

**The Proposed James P. Grant School of Public Health:  
A pre-feasibility study**

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## **1. Introduction**

Public health is a neglected area in medical and social science education in Bangladesh. The graduate medical and nursing education in Bangladesh is basically clinically oriented and gives little attention towards public health. This is however well recognized that individual oriented clinical medical care services will never be able to address the health problems of the vast majority of the population of this country. What is needed is a system of preventive, promotive and rehabilitative care program. This, however, requires a large number of skilled and motivated public health professionals. But few existing public health institutes are not able to produce the desired number and quality of human resource in this field. Considering this context BRAC, a leading development organization of Bangladesh, is planning to establish a School of Public Health, which will be affiliated with the recently opened BRAC University. The School will be named after the former Executive-Director of UNICEF the late James P. Grant.

This reports the result of a preliminary study carried out to explore the feasibility of the proposed James P. Grant School of Public Health. A detailed feasibility study will follow based on this preliminary study. The present study was carried out with the following objectives:

### **1.1. Objectives:**

1. To investigate the current public health education situation in Bangladesh. Public health education will include other related fields like, Population Science, Health Economics, and Nutrition.

→The existing institute and organizations in Bangladesh who offer training in public health and related field:

- Name of institute and organization
- Number and background of the students
- Course content and duration
- Course fees
- Collaborative organizations

→ Public health professionals in Bangladesh who are trained abroad:

- Number of professionals trained outside the country last two years: Government, Private, NGO
- Name of the institutes they went for training, and their funding agencies.

2. To identify the potential students for the proposed school:

- Government
- Private
- NGOs
- International and regional

3. To explore the probable courses to be offered:

- Probable course contents
- Probable short courses
- Probable course fees

4. To identify the potential faculty members for the proposed school :

- In Bangladesh
- Abroad

## **1.2. Methods:**

Following techniques were used for data collection:

### 1. Secondary source:

Brochure, booklets, curricula of different institutes offering public health courses and trainings were reviewed.

### 2. Web Search

Curricula and other information about South Asian Public Health Institutes were collected through web search.

### 3. Key informant interview:

Individual interview with 20 experienced public health managers, researchers and teachers from the Government of Bangladesh, NGO and private sector were conducted. Name of the experts interviewed are listed in Annex-1.

### 4. Group discussion:

Discussions were conducted with the following six groups:

1. Health Program Managers, BRAC
2. Medical Officers- BRAC Health Centre
3. Students of National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine, NIPSOM
4. Recently graduated doctors-Private Medical College (Bangladesh Medical College)
5. Internee doctors—Government Medical College (Chittagong Medical College)
6. Students of Institute of Health Economics, Dhaka University.

## **2. CURRENT PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION SITUATION IN BANGLADESH**

It was found that there are different institutes in Bangladesh that offer various level of courses and training in public health and related fields. Following are the particulars:

### **Masters Level:**

#### **A. In Public Health**

##### **a. National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM)**

National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM) is the main Government Institute that offers different masters level degrees in Public Health. Established in 1974 under the University of Dhaka, the aim of NIPSOM is to develop manpower at the postgraduate level in the Public Health disciplines and to provide research, advisory and consultancy thereof. The institute offers eight Masters in Public Health (MPH) Courses. Names and total places available for the courses are as follows:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Total places available</u>
1. MPH (Public Health Administration PHA)	20
2. MPH (Community Medicine CM)	20
3. MPH (Occupational and Environmental Health OEH)	20
4. MPH ( Health Promotion and Health Education HP & HE)	20
5. MPH (Reproductive Health and Child Health RCH)	20
6. MPH (Hospital Management HM)	20
7. MPH (Epidemiology EPID)	15
8. MPH (Nutrition Nutri)	12
	Total ---147

MBBS or its equivalent degree recognised by Bangladesh Medical and Dental Council (BMDC) plus one year of inservice training is the basic requirement for all MPH courses at NIPSOM. However, MPH courses in Health Promotion and Health Education, Hospital Management and Nutrition are open to non-medical candidates also. The government pays the tuition fees for Government candidates. For Bangladeshi private candidates the tuition fee is Tk. 7000,- for all MPH courses and for foreign students the fee is US \$ 2000. Fifty percent of the total places are reserved for private candidates. All MPH courses are for one academic calendar year. The courses are divided into two parts as follows:

#### Part-1

Part -1 of the MPH courses serves to provide a foundation to all students irrespective of the area of specialization chosen by them. Following subjects are covered for this basic orientation:

Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Research methodology, Population dynamics, Health Education and Promotion, Reproductive and Child Health, Nutrition and Biochemistry, Hospital Administration, Occupational and environmental health, Community Medicine, Behavioural sciences, Medical Sociology, Microbiology, Parasitology, and Medical Entomology.

#### Part-II

This part is designed for specialization training in respective field of public health, the students plan to do. Each student also has to complete a dissertation in this part.

### **b. Armed Forces Medical College**

Bangladesh Armed Forces Medical College also offers two Masters courses in Public Health, namely MPH in Public Health Administration and MPH in Hospital Management. The former course was started in 1995 which has 10 (ten) places and the later from 1998, which has 5 (five) places. All the places are reserved for the army personnel. However, they are planning to include two non-army government candidates from next year. They follow the same syllabus as NIPSOM and the government pays the tuition fees.

### **c. Adventist University and Seminary Bangladesh:**

The Philippine-based Adventist International Institute of Advance Studies (AIAS) offers a Masters in Public Health (MPH) course through its Dhaka campus located at ADRA School, Mirpur-1. The following are some further details of the course:

Eligibility: Graduate in any discipline

Tuition fee: US \$ 200 per course. Total 15 course are required for MPH; US \$ 3000 for the whole course.

Program duration: This is a split programme; it takes 3-4 years to complete the degree.

Course offering: 4 courses in a year.

Course duration: 14 working days.

Class time: The course is designed particularly for working professionals, and the class time Sunday-Thursday 4-8 PM

Curriculum:

#### Professional Foundation -

Theology of suffering and Healing, Mechanisms of Health & Disease, Current International Health Issues, and Public Health Nutrition.

#### Public Health-

Principles of Environmental Health, Bio statistics with Research Applications, Principles of Epidemiology, and an elective from Primary Health Care Area.

#### Health Promotion & Education-

Health Education Theory & Practice, Planning & Communication Health Education Programme, and topics in Family Health.

#### Culminating Phase-

Complete one of the two options:, Applied Community Project, a field learning Internship  
Field Research

Most of the students are professionals from different NGOs. So far 20 students have graduated from the Institute. In the current session there are seven students.

#### **d. Institute of Community Health-Bangladesh**

The Dhaka Community Hospital is planning to open an Institute of Community Health. They are planning to offer both clinical and public health courses at masters level. However, the course design and other set ups are still in an initial phase. The office of the proposed institute could not provide any further information.

#### **B. In Public Health related fields:**

##### **Dhaka University**

##### **a) The Department of Population Sciences**

This department of Dhaka University offers Masters in Social Science (MSS) in Population Sciences. The Department of Population Sciences was established in 1999 under the Faculty of Social Science at the University of Dhaka in collaboration with UNFPA. The duration of this course is two years, which is divided into four semesters. Each semester is of nineteen weeks. Admission to the course is open to the candidates who have at least Bachelor Degree or its equivalent from any recognised university or at least a four years graduation degree from other institutions such as medical college, engineering college etc. There are 25 (twenty five) places in the department of which 10 (ten) places are reserved for female students. The tuition and other fees are as per Government subsidised rate. (Around Tk. 1500 per year including all fees)



The curriculum of the programme is divided into four levels- Foundation, Integration, Specialization and Performance.

Foundation level:

Introduction to Population science, Principles of Society and Economy, Social Science Research Methodology, and Basic quantitative methods.

Integration Level:

Population theories, Reproductive biology and contraception, Environment and Human Ecology, And Techniques of population Analysis.

Specialization level:

There are seven modules which include- Demographic Analysis, Population Studies, Population and Communication, Population and Sustainable development, Reproductive Health, Policy, Programme and Management , and Gender Issues.

Performance level:

Thesis for thesis group and term paper for non- thesis group.

**b) The Institute of Health Economics**

This institute of Dhaka University offers an M.Sc. in Health Economics. The Institute was established in 1998 with the collaboration of Department of International Development (DFID) of UK. The duration of the course is one year. Admission to the course is open to candidates with at least Honours Bachelor Degree or its equivalent from any recognised university or a four years graduation degree from other institutions such as medical college, engineering college etc. Candidates having experience in health related field are preferred. Course fee is Tk. 5000.

The course content include:

Economics, Health Economics, Health care management, Public health , Epidemiology, Applied Econometrics, Research Methods, Health policy and planning, Health care evaluation, and Health care financing.

### **c) The Institute of Nutrition and Food Science**

This institute of Dhaka University offer an M.Sc. in nutrition courses. Admission criteria are same as the Institute of Health Economics. The duration of the course is also of one year.

The tuition and other fees are as per Government subsidised rate. (Around Tk. 1500 per year including all fees). In the course content along with the clinical nutrition there are courses related to public health and social science which include:

Public Health nutrition, Nutritional epidemiology, Nutrition education, Development and nutrition, and Economics and nutrition planning

### **2.1.2. Ph.D. and M.Phil. level**

National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM), The Institute of Nutrition and Food Science, The Institute of Health Economics of Dhaka University and Institute of Bangladesh Studies, and Institute of Biological Science of Rajshahi University offer both M.Phil. and Ph.D. courses in public health related fields. In all the institutes duration of M.Phil. Course is two years and Ph.D. three years. However, though each year seven students in NIPSOM and in other institutes a varying number of M.Phil. students are enrolled; Ph.D. students in Public Health are rare. From Institute of Bangladesh Studies and Institute of Biological Sciences of Rajshahi University only two Ph.D.s have so far been awarded in the field of Health and Social Science. For the Ph.D. students of Institute of Bangladesh Studies, and Institute of Biological Science the University Grants Commission provides a stipend amounting to TK 2000 per month.

### **2.1.3. Under graduate Level**

#### **a) Medical College**

There are thirteen medical colleges in public sector and six in private sector in Bangladesh. Community Medicine is taught in under graduate level in all the medical colleges. Previously community medicine was taught as a subject only in fourth year of the medical course. Since the

early nineties the course has been redesigned and is now offered from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> year classes. The subject of the community medicine is divided into three main parts as follows:

1. Community health, behavioural science, biostatistics, demography, public health administration, international health organizations, international health regulations, health laws of Bangladesh, national health policy, organogram of health services of Bangladesh and primary health care.
2. Environment and health, occupational health, personal health, maternal and child health and family planning, food and nutrition, health education, epidemiology of common communicable and non communicable disease in Bangladesh and medical entomology. Deficiency disease, preventive and social medicine including paediatrics, obstetrics, geriatrics, and mental health.

All the medical colleges follow the same curriculum. However, two private medical colleges namely, Community based Medical College of Mymensing and Medical faculty of Gonobishyabiddaloy, Savar have special emphasis on community oriented medical teaching. In these institutes students are given exposure with the health and illness conditions of the community outside the hospital.

#### **b)Private University**

Independent University, Bangladesh, a private university, has a Population and Environment programme. The School of Environment Science and Management offers a Bachelor of Science degree with concentration in population -environment. The students of population-environment take the following core courses:

Environmental Chemistry, Environmental Biology, Ecology and Conservation, Environment and Natural Resources Economics, Remote Sensing and GIS, Energy and Environment, Environmental Law, Environmental Impact Assessment, Population -Environment, and Social Science Research Methods.

Students majoring in population -environment take the following:

Principles of Demography, Environmental Health and Sanitation, Reproductive Biology, Family planning programme and reproductive biology.

Courses offered as optional are:

Epidemiology, Geodemography of Poverty and Environmental management, Demography of developing Countries with special reference to Bangladesh, Population, Environment and Development planning, Migration and Urbanization, General Theory of Population, Population Policy and Planning, Environmental Toxicology, and Independent study in Population - Environment

#### **c) College of Nursing**

There is a two year graduation course on Public Health Nursing at the College of Nursing in Dhaka. Every year about 40 nurses are enrolled.

#### **d) Other Institutes**

In addition to medical colleges, some institutes and departments of universities have public health related topics in their graduate and masters course curriculum. For example,

# Institute of Business Administration (IBA) runs a course on hospital management.

# Nutrition and Child development department of Home Economics College have courses on public health nutrition and family health.

# Women's studies department has a course on reproductive health.

# Anthropology department of Jahangir Nagar University offers courses on Biological and Medical Anthropology.

#### **2.1.4. Short training courses:**

In addition to the Masters, Ph.D., M.Phil, and undergraduate level studies, there are a number of short courses on different public health related topics. The duration of the courses vary from one weeks to four weeks. These are generally on job trainings. The participants are mainly from different GOB and NGO professionals working in various public health projects. Some of these courses are international. Following are the detail of these short courses:

1. ICDDRDB offers the following Public Health related national and international short courses:

National course:

- a. Introductory Courses on Epidemiology and Biostatistics.
- b. Training course on feasibility means to address moderately malnourished children.
- c. Training in Arsenic Measurements.
- d. Training course in clinical Economics.

International courses:

- a. Emerging and re-emerging pathogens
- b. Health and Demographic Surveillance system
- c. Clinical management of Diarrhoeal Diseases
- d. Workshop on improving effectiveness of quality services and sustainability in Reproductive health programme through operational research.

\*Number of course participants ranges from 20-25.

- Tuition fee for the National training courses is around Tk 10,000 and all the International courses and some national courses are sponsored by the following funding agencies:

Japan International Corporation for Welfare Services (JICWELS)

SIDA

Office of the Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA), USA

Government of Japan

2. National Institute of Preventive and Social Medicine (NIPSOM) offers two weeks courses on:

Epidemiology

Biostatistics

3. Bangladesh Institute of Research for Promotion of Essential and Reproductive Health and Technologies (BIRPERHT) offers short courses in the following areas mainly for national participants:

- a. Research Methodology
- b. Epidemiological Approach to reproductive health
- c. Application of basic Statistics in Health Research
- d. Training course on statistical method in sociomedical research
- e. Operation research methodology

Number of participants ranges from 20-25.

The courses are sponsored by various sponsoring agencies eg. CDC,USA

4. BRAC offers short courses on various health and family planning issues mainly for its staff members and also for GOB health professionals. BRAC has organised a six weeks international course on 'Anthropology of Health and Health Care' in collaboration with ICDDR, University of Amsterdam and De la Salle University of Philippines.

5. Bangladesh Medical Research Council (BMRC) offers courses on:

- a. Research Methodology
- b. Bio statistics

These courses are for medical graduates and duration is for four weeks. This is financially supported by WHO, UNFPO. Participants are given stipends.

6. The National Institute of Population Research and Training (NIPORT) was created in 1977 with the following mandate:

-Provide task oriented Maternal and Child Health (MCH), Family Planning (FP) and management training for all categories of MCH-FP personnel from administrative and technical officers at the district and thana levels to field workers at the village level and -Conduct training related and operations research, together with population studies, and incorporate the findings of such research into MCH-FP policymaking and service delivery

NIPORT also provides management training to a large number of program officials from the district and thana levels that include Civil Surgeons, Deputy Directors of FP, Thana Health and FP officers, and Medical Officers posted at the thana health complex. These training courses



are mostly directed towards improving the management efficiency quality of services and problems faced in the field and other related matters.

7. Institute of Child and Mother Health at Matuail offers two weeks course on Research Methodology and topics related to Mother and child health.

8. Urban Family Health Project (UFHP) coordinates short training for about one week to three weeks for doctors, paramedics, counsellors, and clinic managers. Training is given on following issues:

Child Survival Intervention, Reproductive Health, MIS, Rational drug use, Communication and counselling, Safe delivery, HIV,AIDS communication and Counselling, Family Planning methods, Nutrition, Clinic management, Clinical management, and Financial management.

Following organisations organise the trainings with the financial and managerial help from UFHP:

AITAM (The Associates in training and management)

GK (Gonoshasthya Kendra)

ICMH (Institute of Child and mother health)

CWFD (Concern Women for Family Development)

DCH (Dhaka Community Hospital)

Radda MCH-FP centre

MSCS (Marie Stopes clinic Society)

BCCP (Bangladesh Centre for Communication Programme)

## **2.2. Public Health Professional of Bangladesh trained abroad:**

Every year a number of students go for public health training outside Bangladesh. Students are mainly from government institutions and NGOs. There are a few private candidates as well. Following are some of the universities where Bangladeshis usually go for Public Health training:

### Asia:

Mahidol University and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand , De La Salle University in Philippine , Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Science and Technology in Kerela, India ,

All India Institute of Public Health, Calcutta, India and Institute of Health Management Research, Jaipur, India.

#### Europe

London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, England , University of Liverpool, England , University of Brussels, Belgium , Heidelberg University, Germany , Royal Tropical institute, The Netherlands , University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands , University of Wageningen, The Netherlands , Karolinska Institute, Sweden , Umea University, Sweden , Upsala University, Sweden.

#### USA

Harvard University , John Hopkins University , University of Alabama , Emory University , Boston University , University of Michigan , Cornell University, University of California at Berkeley.

#### Australia

Australian National University , Edith Crown University , University of Western Australia

\* The list is not complete.

### **2.2.1. Funding agencies**

Some candidates are funded by the Government of Bangladesh, some NGOs like BRAC, ICDDR, CARE, PROSHIKA fund their own candidates. Various donor agencies like DFID, WHO, World Bank, USAID, and others also provide fund. In some cases the respective foreign governments or the university provide fund for the students. There are a few students who go abroad to study public health with their own fund. It is, however, reported that many Bangladeshi doctors who are studying Public Health particularly in America, not because they are interested in public health but because the admission criteria in public health courses is easier than that of clinical medicines, and this admission in public health allows the doctors in getting visa or stay permit in USA.

### **2.2.2. Number of students:**

It's difficult to assess the exact number of Bangladeshis going abroad to study public health each year. However, the inquiry so far suggests that around 25-30 students go abroad for public health



training each year. This figure is not confirmed and the number might vary greatly from year to year.

### **3. POTENTIAL STUDENTS FOR THE PROPOSED PUBLIC HEALTH SCHOOL:**

The study indicates that there are potential students in government, NGO and private sectors for the proposed James P. Grant School of Public Health (SPG SPH):

#### **3.1. Government sector**

Bangladesh is one of the signatory of the Alma Ata conference and took Primary Health Care (PHC) as the main strategy for the improvement of health of the people of the country. The administrative and infrastructure of the health sector was organised according to the PHC policy. The recently initiated Health and Population Sector Program (HPSP) of the Government is also designed with a community health focus. In addition, more donor funded public health projects are underway. As a result a demand is quickly growing for a quality public health training institute. However, all the respondents of this study acknowledged that in spite of the need there are serious shortage in public health professionals in the country and there is a serious lacking in existing public health training.

It was found that in NIPSOM, which is the major government institute providing graduate training in public health for more than two decades, 850 application forms were sold for the 2001-2002 session's MPH courses. Of that 548 appeared in the admission test. This number is bigger than that of the previous year. Of 548 only 155 were admitted in different courses. The rest about 700 persons who showed their interested in public health could not be accommodated. Many of these unsuccessful candidates either will try for next year or will try to get admission in other public health related fields, eg, Health Economics, Population Science etc.

On the other hand, the students and faculty members of NIPSOM mentioned various limitations of the training in NIPSOM. A group of students mentioned the following in this respect:

1. The NIPSOM courses are oriented overtly towards theory and less emphasis is given to practical training.
2. There are little field level public health problem solving exercise.
3. Inadequate number of skilled, motivated faculty members.

4. Little or no use of modern teaching techniques.
5. Poor library facilities.
6. Poor computer training.
7. Faulty curriculum. Too many topics and some irrelevant courses.
8. Poor linkage with other organisations (NGOs, International agencies).

The faculty members also acknowledged the problems with the teaching in NIPSOM. They said because of various administrative and logistic problems the teaching in NIPSOM is hampered. Moreover, as this is a government institute changing the curriculum is also a difficult task. The action involves lengthy bureaucratic process and is influenced by various political factors. In addition the faculty members pointed that as there is no proper career planning for the public health professionals in the government health sector, there is a lack of motivation among both teachers and students of NIPSOM. There are many teachers and students in NIPSOM who do not have a real interest in public health but got themselves enrolled in NIPSOM because of various political, personal, and administrative reasons. On the other hand, there are also a number of really motivated public health teachers and researchers in the government who are getting opportunities for The other public health related post graduate courses (Health Economics, Population science) offered by the Government who are not getting opportunities for higher studies and capacity development.

The other public health related graduate courses (Health Economics, Population Sciences) offered by the Government Universities have just started. It is too early to assess the courses. However, the number of places available are very limited in these departments and there are shortages of relevant faculty members. Moreover, these departments are not appropriate for those who are interested in mainstream core public health subjects. In this connection the study by Alam (1996) is worth mentioning which discussed the limitations of all Government graduate and postgraduate level medical and health related teaching in Bangladesh.<sup>1</sup>

### **3.2. NGO Sector:**

The inequity suggests that NGO is a most potential sector from which JPG SPH can expect a large number of students. There are about 400 NGOs in Bangladesh working in the field of

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<sup>1</sup> Alam NSM 1996 Teaching Health Social Science: Bangladesh Case Study. Special Publication No-15, ICDDR.B.

health.<sup>2</sup> Almost all these NGOs have public health components in their programme. However, most of the NGOs lack skilled public health personnel. Though there are some top level managers and researchers in the NGO sector who have graduate level training in public health. There is a big number of mid level health managers who do not have any specialized public health training. A number of health NGO policy makers said that when they put advertisement in the newspapers for a senior position in the public health project they hardly find candidates with postgraduate degree in public health. The health NGO managers feel a need for proper public health training for the personnel working in the health NGOs. Only two or three large NGOs can afford to send one or two of their staff members for overseas training in public health per year. These NGOs, however, usually do not send their candidates to the national institutes such as NIPSOM, since according to some of the NGO policy makers the curriculum of NIPSOM do not fit with their need, and they are not satisfied with the quality of teaching at NIPSOM. They, therefore, expressed the need for an international standard private public health institute. This they said would also provide an alternative to NIPSOM for public health teaching in the country. Following are some of the points that the respondents mentioned in support to the need for an international standard private public health institute :

- a. The NGOs who currently sending their candidates abroad will prefer Bangladeshi private Public health institute because it will be cheaper and expected to be more relevant to local situations.
- b. Some donor agencies that provide funding for academic capacity building of the NGO staff, give priority to the institutes of the candidate's own country. JPG SPH can be an option for them.
- c. Some candidates who are in the middle of their career, even after getting a scholarship couldn't avail an overseas long-term training because of their family problems (hampering of education of children, safety of family etc). Such personal difficulties didn't allow them to stay away from the family for a longer period. SPG SPH could be a good option for such candidates.
- d. Number of mid-level health managers in NGOs who cannot get scholarship from external sources would take the course with their own funds for their career development. The expenses of the Adventist University and Seminary

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<sup>2</sup> The Directory of Health NGOs in Bangladesh 200-2001. VHSS: 2001.

Bangladesh, shows that there are a number of candidates from NGOs who are studying with their own funds. However, the Adventist course takes too long (3,4 years), as it is a split program and candidates complained that the course fee was too high. If these issues could be addressed in JPG SPH then it will be able to attract similar type of students.

e. There are a number of doctors working in NGO managed clinics who have developed interest in public health along with their clinical science interests. They will be interested to take a graduate training in public health. JPH SPH can be a good option for them.

### **3.3. Private Sector:**

There are potential students for JPG SPH in sectors other than government and NGO. This is worth mentioning here that out of 548 candidates appeared in NIPSOM admission test 350 were private candidates. This indicates that there is a large number of potential candidates in the private sector. Following are some examples:

- a) Every year a few self-financed Bangladeshi students go abroad for studying public health. They could be potential students for the JPG SPH as the cost would be less here, and this institute would offer them a learning in his,/her familiar and native setting. However, this will greatly depend on the standard of the teaching in JPG SPH.
- b) There are also potential students among the young doctors and fresh medical graduates who have little public health exposure. Many of these doctors are either unemployed or frustrated with a low paid job in a clinic. Some are fed up after unsuccessfully trying for admission in clinical post graduate studies. Some also became disinterested in clinical medicine for various other reasons such as commercialisation, and politicisation of the medical profession. All these doctors are looking for an alternative in their career plan. Some of them have decided to make a public health career, but do not have much options other than NIPSOM. Although the number of

such candidates would not be very large but they are potential candidates for JPG SPH. Particularly doctors who have passed from private medical colleges might generally prefer another private public health institute and cost should not be a problem for them.

- c) There are many professionals with non medical background and number of fresh graduates in non medical subjects are also interested to take public health career. JPG SPH can be good place for them. However, number of these candidate will depend on the possibility of creating more job opportunities for public health professionals.
- d) As there is only undergraduate courses, and no graduate courses in health and population related fields in the private universities, the graduate students passing from these universities (eg. Environment and Population Science in Independent University), could be potential students for masters course of the JPG SPH.
- e) There are also some unexplored potential job fields in the country for public health professionals. If an awareness and demand can be created for public health experts in various private sectors (Skilled health care managers for private clinics, occupational health experts for garment factories) JPG SPH can expand its market.

#### **3.4. International Sector:**

It is expressed by the respondents that JPG SPH will be able to attract many international students as well if an international standard academic quality can be maintained. The points in support are the following:

- a) There are few Public Health institute in the South and South East Asia. So JPG SPH can expect a number of students from this region, particularly from SAARC countries. Many students from this area go for public health training to Thailand. Most respondents commented that students from SAARC countries would prefer a quality institute in this region rather than Thailand because of

cultural closeness. Some also complained about the difficulty in understanding Thai English for outsiders.

- b) JPG SPH can attract students from various Western, African, Latin American countries as well. The most important strength of SPG SPH will be its affiliation with BRAC's programmes. BRAC has decade old community based health programmes which has almost all the components of primary health care, in addition to its education and various other development programmes. This gives a rare opportunity to look at health from a holistic point of view. This sort of practical field for learning is almost non existent in the public health departments of reputed western universities. This rare opportunity for combining theory and practice can attract public health students all over the world. Moreover, BRAC has successfully conducted international courses, which makes the organisation credible to international students. BRAC has organised an international course on 'Anthropology of Health and Health Care' mentioned before and is also conducting a Diploma and Masters courses in NGO management collaboration with School of International Training, Vermont, USA for the last five years.
  
- c) Public Health department of many western universities have a 3 , 4 months compulsory field placement for the students and most of the students go to different Asian and African countries. JPG SPH can attract those students.
  
- d) If possible student exchange program with various international universities can be organised. Joint programme with some western universities are also suggested. It is said that an overseas academic trip would be an additional attraction to the students from home and the region.

#### 4. PROBABLE COURSES:

It is generally accepted that health problems stem from multiple causes, encompassing social, economic, cultural, psychological, political, organisational, demographic, geographical and biological components. Therefore, a public health course should be designed in such a way that it will impart to students a holistic understanding of health. It is suggested that JPG SPH can start by offering a comprehensive masters course along with few short courses. It can also offer Ph.D. in future.

Different universities call this public health masters degree differently according to the focus of their courses. For example, Masters in Public Health, Masters in Primary Health Care Management, Masters in Health Social Sciences etc. JPG SPH should decide about its focus. Generally it is suggested by the respondents that a graduate of public health masters should:

1. Understand the biological, social and cultural base of disease and illness, reproduction, health behaviour, and gender issues in health.
2. Know about various aspects of national and international public health issues.
3. Be able to design and manage health intervention programs from a cultural based and community perspective.
4. Be able to design, interpret and utilise relevant methodologies for community health research encompassing both quantitative and qualitative methods.

To enable the students to develop above mentioned capacities the course content therefore should include the following subjects:

Epidemiology

Biostatistics

Health Economics

Health Service Management



Medical Anthropology  
Environmental health  
Health Education and Behavioural Science  
Public Health Nutrition  
Occupational Health  
Gender, Sexuality and Reproductive Health  
Social, Economic and Cultural perspective in PHC  
Computer application in Health Science  
Research Methodology (Both qualitative and quantitative)

This list is not exhaustive. Some of these subjects should remain as core subjects and others elective. Some more subjects can be included based on the focus of the course and availability of faculty members. The course contents of public health in different regional universities mentioned below can help us in selecting the additional subjects.

#### **4.1. Course contents of some regional Public Health Institutes**

##### **Mahidol University, Thailand**

###### **a.Masters in Public Health**

Biostatistics, Epidemiology ,Environmental health service, Family Health, Health Education and Behavioural Science, Microbiology, Nutrition, Occupational Health and safety, Parasitology, Public health administration, Public Health Nursing, Sanitary Engineering.

###### **b.Master's in Health Social Science**

###### Required courses:

Medical Geography,Population and Health , Health Sociology, Medical Anthropology, Health Psychology, Health Economics, Social Research Methodology, Statistical analysis.



Elective Courses:

Social Science of Reproductive Health, Women, Health and Culture, Medical Ethics and Health care rights, Feminist and gender theory, Health care organisation, Social Science of HIV infection, Urban impacts of Health, Health and safety of workers, Social science of tropical disease, Environmental psychology, Social research methodology, Advanced Statistical analysis.

**ASEAN Institute for Health Development offer Primary Health Care Management Programme (MPHM), Thailand**

Health Service Management, Epidemiological Studies in Health Systems, Health Economics, Socio-economic and Cultural perspective in PHC, Management of Health Information, PHC and quality of life development, Research Methodology, Management of Environmental Health Programme, Management of training programmes, Computer application in Health Science, Health manpower planning, Leadership Development, Field study, Thesis.

Short Course:

Primary Health Care service Management, Community based approaches in Safe Motherhood and Child Care, Management of Community based Prevention of HIV and Care for people with AIDS, Women's health and development, Reproductive Health, Income Generation and Community Participation, Integration of Health and Social Science, District Health System based on PHC approach, Primary Health Care Management advancement program.

**University of Chulalongkorn, Thailand**

**Masters in Public Health**

Core courses:

Health problems, Determinants and trends, Information, Research and Measurement, Policy and strategic planning, Implementation and management, Health System Development

Elective Courses:

Studies in Rational use of Technology, Studies in Health financing, Studies in Health development, Studies in Human resource development, Seminar in Health system development, Fundamental science and Research Skills, Fundamental financial and management skills, Directed Studies.

**De La Salle University, Philippines**

**Masters of Health Social science**

Term-1

Health Social Science, Biological and Social Foundation of Health, Gender, Sexuality and Reproductive Health, Health Social Science research Methods 1

Term-2

Health Statistics, Health Social science Research Methods 2, Health Economics, Population Studies.

Term 3

Community Organisation and development, Programme planning management and practicum, Ethics, policy and programme analysis, Directed reading, Thesis

**Achuta Menon Center for Health Science Studies**

**Sree Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Science and Technology**

**Kerala, India**

The Modules:

Quantitative Methods in Health Research, Introductory and Intermediate Epidemiology, Health and Development, Health Economics, Gender Issues in Health, Anthropological Perspectives of Health, Health Policy Analysis, Intermediate Biostatistics, Management in Public Health, Field study in Public Health and project work and Dissertation.

#### **4.2. Probable short courses in JPG SPH:**

As mentioned before there already exist some short courses organised by different organisations on selected subjects like, Epidemiology, Biostatistics, Research methodologies, Health Economics, Public Health Nutrition. JPG SPH also can offer these courses. It can make a difference in the course by incorporating some practical training. The respondents however suggested that JPG SPH can explore new areas in which no short term training facilities exist in the country. Some suggestions about the probable topics for short courses are as follows:

Environmental and occupational health

Gender, Sexuality and Reproductive Health

Community mental health

Medical Anthropology

Medical Ethics

Public health Nursing

Disability management

Drug abuse and rehabilitation

It was suggested by the respondents that short courses should be accredited by the University.

#### **4.3. Course design:**

There were some suggestions regarding courses design of JPG SPH by the respondents as follows:

- 1) JPG SPH should take maximum advantage of BRAC's field based health and other development programmes. These programmes can be used as practical fields for the students. The students can also do their thesis work based on the community based programs. It can also use community health projects of other organisations for its field study. For example, Matlab project of ICDDR, B could be an appropriate site for field study. The health projects of Gonoshyastho Kenra (GK), and Grammen can also be used. This is one of the unique ways in which JPG SPH can make a difference with other public health institutes.
- 2) JPG SPH should have regular research activities, which will enable the institute generate additional knowledge. It can utilise the facilities of BRAC's Research and Evaluation

Division in this regard, which has decades of experiences in conducting various community based health research.

- 3) There should be provisions for those who are on the job and are unable to become a full time student. Arrangements like split programme and part time studentship should also be considered.
- 4) There can be a continuing learning programme, where lectures could be organised on various focused topics. Clinicians can be benefited from lectures on various social science topics, and social scientists working in the field of health can be benefited from lectures on different medical topics. In addition, learning program can also be organised on various advanced topic of both medicine and social science.

#### **5. COURSE FEE:**

Most of the public health related graduate and postgraduate courses in Bangladesh are subsidised by the government or sponsored by various donor agencies. As a result the course fee is generally very low. In NIPSOM government candidates do not have to pay any tuition fee; for the private candidates total cost for one year MPH is Tk 10000 (aprox. US\$ 200). However, for international students the fee is US\$ 2000. University masters course also involves very negligible amount of money (Less then US\$ 100 per year). The course fee for the short courses organised by various organisations do not exceed US\$ 200. Tuition fee in private universities however, is high. But most of these universities offer masters degree only in subjects like Business Administration or Computer Science. The fee is around US\$ 4,000 for a three years course. However, Public Health is not as popular a subject as Business Administration or Computer Science in Bangladesh. So it is unlikely that students will be willing to pay such a high tuition fee for a masters in public health. The tuition fee for the MPH in Adventist University and Seminary Bangladesh is, however, high and amounts US\$ 3000. This amount is paid over a period of three/four years (per course 200 US\$, total 15 courses). The students consider this course expensive. The tuition fee for MPH course in some of the regional Institutes (Mahadol and Chulalongkorn university, Dela sale Philipines, Achuta Menon Center for Health Science Studies ) ranges from US\$-3000-4500.

Respondents of this study suggested that a tuition fee of about US\$ 1500 for national candidates would be reasonable for a one year masters course in JPG SPH. However, this was also mentioned by most respondents that the school will not be able to survive only on self financed candidates, as the number of such candidates will be low. The school will have to depend on scholarship supports from various sponsoring agencies at least for the initial years. Some also suggested a variable tuition fee for different categories of students. For example, international students can be charged a higher tuition fee than the national candidates.

## **6. POTENTIAL FACULTY MEMBERS:**

There are potential faculty members for JPG SPH in existing public health institutes, NGOs, and universities in the country and also in overseas universities. Number of teachers and researchers working in government institutes and universities showed their interest in getting involved in a private public health institute like this. They believe JPG SPH will give them a better opportunity to work, than their current positions, where they have to work under various constraints and limitations. They also mentioned their frustration about the poor remuneration they receive from government. In NGOs and in some research organisations there are some qualified public health managers and researchers who also can be potential faculty members for the proposed public health institute. For example, in ICDDR B there are a number of experienced researchers and public health experts who could be interested in taking a faculty position in JPGSPH. It is also possible to organize a joint course in collaboration with ICDDR B. There are public health professionals in BRAC who have both extensive programmatic and research experience along with higher academic degrees (Ph.D.) in the relevant area. They could be potential resource person for JPG SPH. The school, however, also should invite faculties from international universities. Cross national faculty members in JPG SPH will enhance its strength, and thus will attract more students.

## 7. CONCLUSION:

The study suggests that considering the existing public health training situation of Bangladesh opening a modern private public health institute is feasible. The existing public health training institutes are inadequate to the growing interest in public health. Moreover, the quality of training is also questionable.. However, the sustainability of the school will depend on various issues:

- a. The curriculum should be well balanced both in theoretical and practical aspects.
- b. There should be strong, motivated faculty members.
- c. The tuition fee should be reasonable.
- d. There should be adequate funds and scholarship facilities for at least initial years.
- e. Proper publicity should be done about the school at national, regional and international levels.
- f. Advocacy should be done in government and different private level for creating more opportunities for public health professionals, thus creating job markets for public health graduates.
- g. Collaborations should be made with international universities and agencies.

**Annex-1:**

**Persons Interviewed:**

1. Dr. Sadeka Tahera Khatun Ex-Director, NIPSOM
2. Dr. Halida Hanum Akhter Ex-Director, BIRPERHT
3. Dr. Khairul Islam Program co-ordinator, Plan International  
General secretary, Bangladesh Public Health Association
4. Dr. Nasiruddin Director, VHSS
5. Dr. Ziyauddin Program co-ordinator, Water and Sanitation Program, CARE
6. Dr. Mahmudur Rahman Associate Professor, Epidemiology department, NIPSOM
7. Mr. Shah Alam Bhuiyan Associate Professor, Health Education department, NIPSOM
8. Mr. Md. Hafez Associate Professor, Biostatistics department, NIPSOM
9. Ms. Nashid Kamal Ph.D. Head, Environment and Population Department, Independent University.
10. Dr. Zahidur Rahman Manager, STD,AIDS Project, SMC
11. Dr. Shafiqul Islam Medical Officer, IEDCR
12. Dr. Enamul Haque Lecturer, Rajshahi Medical College, Rajshahi
13. Ms. Rafia Sultana Nursing Supervisor, BIRDEM
14. Dr. Fakir Anjuman Ara Senior Training officer. ICDD, RB.
15. Dr. Mamun Hussain Psychiatrist, IPGMR
16. Dr. A. Mushtaque R. Chowdhury,  
Deputy Executive Director and Director, Research Division, BRAC
17. Mr. Abdullah Hel Hadi Ph.D. BRAC
18. Dr. Syed Masud Ahamed BRAC
19. Dr. Kaosar Afsana BRAC
20. Dr. Malabika Sarker BRAC (Currently research fellow at Heidelberg University, Germany)