bodies, namely the NGOs, have realized the potential of improving the education sector through ICT, thus making room for people to excel in education both nationally and internationally; this also created opportunities for the country to move in pace with other developed and developing countries that are well ahead in this field such as India and Sri Lanka. As the top issue in the current agenda of the government, the National education policy 2010 has been designed to serve the purpose of the improvement of the infrastructural development which is to be governed by other authorities that are responsible for execution and monitoring of policy implementation. The national education policy has been aligned with the national health policy to bring about changes in the tertiary

education area of Bangladesh. Nursing council of Bangladesh has proposed the possibility of establishing post graduate education in health care in Bangladesh in their annual forum. It is evident that it is necessary to have the right human resources available nurtured with the right competences and skills required for progressing towards the goals set in the national policies and stay in tune with other countries around the globe.

2. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

Obj 1: To identify factors which are considered as impediments for the infrastructural development of higher education development in Bangladesh?

Obj 2: To critically analyze and examine the role of government in formulation and execution of the national education policy

Obj 3: To critically evaluate role of NGO's and other institutions towards development of nursing education.

Obj 4: To examine the possibilities of introducing post graduate opportunities in Nursing.

3. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A policy can be defined as a set of principles and guidelines formulated and published in a booklet dictating the long-term goals of the organization and are widely accessible to the public. The underlining principle that exists in the formulation of a well structured policy is the effectiveness it has in achieving the organizational goals and objectives. As it has been a challenge for Bangladesh to execute the existing policies in the right manner, the problems that are pertaining are immense and therefore, effectiveness of the policies is question-

ble. According to international statistics Bangladesh is the only country in south Asia to have achieved MDG. Under the monitoring of United Nations (2012) and World Bank (2013), it has been highlighted that Bangladesh has made remarkable progress in the sectors of Health and Sanitation, but not as remarkable in the education sector (BHP, 2015). For example, considering the nursing education is still underdeveloped in the country with weak education resources and limited scope of practice resulting to poor status of nursing profession (BHP, 2015). The progress of education development is not as significant due to the lack of infrastructural development especially in the rural areas of Bangladesh.

3.1 EDUCATION DEVELOPMENT IN NURSING

In Bangladesh, the educational requirements for studying in nursing are relatively difficult and the opportunities are very few. As highlighted in the conference held by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (2013), the requirements for admission in this course should somewhat be relaxed so that prospective students are more interested to educate themselves and invest in development of proper health care facilities in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh one of the main problems that are prevailing is the lack of qualified teachers with the required level of knowledge and skills in their areas of expertise. (Habib, 2014) et. al. Alam(2009) in his research has also recommended that a system needs to be in place which will confirm a solid platform for improvement and quality of education entailing the backdrop of the socio-economic factors of pertaining in the society. Integration of population and development, side by side with the deployment of policies in the market is a big challenge. In respect to this, the main component is the technological transformation of the modern era. Sharma (2001) in his paper on barriers of education has pointed out some common factors that are considered as impediments in education development. The commonly highlighted factors are:

- Financial Strength
- Attitude towards policy makers
- Budget Allocation
- Cost Efficiency.

In their research (Alam 2008, Hallak 1990) argued about the existing link between education and human resource development, that has direct impact on the economic growth of a nation. In their view, they have argued on certain points:

- Individual creativity and participation in the economic, social and cultural roles in the society.
- Improved understanding and growing respect for others to improve social image and promoting self awareness.
- Improvement in the area of health and nutrition
- Improving opportunities for economic development
- Social and cultural changes
- Democracy
- Environmental development (thus improving the livelihood of people)

In order to bring about changes in the health care sector it is crucial to firstly attend to the problems and issues at hand. Without the proper resolution of the problems it is not a wise decision to implement any sort of projects which may end with a undesirable result. Considering the socio-economic aspects of Bangladesh and the context of the current trend in the migration of a large number of people migrating from rural to urban areas for better life, it is important to understand the needs and wants of this section of the population; that is the health and education as well as human resource development.

3.2 CURRENT STATUS OF EDUCATION POLICY IN BANGLADESH:

For development of the sector it is vital for the government and entrepreneurs to take steps for bringing about changes. In the current context, the main problem that prevails is the lack of development in the infrastructure. Alam (2008a) mentioned in his research the adoption of imported technology and development of indigenous technology. Bangladesh being a nation much dependent on import of goods and services require proper planning and assimilation of adoption in terms of technology transfer. Some of the socio-economic indicators of Bangladesh are shown in the following Table 2. These indicators highlight the current situation of Bangladesh. According to the data published in the World Bank Database (2013), the GDP of Bangladesh was 5.8 % in 2013.

3.3 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY:

The Government is responsible for designing, drafting and implementation of the policies. Monitoring and evaluation after implementation is also a major responsibility of the government aside to the amendments that are made periodically. Unstructured and disorga-

nized engagement of resources has brought about the requirement of competent resources along with the time and effort. Policy makers are responsible for managing the complexities of the interconnected systems within the departments which comprise of government, non-government and other private entities. It has often come into light the limitations of resources (human and financial) and it is therefore a responsibility to accommodate the interests of the citizens and formulate policies and strategies which are beneficial to the country.

” Despite these challenges for policymakers, economists have not always ascribed a central role to government policy in economic development” (Chang 2003). Governments even though are thought to manage a complex system have not always been able to adapt to the economic and environment aspects of the country. Therefore, policy design and governance is a complex system which the government has to take into account for future sustainable development.

3.4 EDUCATION SYSTEM IN BANGLADESH:

Education system in Bangladesh has three major stages starting from primary, secondary and tertiary education. As shown in the education structure presented in Figure 1, primary education is a five year cycle proceeding to Secondary Education which is a 7 year cycle also subdivided into 3 stages of Junior School Certificate (JSC), Secondary School Certificate (SSC) and Higher Secondary Certificate (HSC) progressing towards graduate and post graduate level education (MoE 2014). The levels of education have been categorized according to the requirement stated in the NEP 2010. All students are nurtured and groomed in the traditional structural aspects. Aside to the formal education, religious curriculum is also followed in Islamic institutions; more commonly known as madrasahs. Dakhil (Secondary Level) Fazil (Higher Secondary), Alim (Bachelors), Kamil (Post Graduate) are categorized under the same curriculum and standard as the general form of education. Technical and vocational education have also been introduced as part of the curriculum for people interested in gaining hands on experience in different technical areas. Primary education has been made compulsory from the age of 6 years under the education act of 1990.

4.0 FINANCE AND BUDGET ALLOCATION IN EDUCATION SECTOR OF BANGLADESH:

Each year the Government allocates a certain percentage in its annual budget for education. Under the provision of the NEP 2010, minimum of 30 percent of the total budget is to be allocated towards education infrastructure and development. Funding is mostly centra-

lized in Bangladesh and is controlled by the concerned ministries. Referring to the budget allocation in table 4 for the current fiscal year it can be seen that there is a drop from 6.02% to 5.92% from the previous fiscal year.

Development and Revenue Budget Allocation

Budget is given in Crore (1 Crore = 10 Million)

Year	National Allocation	Total Allocation in
2001-2002	38692.00	3227.5
2002-2003	42407.00	3559.3
2003-2004	49269.00	3818.1
2004-2005	75903.11	4459.3
2005-2006	80654.67	6423.9
2006-2007	71410.00	5709.2
2007-2008	80346.00	6396.2
2008-2009	94140.00*	6739.2
2009-2010	110523.00*	8971.6
2010-2011	132170.00*	9824.3
2011-2012	163589.00*	10649.9
2012-2013	191738.00*	11558.9
2013-2014	222491.00*	13179.2

*National Allocation including Memorandum Item

(Source: Ministry of Education 2014)

4.1 DEVELOPMENT OF COMPETENT TEACHERS:

Under the UNESCO guidelines the following competency framework for teachers has been designed. To maintain a certain standard this framework seems very useful giving a clear vision as to what to expect when approaching teachers for encouraging them to use technology in education.

At the conference held by Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, 2013, it was highlighted by the participants that there is a very low percentage of competent and skilled teachers who can be engaged in development of nursing education in Bangladesh. Furthermore, it is also evident that the level of dedication towards investing in health care education is very low. One of the key problems that prevails is the lack of infrastructural development. Even with the allocation of budget annually, the level of changes is very insignificant.

5.0 PROSPECT OF MASTERS IN NURSING IN BANGLADESH:

The committee during the meeting put forward a proposal to introduce the prospect of masters in nursing and also bring about changes in the national education policy and national health care policy. In

order to develop the health care sector it is crucial to invest in development of infrastructure and also promote the prospects of health development in Bangladesh where the ratios of competent instructors to students are less than 10 (ten percent). The proposed program of introducing MSN in Bangladesh has been considered fewer than two possible options:

- Completion of first year program and graduate with a training certificate

Continuation of the program and progress towards research dissertation and graduate with a Masters of Nursing.

6.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:

A research study is associated with a combination of different elements which include the factors of data collection and synthesis. In order to get the expected results a suitable structure has to be in place. This structure comes with a combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods.

6.1 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION:

The decision to carry out primary research depends upon the type of research study being carried out. Primary data collection has benefits as it provides an opportunity to get a better insight into what the researcher is expecting. It is more concerned with the practical aspect rather than the academic aspect in a project. For the purpose of this research the researcher has chosen to go forward with the interview method to collect primary data which are to be used. All data gathered from interviews has been compiled and interpreted to derive the best results.

7.0 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS:

This stage of the report involves presentation of the findings from the qualitative analysis of data gathered from the interviews of different respondents. Classification of all derived results will subsequently be encapsulated in the presentation giving a full picture of the critical understanding of the policy and governance of the existing policies. All data is represented in alignment with the research objectives. The researcher will be critically discussing each of the findings by critically analyzing the results from different perspectives that are subsequently aligned with the research objectives and research questions.

As part of the research study, the researcher aims to present all findings in a concise manner for better representation. All data that have been gathered through the course of the different interviews and

analysis of the data from different literature will be contextualized focusing on the different areas of the research focus areas and objectives. As the research concentrates on the classification of the parent themes and a large group of data is further classified into sub themes from the data gathered.

7.1 FINDINGS:

Discussion on the role of the government in respect to policy governance and implementation has been very crucial in Bangladesh. Some of the major issues that have been found in the course of the research are more categorized as follows:

7.1.1 INEQUALITY IN EDUCATION SECTOR:

In a report published by (World Bank 2013), it has been clearly stated that the gap between the enrolment of male and female in post primary education is approximately 14% and gross enrolment in primary school is 114% in 2011.

Equity in the educational system and its contribution to social mobility and poverty reduction through equal opportunity for the poor in education are major concerns, where the role of NGO's are encouraged in developing projects to support the system. As discussed in the review of literature, NGO's play a crucial role in education development and it is the responsibility to minimize the inequality in the education sector.

7.1.2 QUALITY OF EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE:

Quality of education is coherently dependent on the financial provisions and management as well as policy governance and mobility of resources. Factoring in the requirement of resources and the utilization of those in systematic way involves having the most competent resources. Effective management of resources and timely execution of policies can bring about changes in the improvement of education sector. Proper allocation of budget and the infrastructure requires more development mainly in the rural areas where one of the biggest issues is the supply of electricity. In certain areas, supply of electricity is not sufficient as the rate of power cuts is higher than in the urban area.

7.1.3 GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT:

There are concerns that have been noticed during the study of policies as well as the practical aspect of research that have been contextualized and analyzed in the previous chapters. Perception and practices are established at different levels of education. According to the responses summarized from the interviews, all respondents have

agreed that the bureaucratic control is too strict and there is little or no room for anyone to express any opinions towards changes. Because of the strict bureaucratic control it has been noticed that the internal efficiency of policy governance is very low and the participation of other bodies are somewhat reluctant to voice their opinions about changes due to the high degree of politics.

Major governance issues are noticeable and establishing a balance between accountability and autonomy can bring about improvement in the quality of education and the drive in the mechanism through the minimization of politics from education development sector. The MoE (Ministry of Education) exerts control over all levels of education from primary to tertiary level with unnecessary intervention in decision making. It is the responsibility of the educational institutions to have their own policies to avoid minimum bureaucratic issues that may leave the institutions towards changes being made institution wide.

7.1.4 INADEQUATE RESOURCES:

Infrastructural development and educational financing is heavily dependent on public sector budget allocations by the ministry of education. When reviewing the NEP and a study of the report published by JICA (2014), a few discrepancies have been found on how the resources are being used for education development. Increase in education expenditure is not enough for infrastructural development, because additional resources cannot alone improve the quality of education management unless weaknesses are identified and a solution to the problem is found. Rather than examining the problems from time to time it is necessary thereby to introduce customary practices before a budget is being made to know how much is really required to be allocated. There has been a shift in financing in proportional terms from primary to secondary education sectors, which raises the issue of adequacy of resources for quality assurance at different levels. Staff compensation uses up almost all of operating budgets, starving out other essential inputs for quality of infrastructural development and improvement of compliance issues.

7.1.5 NON-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATIONS:

The growth of the number of NGOs in Bangladesh over the past few decades has been tremendous. It is also noticeable that general population and the government of Bangladesh have become much dependent on the support of these organizations for socio-economic development. Overseas development aid is something that the Government relies upon for infrastructural development of the country for

projects on education development, health and sanitation etc. Looking into the role of NGOs, it can be said that they are one of the key players in encouraging local and national governments to adopt policies with proper utilization of the available resources. It has also been analyzed during the course of the study that NGOs are well-placed and play a key role in the promotion and execution of policies designed and drafted by the government. As NGOs are closely working with donor organizations like World Bank, IMF and ADB, the flexibility in the organization structures and procedures work towards the development of the country.

8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS:

This section will proceed onto providing recommendations on the findings from the study and providing a scope for further research. In relation to the study and the data analysis conducted, it is possible to put forward a few recommendations for improvement of the current situation in the education sector of Bangladesh. Designing of the school curriculum and the learning materials has been pointed as a key aspect of the national policies. Much emphasis has been put on the curriculum design and content of the textbooks and study materials. During the course of the study it has been noticed that academics are not pleased with the content of what is being taught to pupil. The reflection of the deviation in the curriculum, notably the primary and secondary education level is significant. Teachers have contested to this issue but there seems to be very less concern on which direction it is moving. The main issue is the existence of red tape between the chain of command. Henceforth, it is recommended that decisions about the teaching methods and contents should be discussed with the respective persons.

9.0 CONCLUSION:

Higher education in the health sector particularly in nursing sector is an inevitable need for overall quality of health sector development. An effective policy involving both the public and private organizations for development of curriculum, infrastructure and education could bring about the significant progress of health care service in Bangladesh.

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