DISTANCE TEACHING-LEARNING DURING COVID-19 IN ONE NGO SCHOOL IN DHAKA

By

Muzahida Tasbiha

19357072

A thesis submitted to the BRAC Institute of Educational Development in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Education in Educational Leadership & School Improvement

BRAC Institute of Educational Development
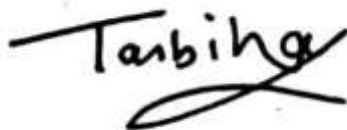BRAC University
October 2021

Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my/our own original work while completing degree at BRAC University.

2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.

3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.

4. I/We have acknowledged all main sources of help.

Student's Full Name & Signature:

_____

Muzahida Tasbiha
19357072

Approval

The thesis/project titled "Distance Teaching-Learning during Covid-19 in one NGO School in Dhaka" submitted by

1. Student-Muzahida Tasbiha (19357072)

of Spring, 2021 has been accepted as satisfactory in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Education in Educational Leadership & School Improvement on 11th October 2021.

Examining Committee:

Supervisor:
(Member)
_____
Dr. Md Tariqul Islam
Assistant Professor, BRAC Institute of Educational Development

Program Coordinator:
(Member)
_____
Dr. Manjuma Akhtar Mousumi
Assistant Professor, BRAC Institute of Educational Development

External Expert Examiner:
(Member)
_____
Mr. Somnath Saha
Lecturer, BRAC Institute of Educational Development

Head of the Institute:
_____
Dr. Erum Mariam
Executive Director, BRAC Institute of Educational Development

Ethics Statement

Proper ethical measurement was taken from the very beginning of this study. The thesis proposal was written mentioning all the ethical issues and one ethics form was filled after writing the proposal. The respective committee reviewed the proposal and approved ethics form before starting work. Before going to the field for data collection, proper permission was taken from the BRAC IED Ethics Committee. All participants were informed about the study with entirely necessary information. After discussing the purpose, significance and their contribution to the research, they agreed to participate. Before arranging interviews, they were given consent form. Participants had freedom to avoid any part of the questions if they feel uncomfortable. Participant's real name was not mentioned anywhere in the final paper. All the data were preserved in the personal computer with proper passport and nobody had access on it. All these procedures were guided and approved by the thesis supervisor.

Abstract

Like many other usual ways of life, COVID-19 had a profound impact on Bangladesh's education sector and worldwide. From the beginning of the pandemic along with many other countries, the Government of Bangladesh also announced a complete shutdown all over the country. Many people in this country live below the poverty line, and can hardly afford their daily meals and other necessities. In this scenario, the government couldn't implement online-based teaching-learning in all educational institutions. Along with other reasons poverty, lack of devices and digital literacy, and lack of proper teacher's training were the main reasons behind not being able to implement distance teaching. Many private educational institutions have initiated online teaching-learning methods to continue the studies of their students. The main sufferers were the students from government primary schools, low-cost NGOs and private schools and schools in remote areas. In this context, the research explores the practices of distance teaching-learning in an NGO school that was in operation from the beginning of the pandemic. Most of the students of this school are from very underprivileged backgrounds, and more than 80% of them had no access to smartphones. Through the research questions the study finds how this low-cost NGO school managed to continue distance teaching-learning despite the lack of trained teachers, device unavailability for the students and no preparation of the school. Following a qualitative research approach the study investigates the practice of distance teaching-learning from both the teachers' and students' perspective. The findings of the research show that despite having many constraints, the school continued distance teaching-learning through phone calls, assignments, oral examination and building proper guidelines. Moreover, all the teachers have learnt and developed many skills throughout the process which helped them to implement new initiatives. The study results create a new way to think alternative ways of providing education to all in any unexpected situation like the pandemic. Finally, the study suggests giving importance to the teachers and students to achieve digital literacy, and the government to provide free internet to all educational institutions.

Keywords: Distance teaching-learning; NGO School; COVID-19 pandemic, Underprivileged students; Dhaka city

Dedication

The thesis is dedicated to my beloved parents for their affection and support throughout the journey

Acknowledgement

I am thankful to Almighty Allah for giving me the opportunity and strength to complete this study. My heartful gratitude to my parents and teachers, who always inspired me and still inspiring me to achieve more. It is my pleasure to thank Dr. Md Tariqul Islam for his insightful guidance from the very beginning of the thesis to till date. A big thanks to my research participants, without whom it would not be possible to complete this research. Also, thanks to Rasheda Nasrin apa for her support to collect data.

.

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms

GoB   Government of Bangladesh

LCPS   Low-Cost Primary Schools

WHO   World Health Organization

MoE   Ministry of Education

NGO   Non-Government Organization

FFE   Food for Education

PESP   Primary Education Stipend Program

IT   Information Technology

UNICEF   United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Chapter 1

Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

COVID-19 was declared as a global public health emergency of international concern on 30th January 2020 and as a pandemic on 11th March 2020 by World Health Organization (WHO) (WHO, 2020). Bangladesh confirmed the first cases of COVID-19 on March 8, 2019 and since then it has had a huge impact on every sector of daily life. "COVID-19 has disrupted education systems around the world, pushing the majority of children temporarily out of school. With close to 40 million children enrolled in school, Bangladesh is among the countries most affected by a complete shutdown" (Barua, 2020). Unlike many other sectors, Government of Bangladesh decided to keep all the schools shut to mitigate the chance of spreading the virus. As WHO declares the corona virus as contagious which may spread widely/rapidly from any kind of gathering. Many developed countries initiated distance teaching-learning method to keep the learning uninterrupted. In Bangladesh, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has encouraged the teachers to conduct distance classes which mainly focused on higher level of education in the country. Besides this, for school and college going students Ministry of Education has started telecasting distant learning program. Distance learning means any form of remote education where teachers and students aren't always physically present in the classroom. In some cases, teacher is present only on occasion or for selected tasks (Keegan, 1980). Distance teaching-learning also means correspondence courses in which students communicate with their teachers or schools through phone call or email. Recently distance education has moved to online education to include various range of systems and opportunities where students can get connected from different devices (Keegan, 1980). There are various forms of distance learning systems available like computer based, assignment based, open schedule, fixed schedule, learning through television and radio etc. Connecting to this study here I have selected some features of distance teaching-learning, which are; learning through phone calls, teacher's presence for selected purpose, online learning and learning through available content or video.

Many obstacles arose when some universities initiated distance teaching. Author Alaul Alam discussed the obstacles in his paper. Students were struggling to adapt with the trend as it was their first experience. Switching from traditional classroom to computer-based learning in a virtual platform made the learning difficult for students. Getting feasible internet connection

at a reasonable price was another big challenge of distance classes. Due to the shutdown most of the students were staying home in different areas of the country and even now internet facilities are hardly found in rural areas. Students use mobile internet which is expensive and interrupts the online connectivity due to poor signal. Poor literacy on handling computer and smart phone was another challenge faced by students (Alam 2020). Except telecasting distant learning program Government has not announced any distance teaching-learning or assignment-based learning for primary level students in the country (Alam 2020). In Bangladeshi primary level, there are students from different socio-economic backgrounds. Students from marginalized backgrounds and hilly area have lack of access to modern device like laptop, smartphone. Most of them hardly even have the ability to afford internet for classes. Thus, considering all the issues government hasn't announced distance teaching for primary students officially but many private and NGO schools are practicing this method to continue providing education to their students. As there is no surety of how long the pandemic will continue or till when schools will remain shut, the government needed to take measures to connect students with regular education. If policy makers and respective officials represent the practice of distance teaching in different kind of schools, then as a whole the government can take steps to make it possible for all over the country. (Sir, please look at the red parts, which I did rephrase here, hope it is fine) As there was no surety of how long the pandemic will continue and till when the school will remain close, it was very necessary to connect students with education. By analyzing and doing research about the practice of distance teaching-learning in different NGO and private schools, the government and policy makers of Bangladesh can think of this kind of initiatives in any emergency situations.

1.2 Research Topic

Research Topic: Distance teaching-learning

Research Title: Practices of distance teaching-learning during COVID-19 pandemic in one NGO school in Dhaka

My working experience with a school for underprivileged children which is practicing distance teaching-learning in this pandemic made me interested to work on this topic. To know more about how the school is adapting this in spite of having no IT training, no devices and poor financial backgrounds.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

Students had experienced sudden closure of educational institution since the beginning of the pandemic. With close to 40 million children enrolled in school, Bangladesh is among the countries most affected by a complete shutdown (Efat, Ashraful, Shahanul. 2020). Different mode and strategies of learning by different countries have resulted in an almost balanced continuation of the learning process. But it has not been fruitful for all levels of students and the process also indicates the growing divides between the rich and poor receiving education through online platforms (Alaul, 2020). According to a report by UNICEF (2020), in South Asia, almost 430 million children are affected by school closures and are at risk of dropping out of the education system due to the economic impact on their families. Unequal access to education materials and economic impact on family's income are acting as main barriers behind unsuccessful implementation of distance learning. All these situations raised in this pandemic need emergency solution. Over the years, Bangladesh has achieved a lot in education sector like mitigating gender gap and ensuring 100% compulsory primary education (Efat, Ashraful, Shahanul. 2020). If the issues raised in pandemic are not addressed properly, the sudden countrywide shut down of educational institutions might cause the hindrance of these achievements.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the steps the school has taken to initiate and continue distance teaching-learning during COVID-19 situation?

2. How is the professional development of the teachers addressed for distance teaching learning?

3. How do the teachers implement distance teaching learning during COVID 19 situation?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

The Government of Bangladesh is working hard to make every sector digitized but primary education sector in Bangladesh is lagging behind a lot in terms of using technology in teaching-learning method. From my direct involvement with a school, I have noticed it requires many techniques and a lot of effort to keep the students engaged with classroom activities. Making them concentrate on studies, teachers' struggle to use internet, and guardian's struggle to pay small tuition fees or buy pen and paper are some of the challenges.

Unlike this school and many other developing countries, most children in Bangladesh do not have internet access and primary level teachers have no proper training to conduct distance classes. From this study I would like to know if teachers are capable enough to maintain distance teaching-learning method and what strategies they are following to keep the students engaged with learning. As the students are from underprivileged background, I will look at whether they are able to afford device and internet for education and if not, what alternatives they are following. Moreover, this study also intends to see how the practice of distance teaching-learning process works in an underprivileged school where 90% students live under the poverty line. Besides looking for the practices of distance teaching this research will also collect information from secondary sources to analyze the practice of distance-teaching learning process in Bangladesh.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The world has changed a lot during the COVID-19 pandemic period and Bangladesh is no exception from that. To stop the outbreak of pandemic, social and physical distance has been maintained strictly which caused the shutdown of schools and any kind of educational institution. Previously many studies have been done to see the impact of internet learning, online courses and distance learning. Bangladesh government has initiated distance learning program through national TV channel where students learn without any direct supervision. Government primary schools have not taken any official steps to continue distance teaching-learning process because of many challenges like IT training, no device or internet. Some private schools and NGO schools are practicing this distance teaching which is very new for Bangladeshi primary education sector. This research title is based on the question how teachers and students are practicing the distance teaching and what kind of outcome it brings to students' learning. Hence through this research I find how distance teaching-learning practices are working from both teachers' and students' perspective. Moreover, I discuss the direct practice of a school from Bangladesh's perspective where students are from underprivileged backgrounds. Thus, I illustrate the challenges and scopes to implement distance learning in primary level. Moreover, policy makers and stakeholders working in the implementation level will be able to see a clear picture of distance learning from both teachers' and students' perspectives and they can take required initiatives based on the findings of the study. Most importantly, when the schools will get back to normal situation, many schools might implement blended teaching-learning incorporating distance teaching method considering the findings of the study.

Chapter 2
Literature Review

In this chapter, I present discussions from different books, articles and documents which I reviewed to get a clear picture of my research topic. I studied different papers from Bangladesh and other country perspective about the practice of distance teaching-learning during pandemic. My main concern was to find out how different schools are continuing distance teaching-learning with lack of training, devices, poverty issues and many other challenges. I organize my literature review under the following categories: 1) distance teaching-learning practice during pandemic, 2) distance teaching-learning practices in underprivileged school and 3) distance teaching and social interaction 4) teacher's professional development for distance teaching-learning.

2.1 Distance Teaching Practice during Pandemic

Like many other areas of our usual life, COVID-19 pandemic has had serious impact on students, teachers and educational institutions around the globe. According to UNESCO (2020), about 1.5 billion students and youth around the world were affected by school and university closures due to the global outbreak of coronavirus. To mitigate the gap of education caused by pandemic, many countries introduced distance teaching-learning.

According to a report published by UNICEF (2020), Over one billion children are at risk of falling behind due to worldwide school closures. Whereas, over 90% of the countries adopted digital remote learning, and around 463 million students worldwide have been cut off from the formal education system. Bangladesh is also one of the countries which implemented complete shutdown and kept educational institution closed since March 16th 2020. As educational institutions were closed from the beginning and government did not implement distance teaching-learning, many students remained away from formal education and examination. Students, parents, teachers and all the associated concerned parties profusely worried as two of the most important public examination arrangements stopped for uncertain period (The Financial Express, 2020). No academic activity, late exam and longtime school closure created an unexpected situation for students. In Bangladesh, governments' main response for primary level students was through TV-based learning. A study by The World Bank showed that around 55 percent of Grade 9 stipend recipients do not have access to TVs. Even among those who have access, only 43 percent of children watch TV learning program carefully (The World Bank, 2021). Though government did not take any action to implement

distance teaching other than TV based learning, many private and NGO schools, initiated distance teaching-learning.

Moving from traditional way of teaching to distance learning cannot happen overnight, rather it is linked to various obstacles and challenges in this pandemic situation. (Crawford, Butler-Henderson, Rudolph, & Glowatz, 2020). However, because nobody knows when this pandemic will disappear fully, many educational institutions across the globe decided to use the already available technical resources to create distance learning material for students of all academic fields (Kaur, 2020).

2.2 Distance Teaching-Learning Practice in Underprivileged Schools

From the beginning of school closure, many authors and policy makers talked about the effectiveness of distance teaching-learning. As Bangladesh is not digitally advanced and most people live here below poverty line, there was a concern about the proper operation of distance teaching-learning. According to research conducted in Pakistan, "distance learning can be effective in digitally advanced countries which is why in Pakistan it is ineffective. In Pakistan, a significant deal of learning and teaching, as well as administrative activities of academic institutions are handled manually" (Muhammad, Kainat 2020, 46). Lack of access to fast, affordable and reliable internet connections hinders the process of distance learning especially for those who are living in rural as well as marginalized communities of Pakistan (Muhammad, Kainat 2020). In Bangladesh also students from rural area, underprivileged background and hilly area struggle to arrange affordable device and buy internet for education purpose. Along with this author also mentioned students who access the internet through smartphones are unable to take advantage of online learning because a significant amount of online content is not accessible via smartphones (Muhammad, Kainat 2020).

According to a Nigerian teacher whose view was presented in a report by Human Rights Watch mentioned that,

> A lot of these problems that we are facing with distance learning are problems that we deal with every day in the classroom: lack of internet at home, lack of resources, lack of parent support at home, chaos at home, lack of a schedule at home, uncertainty around food, uncertainty around housing (Human Rights Watch, 2021, 3).

In Bangladesh also students and teachers face these kinds of obstacles to cope up with distance learning process. The report also mentioned that historically under-resourced schools particularly struggled to reach their students across digital divides. There are students who

already faced greater obstacles in learning and now this digital divide is putting them in a risk of further discrimination (Human Rights Watch, 2021).

India also had the same scenario where underprivileged students were out of education since the lockdown started because of pandemic. An Indian educator Sharma discussed that due to COVID-19 pandemic, the schools are now running online classes all over India but a large section of underprivileged children is devoid of resources that are minimum required for online classes (Muhammad, Kainat 2020). Whether it is Bangladesh, India, Pakistan or Nigeria, there are some common problems like lack of resources, affordable internet connection and impact on income. All these challenges are depriving underprivileged students from receiving minimum education during pandemic.

UNICEF Bangladesh is working with the Government of Bangladesh to make the distance learning-learning more effective so that maximum numbers of students get the benefits from this. UNICEF has also helped produce guides to assist teachers that are taking remote classes. UNICEF (2020) chief of education Nor Shirin and Md. Mokhtar mentioned "we want to ensure that remote learning is an option for as many children as possible during the COVID-19 crisis,". They also said, "equity of education is at the heart of our thinking, which is why lessons taught over the TV are already being complemented via mobile phones and the radio". Along with this Chief of Education Md. Mokhtar said "it's important that less privileged children don't lose out. We urgently need to act now to give them alternative ways to learn and to help them rebuild routines" (UNICEF 2020). In this paper UNICEF officials talked about the urgency of implementing distance learning and making it available all over the Bangladesh.

2.3 Distance Teaching and Social Interaction

Sometimes remote learning is a challenge for dedicated students because there is less scope for social interaction on television and online. Conventional classroom socialization is one of the major missing in distance teaching-learning, which is very important for students' growth. In distance learning students never see their fellow students in person as they communicate their fellows through digital media. Thus, real time sharing of knowledge, ideas and information are partially missing from the digital world (Kaur, 2020). For growth and learning, children and young students need social interaction-based activities and educational institution is one of the best medium for students' socialization. This will be very hard to tackle if underprivileged students and young adults remain out of education for a long time as

they are mostly impacted by school's suspension (McCarthy, 2020). Though short-term school closure as a consequence of emergencies is not new, but this uncertain shutdown around the globe made everyone concerned about their children's education.

Most of the parents are worried about children's socio emotional development in remote learning. They think, long time school closure can inflict psychological distress and misery among kids at various level. According to research, "children learn much more than reading and math when they attend school in person; they also learn critical social and emotional skills they'll carry into adulthood" (Maryville Online, 2021) (online blog in text citation will be like this). The switch to distance education can affect children differently along with their educational performance. Distance education does not offer the same social benefits that children receive when interacting with peers or teachers. Many parents are seeing the negative impacts of school disruptions and switch to remote learning. (Maryville Online, 2021) Parents wonder about the impacts on the social and emotional developments as they feel children might get disengaged, isolated and unmotivated.

2.4 Teachers' Professional Development for Distance Teaching-Learning

Ensuring professional development of teachers for remote teaching-learning became one of the most discussed topics since the pandemic has started. Along with necessary resources, teacher need some skills to conduct distance teaching-learning. As the pandemic has started without any prior notice, teachers did not receive any training rather they grew throughout the process. According to an educator, "[t]he scramble to implement remote learning in March left many educators with no option but to learn, apply and teach with unfamiliar virtual tools" (Belastock, 2020). The sudden closure during COVID-19 helped many educators learn and navigate remote teaching-learning. But some educators think the forefront of implementing successful remote teaching-learning depends on the commitment of the entire school community. School community must ensure to provide high quality, effective and engaging content and instruction for students (Belastock, 2020). Being able to produce high quality and engaging lesson plan is a must needed skill which teachers learn through different training and courses. According to Tina Morris, who is a teacher, discussed her thoughts about remote learning in an article. She said "you sort of have to redo all of the curriculum so you can teach it online, because a lot of it was dependent on you being there and leading the students through certain things" (Gorey, 2021). These literature shows along with technological skills, quality content and lesson planning skill are much important for both remote learning and face to face learning.

Another most important issue to reinforce remote learning is families' engagement and their communication with teachers. According to an article published by OECD, "education systems should aim to strengthen engagement between schools and parents in order to improve information and guidance to parents" (OECD, 2020, 2). Authors think strengthening communication with students will be an effective practice to support children's learning. In many countries government and different NGOs took initiatives to provide quick training to teachers on distance teaching-learning. Like many countries in the world Zimbabwean educational institutions were shut since the beginning of the pandemic. And most of the public schools and schools in rural areas were not able to offer online teaching. Considering the scenario UNESCO (2020) initiated 'Rapid Teachers Training on Open, Distance and Online learning'. The training was structured in three modules which were; introducing teachers to basic IT concept, teaching digital literacy and planning and developing resources for remote learning (UNESCO 2020). This training helped many teachers to gain new skills and helped under resourced schools to continue distance teaching-learning.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This research is based on primary data sources. I have collected data from one specific school as the school is practicing distance teaching during COVID-19 pandemic situation. I have used qualitative methods for this research to answer questions about experience, meaning and perspective from the standpoint of participant. As I tried to analyze the details of how an underprivileged school is practicing distance learning during COVID-19 pandemic, I needed to collect the elaborate thought, hear experiences and opinions of the participants. I have chosen qualitative research method because of its ability to provide complex textual description of how people experience a given research issue. It provides information about the 'human' side of an issue (Mack *et al*., 2005). Qualitative research techniques include 'small group discussions', 'semi structured interview', 'in-depth interview' and 'analysis of texts and documents' (Hammarberg, Kirkman and de Lacey, 2016). The study conducted both interview and group interview which falls under the criteria of qualitative research. Qualitative approach helped to get detail picture of the practices of distance teaching-learning.

3.2 Research Site

I have collected the primary data of this research from one NGO school in Dhaka. Since its inception in 2004, the school is working tirelessly to provide quality education to the underprivileged students of the community. All the students of that school are from very poor economic background. With the help of Agami Education Foundation and other donors, the school manages free books, notebooks and other necessary equipment for the students. The school's initiatives and activities during COVID-19 pandemic connects with the main concern of this research; which is practices of distance teaching-learning having no training, no devices and other challenges. Another reason to choose the school is my easy accessibility.

3.3 Research Participants

Participants of this research are both students and teachers from selected school as I wanted to know their experiences of distance teaching-learning. Students are from grade 3 to grade 5 and their ages are in between 8 to 13. I have collected interviews from 5 teachers. Among

them 2 of them are senior teachers who have been serving in this school more than 10 years and one of them is assistant head teacher. They both have bachelor degrees and they have received many non-government trainings from different foundations. Other 2 participants have been teaching in this school as a part of their Teach for Bangladesh fellowship for 2 years. And another participant is junior teacher of that school who is continuing her bachelor degree and teaching in this school since 2019. I was supposed to take one interview from school governing body to know the reason behind initiating distance teaching-learning but because of some unavoidable issues it was not possible. The two Senior teachers helped me to get the background stories behind this initiative.

3.4 Sampling Procedure

My research intended to know the detail representation of practicing distance teaching-learning which required deep understanding from both teachers' and students' perspective. In research participants portion I have mentioned who are my target audience. I have used purposive sampling as the sampling procedure which allowed me to follow my own criteria to choose participants (Mack *et al*., 2005). As I have worked for 2 years with teachers and students of that school, I had the chance to know my participants well. I have purposively selected participants who are more fluent and able to share their thoughts well.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

To conduct this research, I have collected data from primary sources and added some secondary sources to make connection with my findings. This research was mainly looking forward to know how distance teaching-learning method impacts students and how the selected school maintained to conduct distance learning process during pandemic without any preparation or training.

3.5.1 Individual Interviews

Individual interviews are useful for learning about the perspectives of individuals. Individual interview is such an effective qualitative method which helped me to know participants' feelings, opinion and experience (Mack *et al*., 2005). Individual interviews are usually face to face conversation between one participant and one interviewee. But phone conversation and interviewing more than one participant also qualify as individual interview (Mack *et al*., 2005). Due to COVID-19 situation I have taken interview over phone. As the purpose of interview was to collect detailed data from the field, so one of the main data collection tools

of my research was individual interview. I have interviewed five teachers who were directly involved with distance teaching-learning. I recorded the conversation of the interviews in mobile phone with the permission of the participants. Later I have transcribed the collected data as soon as possible. These in-depth interviews engaged me in one-to-one discussion through interview guide and helped me to properly understand the participant's view on how distance learning is helping them to understand particular problem or how they communicate.

3.5.2 The Group Interviews

I have used 'the group interview' method to collect data from students. Group interview is another important tool of qualitative research which helped me to take elaborate interview from several individuals. Generally, in group interview, a group of people focuses on given issue or topic (Anderson, 1990). Group interview method is very suitable for collecting data from children, youths and parents. It allows them to tell their stories, express their opinions and even draw pictures without having to follow strict sequence of question (Adler, Salanterä and Zumstein-Shaha, 2019). This method helped me to understand the changes in the participants' lives. There are some issues which need to be addressed when preparing for group discussion. The ideal number of participants per group interview can be 6 to 9 people which need to make sure before arranging the interview (Adler, et. al 2019). I have selected my participants and prepared my interview guide and confirmed place and time beforehand to avoid any misunderstanding. I arranged one group interview with 8 students who were active participants of distance teaching-learning. I played a role as a moderator and took note by myself. Firstly, I introduced myself to the group and tried to create a friendly environment so that participants can share their opinion in group without hesitation.

3.6 My Role as a Researcher

I have been a teacher of the school for 2 years which I have selected for my research. During my group and individual interviews, I tried my best to be mindful. I made sure that as a researcher I should not impose thoughts from my experience rather listen carefully even though I know the process or answer.

3.7 Data Analysis

For data analysis, at first, I tried to get familiar with the data and revisit my research question/objectives to make connection with the findings. Then I identified broad concepts, quotation, behavior or phrases which are mentioned by the participants. Finally, I

summarized the data based on the need of my research. To do that I used content analysis method. Qualitative content analysis is one of the several qualitative methods available for analyzing data and interpreting the meaning. (Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). Content analysis method helped me to find out the hidden meaning of every word, themes and text. So, I used this process for data analysis to bring out the best outcome of my research.

3.8 Ethical Issues and Concerns

I have done this research with proper ethics and concern and made sure my biases do not impact the findings of this research. After deciding to work in the selected school, I have shared my research interest and what kind of information it will require with the founding body of the school. After receiving permission and choosing my participants, I took informed consent from the participants explaining my research (Mack *et al*., 2005). I made sure that my participants understand what it means to participate in a particular study so they can decide consciously whether they want to participate or not. As this research required group interview with children aged 10 to 14, I explained and presented questionnaire with head teacher. I took his consent as the research was about teaching-learning in their school. I also maintained proper confidentiality of my participants throughout the research. Their school's name and participant's name were not mentioned anywhere. In the paper I have used different pseudo name for each participant for my own understanding.

I have mentioned earlier that I have been a teacher of the selected school for two years. My experience of working with them helped me to choose participants and get the permission easily but at the same time it arose many biases in me. As I was also involved with the distance teaching-learning, sometimes I felt like suggesting my participants what to talk. Knowing details about the distance-teaching learning process of that school also sometimes motivated me to influence the participants. But I have been very determined to be professional and listen to them without putting my own thoughts. While writing the findings part, I also made sure to write only what my participants shared.

3.9 Credibility and Rigor

To conduct this research, I have taken data from primary sources and used those to build a clear explanation of themes. I have prepared interview guide for both teachers and students. The tool I developed also indicated the same theme and data was automatically triangulated around similar themes. To write my literature review, I have done research on my selected topic from many countries' perspective. I have developed proper research methodology after

reviewing many papers with the guidance of my supervisor. Another important thing is, I have selected a person who reviewed and provided feedback on my research. Many scholars believe that involving a reviewer beyond the researcher adds validity to the study (Anderson, 1990).

Before conducting the research, I have successfully completed two higher lever research course which are; Research methodology 1 and Research Methodology 2. These courses were mandatory to finish MEd degree in BRAC University. Before going to the field for data collection, I have worked on feedback given by my supervisors and got official approval from faculty members. I have conducted my undergraduate thesis and went through same procedures. Also, I have worked on two summer research projects during my bachelor studies. All these previous experiences helped me to do better data collection, analysis, interpretation, tools development and other research activities.

3.10 Limitations of the study

My research is about the distance-teaching learning practice during COVID-19 and I have collected all the data during pandemic. I had some challenges while choosing school. All the educational institutions were shut from the beginning of the pandemic and there were very few schools which continued distance teaching-learning. Once I have selected the school, I was worried about how to collect data in this situation. My research required data from both teachers and students and I was able to take interviews of teachers over the phone. As I wanted to take group interview from students, I had to go through lots of process to select place and time. The school was closed and taking interview at students' home or any other place was risky as they are below 18 and I cannot invite them anywhere. Later I have talked with the school governing body and the head teacher. They managed to open one classroom for me and provided one teacher for students' and my safety. Besides this, my research topic is a vast issue and I wanted to look at the distance teaching-learning practice of at least 2 to 3 schools. But because of accessibility, I could not manage to collect data from more than one school. However, I have overcome these challenges by focusing on elaborate thoughts on one school. While writing literature review, it was hard to find secondary sources to support my argument from Bangladesh's perspective. To recover this, I have collected sources from other countries' perspectives.

Chapter 4

Results

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I have discussed the results about the teaching-learning practices during the COVID-19 pandemic in one NGO school in Dhaka. In total, I took five interviews from teachers and a group interview with eight students. After an in-depth analysis of collected data, I have found three major themes that helped me get the answer to my research questions. My three primary themes are: initiative of distance teaching-learning, teacher's professional development and implementation of distance teaching-learning. Under each primary theme, there are some sub-themes that I discuss in this chapter in detail.

4.2 Initiatives of distance teaching-learning

I have selected an NGO school for my research where most of the students are from underprivileged socio-economic background. Due to the lockdown during the pandemic, their earnings got impacted severely, and most of them lost their jobs. In this scenario, where students and their families were going through these challenges, it was not easy for the school to initiate distance teaching-learning. Still, the school authority decided to continue distance teaching-learning just one week after the lockdown has started on March 16 2021. The founding member of the school Professor Nashida Anam had a meeting with all the teachers to discuss how they can connect with students and involve them in their studies. After several discussions, the school decides to start distance teaching-learning from the beginning of the pandemic. In this section, I discuss the factors and strategies that worked for the school to initiate distance teaching-learning.

To keep students connected: One of the main reasons the school has initiated distance learning is to keep students in touch. Most of the parents lost their job in the pandemic, and they were shifting to the village. One of the teachers Ms. Faria mentioned the reason in her interview. According to her,

> In our school, kids are from a very poor economic background, and they only study the time they spend inside the school. Most of them hardly sit for studies at home as their parents are not careful enough about their education. In this case, if we leave these kids for such a long time with no touch, we have a high chance of not getting them back, and this is one of the main reasons we initiated distance teaching-learning.

The other two teachers also had the same concern and shared how difficult it was for them to connect with students. In the beginning, they did not have the phone number of all students. Teachers took help from few students to get other's numbers as they live in a close area, and sometimes, they had to visit home nearby. These collaborative steps helped them collect 100% of students' contact numbers of their respective classes.

Communication through food distribution: Once teachers from each class collected students' contact numbers, they faced challenges communicating with their students. In other words, guardians were not supportive enough to make sure the connection between their child and teacher. Some guardians were not even interested in talking about their kid's education instead; they used to share how much sufferings they were going through and how they lost their job. However, considering the student's families scenario during the pandemic, the school community decided to distribute food among students, and they were working with donors to manage that. In school meetings, teachers bring guardians' apathy to communicate and their struggle to continue education. In this situation, teachers, founding members and the management committee decided to connect with studies and food distribution to make the communication more effective and aware guardians. They have decided to distribute food package once a month with some conditions. Students will get a monthly food package only if they maintain proper communication with teachers and complete monthly assignments. After completing each phase of learning in a month, students will be supposed to give verbal and written examinations and collect their food packages from school in the given time. Ms Diba, a senior teacher of the school, mentioned the strategy in her interview,

> Once we let them knew about the monthly food distribution policy, it became easier for us to communicate and continue teaching-learning. Sometimes guardians themselves used to call us to inform updates or if students had any challenges. Basically, they are helpless and losing job put them in miserable condition. Our little contribution helped them, and we were also able to continue working on our purpose.

This is how connecting food distribution with learning, teachers could start working on distance teaching-learning, and it was a great initiative. In this way, students were benefited in two ways by having food and being able to keep in touch with their studies.

4.3 Professional development of teachers

As lockdown started on March 16, 2020, without any notice, teachers had no chance to work on their professional development to cope with distance teaching-learning. According to a

survey done by grade three and four teachers, 80% of the students had no smartphone at their home. For this reason, teachers could not take a direct online class with all students rather, they supported calling each student separately. For students who had a smartphone, the teacher supported them through zoom or imo call. Sometimes students shared their phone with nearby fellow friends, which helped the teacher to reach more students but not 100%. To prepare a worksheet, take a class through phone calls, attend office meeting and make questions, teachers needed professional support which was ensured throughout the process. In this section, I discuss how the school worked to ensure teachers' professional development during pandemic for distance teaching-learning.

Technological skills: Teachers of the school were always comfortable in face-to-face teaching and communicating. They had all the meetings on the school premises. After lockdown school authority decided to conduct online meetings and informed teaches to download necessary application in their phone like zoom/google meet. Using different apps for online meeting, sharing work updates in online was a very new experience for the teachers that developed their technological skills. According to a senior teacher Ms. Diba,

> I did not have Facebook account earlier, but after lockdown we had to post everyday update on school's messenger group and it helped my typing skills. Though we did not take online class with large number of students, but we had regular meeting with teachers and authority through zoom call or meet. Now I know how to conduct a meeting and class in online.

Other teachers also had a similar experience of using new technologies. In the beginning, they struggled a lot and made mistakes but the senior founding member whom teachers call 'Boro Apa', helped them a lot and asked young teachers, who are more expert to use technology, to help senior teachers. In collaboration with each other, teachers developed their technological skills through a continuous learning process.

Training: Once the school started distance teaching-learning practice, teachers felt that they need to learn many things. To teach students effectively from a distance, without the help of smartphone, teachers need to know how to prepare the effective worksheet and other teaching-learning materials. Some teachers decided to make video contents so that students without a smartphone can take help from their neighbors or relatives for certain times and watch the lessons. These new initiatives required proper trainings which they received from Agami Education Foundation and A2i (Access to Information). Regarding training Ms Inaya,

a senior teacher of the school, said in her interview that "we learned from the training how to use different apps, conduct online classes and prepare worksheets. I have some online videos which help my students to learn from a distance. This training developed our digital literacy". From the training, teachers learned how to make video content, basic methods and techniques of conducting online class, making questions for oral exam and preparing useful worksheets. All the training held online and helped teachers to enhance their professional skills for conducting online classes. Through different pieces of training, programs and assisting each other teachers enhanced their professional development.

Skills to continue after lockdown: Teachers developed some valuable skills during distance teaching-learning which can help them in face-to-face classes after lockdown. Besides the teacher, some students also developed their digital literacy. Every year during Ramadan, the school remains close for more than a month. Both teachers and students can apply their distance teaching-learning during Ramadan or in any other long vacation. According to Ms. Inaya, "I will continue uploading videos even after lockdown. This will help my students get the lesson. Making an attractive worksheet will also make the class interesting". In this regard, another teacher Ms. Najifa mentioned,

> Students achieved digital literacy. Very few students, but they did. I believe if other students also got the internet access, they could do that too. Even when we're back to new normal we can continue distance teaching-learning. In case of anyone is sick. In case of anyone is far away. Remote learning is a great thing.

Other teachers also shared the same opinions about teaching student digital literacy. Teachers are now confident to compose question papers on their own, use colorful photos to design lessons and make engaging worksheets for students' learning.

4.4 Implementation of distance teaching-learning

At the beginning of lockdown, teachers and school authorities thought to keep the distance teaching-learning only in the oral version. The steps were, firstly, the teacher will call every student in a given time and assign them particular lessons to read. Secondly, students will finish their assigned chapter in a week and share their learning with teachers. In the meantime, if students face problem in understanding, they could call teachers and clarify their problems. After following these steps for one month, the teacher noticed only oral examination and oral teaching through phone calls are not helping students. In the teachers' meeting, both the school authority and teachers decided to start preparing the worksheet and

send it to students. Teachers collaborated distance learning with food distribution which I have mentioned earlier. In this process, students would come to school every first week of the month and collect their food package, worksheet and notebook. Some students moved to their village and for them, the teacher sent soft copies in their neighbor's or relative's phone, but they were not able to collect food. One month later, before taking their next food package, students had to submit their completed worksheet. Though the school was close, teachers had roaster duty in the school for official work. Teachers asked students to call and come individually to school if they had a problem in understanding lessons. In this section, I discuss several aspects that the school followed to implement distance teaching-learning during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Online classroom and Office hour: I have mentioned earlier, the students from my selected school are from very underprivileged backgrounds. Their situation is reflected in a survey conducted by the teachers at the beginning of the pandemic before starting distance learning. In that survey, teachers found that 80% of the students do not have smartphone or internet available in their home. Considering the situation of large number of students, school authority could not conduct fully online teaching-learning rather, they started distance teaching-learning. In previous sections I have discussed how the teachers-initiated distance-teaching learning on a monthly basis by providing assignments and taking exams on specific chapters at the end of each month. Students whose parents had a smartphone, got the opportunity to learn from their teacher through zoom or imo class. As most of the guardians are working parents and remain outside home for a long time, teachers used to set a particular time for online class discussing with guardians who have smartphones. Except for weekends, most of the classes were usually conducted after evening as it was the common time when a large number of students could use phone in the presence of their parents. In the online class, teachers discussed assigned chapters given to students. Grade five student Munim mentioned in the group interview that

> Our teacher made the lesson clear to us in zoom classes. Whenever I had a problem in math or understanding a particular lesson in English, I used to call or text my teacher. Besides class, she gave me separate time to teach and I sent the picture of my writing, and she gave me feedback.

Teachers also mentioned that they provided support to students besides specific class hours.

Teachers and school authority were concerned about the large number of students who had no smartphone available at home. It was hard for both teachers and students to teach and learn a new chapter of Math or any other subject just in the voice phone call. Shanta, grade four student, said that she was struggling to understand a chapter from science book. For this reason, she called her teacher, and the teacher made it easy for her to understand. However, while doing geometry for her assignment, it was tough to comprehend from a phone call. The statement of Shanta is echoed in the voice of many other students. From the second month of starting distance teaching-learning, the school authority decided to bring teachers in the school on a rotation basis so that some students can visit to teacher to make their lessons clearer. To visit the school, students had to take prior appointment with the teacher through a phone call, and they had to maintain basic health precautions like wearing masks and maintaining social distance. Only 2 to 3 students were allowed to visit simultaneously so that both the teacher and students can ensure social distancing.

Material supports from school: School provided all kinds of reading learning material support to students and teachers. Students needed exam paper and notebook to complete their work, which the school provided every month. Besides, some teachers also prepared reading materials on their own to make the lesson understanding. As I have mentioned earlier large number of students could not participate in an online class because of not having smartphone. Still, teachers tried to support students through online teaching who have a smartphone available at home. However, the number of students who have smartphone at home was four to five students from one class. Some students lived in a very close neighborhood; teachers asked them to collect material from their classmate. According to Ms. Parama,

> Materials I made by myself, I showed kids in video calling, sent pictures, sent videos and asked them to review it, to give their comments, analyze them. I used to send them some YouTube video's and asked them later what they learnt. I made some PowerPoint presentations and showed them and of course asked if they get it and encouraged them to question.

In this way, teachers could not cover 100%, but few students got the services. For other students, the teacher used direct phone call to share learning. Earlier I have discussed that students without smartphones had the opportunity to visit teachers in the school by taking appointment. As most students could not reach through online, visiting teachers during specific office hours helped students collect necessary materials.

Flexibility in assessments: Students participated in monthly exams sitting at their home. Teachers took both written and oral examination to assess their actual learning. Some teachers were concerned about the integrity of the assessment, and for this reason, they tried to involve parents in this assessment procedure. Ms Nafiza said,

> The integrity of the assessment was hampered. I could hear a third person beside my students who would actually tell them the answers. In cases like this I talked to the parent and made them understand about the importance of learning by themselves to them. If they were rightly communicated from before, maybe this won't have happened.

Once students submitted their answer scripts and participated in oral exams, teachers found that some students answered copying from the book rather than learning the lesson. When the teachers found issues like these, they would call the students and ask them to sit for the exam again. However, all the teachers agreed that they were flexible while checking scripts as students are not getting face-to- face class and struggling with many issues at home while participating in online and/or distance learning. According to Ms. Diba, "I understood some of my students took help from books, and some hardly answered correctly. Yet I tried to motivate each of them to write on their own and appreciate if they got very few right answers". Teachers also employed oral exams to assess whether students learned their assigned lessons properly or not. If any student failed to answer, teachers gave several chances to participate in the exam based on the feedback provided to them.

Challenges for lack of devices: All five teachers in the interview and all eight students in the group interview mentioned how challenging it was for them to continue distance teaching-learning within the limitations related to devices. Students had difficulties understanding over phone and visiting teachers was not always feasible for them due to lockdown. One student from grade 4 mentioned that "if I had a video call system like some of my friends, I could understand the lessons more easily, especially Mathematics". More than any other subjects, students struggled in Mathematics, and for that, they took help from their siblings or relatives who study in school or college. According to Ms. Parama,

> First and foremost, very few of my students had access to the internet or smartphone. It was difficult to gather all the students and teach them at a time. I had to teach them one by one by calling them separately. In that case, it was not possible for me to reach

out to 100% students because they didn't have internet access. I could only reach 10% of my students through the internet.

Teacher of the school going through some common and some different experiences in terms of conducting distance teaching. One of the common experiences of the teachers is that they had to struggle to reach students through phone calls as student's family has only one phone and most of the time parents used to stay at work while the teacher calls them. Ms. Inaya mentioned "I had to call several times and sometimes even after 11 pm as father came home late". Students took help from their neighbor or fellow friends, but it was not feasible for them constantly as people had their timing and business.

Missing Joy factor: Distance teaching learning helped students get connect with studies, but all students mentioned in their discussion were missing classroom interaction and fun. Besides engaging in education, teachers made guardians and students aware of staying inside home and maintaining social distance to get rid of the Coronavirus. Being in the house for a long time caused students to miss school more. Arif, a grade three student mentioned, "our teacher used to give us 5 minutes fun time after finishing particular work, we had lots of fun in the school and learning was easy. I couldn't see or talk to my friends for a long time, and that's why I don't like distance teaching-learning". Though teachers and authorities made lots of effort to keep students engaged in studies, they surely missed the school's fun environment.

4.5 Conclusion

My analysis of data presented in this chapter shows how the life of a particular group has become struggling during COVID-19 pandemic. Like other sectors of usual life, education of our students had suffered a lot due to complete shutdown and school closure since the beginning of pandemic. The scenario of my research school represents the reality of under resourced school and underprivileged students. Many private and English medium schools-initiated distance teaching-learning during pandemic. But a large number of primary level students are kept away from education as no such initiative were taken for them. Teachers and governing body from my research site started distance teaching-learning to keep students engaged in education. Both students and teachers had lack of resources, the teachers had no training to conduct distance class and faced many other challenges. Yet they initiated distance teaching learning and kept growing through the process. All these findings prove that with proper willingness and hard work we can make things possible. This initiative can be an

example of many other schools which are under resourced and could not continue education during lockdown.

Chapter 5

Discussion and Conclusion

5.1 Discussion

My research focuses on the distance teaching-learning practices of one NGO school in Dhaka during the COVID-19 pandemics. In this chapter, I discuss the results of my study that I presented in Chapter 4 through the analysis of primary data. In doing so, I consider and argue with the relevant literature of relevant field.

'Food' to keep connected

My selected school teachers and school authority are well aware of students' socio-economic condition, which led them to initiate distance teaching-learning from the beginning of the pandemic. In the normal situation, during Ramadan, students used to get a one-month-long vacation. Teachers noticed that after every long vacation, one or two students dropped out for not being in touch, and it was hard to get them back in school. As guardians in that community are not aware of their child's education, teachers must communicate and motivate them to send back their children to school. All these factors worked like a driving force to communicate with students and keep them connected with studies during the pandemic. I find through data analysis that teachers struggled in collecting students' contact number and make their guardians realize why it is important to keep students connected with education. I also learned from the data that guardians used to complain to the teachers about their miserable situation because of the pandemic. When teachers linked food distribution to continue studies and monthly assessment, then guardians became aware of connecting their children with teachers on a daily/weekly basis. These findings are very important as it shows what factors can motivate deprived people to education. Based on the data, I argue that education is not the priority to surviving with an empty stomach. According to research done by author Mahruf C Sohel also thinks that there are interrelated links between childhood poverty and dropout rate. He discussed that children who are affected by childhood poverty are less likely to go to school and more likely to drop out from education. Even though they are in school they are more likely to be 'silently excluded' from classroom education (Sohel 2014). In 1993, linking education with one of the basic rights, the Bangladesh government took the "Food for Education" program to increase the enrollment rate of primary students (Akhter, Carlo 2020). In Bangladesh, many children from poor background do not attend school because they contribute to family's livelihood. The FFE program provides them monthly

ration which becomes a source of income for the poor family and enables a child from the family to go to school. The main objectives of food for education program are increasing school enrollment, promoting school attendance and improving educational quality. The FFE program has covered 27 percent of the country and it is found very expensive to cover other three quarter of country. Considering the feasibility, the FFE program shut in 2002 and in July 2002, Government of Bangladesh (GoB) initiated Primary Education Stipend Program (PESP). Poverty has been consistently identified as one of the major factors behind non enrollment, low attendance and poor performance of primary students. PESP aimed to overcome these challenges by providing monthly stipend to students from poor households. Alleviating poverty, increasing enrollment, attendance, primary completion rate, reduce drop out was the main objective of PESP. Eradicating child labor and empowering women was another long-term goal of PESP (Tietjen, 2003). "In order to qualify for the stipend, selected pupils must maintain 85 percent monthly attendance and attain a minimum of 50 percent marks on the annual exam" (Tietjen, 2003, 6). Along with government primary schools, some NGO school, community school and ebtedaye madrasa have been the beneficiary of this project.

The FFE and PESP projects have been working as a great motivating factor to poor households to send their children to school and achieve 100% enrollment rate in primary level. We have seen in the introduction part how vastly this pandemic impacting the education system worldwide specially country like Bangladesh. To mitigate the loss in education caused by pandemic, government, NGO run and other low-cost private schools can take this kind of initiative. Initiative taken by the school of my research site also shows how food or monetary compensation helps underprivileged families to keep continue their child's education.

Learning during lockdown

In this 21st century we are living in an era where everything is getting digitalized. To cope up with the modern world we need to learn basic computer literacy no matter where we work. Since the beginning of pandemic in March 2020, many sectors are conducting their work online. Bangladeshi educational institutions are also closed due to lockdown from the very beginning of pandemic and large number of students are staying away from education. To conduct online classes, teachers need to develop some professional qualities as this is very new experience to them.

Teachers from my selected school couldn't achieve necessary professional development before starting the distance teaching-learning, rather they learned everything throughout the process. Collected data shows us teacher lacked technological skills as for most of them it was very new to learn typing or using Facebook. After initiating distance teaching-learning, teachers learned how to conduct online meeting/classes using different apps, how to prepare colorful or interesting material using computer to make the learning more interesting. The school has organized some training session with the help of Agami Education Foundation and Access to Information (a2i). These trainings helped teachers to learn how to conduct online classes, record video class and other necessary skills of distance learning. Author Alam and Tiwari mentioned in their paper, "COVID-19 has adversely affected the incomes and well-being of teachers in private schools, especially low-cost private school (LCPS)" (Alam and Tiwari, 2021, 5). In Gambia, Liberia, Malwai, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone and Uganda, more than one-fifth of the teacher workforce is in private schools. Multiple reports pointed out that many private school teachers losing their jobs, having their salaries cut, or not paid at all. All these challenges have significantly impacted their livelihood, their mental health, and potentially their motivation to teach (Alam and Tiwari, 2021)

Author Alam and Tiwari (2020) presented in their paper about the miserable condition of teachers from low-cost non-government schools which is fully closed due to pandemic. Low-cost private school and NGO run schools are the main victim of this pandemic as they don't receive any kind of donation from government and struggle to pay teachers' salaries and other maintenance costs. As most of the students of those schools are from middle class or lower-class background, they also struggle to get quality education. Teachers of those schools were always used to taking face to face classes. Even in pandemic situation most of the schools did not take any action to continue education which keeping large number of students away from learning. According to an article published by UNICEF discussed that students in the primary level specially belonging to lower income groups are getting hampered because of the lack of remote learning facilities. It shows us the technological inequality in the country which can lead us to longer inequality based on their access to distant learning (UNICEF 2020). This pandemic more clearly showed us the inequality among educational institutions. Keeping large number of students away from education will create more discrimination in longer terms.

Data from my findings is very important as it represent how a low-income school with students from underprivileged background can conduct effective distance teaching-learning.

These learning are not only useful for the pandemic situation rather it will help teacher to continue effective teaching even in normal situation as well. It also shows us there can be always an alternative way if there is will. Most students of the school had no smartphone to conduct online classes but teachers continued teaching through direct phone calls. According to an article published by UNICEF also has similar points of view. To address differential access to technology the article suggested multiple learning modalities. Authors believe being under teachers' guidance during lockdown is very crucial for students learning and mental wellness. The article mentioned, it is important for teachers to interact with their students frequently and keep them engage by providing assignments and giving feedback on their work. Teachers can continue doing this through phone calls, SMS or using social media for those who have access. (UNICEF, 2020). Those schools can learn a lot from the findings of this research as it shows how to conduct distance teaching learning with minimal resources. Low income and underprivileged school can take idea about conducting distance teaching-learning and implement on their own school.

5.2 Conclusion

It has been discussed throughout the paper how negatively this pandemic is impacting our education sector. According to a data presented by UNESCO, more than 36.0 million students are now out of school because of the pandemic, including 17.0 million primary schools. Besides academic learning, school is a place to grow socially, emotionally and morally for both young and teenage learners. Many private and public universities, colleges, and schools have started distance teaching but large number of primary students throughout the country are away from learning more than a year. Poverty, lack of devices, no internet facilities, lack of training to teachers are few reasons out of many for not being able to conduct distance teaching in primary level. This research presented the story of an underprivileged school where students are from below poverty line. It showed how the school overcame challenges of poverty, lack of devices and training, and continued distance teaching-learning from the very beginning of pandemic. I have learned from this research that there is always an alternative solution for any kind of challenges.

5.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings of my research here are some recommendations which will help to improve the educational scenario in any long vacation or emergency situation like COVID-19:

- Teachers must keep record of students' contact number to communicate in emergency

- Schools must arrange necessary IT training for teachers and conduct basic IT classes for all students.

- Use of technology in the classroom should be normalized as it will make the lessons interesting and teach students basic IT skills.

- According to teachers, video classes will help students to understand the lesson by themselves or with help of family members.

- Teacher and guardians should maintain proper communication for the purpose of students' betterment

References

Adler, K., Salanterä, S. & Zumstein-Shaha, M. (2019). Focus group interviews in child, youth, and parent research: An integrative literature review. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*, *18*,

Adnan, M. & Anwar, K. (2020). Online learning amid the COVID-19 pandemic: Students' perspectives. *Journal of Pedagogical Sociology and Psychology 2*(1). 46-51

Ahmed, A. & Ninno, C. (2020, February). Food for education program in Bangladesh: An evaluation of its impact on educational attainment and food security. Washington, D.C., USA: International Food Policy Research Institute.

Alam, A. (2020). *Challenges and Possibilities of Online Education during Covid-19. Preprints*, 2020060013 (doi: 10.20944/preprints202006.0013.v1).

Alam, A. & Tiwari, P. (2021, March). Implications of Covid-19 for low-cost private schools. *Office of Global Insight and Policy* (8).

Anderson, G. (1990). *Fundamentals of educational research.* London, England: The Falmer Press.

Barua, A. (2020). *The impact of COVID-19 Pandemic: Education sector of Bangladesh.* Dhaka, Bangladesh: Bangladesh Institute of Peace & Security Studies.

Belastock, E. (2020). *How to Improve Teacher Training for More Successful Remote Learning*. Edtech. Retrieved from https://edtechmagazine.com/k12/article/2020/08/how-improve-teacher-training-more-successful-remote-learning

Corona-time education sector. (2020, May 12). *The Financial Express*. Retrieved from https://www.thefinancialexpress.com.bd/editorial/corona-time-education-sector-1589127415

Crawford, J., Butler-Henderson, K., Rudolph, J., Malkawi, B., Glowatz, M., Burton, R., Lam, S. (2020). Covid-19: 20 countries' higher education intra-period digital pedagogy responses. *Journal of Applied Teaching and Learning (JALT), 3*(1) 1-20.

Downe-Wamboldt, B. (1992). Content analysis: Method, applications and issues. *Health Care for Women International, 13*(3), 313-321.

Emon, E., Alif, A., & Islam, M. (2020). Impact of COVID-19 on the Institutional Education System and its Associated Students in Bangladesh. *Asian Journal of Education and Social Studies*. *11*(2), 34-46.

Gorey, J. (2021*).* Teaching in a pandemic: How educators are handling the sudden shift to distance learning. *Earth Watch Institute*. Retrieved from https://earthwatch.org/stories/teaching-pandemic-how-educators-are-handling-sudden-shift-distance-learning?gclid=CjwKCAjw092IBhAwEiwAxR1lRjgRia4vvsXcD5lPkwOwx4ZmpONv0u_qfx1IA84GlahaTmvYBBsS3xoCuhwQAvD_BwE

Hammarberg, K., Kirkman, M. & Lacey, D., (2016). Qualitative research methods: When to use them and how to judge them. *Human Reproduction*, *31*(3)*,* 498-501

Human Rights Watch. (2021). *Problems with education around the world during Covid-19: Years don't wait for them: Increased inequalities in children's right to education due to the Covid-19 pandemic*. United States of America: HRW

Keegan, D. J. (1980). On defining distance education. *Distance Education*, *1*(1), 13–36.

Kaur, G. (2020). Digital life: Boon or bane in teaching sector on Covid-19. *CLIO an Annual Interdisciplinary Journal of History*, *6*(6), 416-427

Mack, N., Woodsong, C., Macqueen, K., Guest, G., & Namey, E. (2005). *Qualitative Research Methods: A data collector's field guide*. North Carolina: Family Health International. p. 10-13

Maryville University. (2021). *Impact of Online Education on Families: Understanding the Transition to Remote Learning*. St. Louis: Maryville University. Retrieved from https://online.maryville.edu/blog/impact-of-online-education/

McCarthy, K. (2020, March 7). The global impact of coronavirus on education. *ABC News*. Retrieved from https://abcnews.go.com/International/global-impact-coronavirus-education/story?id=69411738

Shohel, M., (2014). Impact of childhood poverty on education for disadvantaged children in Bangladesh. *Child Studies in Asia-Pacific Contexts*, *4*(2), 77-94.

The World Bank. (2021). *Keeping Bangladesh's Students Learning during the Covid-19 Pandemic*. Retrieved from: https://www.worldbank.org/en/results/2021/04/18/keeping-bangladesh-s-students-learning-during-the-covid-19-pandemic

Tietjen, K. (2003, November). *The Bangladesh primary education stipend project: A descriptive analysis, 1*. Bangladesh: The World Bank.

UNESCO (2020). *Global education coalition*. Paris, France: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

UNESCO (2021.). *UNESCO's rapid teacher training on open, distance and online learning reaches 1400 teachers in Zimbabwe*. (No 4). Zimbabwe: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNICEF (2020). *Covid-19: Are children able to continue learning during school closures: A global analysis of the potential reach of remote learning policies*. New York, USA: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

UNICEF. (2020). *Guidance on distance learning modalities to reach all children and youth during school closures*. Regional Office for South Asia: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

UNICEF. (2020). *Students in Bangladesh adjust to remote learning via national TV during Covid-19 lockdown: Wide availability of TV makes it easier for children to continue education remotely*. Bangladesh: United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund.

WHO. (2020, March 24). *COVID 19 situation report* (No. 4). Dhaka, Bangladesh: World Health Organization

Appendix

A. Consent Letter

Muzahida Tasbiha
Consent Form
Date: 31st January 2021

Participant's Consent Form

Study Title: Practice of Distance Teaching Learning in One NGO School in Dhaka.

Declaration by participant:

The researcher gave me oral/written explanation about the research and asked my opinion if I want to participate in this interview. I had the opportunity to ask question and I willingly agreed to give my interview.

I have been informed that all the information will be confidential and I can hide my identity if I want. It is clear to me that I am free not to answer any particular question if it bothers me. I am aware that my phone interview will be recorded and kept safely till the ending of the study.

Participant's name:

Signature: Date:

Declaration by the Researcher:

I have given an oral explanation of the research project to the participant, and have answered the participant's questions about it.

I believe that the participant understands the study and has given informed consent to participate.

Researcher's name: Muzahida Tasbiha

Signature: Date:

B. Interview Guides

Question for Teachers

(Interview)

Name: _____   Age: _____

Teaching years: _____

1. Can you please reflect the distance teaching learning process that you have been following since the beginning of pandemic?
   (In this portion participant teachers will reflect their journey in detail and researcher will take note?

2. How many students were under your supervision and what steps you have taken to reach them?

3. Will you please share how did you check students' understanding?

4. As this is very new teaching learning method and you haven't received any formal training or take any preparation about distance learning, how hard or easy it was for you to keep going?

5. What steps you have taken to overcome the challenges of students?

6. Comparing to face-to-face classes, what are the new things you have learned in distant learning?

7. As a teacher, what was your priority to make sure students' learning?

(Group Interview- Students)

Name: _____   Age: _____

Class: _____

1. What are the basic differences you have founded between distant and face to face classes?
2. What did you do when you struggled to understand particular lesson/topic?
3. What would have done better to make the distance learning easier for you?
4. Reflect your distance teaching learning experience in few lines.

_____