

Online Learning in COVID-19 situation: Scopes and Challenges in teaching-learning for Bangla subjects in Government Primary Schools

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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

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my original work while completing a 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 complete and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material that has been accepted or submitted for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all main sources of help.

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Ethics Statement

Throughout this study, I have intentionally tried to keep myself aware of the prejudices, biases, and perceptions that might obstruct the objectivity and neutrality of the data. I was cautious while upholding any particular values or ideas. Also, I have not made any attempt to omit data that might affect the interpretation of the findings. Therefore, the findings presented here in this study are authentic and without any manipulation. At the same time, I was strict about maintaining the highest possible ethical and professional research code of conduct. I had conducted this research by protecting the integrity of the research through the following measures. Informed consent was designed and signed by all the research participants prior to the interview to protect the privacy of the interviewees. The consent form was illustrated with the description of key issues like purpose of study, statement for privacy, with the right of withdrawal from the interview at any point, no personal gain but volunteering this research (John, 1998). The confidentiality of the information and interviewees' name is also given high importance through generalizing all the statements and not quoting by name. The data was positioned correctly in transcripts and guaranteed to respect individual beliefs and views.

Abstract

In 2020, when the COVID-19 pandemic attacked, the education sector was also affected like any other countries' sector. A developing country like Bangladesh has gone through many changes in the education sector, including several different ways of learning, such as online classes. For the financial status of the majority of families of the students of government primary schools, it is pretty challenging to support the students using online platforms. Therefore, this study intended to understand the practice of Bangla online classes, its challenges, and scopes to improve. It has also come up from this study that blended learning is one of the significant components of the future education system. I chose a qualitative approach for this study and selected 18 participants who are either teachers' or students' names that are also important by or observers of Bangla online classes. Data from the interviews showed that though online Bangla classes are the only alternative during this emergency, all the skills of this subject are not possible to practice through online classes. The main challenges are the duration of the class, lack of online classroom activities and contents, and the process of online learning. Thus, this study proposes a fixed time and date of the class, which is helpful for teachers and students, creating online content for Bangla online classes which is equivalent to grade one to grade five, training of the teachers on how to take online Bangla classes efficiently, and researching and creating online activities for online Bangla classes.

Keywords

Distance education; Online learning; COVID-19 situation; teaching and learning for Bangla subject; Government primary school.

Dedication

This Thesis is dedicated to my father and mother for their unconditional love and continuous support.

Acknowledgment

Firstly, I would like to show my gratitude to the most merciful almighty Allah who made me able to prepare this research paper.

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List of Acronyms

AT - Assistant Teacher

ATEO - Assistant Thana Education Officer

BdREN - Bangladesh Research and Education Network

CBC - Competency-based Curriculum

FGD - Focus Group Discussion

HT - Head Teacher

ICT - Information and Communication technology

ITU - International Telecommunication Union

MICS - Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey

MoE - Ministry of Education

NAPE - National Academy for Primary Education

NCTB - National Curriculum and Textbook Board

SDG - Sustainable development goals

TV - Television

TEO - Thana Education Officer

TA - Thematic analysis

UNICEF - United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund

CHAPTER 1: Introduction & Background

1.1 Introduction

In 2020, we were experiencing an uncertain situation. The countries of the world were suffering different dimensional problems because of the COVID-19 pandemic. After its discovery, the coronavirus has affected our society and environment (Verma & Prakash, 2020). Covid-19 hindered public livelihood, national economies, trading, sustainable development goals (SDGs), education, and other aspects of the lives (Marois et al., 2020; Khetrapal & Bhatia, 2020; Schleicher, 2020; Seetharaman, 2020). As a result of the pandemic, the whole world was forced to go into quarantine for the sake of survival. In addition, it imposed on us to adopt new ways of living, such as avoiding social interactions to maintain social isolation, switching from visiting physicians to online health care, and transforming to distance learning from schooling (Mopme, 2020).

Almost every sector of our country was affected, including the education sector. According to the Financial Express (June 2020), UNESCO statistics said 1.2 billion learners worldwide (68% of the world's overall enrolled learners) were affected due to the closing of educational institutions in 144 countries. It was no different in Bangladesh. All the educational institutions in the country had remained closed from 17 March 2020 till 12th September 2021 (Prothom Alo, 2021). The lack of learning resources was undeniably the direct and most urgent effect of Covid-19 on the education sector. More than 36 million students were out of school, including 17 million primary schools. Also, Covid-19 had effectively noticed the discontinuation of the standard academic curriculum throughout the country. One of the alternatives was distance education to combat the lack of learning.

The term 'distance education' refers to a variety of forms of study at all levels that are not under the persistent, immediate supervision of teachers present with their students in lecture rooms or on the same premises, but which benefit from the planning, guidance, and tuition of a tutorial organization. (Holmberg, 1977:9). These initiatives utilizing optical techniques such as cable television, fiber optics, microwave, television, satellite, and modern computer networking had already allowed educational institutions to share schedules and resources, allowing for an expansion of curricula and academic support for students (Barkar 1987a; Kitchen and Russell 1987). Online learning is one of the parts of distance education. According to the theory and practice of online learning written by Terry Anderson, 2008, The tools and possibilities to find students' assumptions and cultural viewpoints are sometimes constrained by bandwidth limits, limiting users' observation of body language and paralinguistic signals. Assistant my thesis group members and colleagues can provide a challenge to instructors. According to some academics, these limitations reduce communication effectiveness (Short, Williams, & Christie, 1976). Others argue that the distinct properties of online learning (appropriate mixtures of asynchronous and synchronous speech, text, and video) can improve and hyper communicate (Richardson, 2000). However, going online for schooling was not yet a viable choice for Bangladesh. According to MICS 2019, about 5% of households did not have a mobile phone. Only 5.6% of households had one in a smartphone or tablet case, and 37.6% could provide internet connectivity at home (urban: 53.10 percent and rural: 33.20 percent).

Moreover, the geographic dynamics were exact: rural areas and disadvantaged regions had much less access to these ICTs than metropolitan and prosperous regions. This was true for more impoverished families as well. Moving online for everyone deepened the current disparity in literacy inequality with such a high digital divide. Though the government of Bangladesh had

started to do classes on TV and radio, and according to the ministry of mass education, teachers of government primary schools had been ordered to take online classes. But it did not improve the situation in any way (Dutta and Smita, 2020). After all of these efforts, the literacy gap is growing higher every day.

This research explored the online learning method, specifically for the Bangla subject, to know the teaching-learning practice of the online learning process and its challenges and scopes. Also, at the end of this paper, there had been some suggestions to make further improvements.

1.2 Research Topic and Title

The research topic was the current online learning practice about a specific subject of primary education. In the pandemic situation, when teachers frequently tried to use different mediums, some online learning processes helped students, and some did not. According to Bhuiyan (2020), During the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, online learning had been a top concern in the education sector, and media such as Zoom or G-meet, a visual chat device, had exploded in popularity during these quarantine days. We could include Facebook Messenger and YouTube channels in this section. Their use as a backup teaching method was suitable for actual teaching or education; instead, they were ideal for business or official functions. This research had included all the mediums of online teaching-learning. The reason for choosing this topic was, in 2020, facing this pandemic situation, teachers were teaching via online and electronic mediums, and students were trying to be comfortable and learn from it. But specifically, in the primary section, it was pretty difficult for both stakeholders to maximize their output. According to an article by UNICEF (2020), some of the students said in a focus group discussion that online learning did not have the instructional guidance, evaluation, or interactivity expected in

the classroom. Low internet access, data expiration, and power outages were common issues in our classrooms. That was the scenario of online learning. However, while the government started to take distance learning classes via TV or radio and gave instructions to teachers to take online classes via G-meet, these scenarios were also valid for Bangla online classes. The government gave the same importance to the Bangla subject as other subjects. But as Bangla is a literature subject and the class's orientation needed to be different, I was interested to know more about this topic, specifically for the Bangla subjects and the challenges and scopes.

So, the title of this research was "Online Learning in COVID-19 situation: Scopes and Challenges in teaching-learning for Bangla subjects in Government Primary Schools "

1.3 Statement of the problem

In 2020, when the pandemic started in Bangladesh, according to Chowdhury (2020), the school closures affected about 42 million children in Bangladesh, leaving students with no choice but to focus on online learning. However, not all students have access to advanced technologies, and virtual classrooms often fall short of students' aspirations and learning requirements. Moreover, since many students in rural areas and low-income families did not have access to television, radio, the internet, or smartphones, they could not take advantage of remote learning opportunities.

Though all the students did not have internet access, even government primary schools' students who had access to Television was 32% (NAPE, 2020), our primary education sector was transferring into online mode. In April 2021, Bangladesh's mass and primary education ministry notified all the primary schools that all government primary schools needed to take

classes via Meet, an online platform. To make this happen, the government started to train the teachers.

According to Aliyyah, Rachmadtullah, Samsudin, Syaodih, Nurtanto, & Tambunan (2020), changes in the teaching and learning environment brought on by online classrooms had an impact on teachers' success and educational quality. The teachers agreed that instructional policy needed to change. All partners, including states, educators, social groups, school committees, and parents, were required to decide and articulate online learning priorities aligned with a national humanist curriculum. So, the online class process was affecting our teachers a lot. Teachers and students experienced specific issues and difficulties in the online education system. Slow network speed and a lack of understanding of the online networking structure resulted in a communication gap during online classes. In addition, teachers were undertrained and lacked adequate knowledge of technology to hold online classes.

On the other hand, many students could not enroll in online classes due to their low socioeconomic status, lack of digital technology, and limited internet access in rural areas. Even though some students could enroll in online classes, they struggled to stay focused due to the current class structure and teachers' poor lecture presentation. Moreover, students were in financial distress, covering educational costs such as course tuition, wireless computer purchases, and a high-cost data plan (Mahmud et al., 2021). So, there is a considerable possibility of enhancing the learning gap or undoing all the previous learnings. This study would help to understand the actual situation of online teaching-learning, its challenges, and scopes to overcome its difficulties.

1.4 Research Questions

These research questions have been used during the study:

1. How is the practice of teaching and learning in Bangla subjects addressed through the online learning approach followed in the COVID-19 situation?
2. What are the challenges in the teaching and learning practices in Bangla subjects used under the online learning approach?
3. What are the scopes that exist in the teaching and learning practices in Bangla subjects used under the online learning approach?

1.5 Purpose of the Study

This study aimed to find out how government primary school teachers were taking online Bangla classes, the practices of the main skills of the curriculum of Bangla literature while they were doing online classes in the pandemic situation. This study also wants to explore the scopes to improve the activity of Bangla online classes to maximize the learning output of all four skills of the Bangla subject. Furthermore, this study wants to identify the challenges faced by teachers and students during online Bangla classes and to know about different ways to overcome the struggles.

1.6 Significance of the Study

Because of the devastating outbreak of coronavirus, the government of Bangladesh declared the closing of all educational institutions. Therefore, after March 17, 2020, all educational institutions in Bangladesh have been closed (Barua, 2020). In this pandemic situation, various

research has been done regarding online teaching-learning and its effectiveness in the secondary and tertiary education systems (Dutta & Smita, 2020). Even though online education faced a range of problems from two key stakeholders: students and teachers, by carefully addressing these issues, it had the potential to build a constructive environment in the field of education as an alternative educational learning method with positive results in all areas (Alam, 2020).

Much research had been conducted during this pandemic situation regarding online teaching-learning (Islam, S. 2020). But, it was difficult to find any study on subject-based topics like English or Bangla. This research helped us better to understand the methods of online Bangla classes. Also, considering the main four skills of Bangla subjects would identify which skills were easy to teach and learn in online classes and which were not. There were many challenges in online classes regarding teaching and learning methods, students' attention, and teachers' way of delivering lectures (Mahmud et al., 2021). In this study, I identified the struggles and scopes to overcome the struggles of Bangla online classes regarding achieving the core skills of Bangla subjects.

Besides, this research identified the failings or changes of Bangla teaching-learning practices and pedagogical areas for further study and customized these areas for online classes.

1.7 Operational Definition of Key terms

Distance learning: Distance learning means any learning without the students being physically present in the lesson. This could also apply to the teacher in certain situations. Different distance learning methods are TV, radio, newspaper, class recording, university portals, and websites, online platforms like Zoom, Meet, WhatsApp, Messenger, IMO, etc.

Online learning: The term "online learning" refers to learning through the internet. It's also known as "e-learning" and other names. However, online learning is only one sort of "distance learning," which refers to any learning that takes place outside of a traditional classroom. Online learning sparks a paradigm change in how we teach and learn.

Skill-based learning: Skills-based learning is where we teach students a specific skill. This allows us to teach a student how to achieve the correct answer in the practice we use, but it also helps students achieve the correct answer in every instance they see the same skill.

Bangla subject Curriculum in Bangladeshs' Government Primary schools: According to the Pathways to Education, 2016, the NCTB prepared a competency-based curriculum for the students of Government primary schools. Bangla subjects mainly focused on four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All the competencies of the Bangla subject are mainly divided to achieve these four skills.

CHAPTER 2: Literature Review and Conceptual Framework

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Introduction

In the literature review, I present some authentic and relevant information from different books, articles, newspaper writing, and other documents. I have researched and reviewed those to understand and explore more about my research topic on the practice of alternative assessments at government primary schools and teachers' perceptions. I have organized the literature review under the following aspects: 2.1.2. COVID-19 situation and educational practice, 2.1.3. Online learning, 2.1.4. Online learning in COVID-19 situation, 2.1.5. Teaching-learning practice of Bangla subject, 2.1.6. Teaching-learning status of Bangla subject, 2.1.7. Online learning of Bangla subjects in the pandemic situation, and 2.1.8 Challenges teachers and students face in online classes.

In the later part of this chapter, I have described the conceptual framework I used in this study to identify the skill-based practices of Bangla online classes. These scopes lie in the practices, the challenges, and the ways to overcome them. This framework has helped me to be focused on the skills of Bangla as this is a literature subject, and the primary education curriculum is mainly based on these skills. Also, I could concentrate on the online classroom activities to understand how much these activities helped teachers teach and students learn the skills of Bangla. Along with these, this conceptual framework enabled me to think about different topics that could be a subject for further research.

2.1.2 COVID-19 situation and educational practice

According to Mahruf, Shohel & Kirkwood (2012), in technology-poor environments, numerous obstacles and issues surround the implementation of innovations to improve teaching and learning. A variety of interrelated problems were frequently discussed-economic, technological, socio-political, attitudinal, and pedagogical- were needed to be addressed simultaneously. Governments and donor organizations also searched for technical innovations in the face of the need to extend and develop educational provisions quickly.

In 2020, we also saw that teachers used other mediums, methods, and online tools to teach to understand their academic visibility and awareness in Bangladesh in this pandemic situation. According to Mishra, Gupta & Shreeb (2020), several online teaching-learning resources accessible to teachers and students, such as Zoom, Google Meet, Facebook, and YouTube streaming, have been used on a need-based basis by any of the teachers who were educated by organizations who had professional expertise. During the preparation, the distinctions between online and face-to-face teaching styles were visible. Using new teaching techniques was a challenging job for teachers. Teachers intended to use WhatsApp, email, and mobile conversation to teach at the lockdown beginning. But as the lockdown period began to be prolonged from time to time, WhatsApp, email, and mobile conversations appeared insufficient. Teachers educated on MZU-LMS and teaching transactions were carried out. Teachers and students used different technological tools such as Zoom, Google Meets, Telegram, LinkedIn Learning, SoloLearn, Udemy, and more to expand their academic visibility and awareness. According to the Ministry of Mass and Primary Education (2019), most of Bangladesh's primary schools were rural. More than half of primary school children attended government-run schools, mostly rural. Digital technology, experienced teachers, and good facilities were lacking in rural

schools (Rafe, 2020). This has hampered attempts in the country to promote online learning. Instructional establishments in this nation have made inadequate digital platforms for educational purposes. As a result, it was impossible to continue learning on these platforms. COVID-19 had several effects on our daily lives, but the effects on education, particularly on kids, were among the most challenging struggles to overcome.

Since the beginning of the COVID-19 epidemic, it has impacted the worldwide healthcare system and many facets of human existence. Aside from other industries, the educational sector was impacted. Due to the epidemic, most educational institutions were forced to shutter, leaving a significant educational vacuum. However, many authorities have agreed that the academic sectors required a system adjustment to cope with the losses imposed by the epidemic in a short period. In that scenario, several nations had come up with the notion of attending classes on an online platform to continue their educational pursuits (Wadud, 2020a). It was simple for educational institutions to take lessons on an ad-hoc basis through the internet. However, this platform became the sole means to teach vast groups of kids (Mishra et al., 2020). Bangladesh also took steps to organize online classes to complete their studies without meeting in person (Shivakumara, 2020). In Bangladesh, the usage of web-based resources was increasing at a fast rate. Most academic institutions have constructed academic portals where lectures may be designed as online courses (Chowdhury, 2020b). These activities would imply higher secondary education and university education purposes.

The government had been chosen to use television to instruct primary students. Students might stay informed about their academics while watching television, and there would be no gaps in their knowledge. Teachers hold courses on various subjects at particular times, and pupils learn through watching television (Alamgir, 2020b).

In 2020, for the first time, education was actually seeking to enhance access to high-quality, sustainable development education to acquire the knowledge and skills needed for long-term development. Many Asian nations are changing their educational institutions into “Thinking Schools” (Obaydullah and Jahan, 2020).

2.1.3 Online learning

About two decades ago, holistic pedagogy was designed with online schooling to understand Bangladesh’s academic visibility and awareness. Yet, we saw that technology pushes learning. At the same time, pedagogy lagged and tended to explain minor, isolated teaching interactions at best, while a holistic view of the field was required (Postman, 1993). Online schooling was also defined by the tools used, not pedagogy, to worsen matters (Anderson and Dron, 2011). As Mark Nickols said, "an overall educational framework is still missing in online education" (2011, p. 322). He added, "the word 'education' is usually absent from e-learning discussion. In reality, the emphasis was on the standardized term learning, which meant that the technique has missed essential schooling characteristics when it comes to a technical issue."

Commonly, because of twenty years of online education and various publications, there were only a few efforts to establish a strong theory about online education in different ways (Nichols, 2011; Anderson & Dron, 2011; Siemens, 2005). Matthew Etherington (2008), in his article E-Learning pedagogy in the Primary School Classroom: the McDonaldization of Education, said that in Australia, owing to the convenience with which educators and teachers could buy personalized e-programs to suit their learning requirements, the number of offers in the leading asynchronous E-learning platform the school curriculum had risen significantly. They were modular, scalable, easy to use, and, most importantly, cost-efficient, accounting for their success. Bañados (2006) said that in online teaching, the pedagogy should be

research-based/oriented; on the other hand, Colpaert (2006) noted that online pedagogy should be based on presentation, interpersonal communication, collaboration, and project-oriented. For me, in the context of this 21st technological era, interactivity, teachers' and students' presence are required in an effective online classroom, and it is vital to discover the creation of an online classroom that will be close to perfect for the students' learning by analyzing the online pedagogy.

Since Caleb Phillips of Boston, Massachusetts, offered shorthand training via weekly courses sent by US mail, distance education has been around for over 300 years. Beginning in the 1920s, the earliest electronic remote learning was conducted through radio airwaves. However, online education has undergone a fundamental shift since the internet's inception (Clark, 2020). According to Moore, Deane, & Galyen (2011), learning environment terms such as remote learning, e-learning, and online learning had different expectations and views. Not simply promoted meanings, but also enacted meanings, definitions by denotation and connotation. What online learning means to academics, managers, students, policymakers, and other stakeholders across the multiple continents, nations, regions, and cities where it seems to occur were all important (Traxler, 2018). A quick examination of the important ones might or might not identify and address some notions and misunderstandings around remote learning, its potentials, and possibilities (Moore et al. 2011, Valentine, 2002). The binary difference between campus education and distant learning might suggest one clear definition. Still, parallels with online learning, e-learning, and virtual learning, as well as overlap with community learning and adult learning, had now blurred the problem (Traxler, 2018). It's also essential to distinguish between formal and informal learning (Folkestad, 2006, Malcolm, Hodkinson, & Colley, 2003, Wellington, 1990).

We used the terms "in school learning" and "remote learning" interchangeably. This appeared to be an obvious distinction: one occurred on campus or within school campuses, while the other did not. But, on the other hand, many campus institutions were already utilizing digital technology to reach out to more significant, farther-flung audiences, as well as students who might be able to study remotely and online. Thus, online learning, digital learning, e-learning, and virtual learning were seemingly identical terms related to the chosen mode of delivery for most distant education. However, they were never the exclusive mode of delivery for either campus institutions or remote learning, which was why the phrase 'blend learning' was coined to describe how digital learning is mixed with one or more other modalities (Graham, C.R., 2006). When we look at the big picture, we would see the implications of this uncertainty.

The researchers had previously argued that digital technologies minimize or eliminate the distances that separated individuals and communities from educational possibilities and constituted a primary delivery mechanism for online learning; however, they had also argued that these gaps might be socioeconomic, cultural, or cognitive and physiological. As a result, if online learning as an instrument of empowerment fulfilled its transforming potential, it might not be construed or defined too narrowly (Traxler, J. 2010).

The claim is that mobile technologies broke down divisions, which might be seen as a distinct element of the gaps between classes or communities regarding digital technology availability and use. Mobile technologies complicated and reconfigured digital boundaries, offering a different form of distance that online learning might or should traverse, not just geographical or geometric. There was also an argument that these technology-enabled pedagogies force learning on individuals and communities at a distance; however, the online was defined and enabled learning providers and producers to exercise cultural hegemony. Their implied concern here was whether remote learning only entailed physical or physical distance and separation, or

whether it also included socio-economic and cultural boundaries, cognitive and physiological ones, and how hegemony functioned in these new spaces of distant learning. As this was already shown, these definitions and differences were never neutral, intellectual, or abstract; they all served the interests of one group or another, and because it had shown that digital technologies exacerbate existing divides and inequities (Traxler, J. 2010), we must pose similar issues regarding online learning.

2.1.4 Online learning in COVID-19 situation

Online teaching-learning has significant applications globally, especially in developed countries. According to Weiyuan (2011), developed countries like China implemented third-generation technology for online teaching-learning. But in our country, we are in the first generation or, in some contexts, second-generation technology users.

Educators have been using different types of technology for the last decade, and they are showing quite an improvement in technological aspects. But Bhuiyan (2020) said that the higher education level struggles to use the online mediums in this COVID-19 situation in Bangladesh. The primary or secondary level was doubting their progress regarding online-based learning. So, ultimately we could tell that we had limited ability to use technology for educational purposes in the context of government primary school students. Because educational institutions were closed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, there was an educational void. Many officials did not want to avoid dealing with education, so they figured out how to close the significant educational divide (Daniel, 2020).

The government of Bangladesh was using TV and radio as the medium of online classes, which is first-generation technology, and different universities, schools of secondary and higher secondary were using various online platforms like Facebook, Zoom, IMO, or Whatsapp to

connect with the students and teach them. Still, the percentage of online classes in the primary section was inadequate. The government had announced that primary school classes would be conducted by television. Students would keep themselves informed of their classes by watching television, and there would be no educational gaps. Teachers taught various subjects at particular times, and students learned from watching television (Alamgir, 2020b). Though the government took this decision in the first phase of the pandemic, they later switched to online classes like Facebook live classes, Zoom, IMO, etc. In March 2021, NAPE instructed all the teachers to distribute worksheets to reach them and support their learning. Consequently, in April 2021, NAPE again led the teachers to learn and use Google Meet to conduct classes and encouraged the students and parents to come and join in the online classes (NAPE, 2021). From the beginning of the pandemic, UNICEF and the Government of Bangladesh collaborated to implement successful remote learning initiatives that reach the most significant number of students possible through television, radio, mobile phones, and internet platforms (UNICEF, 2020). In addition to UNICEF, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has assisted in developing guidelines to help instructors take the class and minimize student losses to avoid the gap (Alam,2020).

In the wake of the lockdown, private schools had hastened to embrace web-based learning strategies, offering lectures delivered via online media platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube (Bhuiyan, 2020; Chen et al., 2020). Later, the University Grants Commission approved institutions' use of online media such as Zoom, Google Meet, and others to complete their semesters. BdREN supported 147 of Bangladesh's 153 public and private institutions in their efforts to educate online (Rahman et al., 2020). Within four months, online learning was legitimized with the help of the Bangladesh Research and Education Network (BdREN). Around 3,800 classes were offered online daily,

with over 220,000 students enrolled. But 90% of the classes were happening in secondary, higher secondary, and university-level institutions. Though these online education methods contributed to the digitization of the education industry, the results were not for everyone (World Economic Forum, 2020).

2.1.5 Teaching learning practice of Bangla Subject

Like those of other countries, Bangladesh's government has continued to reform the education sector to respond to new developing concerns and promote sustainable development. The establishment of a new educational system is based on this assumption. However, there has been far too little work done to establish a link between competency-based curriculum and sustainable development, as well as their early challenges.

Traditionally, the term "competence" or "competency" has been used to indicate a professional or occupational attribute combining behaviors and skills. Competencies are, in general, measurements of how well someone can accomplish various activities based on their knowledge, abilities, and qualities. In Bangladesh, the curriculum board mainly focuses on a competency-based curriculum for Bangla. There is no difference in the primary education system, though some researchers do not acknowledge this system as a full competency-based curriculum.

Young learners needed to develop most of the educational objectives in all three domains (cognitive, affective, and psychomotor) created by BS Bloom (an American educational psychologist) and his co-workers in 1956, this mode of curriculum development was not suitable for general education, especially at the primary and secondary levels. A curriculum could be described as competency-based since they often attempted to acquire expertise in certain subjects. A curriculum focused on the complex consequences of a learning process (i.e.,

knowledge, skills, and attitudes) rather than what learners should acquire in terms of the traditionally defined topic matter. In theory, such a curriculum was learner-centered and adaptable to students', instructors', and society's evolving needs. It indicated that learning activities and surroundings were chosen to acquire and apply information, skills, and attitudes to real-life circumstances.

The competency-based curriculum was often built around a set of essential, cross-curricular, and/or subject-specific capabilities. Instead of concentrating on what learners were supposed to learn in terms of the traditionally defined topic matter, a curriculum highlighted the multifaceted outputs of a learning process (i.e., information, skills, and attitudes to be applied by learners). Competence refers to the knowledge, skills, and actions that one should master to do duties at school and in the workplace (Mosha, 2012).

2.1.6 Teaching-learning status of Bangla Subject

Competence was defined by Kouwenhoven (2003) as the capacity to choose and use an integrated accumulation of skills, knowledge, and attitudes to complete a task in a specific situation. Competence was defined in this context as the capacity of learners to engage in a given task to establish norms emphasizing what they can accomplish rather than what they know. A competency-based curriculum was a method of education that aimed to develop pupils' ability to learn and perform tasks according to predetermined criteria. As a result, a competency-based curriculum included specific outcome statements that illustrate the capabilities to be attained. According to Mosha (2012), a competency-based curriculum strives to foster learners' ability to perform, learn, and learn how to study and know. The competency-based curriculum was deemed adequate for meeting the country's evolving societal needs, technical socio-economic demands, and long-term development goals. It focused on

acquiring skills, information, behaviors, and attitudes that were important in carrying out various tasks to resolve concerns of unemployment among adolescents and graduates (MaodzwaTaruvunga & Cross, 2012).

According to Wangeja (2010), a competency-based curriculum was one in which information was built rather than conveyed, and past knowledge influenced the learning process. It was a movement from conventional input-driven education, which focused on knowledge growth, to competency-based education, which focused on skills development (Young, 2009). According to the primary school curriculum, NAPE mainly concentrated on a competency-based curriculum from 2011, while the reform started in the education sector of Bangladesh (NAPE, 2011). For the Bangla subject, the competencies mainly focused on four skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. All the competencies addressed in the primary school curriculum were mainly derived from these four skills and the terminal competencies of every grade. It focused on developing skills as a set of values, skills, knowledge, and attitudes required to do various activities (Mulder, 2014).

Bangladesh is transitioning from an objectives-based curriculum to a competency-based curriculum in response to the problem of delivering excellent education for long-term development (CBC). Like many Asian countries, Bangladesh has a large population of jobless youngsters who doubt the quality of education available. The NCTB research emphasized the need for our primary school curriculum that combines and prepares students with competencies and abilities that can be used in real-world circumstances both locally and globally (Pathways to Education, 2016).

The competency-based curriculum discouraged the acquisition of information in favor of developing skills. However, the curriculum was shifting from content-based to competency-based. As a result, a shift in teaching-learning techniques from rote memorization

to strategies that assisted in developing competencies and abilities that could be applied to real-world challenges was required for long-term growth (Woods, 2008; World Bank, 2011).

2.1.7 Online learning of Bangla subject in COVID-19 situation

In research about online English education in Wuhan, China, Zou, Li, & Jin (2021) said that Technical problems, issues involving the learning process, learning environment, self-control, efficiency and effectiveness, and health concerns were all identified as six types of challenges faced by the students. Students indicated the highest level of preparation in terms of technological access, but they were the most bothered by technical issues during online learning. Teachers were most frustrated by pedagogical obstacles, particularly students' disengagement in online classes, out of three categories of challenges. As English and Bangla are both literature subjects and have the same skills-focused competency-based curriculum, the scenario can be the same in a distant learning situation. In the same study, I also shared that it was easy to teach secondary and college students, but it was quite challenging to teach the primary level students in a distant learning mood.

Learning new skills in a language on online platforms differs from learning a subject online. Language subjects, unlike other subjects, are both a medium of education and a subject of online study. Learners are expected to listen, talk, read, and write in the language they learn during the learning process. As a result, the effectiveness of the language class is determined by whether the online learning environment can create chances for learners to use the language and if the learners feel free to do so digitally (Zou, Li, & Jin, 2021). Tylor & David (2013) stated that learners' readiness for online language learning had received insufficient attention and created a self-assessment survey instrument including indications of learner autonomy,

computer self-efficacy, attitude toward online learning, motivation, and English language self-efficacy. It provided some insight for academics in this field, but their model still needs to be validated. This study is also applicable for Bangla online classes. Before starting the online Bangla classes, there was a lack of research on the readiness of the teachers and students. But we could see some ideas came from Zou, Li, & Jin (2021) to solve the challenges of literature subjects online classes like the Government should provide enough training for teachers, particularly in pedagogical matters. Language teachers should pay great attention to students' participation and communication in online classes. This is similarly true for Bangla online classes. In the COVID-19 situation, teachers need to pay full attention to how students perform and communicate to teach any Bangla subjects' skills.

As per I know, no study has been conducted to evaluate Bangladeshi government primary school teachers' and students' practices, skill-based activities, challenges, and the possibility of improving online Bangla lessons. Because of the pandemic, fully online teaching-learning for Bangla was implemented in government primary schools. I took advantage of the opportunity to conduct the study to get a rough idea of the orientation of online Bangla classes, regular activity or practice of the online Bangla class challenges that students and teachers face, and opportunities to improve for online Bangla learning.

2.1.8 Challenges teachers and students face in online classes

Different types of struggles were happening during online Bangla classes. According to the "How Many Children and Youth Have Internet Access at Home" survey, produced jointly by UNICEF and the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), 2.2 billion children and young people aged 25 and under did not have internet access. So, expanding internet connectivity was critical for ensuring that both children and young people develop and acquire the information

and skills necessary to support a prosperous future. “UNICEF is promoting learning using simple mobile phones and text messaging instead of smartphones to target vulnerable students and enable equal access to remote learning,” said Iqbal Hossain, Education Specialist, UNICEF Bangladesh.

A challenge of online Bangla teaching was that teachers had difficulties due to inadequate technical skills and experiences in this online class phase about the online activities. Though Bangla is the native language, teaching Bangla in an online class was equally tricky as other subjects, considering the skills of this subject. Also, they struggle to design the assessments (Islam, 2020). Furthermore, Teachers were now teaching in two separate ways: live-streaming classes and recorded classes (Zaman, 2020). On the other hand, Online Bangla classes were not always more successful than conventional classes. Since most teachers were not well educated in these technological activities and specific skill-based activities, the issue began with a lack of adequate information about technology and online classes (Islam, 2020). Since both teachers' and students' first time connecting via online classes, there was a contact distance between them (Lapada et al., 2020). As a result, it appeared that they were having difficulty maintaining sufficient flexibility for these online classes. This seems to be the case when both were moved from conventional classrooms to interactive classrooms, resulting in new learning and teaching environment than before (Alam, 2020). Students also faced different challenges due to learning from online Bangla classes. One of the first limitations was that teachers and students lacked the technical proficiency qualification needed for online classes due to their geographic location. In Bangladesh, a large number of students live in rural areas. They lived in remote areas where these necessities were difficult to come by (The Independent BD, 2020a). Also, during the online Bangla classes, students could not concentrate due to how classes are conducted and the environment in which they are taught (Fatema, 2020). Some

Bangladeshi students had wasted their time on Facebook, television, and the internet instead of focusing on their studies. Often, students were engrossed in pointless rumors in several Facebook and WhatsApp communities, endangering their future (Barua, 2020).

Bañados (2006) said that in online teaching, the pedagogy should be research-based/oriented; on the other hand, Colpaert (2006) noted that online pedagogy should be based on presentation, interpersonal communication, collaboration, and project-oriented. For me, in the context of this 21st technological era, interactivity, teachers' and students' presence are required in an effective online classroom, and it is vital to discover the creation of an online classroom that will be close to perfect for the students' learning by analyzing the online pedagogy. In addition to UNICEF, the Ministry of Education (MoE) has assisted in developing guidelines to help instructors take the class and minimize student losses to avoid the gap (Alam,2020).

2.2 Conceptual Framework:

To ensure the quality of online learning in Bangla subjects in our primary education sector, I have focused mainly on three aspects. First was online teaching-learning in Bangla subject based on the skills of the subject (listening, speaking, reading, and writing), the second was the challenges of online teaching-learning of Bangla subject classes, and the third was the scopes to improve the learning of the students based on the skills of the subject. According to the World Economic Forum (2020), Some studies indicate that students maintain 25-60% more content on average while studying online than only 8-10% in a classroom. This was primarily due to students' willingness to study online faster; e-learning took 40-60 percent less time to learn than in a typical classroom environment. Students could practice at their own pace, go back and re-read, skip or speed up lessons they wanted (Colpaert, 2006).

Nevertheless, within age groups, the efficacy of online learning varies. The general opinion among children, especially younger ones, is that an organized atmosphere was needed since children were more easily distracted. According to Dowson Tong, Senior Executive Vice President of Tencent and President of Tencent (2020), to get the total value of online learning, there might be a concerted effort to have this framework and go beyond replicating a physical class/lecture through video technologies instead of using a variety of networking resources and interaction approaches that encourage "inclusion, personalization, and intelligence." Studies have also shown that children used their senses extensively to learn; making learning enjoyable and productive through technology was crucial. Over time, we had observed that innovative integration of games had shown greater engagement and increased motivation, particularly among younger students, to learn, making them truly fall in love with learning.

For Bangla subjects, online classes were equally crucial during the pandemic situation, and the Government of Bangladesh gave equal importance to Bangla online learning for primary education, especially from June 2021 (NAPE, 2021).

To understand the current practice of online learning in Bangla, I had wanted to understand the application of the two components of online teaching-learning in my study. Those were 1.

Pedagogy, and 2. the orientation of the medium of instruction from the socialization aspects.

According to Curriculum and pedagogy: The what and The how of early childhood education edited by Bowman, Donovan, and Burns (2001), pedagogy is the overarching notion in many ways; it refers to the purposeful process of developing growth within a culture and community.

From this perspective, pedagogy consists of three basic components: (1) curriculum, or what is being taught; (2) methodology, or how it is taught; and (3) techniques for socializing children in the repertoire of cognitive and affective skills required for successful functioning in society, which education is designed to promote. Aligned with this, in Pedagogy, I emphasized essential

lesson planning, classroom activities aligned with the skills of Bangla and the assessment process after the class, the curriculum where I gave emphasis on which of the skills students can achieve mastery and which skills of the curriculum is hard to achieve in online Bangla classes.

Along with that, I wanted to know about the orientation of the medium of instruction, as the techniques of online classes for socializing the children are different from the traditional physical classroom. These techniques were new for teachers and students. That is why it was essential to understand the socializing practice of online classes and how students perceive the knowledge of cognitive and affective skills required to function in society.

Knowing about these components of online class pedagogy, I wanted to understand the actual online learning situation in Bangla subjects and try to find out the challenges and scopes to overcome those in our country's primary education sector.

CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In methodology, I present the information I planned to collect data for my study. The methodology part of this study includes the following aspects: 3.2. Research approach, 3.3. The research site, 3.4. Research participants, 3.5. Research method, 3.6. Research tools, 3.7. Data collection procedure, 3.8. Data analysis procedure, 3.9. Ethical issues & concerns, and 3.10. Limitation of the study.

3.2 Research Approach

I did this research using the Qualitative approach. Creswell (2014) said that researchers should consider three main factors to choose a research approach: the research problem and question, personal experience, and the audience. The qualitative approach appears to be open-ended.

So, in this research, the reasons behind choosing a qualitative method are,

1. To know the answers to the research questions as all of the problems are open-ended, so the answers were being derived from the participants' experiences, and
2. To analyze the context and know more about the current practice, I want to study the answers' reasons.

I gave the audience more space to open up their understanding and thoughts regarding online classes according to my personal experience and audience type.

3.3 Research Site

I did this study in the government primary schools of two thanas of Chittagong city. According to Deutsche Welle (September 2020), Bangladesh's government had requested state-owned radio and television stations to broadcast live and filmed lectures to counter school disruption due to the pandemic. According to Dhaka Tribune (May 2020), the primary education directorate requested primary schools to take online classes. Initially, 30% of Dhaka and Chittagong city schools started to take online classes via phone or different online mediums. So, as this was evident that the teachers of Chittagong urban areas were taking online classes, I have selected the research site according to the participants' availability.

3.4 Research Participants

Participants for the study had been chosen purposely. Generally, purposive sampling was used in qualitative research to identify and select participants to make the most effective use of limited resources (Palinkas et al., 2013). At the same time, according to Palinkas et al. (2013) mentioned, "Purposive sampling not only involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals who are familiar with the content of the research study and are experienced or interested in that particular topic, but it also emphasizes the availability and willingness of the participants to participate and to contribute in the study by sharing their thoughtful opinions and perspectives." (p.539). Also, McMillan and Schumacher (2001) said that purposive sampling was considered the best technique while choosing small participants who are likely to be knowledgeable and require a level of understanding about the area of research interest.

The participant's list is given below;

Thana	Participants	Number of Participants
Panchlaish	Student	2
	Parent	1
	Assistant teacher	4
	Head Teacher	1
	TEO	1
Chandgaon	Student	2
	Parent	1
	Assistant teacher	4
	Head Teacher	1
	ATEO	1

Table 3.1: Research participants list 1

District	Thana	Participants	Total no.
1 (Chattogram)	2 Thana (Panchlaish & Chandgaon)	Student	4
		Parent	2
		Assistant teacher	8
		Head Teacher	2
		TEO/ ATEO	2
Total			18

Table 3.2: Research participants list 2

Those teachers and students who participated in online classes throughout this pandemic could give an authentic opinion about the current situation and tell us what went well for them and

what they need to improve. I had selected Chittagong cities' two thanas' government primary schools' students and teachers for these reasons.

3.5 Research Method

For this research, I have collected data by using two methods:

1. Semi-structured Interview, and
2. Focus group discussion.

According to Cohen & Crabtree (2006), researchers frequently favor semi-structured interviews because they could prepare questions ahead of time. This helped the interviewer to be prepared to look professional during interviews. Semi-structured interviews also offered informants the capacity to express their thoughts in their language. Also, According to Stuter (2006), qualitative research helped gather in-depth and vital information and understanding of the participants regarding the study's research questions. On the other hand, according to Seal, Bogart, & Ehrhardt (1998), dynamic interactions in focus groups provided insights beyond the core themes. The findings have been discussed using small-group dynamics theories.

For qualitative research, I wanted to do semi-structured interviews because I wanted to know the comprehensive but necessary details on the process's questions, the implementation of the method, and the challenges and scopes. Also, I wanted to do an online focus group discussion, as I thought it would give me a holistic picture of the current situation about distant learning.

3.6 Research Tools

In-depth semi-structured online interviews and focus group discussions with the participants were supposed to be used to collect data for the study. FGD was chosen because it allows the

participants to interact and develop new ideas; as Carey & Asbury (2012), focus group discussions allowed interaction among the group members to enhance their understanding of that particular topic. Semi-structured questions were formed according to the different themes, namely online Bangla classes, the practices of Bangla online classes, Scopes to improve the online Bangla classes, challenges of the classes, and scopes to overcome the challenges of the online Bangla classes.

Qualitative data collection usually depends on face-to-face interviews, FGD, and fieldwork; however, there are numerous ways to collect data virtually (Jowett, 2020). For collecting data online, the most used tool is video-calling (e.g., Skye/zoom/google meet) or the use of text-based instant messaging (e.g., WhatsApp) instead of the face-to-face interview or focus group (Jowett, 2020). In this study, data has been collected using twelve online semi-structured interviews from 2 assistant teachers, 2 head teachers, 1 AETO, 1 TEO, 4 students, and 2 parents, and one virtual FGD, which has been conducted to collect data from 6 assistant teachers, who have been selected from 2 different thanas of Chattogram city in Bangladesh.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

To collect data from the selected participants, I took permission from the participants. Then, after explaining the purpose of the study, I first set a convenient time for the online interviews. I took prior consent from the participants to record the call for further reference, informing them about the time commitment. Interview questions included the simple and shortened yet important questionnaire directly relevant to the central research questions of the study. The intention was to reduce time commitment as participants are more likely to hang up or not complete more extended interviews. Research shows that online interviews should take approximately 20 to 30

minutes to ensure meaningful engagement from participants (Greeffe, 2020).

Secondly, for the focus group discussions, I communicated with the assistant teachers about the time and platform of the debate. Zoom was used for the FGDs. The time duration for each FGD was about 1 hour and 30 minutes. The practice was done with each participant to avoid technical errors in the main call. Prior permission was taken from them to record the call for further reference that their identity would remain confidential and the information would be used solely for the research purpose. I have taken the notes as well. The participants were requested to have the video contact to be visible, and then at least some possible non-verbal cues can be determined to facilitate the interaction. The following is the detailed table of the overall data collection procedure.

Data Collection Procedure:

Data Collection Tools	Participants	Procedure
12 Qualitative online Interview	2 Head Teachers 2 Assistant Teacher 4 Students 2 Parents 1 AETO 1 TEO	First, I set a convenient time for the qualitative online interview using Zoom with the participants. Prior consent was taken from the participants to record the call for further reference, and they were also informed about the time commitment for 20 to 30 minutes. Interview questions included the simple and shortened yet important questionnaire directly relevant to the central research questions of the study.
1 FGD	6 assistant teachers (3 from each Thana)	Zoom was used for the FGDs. The time duration for FGD was approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes.

Figure 3.3: Data collection procedure

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

It is known that there are five significant ways of data analysis methods in qualitative research. Content or thematic analysis is one of them. According to Braun, Virginia & Clarke, Victoria. (2012), Thematic analysis (TA) is a tool for the systematic detection, arrangement, and insight of sense trends (themes) through a dataset. By reflecting on context through a dataset, TA helps me to see and make sense of concepts and interactions that are mutual or shared. This approach is a way to describe what is predominant in how a subject is debated or written and make sense of those commonalities.

The interpretation patterns that TA helped me recognize must be significant about the specific subject and study issue being examined. The response to a question is created by analysis, even though, as in some qualitative studies, the question being asked becomes obvious only through the analysis. Thematic analysis is a versatile approach that enables me to concentrate in several different ways on the results. So, I went for a thematic approach for data analysis for this study.

As part of the data analysis procedure, I have transcribed the recorded data. After that, the transcribed data were coded, categorized, and ordered to determine emerging themes and patterns. In the next step of the analysis, data were examined to find similarities and differences within the categories. Then, data were obtained from the online interview and focus group discussion. Data triangulation was also applied by collecting data by individual interviews and FGD.

3.9 Ethical issues and concerns

I took prior consent from all the study participants before recording their phone interviews and FGD discussions. Then, the confidentiality of the participants was strictly maintained throughout the whole study. Pseudonyms had been used while quoting the participants. Before giving any opinion on a particular topic, I tried to uphold my biases and went with the study's findings.

3.10 Limitations of the study

In this study, the main focus was to understand the practical scenario. As I already said, I did not find any study related to online learning that explains the practice of online teaching-learning of Bangla online classes. So, in my research, I mainly focused on describing the main aspects of the current practice of online Bangla classes, its challenges, and scopes to improve rather than being solution-oriented and trying to find solutions to the problems. I found this as a limitation of my study.

On the other hand, Khan, Rahman & Islam (2021) shared from their study that 45.9% of the students are participating in online learning during the pandemic; however, only 13% of them can engage in online classes via zoom or G-meet. I have found this scenario as another limitation of my study. Though the research site is in an urban area and the students are from the metropolitan area of Chattogram, as most of the government primary school students have come from low-income families. Hence, the number of participants is meager.

CHAPTER 4: Results and Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this section, I have presented the findings of qualitative data analysis. This section gives an overview of the Bangladeshi government primary school teachers' practice on online Bangla classes, its challenges, and scopes to improve online classes, along with a complete description and analysis of the collected data. Semi-structured online interviews and FGD with the participants were organized in response to finding out the practice of online Bangla classes in the pandemic, challenges of teachers and students on this online learning process, scopes those exist, and the ways to improve the online Bangla classes in future to improve students' learning at Government Primary Schools in Bangladesh.

After cataloging and analyzing the data, four themes aligned with the four research questions and conceptual framework are developed based on the responses from the participants. The themes include 4.2 General response to the COVID-19 pandemic and teaching-learning through online learning, 4.3 Practice of teaching and learning in Bangla online classes, 4.4 Challenges in the teaching-learning practices in Bangla online classes, 4.5 Scopes that exist in the teaching-learning practices in Bangla online classes, and 4.6 Areas of improvement. In the following section, these two themes and the sub-themes are discussed.

4.2 General response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the teaching-learning through online learning

In answer to this research question, the participants have shared different opinions. All of them are aligned on the point that online classes are an alternative; they can not replace regular

physical classes. The outcome of online Bangla classes is not equal to the physical classrooms. From a teacher's perspective, one Head Teacher has mentioned,

“Since it is not possible for us to take physical classes in the converted situation and since these students cannot come to the school directly, since we cannot take classes, now we actually have no other option but this online way.” (HT1, interview # 1, Dated: 18/5/202)

On the other hand, from a student's perspective, one student has mentioned that,

“We are all at home for the coronavirus for this pandemic. So we are all at home, that is the reason we all feel bored. So, we are doing online classes. This allows us to meet friends. Or we may learn something new.” (Student1, Interview # 5, Dated: 19/ 6/ 2021)

Also, one of the participants from the FGD said that,

“ By the Online classes, we can try to do as close as physical classes. And in this pandemic context, online classes are best from the other distance learning process.” (AT7, FGD#1, Dated: 3/7/2021)

So, it has been found that teachers and students from both perspectives feel that online classes are playing an important role as there is no alternative. And online classes are helping students to continue their learning.

4.3 Practice of teaching and learning in Bangla online classes

The teacher participants shared that they practiced different activities for the Bangla subject in the physical classroom to ensure the students' learning, specifically, the four skills of this subject. One of the participants shared that, during the physical classroom, they used to read aloud to ensure that students were listening, then asked the students to read to understand that they were listening properly and could read accordingly. In a part of the class, they always told the students to give some answers to the questions verbally to ensure their speaking skills, and then, of course, at some point of the class, they told the students to write in their notebook and check them during the class time to ensure that the students were writing properly. If students made any mistake, teachers would correct them at that moment. (AT1, interview # 3, Dated: 15/6/2021)

But when I asked about the practices of online Bangla classes, most of the participants were puzzled and could not identify the activity they did during the class time. One of the participants of the FGD said that,

“During the online class, generally, I tell the students to read aloud to practice their reading. Sometimes I read a part of the chapter or ask questions to practice the students' listening skills. Other than this, I ask reflective questions to the students to understand their speaking skills and try to correct them if they make any mistake.” (AT8, FGD#1, Dated: 3/7/2021)

Another participant said that,

“In every online Bangla class, I give instructions to students to write question-answers or to do some tasks in the notebook, click pictures of that and send them to me via Whatsapp or IMO. I can see them, but giving feedback or doing corrections is difficult here for the writing skill.” (AT5, FGD#1, Dated: 3/7/2021)

So, it can be summarized from these reflections that the instructions for online Bangla classes are more similar to the physical Bangla classes. Teachers practice the same activities for online Bangla classes rather than innovation or revising them according to the context. Only one thing which has been found innovative is using online content. Some of the teachers shared that they use online videos and animations during the class to ensure the students' attentiveness and engagement and ensure the classrooms provide a fun and joyful environment for the school. (HT1, interview # 1, Dated: 18/5/202)

4.3.1 Orientation of Bangla Online Classes

According to 75% of the students from all the participants, Bangla online class is more enjoyable and effective than the other classes. One of the participants told that,

“ Online Bangla classes are much better than normal classes. We can understand everything the way we do in a normal class. Otherwise, we have to write with chalk on the board in physical classes, but in the online class, we can do all this through

the camera. We can also see many things easily. There is a lot to be understood in the online Bangla classes, simply.” (Student, interview # 8, Dated: 22/06/2021)

Another participant said a similar thing,

“Online Bangla class is easier than other classes. It is well understood what the teachers are saying to do it here. As well as show class works to the teacher.”

(Student, interview # 9, Dated: 19/06/2021)

So, it is evident that students think online Bangla classes are easier to understand than the other subjective classes. Also, from the teacher’s interview, it is clear that they can use different online materials for online Bangla classes as the Government web portal and Youtube have a lot of content on primary grades. Students can understand by watching various online videos and quickly asking the teacher if they don't understand. The teacher explained again. A lot of the time, teachers even record the class and send it to the students. If students don't understand something in class, they can understand it by watching it again. For teachers and students, online Bangla class is relatively easy.

4.3.2 Impact of Online learning on students

From the analysis of the interviews and FGD, it is clear that teachers have similar opinions about this topic. All teachers, AETO and TEOs say that learning outcomes are not possible online. Then classes. One of the participants has mentioned,

“So in our online classes, I don't think we're supposed to get the learning outcomes

done for the students. This means that it is not fully effective in regards to achieving the learning outcomes." (AT1, interview # 3, Dated: 15/ 6/ 2021)

One of the participants of FGD has mentioned that,

"Overall, it seems to me that as an alternative, online education is a good privilege choice, but at the same time, there are several shortcomings in online learning. A learning outcome, which may be achieved in the physical classroom, is not possible in online classes. Specifically, it is difficult for the students to achieve the learning outcome for writing skills, and teachers can not be sure about the achievement." (AT4, FGD#1, Dated: 3/7/2021)

Similarly, another participant said that,

"Now, the students of grade one or two do as much as they can. Those in Four Five may catch what the teacher is saying and what lesson they are teaching now. I'm not happy about it; only a minimal number of kids here can catch the teacher."

(AETO, interview#11, Dated: 9/7/2021)

So, it is clear from this discussion that achieving learning outcomes from online classes is complex and can not be similar to the physical classroom. But from some responses, it is also found that online classes also help students to continue their learning in the pandemic situation; simultaneously, teachers and students shared that they feel curious and fun in online classes as they can use exciting applications and online materials which arouses a lot of curiosity in

students, such as - when students are doing online classes, they can see them in the video, they can see their teacher or other peers in the video; also can use mute-unmute, raising hands, chatbox and other applications on the G-meet classes which they feel exciting. At the same time, some visual materials are like looking at an online book and sharing reflections after watching a video also makes them happy to do new things.

These things have been adamant about adapting to the physical classroom. A teacher couldn't always use a projector or this material. Due to different challenges, these things worked out in the online class. And at the same time, the online class is an entirely new inclusion for students. So as students are curious about anything new, they eagerly wait for online classes.

4.3.3 Skills that can or can not be practiced in an online Bangla class and the related activities

Though one of the participants shared that all four skills must come in one lesson, there is no such thing every day. A teacher can also present a lesson of the day with two skills (HT2, interview # 1, Dated: 18/05/2021).

However, after analyzing all the responses, interestingly, I found some of the quantitative data, which I found very important to discuss. It is clear from the responses that teachers are aware of the skills of the Bangla subject while they are taking online lessons. However, it is quite challenging to say which skills they could teach and which not. 4 of the participants struggled to identify the activities related to the skills of Bangla subjects and were unsure about their practices.

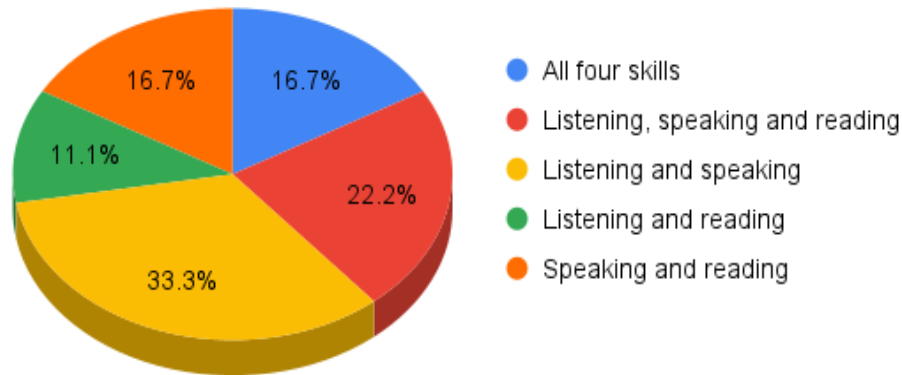


Figure 4.1: Percentage of skills that can be practiced in online classes.

From figure 4, it can be seen that 16.7% of the participants can recognize the activities which can ensure all four skills can be practiced in online classes, 22.2% of the participants shared that only listening and speaking, 33.3% of the participants shared that three skills listening, speaking and reading, 11.1% of the participants think that listening and reading, and 16.7% of the participants recognized the activities which can ensure speaking and reading skills on the online Bangla classes.

One of the participants shared that, in the case of online classes, what she has experienced is that she can take listening. Then when the kids are reading, she requests popcorn reading or reading allowed; she can check the reading and listening skills of the kids. Then there is speaking; when students have a conversation or reflection from reading material or after seeing a video, she can ensure that too. (AT5, FGD#1, Dated: 3/7/2021)

Another AT from the FGD shared a different opinion. He thinks he can ensure all four skills in his online Bangla classes. In his class, students listen when he gives any instruction or read a story from a textbook, students speak when they are told to provide an answer to a question or reflect

on any topic, students read when they do some activities like popcorn reading or reading aloud, and finally, students practice their writing skill. In contrast, they give answers in a notebook and then click pictures and send them to the teacher. He can check the answers and get back to the student after the class. (AT8, FGD#1, Dated: 3/7/2021)

One of the participants said,

“ I can speak when my teacher asks me to answer. I also can read when the teacher tells me to read from the book or slide. I think I can practice these two skills more frequently in my online classes.” (Student4, interview#8, Dated: 22/06/2021)

Similarly, another participant said that

“ My daughter can listen to her teachers clearly in the online classroom and can understand the instructions of the teachers. She also can speak and read while the teacher asks any question or tells her to read something.” (Parent1, interview#10, Dated: 19/06/2021)

So, from this discussion, it is clear that skills that can be learned quickly are listening and reading, sometimes speaking and writing, which can also be practiced in online Bangla classes. It is evident that participants give examples of the activities they identified as beneficial, like hearing from textbooks or stories while practicing listening, telling answers, sharing reflections while speaking, reading aloud, or doing popcorn reading while practicing reading. Very few teachers shared that students write on their notebooks, and they give feedback while students send pictures to them.

However, It was exciting that there are few similarities among the participants regarding this question. One participant shared that,

“ Out of the four skills, they can say what they hear and what they see. But reading is also possible, but writing is getting less. Writing skills are declining.” (AT2, interview#4, Dated: 19/06/21)

On the other hand, one participant from FGD shared that sometimes, students cannot hear clearly for connection issues or other family issues. Sometimes, it is difficult to tell the students' instructions, which indicates that listening is not easy to practice in an online class. Also, he thinks that supporting students who cannot hear clearly in the physical classroom for writing skills is not possible in online classes. He can not see the script or notebook and can not correct if there are any spelling mistakes or anything error. (AT3, FGD#1, Dated: 3/7/2021)

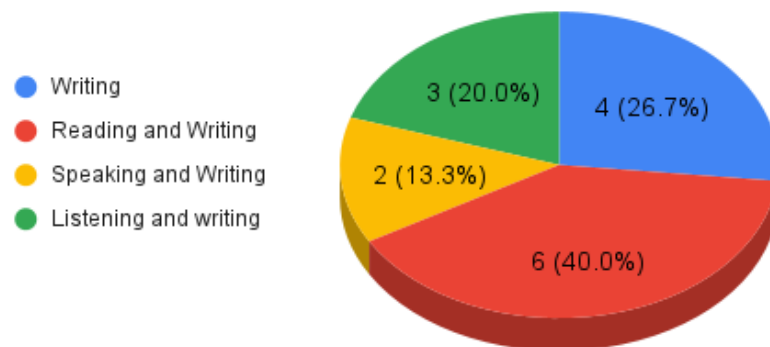


Figure 4.2: Percentage of skills that can not be practiced in online Bangla classes

From Figure 5, it is clear that 26.7% of the participants think that writing skills can not practice in the online Bangla classes; 40% of the participants shared that reading and writing, 13.3% of the

participants told that speaking and writing, and 20% of the participants shared that listening and writing are difficult to practice as a skill in the online classes.

If this data is analyzed according to the role of the participants, it shows that 3 students said that they feel difficulty when they listen and read in the online Bangla classes; 5 of the Assistant teachers and 1 of the Head Teacher shared that they think writing is most difficult to ensure as a skill in the online classes; however, listening is also a concern due to the connectivity of the device and speaking is difficult as most of the time the background of the student is not learning-friendly.

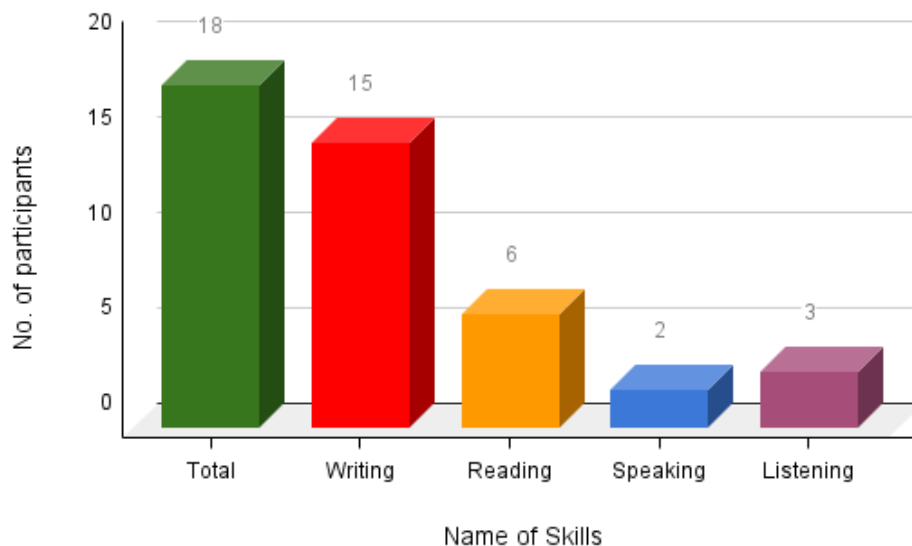


Figure 4.3: No. of participants vs. skill that can not be addressed in an online Bangla class

From the above bar chart, it is evident that 15 of the participants out of 18 think that writing is a skill that they can not practice or ensure that students are learning from the online Bangla classes. Whereas 6 of the participants believe in reading, 2 of the participants find speaking,

and 3 share that listening is difficult to achieve as a skill for the students in the Bangla online classes.

From the above discussion, it is clear that writing is a skill that is a challenge to achieve considering online Bangla classes; also, it differs from student to student, parent to parents and teacher to teacher that which skill is easy to mastery and which is not, what I found very similar like a physical classroom outcome.

4.4 Challenges in the teaching-learning practices in Bangla online classes

Several challenges come out when participants describe their experiences and share them with me. One of the main challenges of any online class is the availability of the internet. As the students of government primary schools come from lower-income families, how difficult for them to avail a smartphone and internet connection. All of the teachers, including the AETO and TEO, shared that the main barrier of an online class is internet connectivity and, therefore, not having a smartphone. One of the participants shared that,

“In online classes, most of the kids are not getting attendance because not everyone has an android mobile. Also, the attention they give in the physical class does not give attention when they come online. They look back and forth. I can't see them paying much attention.” (AT2, interview#4, Dated: 19/06/2021)

Similarly, a participant from the FGD told that,

“90% of my students can not attend the online classes. The main reason behind this

is the unavailability of smartphones and fewer internet connections. Maybe online classes are effective, or this is the only option as we have nothing to do right now. But it is a concern or challenge that we could not reach all of our students and can not ensure their learning over the months of the pandemic.” (AT5, FGD#1, Dated: 3/7/2021)

Furthermore, another participant shared that,

“The Guardians can't provide such a smart device for all the children we work with within the primary government schools, but the maximum number of them are required for online classes. In my previous station, Panchlaish, where I saw 20% in some schools and 25% in some schools, kids with this type of figure can join an online class. That means too many children cannot join online classes.” (AETO, interview#11, Dated: 9/7/2021)

Though this challenge is not directly related to the research, as all of the participants told about this challenge, this can be a topic for serious discussion.

The other challenges related to the research topic are mainly the online learning process, lack of activity, class timeshares, and unavailability of several online contents.

4.4.1 The online learning process

Seven of the participants shared that this online learning process is not helping them to teach or learn the skills. One of the participants shared that,

“For online learning, as we could not see how the teacher was writing on a board, we could not follow the teacher. Also, in the physical classroom, if we make any mistakes in our writing, the teacher can correct them or give suggestions on how to correct them. But in the online classes, for this distance, the teacher can not do that easily, and we need to wait for his suggestions.” (Student2, interview # 9,

Dated: 19/6/2021)

Another participant from the FGD shared that for this online learning process, it is difficult to check each student for each activity, identify their struggles and solve them; also, it is challenging to ensure that all the students are participating in the class while in the physical classroom that was all about eye-contact. (AT7, FGD#1, Dated: 3/7/2021)

Similarly, another participant said that,

“ In class, eye contact is significant. A teacher can understand whether their student is learning from this eye contact. But for online classes, as this is happening as distance learning, eye contact is impossible. A teacher could not understand, a student was actually learning or not.” (AETO, interview#11, Dated: 9/7/2021)

4.4.2 Lack of activity

From the analysis of the interviews and FGD, it is clear that doing different activities is very difficult in online Bangla classes. Though there are certain activities like popcorn reading, reading aloud, peer work, writing in the chat, seeing the video, and telling reflections on the class, the activities are limited. Teachers can not try fun activities or guided practice in online Bangla classes. Teachers can not design customized activities for specific students, which does not help students achieve their skills.

4.4.3 Duration of an online class

The class duration of a regular physical class is a minimum of 35 mins where a teacher can utilize all of the time for learning purposes. But if a teacher schedules an online class for 40 mins, 30% of their time is spent on different logistical activities, like mute-unmute, video on-off, etc. That means a teacher can give learning support to the students only for 28 mins. Sometimes students can not join on time, and they feel exhausted early because they continuously look at a screen and lack fun or diverse classroom activities. One of the participants said that,

“ Online class time is limited. The issue of time is a challenge that often takes a long time in the class and gets the children a little tired. For children, online classes may not be physically possible. In case it is the same for Bangla online class. It turns out

that if you take a long time, they lose focus. Physically maybe they feel a little tired

at the end of the class.” (AT1, interview#2, Dated: 14/ 6/2021)

4.4.4 Unavailability of Bangla online contents

Mostly the teachers shared that the number of online content for Bangla subjects is very few. We found some content on the Government NCTB website and Youtube, but the contents of Youtube are not always child-friendly, and the Government website content is too old. In this current situation, this is a challenge for the teachers to make online content for Bangla online classes. Though teachers try to make powerpoints and search for appropriate videos as content, as in an online course, teachers could not use any hand-made material or thus thinks, it is challenging to ensure the learning without proper contents or materials as different students learn differently.

4.5 Scopes that exist in the teaching-learning practices in Bangla online classes

As the main challenge of online learning is distance itself and also the network or internet connection, so the first idea that comes from the participants is Government needs to take steps to provide all the students with mobile phones and internet access; thus, all the students will be able to go into the class and teachers can support them in any way. Also, if the internet connection is strong, the logistical challenges and need for extra time will be solved automatically.

Though this was one of the main scopes to improve the teaching and learning of the students in online Bangla Classes, more related scopes suggested by the participants are described below.

4.5.1 Increase the duration and maintain a routine for online classes

All participants shared that if they have a fixed date and time, it will be beneficial to prepare the content and the internet. One of the Participants said that,

“We get very little time in the online class. If we can fix a time and date, then it will be easy for me to prepare myself with plans, content, and material, as it will help the students to be prepared with the internet and learning materials.” (AT1, interview#3,

Dated: 15/6/2021)

Similarly, another participant shared that if the class time constructed is one hour, it will be helpful for them to manage their time and ensure the students' learning. (AT5, FGD#1, Dated: 03/07/2021)

4.5.2 Select one skill for one class

One of the participants said that,

“It is not necessary to think about all four skills for one class; I can decide today that I will just let the students read a paragraph or do a single activity which ensures

mastery in one skill. Let me just say, today I will not take any other subject, I will not take any other skill. It will be helpful for any teacher to take one skill or one objective for one class.”(HT1, interview#1, Dated: 18/05/2021)

From this answer, it is clear that for a Bangla online class, if teachers choose the learning outcome carefully considering the skill of that learning outcome, it will be helpful for the teachers to plan that class by including necessary materials or content and for students to learn that skill from the class.

4.5.3 Take review classes

One of the participants told that,

“As a guardian, I think, If a teacher takes a review class separately, separating my child from others after finishing the class and if the teacher spends an extra five minutes with him, telling him that yesterday you were not here in the class, we read these things, You will finish these things at home, you will finish today's reading as well as yesterday's reading. Remind him of that will be very helpful for my child.” (Parent2, interview#6, Dated:19/06/2021)

Similarly, students also shared that review class is one of the scopes to improve the online Bangla classes. The reason behind this is though Bangla is a comparatively easy subject. Still,

sometimes students can not join online classes and can not understand the topic due to network or other issues; it was a struggle to be on track. That is why a review class is always helpful.

4.5.4 Use digital content

Participants of this research shared that using digital content is very useful for them. Still, as there is less content in the online portals, it is difficult to find appropriate content for their class. One of the participants told that,

“The use of audio-video and various digital devices, but for us, in my opinion, the beginning of a new horizon for the education perspective of our country. Let’s stand in this place, even after the opening of the school after this pandemic. I believe that our students will be able to learn the Benga skills in a better way, especially the competencies of Bengali, effectively and use them in real life.” (AT6, FGD#1,

Dated: 03/07/2021)

That means teachers depend on the online audio-video content, and thus this is also a scope to improve our online Bangla classes for teaching and learning from the perspective of the teachers and students.

4.6 Areas of improvement

When I asked this question, 78% of the respondents were confused and took time to think about online classes, specifically Bangla classes. 22% of the respondents shared that the main scope in the online Bangla classes is that this is the future of our education system; we will also practice this online learning in the future. So it is a scope for us to trial and error and try to overcome the obstacles which come in the path of this online learning process. One of the participants told that,

“These online classes will continue in the future. The concept of digital Bangladesh will come into reality by this. This will be one of our many achievements. So, we want to continue online classes. We will learn what the challenges of it are and, of course, will take necessary steps to overcome this.” (TEO, interview#12, Dated: 09/07/2021)

Along with this scope, 78% of the participants shared three more areas with me. Those are 1. Learning of the children about online security, 2. Make more subject-based online content, and 3. Increase teachers’ skills regarding online classes and content.

One of the participants in the FGD told that,

“This is a scope for us as teachers to learn how to take online classes; previously, we did not have this opportunity. We can also learn about different online content, how to use those content, and how to search for those content. Which is also an

opportunity for us as this is the future of our education system.” (AT7, FGD#1,

Dated: 03/07/2021)

Similarly, another teacher shared that maybe taking online classes is a struggle for them, allowing learning. Also, as now children can get a mobile phone or smartphone very quickly, students need to know about internet safety. So, by doing online classes, teachers get the opportunity to teach about online or internet safety to their students. (AT8, FGD#1, Dated: 03/07/2021)

From this discussion, it is clear that though online Bangla classes have a lot of challenges, according to the participants, online classes are the future or part of the future of our education system, and it is necessary to have training on them, specifically subject-based and skill-based training. It is also essential to have diverse and appropriate online content which will be helpful and helpful for learning. For online Bangla classes, it is necessary to have training and content, both skill-based. Additionally, one of the HT shared that what has benefited them because of this COVID-19 is that they have been able to teach their students how to use these online devices, and their teachers have also become accustomed to it. This is also a suggestion to continue this practice in some way.

CHAPTER 5: Discussion, Conclusion & Recommendation

5.1 Introduction

In this last chapter, I discussed and gave some concluding remarks on the findings and recommendations of the study conducted on the perceptions of Bangladeshi Government primary school teachers, students, parents, and government officials regarding their practices, challenges, and scopes of online Bangla classes during the COVID 19 situation which will have some impact on online learning for the future also.

5.2 Discussion

Because of a pandemic, online classes in the distance learning situation are the only alternative for any teacher or student to continue learning during the COVID-19 crisis. During the lockdown, private schools have hastened to embrace web-based learning strategies, offering lectures delivered via online media platforms such as Zoom, Google Classroom, Google Meet, WhatsApp, Facebook, and YouTube (Bhuiyan, 2020; Chen et al., 2020). But according to UNICEF (2020), Bangladesh Government primary schools only have 7% of students who can access online learning. The findings from the first research question also support this data. All the teachers and Government officials shared that the number of students attending the online classes is deficient. One of the participants shared that the percentage of students who can join online classes is a maximum of 15% in her thana. Also, from the FGD, it is evident that many technical issues are the prior requirements for an online classroom intervention. This is also found in the research of Rafe (2020), where he said that digital technology, experienced teachers, and good facilities are all lacking in rural schools. Therefore it is clear that before going for an analysis of an online class, specifically if that is a subject-based class, it is needed

to keep in mind that in Bangladesh, the context is very different than other developed or Middle-income countries, Government primary schools of Bangladesh does not have enough resources, even sometimes minimum resources for supporting the teachers or students to do an online class effectively and efficiently, lastly most crucial thing is, the students of government primary school are from lower or lower-middle-class families. Thus 90% of them can not afford a smartphone device or internet connection to join online classes.

When the pandemic started in 2019, several nations came up with the notion of attending classes on an online platform to continue their educational pursuits (Wadud, 2020a). It was simple for educational institutions to take lessons on an ad-hoc basis through the internet. However, this platform became the sole means to teach vast groups of kids (Mishra et al., 2020). Bangladesh has also taken steps to organize online classes to complete their studies without meeting in person (Shivakumara, 2020). In this study, participants also agreed that during this time, online classes are the only medium that can help students to continue their learning, those who could not join online classes are mostly from low-income families. The learning gap increased in their case. But 100% of the students' participants agreed that Bangl online classes are helpful to continue their education, and they can understand the content that the teachers are delivering clearly if other logistical issues are on the rack like internet, device efficiency, etc.

Then, it is also found from the study that most of the participants from teachers or students somehow agreed on this notion that teachers can design activities for online classes that can address the skills of literature. Students can learn those skills in an online Bangla class. Listening and speaking are two main language skills teachers can practice clearly, and students can understand and practice during class time. Also, reading is possible with some activities like reading aloud or popcorn reading. Students enjoy these activities during the class because they

engage the students and help them achieve these competencies. But fifteen participants out of eighteen said that writing is a skill that can not be designed or practiced effectively in online classes. According to NCTB Curriculum, the Bangla subject mainly focused on four language skills; writing addresses the students' writing competency. One of the significant findings of this study is that teachers can not design activities for writing competencies because of the distance of the teacher and students' context. Parents and students are also not sure that students are achieving this skill. The NCTB research emphasized the need for our primary school curriculum that combines and prepares students with competencies and abilities that can be used in real-world circumstances both locally and globally (Pathways to Education, 2016). So, it is essential to acquire writing competency, and online Bangla classes can not provide this opportunity to us.

In addition to this, many struggles have come up from the interviews and FGD. The class time and the online learning process are two of them. Teachers feel that the time of an online class is significantly less than physical classes because when a teacher enters a physical classroom, they can plan and execute a minimum of 35 minutes without any interception. But when a teacher goes for an online class, many logistical and surrounding issues impact the class time, and teachers can not manage time according to their plan. Also, the process of online classes itself is a challenge. Sometimes students do not give attention to the class only because of this distance; teachers can not understand and ensure the student's learning because of this distance. Students do their class surrounded by their family and friends. Sometimes these family environments make barriers to giving attention in the class. Though these are mainly the challenges of online classes, these challenges are also very accurate for Bangla online classes.

Furthermore, the subject-based challenges of online Bangla classes are one lack of activities and two lack of online content or resources. The study participants clearly stated that they struggle to design activities for writing competency. Other activities for other competencies are needed to repeat several times because of the lack of online activities. This lack of activities happens for several reasons. These students can not effort a smartphone with enough memory or other facilities to browse different websites or videos; on the other hand, physical classroom materials can not be used in these online classes. So, teachers need to do the same activities repeatedly, and students sometimes get bored with this. The study participants also stated a lack of content on the internet for the Bangla subject. According to Chowdhury (2020b), the usage of web-based resources is increasing at an increasing rate in Bangladesh. Most academic institutions have constructed academic portals where lectures may design courses online. But these activities would imply higher secondary education and university education purposes. Also, The government has chosen to use television to instruct elementary school kids.

Students may stay informed about their academics while watching television, and there would be no gaps in their knowledge. Teachers hold courses on various subjects at particular times, and pupils learn through watching television (Alamgir, 2020b). But the instruction for taking online classes came later in 2021 by the NAPE. In March 2021, NAPE instructed all the teachers to distribute worksheets to reach them and support their learning. Consequently, in April 2021, NAPE again led the teachers to learn and use Google Meet to conduct classes and encourage the students and parents to come and join in the online classes (NAPE, 2021). But, after taking training and teaching online Bangla classes, teachers shared that they are facing challenges because of the lack of content. Only Government primary schools websites have

content that is just the contents of the NCTB books. These are not enough and not updated also.

In alignment with the findings mentioned above on the challenges, it is found from the study that there are several scopes to improve online Bangla classes. It would be great if teachers could fix a specific time and date for the classes. The class time can also be increased if teachers and students agree to do so. Another scope to improve is if teachers choose one competency for one class. If they choose this way, they can consciously design classroom activities, considering the time and students' mastery. Also, it will help students to be focused in the class and learn competency more effectively. Teachers can also take review classes if they find the necessity of it. One of the parents shared that her daughter could not understand the content of the class several times because of technical issues or other difficulties. So, it will be great if the teacher communicates with the student later and reviews whether she understands the content.

Besides, one of the teachers shared that an effective way to ensure that students achieve mastery on a specific learning outcome is the review call or class. That teacher said in the interview that he found it very helpful while he called his students after class, specifically those who were not present for the whole time of the class or seemed virtually excluded from the class. Finally, the participants shared that finding online content related to the Bangla subject on online platforms would be great. It is also a scope to improve. If the government or any private organization makes and uploads online content related to grades one to five, that will remain forever and help teachers and students consistently.

Moreover, it is very clear from the interviews and FGD that online education is the future or part of the future education system. Nobody can remove this from teachers' or students' life even after the COVID-19 pandemic. The practice of online education, which was developed in 2020

and 2021, has a lot of impacts, and teachers will practice this with their students after the pandemic. Bhuiyan (2020) said that we could not avoid or remove online learning from our education system even if the pandemic ends shortly. When in September 2021, the school reopened, teachers were using video content and other materials in their physical classes to deliver the learning objective in the classroom. So, it is essential to think about the lack of activities and online content. It is time to improve in these areas, including taking online classes or going for blended learning.

5.3 Conclusion

This study aimed to discover the practices of online Bangla classes during the COVID-19 pandemic in Bangladeshi government primary schools and its challenges and scope to improve in online Bangla classes. While doing this study, I considered to give importance on the online classroom activities, the subject domains that are supposed to be practiced during the class; it is possible to achieve mastery on those domains or not, if yes then what are the activities that ensure the mastery of the students, if no then why this is not possible to achieve the skill, what are the challenges and what can be the scope to improve online classes or reduce the challenges of the teachers and students of online Bangla classes. This study was successful as it generated some findings based on the practice and challenges of the teachers and students in online Bangla classes and finding the scopes to improve in online classes to facilitate students' learning more effectively.

The online Bangla classes are relatively more enjoyable and effective than other subjects classes. Teachers can design their activities considering the domain skills, and students can also achieve the mastery of a learning outcome. However, writing is the main language skill that

is less practiced during the class, and also, teachers are not confident about the student's mastery of writing, which the students support. Though it was evident from this study that distance learning and logistical issues play a vital role in the classroom if we look forward to outcomes. But, considering only the Bangla online classes, it is found from the study that teachers have less idea on how to design different activities for different domain skills by addressing all the students of the class. Also, the lack of online content has a significant impact on the lesson plan and classroom activities. Thus, the result of the study provides the necessary information to reconsider the practice of online classes, logistical issues of an online classroom, the activities, and the contents of an online Bangla class to ensure the students' learning outcomes.

5.4 Recommendation

Following are some of the recommendations which the study would like to provide. These recommendations emerged as a result of this study, and they have emerged directly from the participant's responses to the questionnaires.

- The school authorities and governments should consider the importance of logistical issues like stable internet and workable smartphones if the government wants to continue online classes or blended learning in the future. Also, the government should think about policies on how they can include all the students in online classes. Because if all the students are not included in the online platform, it is pretty impossible to ensure equal opportunity for all the students.
- The challenges of online Bangla classes that participants mentioned, such as class time, less attentive students, and the struggles students and teachers faced during the class activity, need to be considered. Government should fix a policy on how they want to

continue these online Bangla classes and the time of the classes because teachers need to have explicit instruction on how they should continue the online Bangla classes.

- Then, the teachers should train on taking online Bangla classes, specifically for the class's lesson plan, contents, and activities. This is super important because we do not know when the uncertainty comes again. We need to be prepared for this. Also, this is high time to train the teachers about how to use online platforms for classroom activities based on skills because if teachers can not design different attractive activities, then students will not feel interested to learn the skills of Bangla subject and resources of Bangla subject which are available in online; as if the government wants to go for blended learning for Bangla subject, then this is high time to implement this in the government primary schools.
- Finally, there should be research and invention on online classroom activities and resources for Bangla subjects. Government should emphasize the training related to online class activities and encourage private sectors to create more online Bangla content for online and offline uses, as these contents can also be usable in physical classrooms. We need to remember that, though Bangla is our mother tongue, learning the skills is equally tricky as other literature subjects. The educational authority is required to study how a teacher can use different resources for different grades for Bangla classes and design activities to address the skills of Bangla subjects.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Letter of consent

I. Research Study Title: The study in which you are being requested to participate has the working title of "Distance Learning in COVID-19 situation: Scopes and Challenges in teaching-learning for Bangla subjects in Government Primary Schools ." This questionnaire has been developed for the purpose of a research project carried out in the BRAC Institute of Educational Development, Brac University, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

II. Purpose of the research: This research aims to understand the current reality of distance learning in this pandemic situation regarding using competencies in the classroom, pedagogy, and a more suitable medium.

III. Confirmation of particular requirements as highlighted in the Plain Language Statement: As stated in the Plain Language Statement, participants in this research will be requested to participate in at least one online survey, which will record as data for research uses. Participants' involvement in this study is voluntary. As a participant, you may withdraw from the Research Study at any point. There will be no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the Research Study have been completed.

IV. Arrangements to protect data confidentiality: Every effort will be made to respect participants' anonymity. The data will be analyzed by the researcher alone. Participants' actual names will be protected and will use fake names if direct references are required. The researcher will hold interview notes and/or transcripts and store them insecurely

V. Agreement: I have read and understood the information in this form. I understand the terms and conditions, and I am aligned with those.

I agree

I disagree

Appendix 2: Qualitative individual online interview questionnaire for the participants

1. How does this distance learning process impact students' overall learning experience?
2. What is your experience regarding Bangla online classes?
3. What skills can you address in online Bangla classes (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)?
4. Which skill was easy to learn/teach? Why?
5. What are the activities you did in the class to learn these skills?
6. Which skill is difficult to learn/teach? Why?
7. What are the challenges you faced during distance learning?
8. What are the scopes you think to overcome the challenges?
9. Any other comments/thoughts you would like to share.

Appendix 3: FGD Guideline questionnaire for the assistant teachers

1. How does this distance learning process impact students' overall learning experience?
2. What is your experience regarding Bangla online classes?
3. What skills can you address in online Bangla classes (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)?
4. Which skill was easy to learn/teach? Why?
5. What are the activities you did in the class to learn these skills?
6. Which skill is difficult to learn/teach? Why?
7. What are the challenges you faced during distance learning?
8. What are the scopes you think to overcome the challenges?
9. Any other comments/thoughts you would like to share.