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Study 5**

**CASE STUDIES OF QUALITY
PRIMARY EDUCATION IN
BANGLADESH**

Conducted by:



BRAC Research and Evaluation Division

October 2004

**Directorate of Primary Education
Ministry of Primary and Mass Education**

CASE STUDIES OF QUALITY PRIMARY EDUCATION IN BANGLADESH

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ACRONYMS

ADB	Asian Development Bank
AUEO	Assistant Upazila Education Officer
BA	Bachelor of Arts
BED	Bachelor of Education
BRAC	An NGO (formerly Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee)
CARE	An NGO, CARE Bangladesh
C-in-Ed	Certificate in Education
CH	Craig-Heneveld
DPE	Directorate of Primary Education
EFA	Education for All
ESTEEM	Effective Schools Through Enhanced Education Management
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GPS	Government Primary School
HSC	Higher Secondary School Certificate
IDEAL	Intensive District Approach to Education for All
MA	Master of Arts
MEd	Master of Education
MOPME	Ministry of Primary and Mass Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
PEDP	Primary Education Development Programme
PSPMP	Primary School Performance Monitoring Project
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
PTI	Primary Teachers Training Institute
RNGPS	Registered Non-Government Primary School
SMC	School Management Committee
SSC	Secondary School Certificate
UEO	Upazila Education Officer
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UP	Union Parishad

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

How do some primary schools in Bangladesh succeed despite of well documented constraints they face? The major primary education research programmes conducted in Bangladesh over recent years have consistently demonstrated that the inputs to primary education are insufficient and often of poor quality, teaching and learning processes remain limited to a very narrow range of practice, and achievement levels are disappointingly low. Findings of the PSPMP study, Education Watch, ESTEEM classroom research and several official government documents and statistics reflect all the above. So how is it that certain schools manage to provide a high quality of education in the circumstances, when the problems exist for all?

The survey-based methods commonly used to study the factors determining educational opportunity and outcomes have taken us some distance in understanding success and failure, but the complexity of the school as a living community demands that further insights be obtained by expanding the horizons of our research activities. To this end, the present study attempts to draw on anthropological and ethnographic research traditions to achieve original insights into what it *feels* like to live in and be part of a school, which really *makes a difference*.

The quality of education has been defined in a broader sense, which includes strong community participation in school improvement, leadership quality of the school heads, teachers' active participation in mentoring the learners, healthy teaching learning atmosphere in the classrooms, putting students in the centre of educational setting, and learning achievement of the students. It has recognized that having all these characteristics in one school is too much to want – a school can be successful in any one or more of the above areas. Six case studies have prepared on purposively selected six successful primary schools in Bangladesh – five of these schools are government and one is registered non-government. These are located in six different districts viz., Bandarban, Chittagong, Dhaka, Jessore, Nawabganj and Pabna. Selection of the schools was guided by the Steering Committee formed for the study. The Research and Evaluation Division of BRAC conducted the study.

Findings

The schools brought under the study came from various settings. Each of them has its own way of being successful depending upon the availability of human and material resources. In general, the schools are not successful at the same level. However, each has a number of characteristics, which can be considered

as factors behind its success; at the same time a number of weaknesses also prevail. Again, each of them faces a number of constraints too. Thus, analysing the findings of the standalone case studies the research team identified and consolidated the success factors and weaknesses of the sample schools, as well as the constraints they face. It can be mentioned that sometimes weakness became prominent than the success factors for a particular school.

Constraints face by the schools

Followings are the constrains that the study schools face.

1. The teacher student ratio is higher than the acceptable level of at most 1:40 in four of the six schools under study. Thus, the teachers are unable to provide adequate time to the students. Quality education requires attention of the teachers to each and every student, however it is not possible in four study schools.
2. Socio-economic condition of the communities where the schools are situated is poor. Average income of the majority of the parents and their educational level are low. Parents of majority of the students are illiterate. Thus, it became the responsibility of the schools to motivate the parents to education and ensure enrolment of their children. Again, due to poverty many parents do not have ability to create adequate environment for study at home. Majority of the students are first generation learners. Due to poverty a good number of the students are to involve in work; they cannot attend school regularly.
3. In relation to number of students in the schools or number of eligible children (6-10 years) in the school catchment area it reveals that some of the schools have inadequate number of teachers and some have insufficient infrastructure like shortage of classrooms. Some of the schools lack electricity, playground, drinking water and toilet facilities. Majority of the schools do not have separate toilet facility for girls.
4. Annual subscription provided by the government is inadequate to bear the day-to-day expenses of the schools. Thus, the schools are to look forward for resource mobilization at the local level.
5. The teachers are dissatisfied with the remuneration they get from the government. They are to engage in other income earning activities to meet the needs of their families. Mostly all the senior male teachers are involved in various types of activities ranges from small trading to private tutoring, which demands good amount of time.
6. In general, there is no provision of incentives or rewards for the teachers or the students for their good performance at school level. Not all the teachers get foundation training like C-in-Ed.
7. To the teachers and the *upazila* education officials, the prime indicator of quality education is the students' performance in primary scholarship examination. Such thinking also covered the parents and the SMC members. Thus, the major activities of the schools concentrate towards

success in scholarship examination. Other issues of quality education get less importance. Again, due to overemphasis on the education of small portion of the students i.e., the scholarship examinees by the best teachers majority of the students are deprived.

Factors behind the success of the schools

Followings are the characteristics of the schools, which made them good schools.

- 1: The schools, in general, have very good links with the communities they serve. Such links have been established during inception of the schools. During the early stage of the schools the respected community people mobilized the parents to send their children to the schools. To build infrastructure of the schools the communities provided help in cash and kind including land and labour. They provide financial support to the schools in various occasions. Involvement of community people in teaching in absence of regular teachers and in preparing annual school plan is significant.
2. The leadership of the head teachers is enormous. All the head teachers are serious and remain busy with the management and administration of the schools. They are the key persons of all the activities. All the six head teachers come to school on time and spent longer period in school everyday. They are very much capable to ensure that the assistant teachers attend the classes as per routine.
3. Majority of the head teachers oversee the classroom activities of the teachers and provide feedback accordingly. Weekly staff meetings are held in some schools, where the teachers discuss about the head teachers' findings of classroom observation and other relevant issues. Except Dhaka school, other five head teachers are committed to their duty as teachers.
4. Influential people of the communities are involved in the SMCs. The SMC Chairs of five government schools are active and do lots of work for the school. They initiate to mobilise funds using their social influence. In some schools, they monitor the attendance of the students and the teachers, and oversee the classroom performance of the teachers.
5. The teachers try their best to teach the students in the classrooms. Except few cases, all the teachers are capable in teaching and are punctual in their duties. They sometimes provide extra care to the slow learners. Good intra relationship among the teachers exists. They are also respectful to the rules and regulations of the schools.
6. A strong emphasis is given in the preparation of the scholarship examinees and participating in the competitions and functions held at the *upazila* level. Winning awards in these occasions bring name and fame for the schools.
7. The attendance rate of the students is higher in all the schools compared to the national average. They are comparatively disciplined.

8. The authorities established students' hostel in two schools. The scholarship examinees and some poor students are allowed to stay there. In one school, some female teachers also stay in the hostel.
9. All the five government schools are considered as better schools by the respective education offices. These schools are favoured through allocating additional funds and appointing more teachers. Good teachers are also appointed in these schools. The AUEOs and other high officials provide more visits to these schools.
10. Majority of the schools have their own sources of income, which help meet the needs of the schools.

Weaknesses the schools carry

Weaknesses of the study schools are as follows,

1. There is no strong mechanism in at least four schools for professional development of the teachers. General practice is to bring good teachers transferring from the neighbouring schools.
2. These schools developed under autocratic rule of the head teachers. No activity is done beyond the head teachers control or wish. Thus, in most cases, democratic values are not practiced in decision-making.
3. On average, 10% of the students do not attend in the annual examinations. The students, teachers' and the parents' involvement in unfair means in annual examination is common to all the schools. Copying, indicating answers of the questions, loose assessment of answer paper, and giving pass marks to the failed students are the unfair means. Thus, the pass rates declared are far from the reality.
4. The teachers recognise the need of co-curricular activities for overall development of the students. However, a few of the students participate in these. Like scholarship examination these activities are also competition centred. Thus, only a small portion of the students gets the opportunity to practice and participate in the competition at the *upazila* level.
5. Due to outside engagement of the teachers, sometimes they are not able to attend the classes. They are to depend on proxy teachers. Quality of these proxy teachers is poor.
6. There is less interaction between the teachers and teh parents. The teachers rarely do home visit. Majority of the parents do not visit school to talk with the teachers about the progress of their children.
7. The schools are not sensitive to the special needs of the disabled and ethnic minority students. No special attention is given to them.
8. As the assessment of the schools is mostly done through assessing the documents, the head teachers keep all the documents updated. Sometimes false statements are also produced regarding attendance of the students, home visit, and students' performance. The AUEOs do not observe

classroom activities of the teachers regularly, and they are unable to provide pedagogical feedback. They do not take any step to stop unfair means in the annual examinations.

9. The SMCs do not run democratically. The Chairs and the member secretaries take decisions in most cases. The other members just put their signatures on the meeting minutes prepared by the head teacher. The same people are selected in the committees for several years.
10. Accounts of the school fund are not transparent. Only a few people like the head teachers, SMC Chairs and one/two teachers may have detailed idea about the accounts keeping.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings mentioned above. These are a kind of general recommendations applicable to all the schools studied. However, some of these may already exist in one or more schools.

1. Attempt should be taken to reduce the number of students per teacher. Thus, the number of teachers should be increased in the schools. This would help improve teaching quality in the classrooms. Provision of proxy teachers should be stopped.
2. Quality education for all students should be the concern of the schools. Education should be provided from equity perspective and hence special care should be taken for all the students in the schools, not only the scholarship examinees.
3. The students should be properly assessed – during class teaching and annual examination. Adopting unfair means in the annual examination should be stopped. The students should start learning good habits from the primary schools. Students getting scores below the minimum pass marks should not be promoted to the higher grades at all. *Upazila* education office should monitor the system.
4. The AUEOs should be more active. In assessing the school performance they should depend on their own observations and judgements, not on the documents provided by the head teachers. The AUEOs should have the capability to provide pedagogical inputs to the teachers.
5. One or two good teachers may be appointed in one school. However, a process of developing good teachers should be there in the schools. A post of assistant head teacher may be created in each school aiming to create good head teachers.
6. Democratic attitudes should be adopted in operating the schools and the school management committees. Weekly staff meeting can be introduced in all the schools. SMC members should visit school regularly.
7. Each and every student should have the chance to participate in the co-curricular activities. Co-curricular activities should be considered as part of overall development of the students.

8. Steps may be taken in order to increase commitment of the teachers in their profession. Professional development of the teachers should be considered as a continuous process. Time has come to think about career path of the teachers.
9. Each school should try to mobilize resources locally. The schools should be encouraged to initiate income-generating activities. The income and expenditure account of the schools should be kept in a formal way. All concerned persons should have the right to know about the status of school funds. This should be made transparent.

সার সংক্ষেপ

সুস্পষ্টভাবে বর্ণিত ও ব্যাপকভাবে জানা বেশ কিছু সমস্যা থাকা সত্ত্বেও বাংলাদেশের কিছু সংখ্যক প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় সফল হচ্ছে কিভাবে? সাম্প্রতিককালের প্রধান প্রধান শিক্ষা গবেষণাগুলোতে দেখা গেছে যে, প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়গুলোর মানোন্নয়নে যেসব ব্যবস্থা নেয়া হয়েছে তা খুবই অপ্রতুল, আর অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই প্রদত্ত ব্যবস্থাদির মানও খারাপ। অনুশীলনের ঘাটতির কারণে শিক্ষণ-শিখন প্রক্রিয়ার মান খুবই দুর্বল থেকে যাচ্ছে এবং এর ফলে শিক্ষার্থীদের অর্জনের মাত্রা আশংকাজনকভাবে কমে যাচ্ছে। সাম্প্রতিককালের বেশ কিছু গবেষণা যেমন প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের পারদর্শিতা নিরীক্ষণ গবেষণা (PSPMP), এডুকেশন ওয়াচ, ESTEEM পরিচালিত শ্রেণীকক্ষ গবেষণা এবং এর পাশাপাশি সরকারি বিভিন্ন নথিপত্র ও পরিসংখ্যান উপরোক্ত ফলাফলকেই সমর্থন করে। এ অবস্থায় স্বাভাবিকভাবেই প্রশ্ন ওঠে যে, এত সব সমস্যা থাকা সত্ত্বেও কিছু কিছু বিদ্যালয় কিভাবে খুবই ভাল ফলাফল করতে পারছে?

জরিপভিত্তিক গবেষণা পদ্ধতিসমূহ মূলত: শিক্ষার প্রাপ্যতা ও ফলাফলের সঙ্গে সম্পর্কিত উপাদানসমূহ নিরূপনমূলক গবেষণায় সাধারণভাবে ব্যবহৃত হয়, যা আমাদেরকে বিদ্যালয়সমূহের সার্বিক সফলতা ও ব্যর্থতার মাত্রা বুঝতে খুব একটা সাহায্য করেনা। কিন্তু একটি সজীব কমিউনিটি হিসাবে বিদ্যালয়ের যে বাস্তব জটিলতা তা পরিস্কারভাবে বোঝার জন্য আমাদের গবেষণার দিগন্তকে একটু প্রসারিত করা প্রয়োজন। এই প্রেক্ষিতে, বর্তমান গবেষণায় নৃতাত্ত্বিক গবেষণার ধারায় নিজেদেরকে বিদ্যালয়ের অংশ হিসাবে বিবেচনা করে এগুলোর অভ্যন্তরস্থ সুক্ষ বিষয়গুলো বুঝার চেষ্টা করা হয়েছে - যা অবশ্যই বাংলাদেশে চলমান শিক্ষা সম্পর্কিত অন্যান্য গবেষণার ধারা থেকে আলাদা।

এই গবেষণায় মানসম্মত শিক্ষাকে এক ব্যাপক অর্থে বিবেচনা করা হয়েছে - যার মধ্যে রয়েছে বিদ্যালয়ের উন্নয়নে সমাজের ব্যাপক অংশগ্রহণ, প্রধান শিক্ষকের নেতৃত্বের গুণাবলী, শিক্ষণ প্রক্রিয়ায় শিক্ষকদের কার্যকর অংশগ্রহণ, শ্রেণীকক্ষে অনুকূল শিক্ষণ-শিখন পরিবেশ, শিক্ষার্থীদেরকে শিক্ষা ব্যবস্থার কেন্দ্র হিসাবে বিবেচনা করা, শিক্ষার্থীদের অর্জনের মাত্রা ইত্যাদি। আশা করা ঠিক হবে না যে, কোন একটি বিদ্যালয় উপরোক্ত সবগুলি বৈশিষ্ট্যই অনন্য হবে, বরং বিদ্যালয়টি এগুলির শুধুমাত্র একটি বা একাধিক বৈশিষ্ট্যের সমন্বয়ে সফলতার একটি মানে পৌঁছাবে। এই গবেষণায় উদ্দেশ্যমূলকভাবে নির্বাচিত ছয়টি বিদ্যালয়ের উপর ছয়টি কেইস্ স্টাডি তৈরি করা হয়েছে - এগুলোর মধ্যে পাঁচটি সরকারি এবং একটি রেজিস্টার্ড বেসরকারি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়। বিদ্যালয়গুলো ছয়টি আলাদা জেলায় অবস্থিত। জেলাগুলি হল - বান্দরবান, চট্টগ্রাম, ঢাকা, যশোর, নবাবগঞ্জ ও পাবনা। গবেষণার জন্য গঠিত স্টিয়ারিং কমিটির প্রত্যেক তত্ত্বাবধানে বিদ্যালয়গুলি নির্বাচন করা হয়েছিল। ব্র্যাকের গবেষণা ও মূল্যায়ন বিভাগ গবেষণাটি পরিচালনা করেছে।

ফলাফল

গবেষণার জন্য নেয়া বিদ্যালয়গুলোর এক একটির অবস্থান এক এক রকম। প্রত্যেকটি বিদ্যালয়েরই সফল হওয়ার উপায় আলাদা। কোন বিদ্যালয়ের সফল হওয়ার উপায় নির্ভর করে সেখানে কী ধরনের মানব সম্পদ ও বস্তুগত সম্পদ রয়েছে তার উপর। সাধারণভাবে বলা যায়, সবগুলো বিদ্যালয় একই

মাত্রায় সফল নয়। যা হোক, সবগুলো বিদ্যালয়েরই এমন কিছু গুণাবলী রয়েছে যেগুলোর জন্য বিদ্যালয়টি সফল হচ্ছে। পাশাপাশি বিদ্যালয়গুলোতে কিছু সমস্যাও রয়েছে। আবার প্রতিটি বিদ্যালয়কেই কিছু প্রতিকূলতাও মোকবিলা করতে হচ্ছে। বিদ্যালয়সমূহের কেইস্ স্টাডিগুলো বিশ্লেষণ করে গবেষকবৃন্দ প্রতিটি বিদ্যালয়ের জন্য কিছু ভাল দিক, কিছু দুর্বল দিক এবং কিছু সংখ্যক প্রতিকূলতা নির্দিষ্ট করতে পেরেছেন। বলে নেয়া ভাল যে, কোন কোন বিদ্যালয়ের ক্ষেত্রে ভালোর চেয়ে দুর্বল দিকগুলোই বেশি করে চোখে পড়েছে।

প্রতিকূলতাসমূহ

বিদ্যালয়গুলিকে নিম্নোক্ত প্রতিকূলতাসমূহ মোকবিলা করতে হয়।

১. যে ছয়টি বিদ্যালয়ে গবেষণা পরিচালিত হয়েছে তার ৪টিতেই শিক্ষক-শিক্ষার্থী অনুপাত গ্রহণযোগ্য অনুপাত ১:৪০ এর চেয়ে অনেক বেশি। এর ফলে শিক্ষকগণ প্রত্যেক শিক্ষার্থীর প্রতি মনোযোগ দেবার মত যথেষ্ট সময় পাননা। মানসম্মত শিক্ষা নিশ্চিত করার জন্য প্রত্যেক শিক্ষার্থীর প্রতি শিক্ষকের যে মাত্রায় মনোযোগ দেয়া দরকার চারটি বিদ্যালয়ে তা সম্ভব হচ্ছেনা।
২. বিদ্যালয়ের আশে পাশের মানুষের আর্থ-সামাজিক অবস্থা খুব একটা ভাল নয়। দেখা গেছে, বেশিরভাগ পিতামাতার গড় আয় ও শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা খুবই কম। বেশিরভাগ শিক্ষার্থীর পিতামাতাই নিরক্ষর। ফলে শিক্ষার্থীদের পিতামাতাকে শিক্ষার প্রতি উদ্বুদ্ধ করতে ও তাদের সন্তানদেরকে বিদ্যালয়ে পাঠানোর জন্য অগ্রহী করে তুলতে শিক্ষকদেরকে চেষ্টা করতে হয়। তাছাড়া, দরিদ্রতার কারণে পিতামাতাগণ তাদের সন্তানদের জন্য বাড়িতে পড়ালেখার অনুকূল পরিবেশ সৃষ্টি করতে পারেননা। বেশিরভাগ শিক্ষার্থীই প্রথম প্রজন্মের শিক্ষার্থী। দরিদ্রতার কারণে অনেক শিক্ষার্থীকেই আয়মূলক কাজে জড়িত থাকতে হয় এবং একই কারণে তারা নিয়মিত বিদ্যালয়ে আসতে পারেনা।
৩. বিদ্যালয়ের মোট শিক্ষার্থী ও বিদ্যালয়ের আওতাধীন এলাকার স্কুল গমনোপযোগী (৬-১০ বছর বয়সী) মোট শিশুর মধ্যে তুলনা করে দেখা যায় যে, কিছু স্কুলে শিক্ষক সংখ্যা কম আবার কিছু কিছু স্কুলে শ্রেণীকক্ষ ও অন্যান্য আসবাবপত্রের সংখ্যা অপ্রতুল। বিদ্যুৎ, খেলার মাঠ পানীয় জল এবং বাথরুমের সুব্যবস্থাও কোন কোন বিদ্যালয়ে নাই। বেশিরভাগ বিদ্যালয়েই মেয়েদের জন্য আলাদা বাথরুম দেখা যায়নি।
৪. বিদ্যালয়ের প্রতিদিনের বিভিন্ন খরচ বহন করার জন্য সরকার থেকে যে পরিমাণ অনুদান দেয়া হয় তা প্রয়োজনের তুলনায় খুবই কম। এর ফলে, বিদ্যালয়গুলোকে স্থানীয়ভাবে সম্পদ সংগ্রহের চেষ্টা করতে হয়।
৫. শিক্ষকগণ যে পরিমাণ বেতন পান তা তাদের প্রয়োজনের তুলনায় কম, এজন্য শিক্ষকদের মধ্যে অসন্তুষ্টি রয়েছে। পরিবারের প্রয়োজন মেটানোর জন্য তাদেরকে উপার্জনের অন্যান্য উপায়সমূহ অবলম্বন করতে হয়। বেশিরভাগ বয়স্ক শিক্ষকরাই ছোটখাটো ব্যবসা থেকে শুরু করে প্রাইভেট পড়ানো ইত্যাদি কাজে নিয়োজিত রয়েছেন এবং এসব কাজে তাদেরকে অনেক সময় ব্যয় করতে হয়।
৬. সাধারণত: শিক্ষক বা শিক্ষার্থীদের ভাল যোগ্যতার জন্য কোন রকম পুরস্কার বা অনুদানের ব্যবস্থা নাই। অন্যদিকে, সকল শিক্ষকের সি-ইন-এড বা মৌলিক প্রশিক্ষণও নাই।
৭. শিক্ষক ও উপজেলা পর্যায়ের শিক্ষা কর্মকর্তারা সকলেই প্রাথমিক বৃত্তি পরীক্ষার ফলাফলকে স্কুলসমূহের যোগ্যতার প্রধান সূচক হিসাবে মনে করেন। পিতামাতা ও বিদ্যালয় ব্যবস্থাপনা

কমিটির সবারই একই ধারণা। এজন্য স্কুলগুলোর সর্বোচ্চ চেষ্টা থাকে বৃত্তি পরীক্ষায় ভাল ফলাফল করার। ফলে মানসম্মত শিক্ষার অন্যান্য সূচকগুলির দিকে নজর দেয়া হয়না। যেহেতু শুধুমাত্র কয়েকজন বৃত্তি পরীক্ষার্থীদের উপর বিদ্যালয়ের ভাল শিক্ষকগণ বেশি মনোযোগ দিয়ে থাকেন সে কারণে বেশিরভাগ শিক্ষার্থীই ভাল শিক্ষকের সহচর্য থেকে বঞ্চিত হচ্ছে।

বিদ্যালয়গুলোর ভাল করার কারণসমূহ

যেসব বৈশিষ্ট্যের কারণে বিদ্যালয়গুলি সফল হচ্ছে সেগুলি নিচে উল্লেখ করা হল।

১. সবগুলো বিদ্যালয়ের সাথেই সংশ্লিষ্ট এলাকার লোকজনদের ভাল সম্পর্ক রয়েছে। বিদ্যালয়গুলোর সূচনালগ্ন থেকে এই সম্পর্কের গুরু। বিদ্যালয়গুলির গুরু দিকে সংশ্লিষ্ট এলাকার লোকজন সন্তানদেরকে স্কুলে পাঠানোর জন্য পিতামাতাদের উদ্বুদ্ধ করেছেন। বিদ্যালয়ের ভৌত অবকাঠামো তৈরির কাজে সমাজের লোকজন কখনও টাকা-পয়সা আবার কখনও জমি ও শ্রম দিয়ে সাহায্য করেছেন। স্কুলের বিভিন্ন উৎসবে তারা আর্থিক সহায়তা দিয়ে থাকেন। কোন নিয়মিত শিক্ষকের অনুপস্থিতিতে অনেক সময় সমাজের লোকজন ক্লাশও নিয়ে থাকেন। বিদ্যালয়ের বার্ষিক পরিকল্পনা প্রণয়নেও সমাজের লোকজনের উল্লেখযোগ্য অংশগ্রহণ ও ভূমিকা থাকে।
২. বিদ্যালয়গুলো সফল হওয়ার পেছনে প্রধান শিক্ষকের ভূমিকা খুবই ব্যাপক। সবগুলো বিদ্যালয়ের প্রধান শিক্ষকগণই ব্যবস্থাপনা ও প্রশাসনিক বিভিন্ন কাজে আন্তরিক ও ব্যস্ত। মূলত: স্কুলের সকল কাজের কেন্দ্রবিন্দু তারা। সকল প্রধান শিক্ষকই সময়মত স্কুলে আসেন ও প্রতিদিনই নির্ধারিত সময়ের চেয়ে বেশি সময় স্কুলে কাটান। অন্যান্য শিক্ষকগণ যেন নির্দিষ্ট সময়সূচী অনুসারে ক্লাশ পরিচালনা করেন তা নিশ্চিত করতে তারা খুবই দক্ষ।
৩. বেশিরভাগ প্রধান শিক্ষকই অন্যান্য শিক্ষকদের ক্লাশ পরিচালনা পর্যবেক্ষণ করেন এবং তার ভিত্তিতে প্রয়োজনীয় ফিডব্যাক দিয়ে থাকেন। কিছু সংখ্যক বিদ্যালয়ে শিক্ষকদের সাপ্তাহিক সভার ব্যবস্থা আছে, যেখানে প্রধান শিক্ষক শ্রেণী কার্যক্রম পর্যবেক্ষণ ও সংশ্লিষ্ট অন্যান্য বিষয়াবলী নিয়ে আলোচনা করেন। ঢাকার স্কুলটি বাদে অন্য সবগুলি স্কুলের প্রধান শিক্ষকই তাদের দায়িত্ব সম্বন্ধে খুবই যত্নবান।
৪. এলাকার প্রভাবশালী লোকজন বিদ্যালয় ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটিতে অন্তর্ভুক্ত রয়েছেন। গবেষণার আওতাধীন পাঁচটি স্কুলের ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটির সভাপতিগণ স্কুলের উন্নয়নে সক্রিয়ভাবে অনেক দায়িত্ব পালন করেন। বিদ্যালয়ের জন্য তহবিল সংগ্রহের জন্য তারা তাদের প্রভাবকে কাজে লাগান। কোন কোন স্কুলে তারা শিক্ষার্থী ও শিক্ষকদের উপস্থিতি এবং শিক্ষকদের শ্রেণীতে পড়ানোর দক্ষতাও পরিদর্শন করেন।
৫. দেখা গেছে, ভালভাবে শ্রেণী কার্যক্রম পরিচালনার জন্য শিক্ষকগণ সাধ্যমত চেষ্টা করেন। অল্প কিছু শিক্ষক বাদে অন্যরা শিক্ষাদানে দক্ষ এবং তারা দায়িত্ব পালনেও যত্নশীল। শিক্ষকদের পারস্পরিক সম্পর্কও অনেক ভাল। তাছাড়া তারা স্কুলের নিয়ম শৃঙ্খলার প্রতিও শ্রদ্ধাশীল।
৬. বিদ্যালয়গুলো বৃত্তি পরীক্ষার্থীদের প্রস্তুতির প্রতি খুবই গুরুত্ব দিয়ে থাকে এবং উপজেলা পর্যায়ের বিভিন্ন প্রতিযোগিতায় ও অনুষ্ঠানে অংশগ্রহণের ব্যাপারে তারা তৎপর। এসব প্রতিযোগিতা ও অনুষ্ঠানে জয়ী হতে পারাটা স্কুলের জন্য অনেক সম্মান বয়ে আনে।
৭. গবেষণার আওতাধীন স্কুলগুলোর শিক্ষার্থীদের উপস্থিতির হার উপস্থিতির জাতীয় হারের চেয়ে বেশি। তাছাড়া শিক্ষার্থীদের শৃঙ্খলাবোধও উন্নত।

৮. দু'টি স্কুলের কর্তৃপক্ষ শিক্ষার্থীদের জন্য ছাত্রাবাস নির্মাণ করেছেন। বৃত্তি পরীক্ষার্থী এবং দুর্বল শিক্ষার্থীরা এসব ছাত্রাবাসে থাকার সুযোগ পায়। একটি স্কুলে মহিলা শিক্ষকরাও সেখানে থাকেন।
৯. পাঁচটি সরকারি স্কুলের সবগুলোই সংশ্লিষ্ট শিক্ষা কর্মকর্তাদের মতে ভাল স্কুল বলে পরিচিত। এই স্কুলগুলো সংশ্লিষ্ট শিক্ষা অফিসগুলো থেকে বিভিন্ন অতিরিক্ত সুবিধাদি (যেমন বেশি অনুদান মঞ্জুরী এবং বেশি সংখ্যক শিক্ষক নিয়োগ দেয়া) পেয়ে থাকে। তাছাড়া অপেক্ষাকৃত ভাল শিক্ষকদেরকে এসব স্কুলে নিয়োগ দেয়া হয়। সহকারী উপজেলা শিক্ষা অফিসার ও অন্যান্য উচ্চ পদস্থ অফিসাররাও এসব স্কুলে বেশিবার পরিদর্শন করে থাকেন।
১০. বেশিরভাগ স্কুলেরই নিজস্ব আয়ের উৎস রয়েছে, যার সাহায্যে স্কুলগুলো তাদের অনেক প্রয়োজন মিটিয়ে থাকে।

দুর্বল দিকসমূহ

গবেষণায় অন্তর্ভুক্ত বিদ্যালয়গুলোতে নিম্নলিখিত দুর্বলতাগুলো রয়েছে।

১. অন্তত: চারটি বিদ্যালয়ে শিক্ষকদের পেশাগত দক্ষতা বৃদ্ধির কোন সুসংবদ্ধ প্রক্রিয়া নেই। এসব স্কুলের সাধারণ নিয়ম হল উপজেলার অন্যান্য বিদ্যালয় থেকে ভাল শিক্ষকদেরকে এসব স্কুলে বদলী করে আনা।
২. এসব ভাল স্কুলগুলো সাধারণত: প্রধান শিক্ষকের কঠোর শাসন মেনে গড়ে উঠেছে। প্রধান শিক্ষকের ইচ্ছা ছাড়া স্কুলগুলোতে কোন কিছুই ঘটেনা। এজন্য, বেশিরভাগ ক্ষেত্রেই সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণে গণতান্ত্রিক পন্থা অবলম্বন করা হয়না।
৩. দেখা গেছে, গড়ে ১০ শতাংশ শিক্ষার্থী বার্ষিক পরীক্ষায় অংশগ্রহণ করেনা। সব স্কুলেই শিক্ষার্থী, শিক্ষক এমন কি পিতামাতা সবাই বার্ষিক পরীক্ষায় অসদুপায় অবলম্বনের সাথে জড়িত। এসব অসদুপায়গুলোর মধ্যে উল্লেখযোগ্য হল নকল করা, প্রশ্নের উত্তরের আভাস দিয়ে দেয়া, নমনীয়ভাবে পরীক্ষার খাতা মূল্যায়ন করা, অকৃতকার্য শিক্ষার্থীদেরকে বেশি নম্বর দেয়া ইত্যাদি। ফলে, পাশের যে হার প্রকাশ করা হয় তা বাস্তবতা থেকে অনেক দূরে।
৪. শিক্ষার্থীদের সার্বিক বিকাশের জন্য শিক্ষকরা সহ-পাঠ্যক্রমিক কার্যক্রমের প্রয়োজনীয়তা স্বীকার করেছেন। কিন্তু খুবই অল্প কিছু শিক্ষার্থী সহ-পাঠ্যক্রমিক কাজে অংশ নিয়ে থাকে। বৃত্তি পরীক্ষার মতই সহপাঠ্যক্রমিক কার্যক্রমও প্রতিযোগিতাকেন্দ্রিক। এজন্যই খুবই কম সংখ্যক শিক্ষার্থী এসব কার্যক্রমে অংশ নেয় এবং তারাই উপজেলা পর্যায়ের বিভিন্ন প্রতিযোগিতায় অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ পায়।
৫. অন্যান্য কাজে ব্যস্ত থাকেন বলে কোন কোন শিক্ষক মাঝে মাঝে স্কুলে আসতে পারেননা। এ সময়ে ক্লাশ পরিচালনার জন্য তারা বদলি শিক্ষক নিয়োগ করে থাকেন। এসব শিক্ষকদের শিখন দক্ষতা নিম্নমানের।
৬. শিক্ষকদের সাথে শিক্ষার্থীদের পিতামাতার যোগাযোগ কম। নিয়ম থাকলেও শিক্ষকরা সাধারণত: শিক্ষার্থীদের গৃহ পরিদর্শন করেননা। অন্যদিকে, মা-বাবারাও তাদের সন্তানদের লেখাপড়ার খবর নেবার জন্য স্কুলে আসেননা।
৭. বিদ্যালয়গুলো প্রতিবন্ধী ও আদিবাসী শিক্ষার্থীদের বিশেষ প্রয়োজনের প্রতি সংবেদনশীল নয়। তাদের জন্য স্কুলগুলো আলাদা কোন ব্যবস্থা নেয় না।
৮. যেহেতু শুধুমাত্র নথিপত্রের উপর ভিত্তি করে স্কুলগুলোকে মূল্যায়ন করা হয় সেজন্য প্রধান শিক্ষকগণ যে কোন প্রকারে সেগুলোকে হালনাগাদ রাখার চেষ্টা করেন। অনেক ক্ষেত্রেই

শিক্ষার্থীদের উপস্থিতি, গৃহ পরিদর্শন, পারদর্শিতা ইত্যাদির ক্ষেত্রে শিক্ষকরা মিথ্যা তথ্য পরিবেশন করেন। সহকারী উপজেলা শিক্ষা অফিসারগণ সাধারণত: শিক্ষকদের ক্লাশ নেবার মান পরিদর্শন করেননা। তাছাড়া শিক্ষণ বিষয়ে যথাযথ ফিডব্যাক দেবার মত যোগ্যতাও তাদের নেই। বার্ষিক পরীক্ষায় অসদুপায় বন্ধের জন্য তারা কোন ধরনের পদক্ষেপ নেননা।

৯. বিদ্যালয়ের ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটি গণতান্ত্রিকভাবে পরিচালিত হয়না। কমিটির সভাপতি ও সদস্য সচিব এই দু'জন মিলেই বেশিরভাগ ক্ষেত্রে সিদ্ধান্ত নিয়ে থাকেন। এভাবে ২/৩ জনের আলোচনায় গৃহীত সিদ্ধান্তের উপর ভিত্তি করে প্রধান শিক্ষক একটি বিবরণী তৈরি করেন এবং অন্যান্য সদস্যবৃন্দ শুধুমাত্র তাতে স্বাক্ষর দেন। দেখা গেছে, প্রতিবছর একই লোক কমিটিতে প্রতিনিধিত্ব করে থাকেন।
১০. বিদ্যালয়সমূহের আর্থিক হিসাবপত্রে স্বচ্ছতা নেই। অল্প কয়েকজন ব্যক্তি যেমন প্রধান শিক্ষক, ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটির সভাপতি ও দুই/একজন সহকারী শিক্ষক বিদ্যালয়ের আর্থিক হিসাবপত্র সম্পর্কে ভালভাবে জানেন।

সুপারিশসমূহ

উপরে বর্ণিত ফলাফলসমূহের ভিত্তিতে নিচের সুপারিশসমূহ করা হয়েছে। গবেষণার আওতাধীন সকল বিদ্যালয়ের জন্যই সুপারিশসমূহ প্রযোজ্য। যদিও কোন কোন বিদ্যালয়ে এর কিছু কিছু হয়তো আগে থেকেই বিদ্যমান রয়েছে।

১. শিক্ষক প্রতি শিক্ষার্থী সংখ্যা কমানোর ব্যবস্থা করতে হবে। এজন্য স্কুলে শিক্ষক সংখ্যা বাড়াতে হবে। এর ফলে বিদ্যালয়ের পড়ালেখার মান বাড়বে। বদলি শিক্ষক ব্যবহারের চর্চা বন্ধ করা দরকার।
২. সকল শিক্ষার্থীর জন্য মানসম্মত শিক্ষাই হওয়া উচিত প্রতিটি বিদ্যালয়ের মূল লক্ষ্য। শিক্ষাদানের ক্ষেত্রে সমতা বজায় রাখতে হবে। এখন যেমন শুধুমাত্র বৃত্তি পরীক্ষার্থীদের জন্য বিশেষ ব্যবস্থায় শিক্ষার ব্যবস্থা করা হয় তার পরিবর্তে সকল শিক্ষার্থীর জন্য এটা করতে হবে।
৩. শ্রেণীকক্ষ শিক্ষণ-শিখনে এবং বার্ষিক পরীক্ষায় শিক্ষার্থীদেরকে নিরপেক্ষভাবে মূল্যায়ন করতে হবে। পরীক্ষায় অসদুপায় অবলম্বন বন্ধ করতে হবে। প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয় থেকেই শিক্ষার্থীরা যেন ভাল অভ্যাস শেখা শুরু করতে পারে সেদিকে লক্ষ্য রাখতে হবে। যে সকল শিক্ষার্থী পরীক্ষায় পাশ নম্বর পাবেনা তাদেরকে কোনভাবেই পরবর্তী শ্রেণীতে উত্তীর্ণ করা যাবেনা। উপজেলা শিক্ষা অফিসকে এ ব্যাপারে নজরদারী করতে হবে।
৪. সহকারী উপজেলা শিক্ষা অফিসারদেরকে আরো কর্মক্ষম হতে হবে। বিদ্যালয় মূল্যায়নের ক্ষেত্রে তাদেরকে প্রধান শিক্ষক প্রদত্ত নথিপত্রের বদলে নিজেদের পর্যবেক্ষণ ও বিবেচনাবোধের উপর নির্ভর করতে হবে। সহকারী উপজেলা শিক্ষা অফিসারগণের এমন প্রশিক্ষণ থাকা প্রয়োজন যেন তারা শিক্ষকদের শিক্ষণের মান উন্নয়নের জন্য প্রয়োজনীয় সহায়তা প্রদান করতে পারেন।
৫. প্রতিটি বিদ্যালয়ে শুরুতে এক/দুই জন ভাল শিক্ষক নিয়োগ দেয়া যেতে পারে। এরপর ঐ বিদ্যালয়েই ভাল শিক্ষক গড়ে তোলার প্রক্রিয়া শুরু করতে হবে। দক্ষ প্রধান শিক্ষক গড়ে তোলার উদ্দেশ্যে প্রতিটি বিদ্যালয়ে সহকারী প্রধান শিক্ষকের পদ সৃষ্টি করা যেতে পারে।
৬. বিদ্যালয় এবং এর ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটির পরিচালনায় গণতান্ত্রিক দৃষ্টিভঙ্গীর প্রতিফলন ঘটাতে হবে। প্রত্যেক বিদ্যালয়ে সাপ্তাহিক শিক্ষক সভার প্রচলন করা যেতে পারে। ব্যবস্থাপনা কমিটির সদস্যগণের নিয়মিত বিদ্যালয় পরিদর্শন করা উচিত।

৭. প্রত্যেক শিক্ষার্থীকেই সহ-পাঠক্রমিক কার্যক্রমে অংশগ্রহণের সুযোগ দিতে হবে। সহ-পাঠক্রমিক কার্যক্রমকে শিশুর সার্বিক বিকাশের জন্য আবশ্যকীয় বলে বিবেচনা করতে হবে।
৮. শিক্ষকদেরকে তাদের পেশার প্রতি নিবেদিত ও আন্তরিক করে গড়ে তোলার উদ্যোগ নিতে হবে। তাদের পেশাগত দক্ষতার উন্নয়নকে একটি ধারাবাহিক প্রক্রিয়া হিসাবে বিবেচনা করতে হবে। শিক্ষকতার পেশা থেকে পর্যায়ক্রমে শিক্ষা বিভাগের গুরুত্বপূর্ণ পদে শিক্ষকদের পদোন্নতির বিষয়টি বিবেচনা করার সময় এসেছে।
৯. প্রত্যেক বিদ্যালয়কেই স্থানীয়ভাবে সম্পদ সমাবেশের চেষ্টা করতে হবে। বিদ্যালয়গুলোকে আয়ের উৎস সৃষ্টিতে উৎসাহিত করতে হবে। বিদ্যালয়ের আয় ও ব্যয়ের হিসাব আনুষ্ঠানিকভাবে সংরক্ষণ করা প্রয়োজন। সংশ্লিষ্ট সবারই বিদ্যালয়ের আর্থিক অবস্থা সম্পর্কে জানার অধিকার থাকবে। এ ব্যাপারে স্বচ্ছতা সৃষ্টি করতে হবে।

INTRODUCTION

1

Primary Education Provision in Bangladesh

Children in Bangladesh start primary education at the age of six years. Official age range for primary education is 6-10 years. Five-year cycle of primary education is free and compulsory by law. In addition to the state owned primary schools, 10 other types of primary schools are there in the country¹. These may be formal, non-formal, Bangla medium, English medium and religious type. To implement Education for All (EFA), several measures have been taken by both the government and the non-governmental agencies during 1990s and afterwards. The government has introduced competency-based education since 1993 (UNICEF and NCTB 1988). To attract children to schools food for education programme was introduced which is now replaced by stipend programme. Forty-percent of the students of rural primary schools lying below the poverty line are eligible for stipend. Along others, two donor-supported special projects, one for management improvement (Effective Schools Through Enhanced Education Management – ESTEEM) and the other for pedagogic improvement (Intensive District Approach to Education for All – IDEAL), have been introduced in the government and registered non-government primary schools.

The Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (MOPME) has a directorate (Directorate of Primary Education) to implement the primary education programme of the government. They are responsible only for the government and the registered non-government primary schools. Division, district and sub-district (*upazila*) level government officials are there for field level implementation of primary education. *Upazila* education offices are the lowest level in this line of supervision. Each *upazila* office consists of one *upazila* education officer (UEO) and 6-8 assistant *upazila* education officers (AUEO). Number of schools in an *upazila* ranges from 150 to 200. Each AUEO is responsible to supervise 25-30 schools. The responsibility of a UEO is to visit five schools and each AUEO 10 schools per month.

¹ These are registered non-government primary school, non-registered non-government primary school, experimental school, community school, satellite school, high school attached primary section, kindergarten, ebtedayee madrassa, high madrassa attached primary section, and non-formal primary school (Primary and Mass Education Division 2002).

The primary education sub-sector in Bangladesh is merely very big. There are about 18 million children in the primary school age (6-10 years) of which nearly 80% enrolled in schools. Moreover, a good number of children (about a third of all primary school students) out of this age range are also enrolled in primary schools. This made primary school classrooms crowded and unmanageable. Recent studies estimated that the gross enrolment ratio at primary level is 107 against 100 children of primary school age (Chowdhury *et al* 1999, 2002). Majority of the primary schools are directly managed or financially supported by the State. The State owned schools and the registered non-government schools together ensure enrolment of over three quarters of the students at primary level. The ratio of the students in these two types of schools is about 4:1.

Unlike other sub-sectors in education, primary education has increasingly been receiving attention from both the national government and the international communities during the last decade. This has ensured access to education for many children and to achieve gender equity in this respect. Bangladesh's achievement in gender equity in enrolment is unique in South Asia after Sri Lanka (Chowdhury *et al* 2003). However, with 80% net enrolment rate and 72% completion rate, it can be said that about 40% of the children cross primary school age keeping their primary education incomplete (Chowdhury *et al* 2002). Again, quality of education did not go equally with the quantitative expansion. Those children complete primary cycle, do not learn much. Many first generation learners have enrolled in the schools in recent past but the schools are not ready to meet their needs. Two important recent studies can be mentioned in this regard. The first one is the *Education Watch* study on competency achievement of the students after completing primary cycle and the other one is the Asian Development Bank (ADB) sponsored PSPMP (Primary School Performance Monitoring Project) study (Nath *et al* 2001, PSPMP 2001). Both the studies found that learning achievements of the primary school students are below the expected level. The last *Education Watch* study showed that about a third remain non-literate or semiliterate after completing primary education (Ahmed *et al* 2003). On the other hand, the parents are to pay a good amount of money for the primary education of their wards (Chowdhury *et al* 2002). Pass rates in the primary scholarship examinations are also un-satisfactory, where best 20% of the learners from each school participate.

Government and non-government primary schools

As already mentioned that State owned and registered non-government primary schools (RNGPS) are the major providers of primary education in Bangladesh. Of the total children enrolled in all types of primary schools, about three quarters are covered by these two types of schools. There are 37,709 government and 19,658 registered non-government primary schools in the country (BANBEIS 2000). Government schools are fully managed by the State and the teachers are public servants. Full salary of these teachers and management costs of the schools come from the government exchanger. On the other hand, 90% of basic salary of the RNGPS teachers is provided by the State. There is a provision of School Management Committee (SMC) in each school. The SMC consists of a chair, a member secretary and nine general members. The head teacher plays the role of member secretary. Day-to-day management of the schools are the responsibility of such committee. Education is free in these schools and the students

receive free textbooks from the State. National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) of the government is responsible for preparing the curriculum and the textbooks for these schools. There is a provision of 11-month long foundation training for the teachers of these schools. Number of primary teachers training institutes (PTI) in the country is 53, these offer Certificate-in-Education (C-in-Ed) course. One recent estimate shows that 92% of the government schoolteachers and below a half of the non-government schoolteachers have this foundation training (Chowdhury *et al* 2002). The *upazila* education officers (UEO) and their assistants' directly supervise these schools.

Each of these schools has a defined catchment area. Children aged 6-10 years living in the catchment area are suppose to enrol in the respective school. However, the general practice in enrolment is to apply the choice of the parents and the guardians. To identify eligible children for primary school, the schoolteachers do census of the households at the beginning of each academic year. The schools vary in the number of students and teachers. There are both single and double shift schools. One or more number of model schools is there in each *upazila*.

The Concept of Quality Assessment

It is not easy for any education programme to run all the schools with equal performance. The above-mentioned studies show that the performance of the schools varied substantially in the test results. Here, the question is why some schools are doing very good and some are not, even all are under the same umbrella.

Multiple regression analysis predicting competencies achievement of the students shows that schools nearer to the local authority, having SMC meeting regularly, frequent school visit by the local authority, parents meetings with teachers, frequent training for the teachers, and educational qualifications of the teachers are the main predictors of schools success. Following the Craig-Heneveld framework, the PSPMP study identified the relative contributions of the four sets of characteristics in the improvement of students' performance (Annex 1). These characteristics are grouped as teaching learning process, school learning climate, outside inputs and enabling conditions. The second study considered some variables related to teaching and learning, which the first one did not. However, both the studies lack how does management functions in students learning achievement. Successfulness of a school does not mean only the competencies achievement of the students. Education is more than what constitutes learning achievement through testing.

Quality is a complex issue in educational setting. The *input-process-output* framework of quality assessment in educational setting is a popular one, but all three components of this are rarely considered together in one study. For instance, one Bangladesh study on quality of primary education by Chowdhury *et al* (1997) analysed mostly the inputs and output components. Traditionally the managers of Bangladesh primary education are also interested only in these two components. To assess *input* one generally assesses physical structure of schools, short and long-term nutritional status of the learners, their family status including parental education and economic condition, textbook, curriculum,

teacher-student ratio, teacher training, students attendance, teachers absenteeism and so on. On the other hand, in assessing output measurement of students learning achievement against curriculum objectives is a common one. Attempts to capture the quality of processes are more recent and so less common in practice. Assessment of quality of processes includes looking at the followings:

- What do learners and teachers actually do in the classrooms?
- How is the curriculum delivered in reality?
- What are the ways in which teaching learning is managed?
- What are the roles of the school heads and the community in school functioning?
- How are the schools supervised and inspected?

Not all, but some of the above issues have captured in a limited scale in the earlier mentioned studies of *Education Watch* and PSPMP. For instance, classroom observations were done under the *Education Watch* study, which reflects the teaching learning process in the classrooms. The PSPMP study also tried to find association between students' achievement and classroom performance. The classroom research under the ESTEEM project is an important one – this study explored how mathematics curriculum is actually delivered in the classrooms of government primary schools.

Rationale of the Study

The survey-based methods commonly used to study the factors determining educational opportunities and outcomes have taken us to some distance in understanding success and failure. However, the complexity of the schools as living communities demand further insights be obtained by expanding the horizons of our research activities. The terms of reference of this study has rightly identified this issue recognising the recent trends of major transformation in educational research. To this end, there is a scope in the present study to explore the internal and external support systems in managing the schools, role and functions of the management bodies, role of the school heads, their accountability and role of school evaluation system in school improvement. Anthropological and ethnographical research traditions to achieve original insights into what it feels like to live in and be a part of a school which really makes a difference is important one.

Organisation of the Report

This research attempts to explore the quality of primary education in Bangladesh. This report has four chapters. Following the introductory chapter, Chapter 2 presents the methodological aspects of the present study including school selection, research techniques used and fieldwork procedure. Findings of this study are provided in Chapter 3, which presents each of the cases separately. Chapter 4 provides the cross case analysis, summary of findings and policy recommendations.

Study Objective

Although the overall quality of primary education in the county is low, the studies show that some schools do very well in the test results and many do not. There are also some schools known to be well operating in the community. The main objective of this study is to explore how do some primary schools in Bangladesh succeed despite various constraints? The following specific research questions are thus included in this study.

- What do learners and teachers actually do in the classrooms?
- How is the curriculum delivered in reality?
- What are the ways in which teaching learning is managed?
- What are the roles of the school heads and the community in school functioning?
- What are the roles played by the school management committees?
- How are the schools supervised and inspected?
- How are the schools accountable to parents and the society at large?
- How are the above related with background characteristics of the learners and the teachers?
- How are these interrelated with each other?

It is expected that exploring the answers to these questions would lead to better understanding the mechanism of school functioning, particularly the factors that make a school successful and their interlinks. Again, the knowledge about the factors and their inter-linkages, and how they function in a successful school would help other schools to become successful. However, the provision of capturing other important issues, which appeared instantly during fieldwork, was also there. Thus, some kind of openness was there in the investigation.

Approach and Methodology

Looking at the main objective of the study and related research questions a prior consideration is that the positivist approach of searching the issues would not fit very well into it. Although survey designs are dominant in the researches in Bangladesh primary education, alternative approaches are rarely considered. Moreover, statistical

significance or generalisability of findings was not considered as relevant for this study. This study is thus adopted qualitative research methods/techniques to explore quality in primary education. Such an approach helps going deeper into the issues and to provide insights into non-measurable characteristics that are intended to explore through this study.

The Craig-Heneveld (CH) model, which was adopted by the PSPMP study, has broadly considered for this study. See Annex 1 to have an idea about the way the model was used in the PSPMP study. Data on five areas related to schooling is required under this model; these are community, school, teacher, classroom and learner. Each of these has broken down into specific factors of focus. Information on these have been categorised into four factors viz., supporting inputs from outside school, enabling conditions, school climate, and teaching and learning process. This study broadly based on the above model with little modification. Such a modification is allowed as per need of the qualitative nature of the research. The factors along with their sub-factors (indicators) considered for this study is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Factors and sub-factors under the model considered for this study

Factors	Indicators under each factor
Supporting inputs from outside school	The school setting, historical background of school, location served by school, socio-economic background of community, school community linkage, role of SMC, schools relationship with higher authorities, support provided by UEO and AUEO (academic, materials and financial), and support from any other external source.
Enabling conditions	Infrastructure and material condition, head teacher and his/her leadership, educational and training background of the teachers, relationship among the teachers, relationship among students, student teacher relationship, teachers involvement with community, school management strategies, work distribution and decision making process, school development plan, and school policy for disabled and ethnic minorities, teachers home visit.
School learning climate	Student achievement, attitude and motivation of the teachers, job satisfaction, support system inside school, discipline in school, curriculum organisation, and rewards and incentives for student achievement.
Teaching-learning process	Classroom environment, seating arrangement of the students, teachers' time use, teaching techniques used, lesson plan and use of teaching aids, students participation in classroom activities, classroom assessment of teachers, giving students feedback, provision of homework, remedial strategies for slow achievers, role of annual examination, and preparation for primary scholarship examination.

School Selection

The schools for the study were selected with the help of the relevant persons working in DPE and the ESTEEM project. A meeting was held in this regard in ESTEEM office in mid September 2003. The members of the research team also participated in the meeting. After long discussion with the study proposal the meeting has decided some considerable characteristics of schools providing quality education. It was clear to all the participants that schools with high achievement of the students would not be the only criteria for selection. Because, it was recognised that learning achievement is only a factor of success and it is usually associated with a high socio-economic intake. Consideration of other important factors of success, as mentioned in CH model, would be more interesting for the study. Criteria of community participation, school leadership, teachers, classrooms and students would be considered in selecting the schools. Following are the criteria in brief.

- a) *Strong community participation in the improvement of schools.* Community may participate in the form of School Management Committee (SMC) or the Parent Teacher Association (PTA) or both. Local elite, common people, and parents may have very good participation in school improvement. Influence of these people impacts school quality.
- b) *Leadership plays important role in school improvement.* This is mostly the leadership quality of the school heads. Schools run centring the head teachers. Head teachers' leadership in general management of schools, financial and academic management and involving others in schools would be of interest in quality improvement.
- c) *Teachers' active participation in mentoring the students.* It needs a set of good teachers who are devoted to education of their students. Teachers not only teach in the classrooms; the students follow them everywhere and learn what they can attract the young children. Teachers' innovation and creativeness impact on quality improvement of schools.
- d) *Classroom culture refers to a healthy teaching-learning atmosphere ensuring active participation of the teachers and the students.* It also includes regular participation of the students; teachers care to teach each and every student, carefully assessing the students' workbooks, and feedback accordingly, special care to weak students and teachers role in value addition for better human life.
- e) *Students are the central part of any educational setting.* Their socio-economic background often play role in their achievement. It would be interesting to see if some schools could break such barrier and show academic improvement of socio-economic background of the students.

After long discussion, names of 11 government and non-government primary schools came out. The divisional consultants of ESTEEM project also provided a list of 18 schools later. Two other lists of schools were also produced discussing with CSID and CARE Bangladesh, which included nine and seven schools respectively. From these four lists the Steering Committee of this study approved five government and one registered non-government schools. For ethical reason we are not mentioning the real names of the schools. The schools are taken from six different districts. The government schools are located in Jessore, Nawabganj, Pabna, Dhaka, and Chittagong districts and the registered non-government school in Bandarban district.

Ethical Considerations and Beyond

Ethical considerations in ethnographic and educational research have been receiving more attention day by day. There are some primary ethical obligations to the subjects with whom the researchers work (American Anthropological Association 1997). This is an issue that needs to be considered not only during fieldwork, but also in preparing the report including interpretation and analysis of data and dissemination of findings (Alderson 1995).

During fieldwork the research assistants firstly explained the objective of the study including the techniques they intend to apply to the school authority and the *upazila* education officers. The fieldwork started after getting their consent. Before every interview, FGD or observation the respondents were informed about the purpose of the events. Without the consent of the informants no information was recorded. It was assured that all sensitive issues and the identity of the concerned persons would be kept confidential. Talking with the children is very special – nothing was discussed with them, which might be harmful for them.

In considering the workload of the teachers, SMC members, villagers and the education officials, work schedule was often adjusted with their activities and sometimes squeezed into their daily routine. Each research assistant spent some days for rapport building at the beginning of the fieldwork. Even then, some informants felt disturbance at the appearance of the research assistants. The situation gradually improved within two/three weeks after starting the work.

We did not seek permission from the informants or the school authorities to use their names in the report. Thus, in reporting the findings we tried our best to keep anonymity of research participants by using fictitious name of the persons and the schools.

Difficulties Encountered

It was appeared during fieldwork that ethnographic methodology was a good means of obtaining an insight about the dynamics in daily life of the schools. It was helpful to understand the process of quality primary schools. However, during data collection certain difficulties were encountered, such as:

- Sometimes it was difficult to obtain necessary information from the school. The teachers and the head teachers were often afraid that through this research the high officials of the government would be informed about the mismanagement of the school. Often they requested the field investigators to write in favour of the schools so that it would create positive image of the particular school.
- Dealing with the government officials at local level was sometimes very difficult for the investigators. In few areas, the local education administrators were not so cooperative and thus the investigators had difficulties in obtaining necessary information from the government office. Sometimes they did not allow the field investigators to record the interview as they thought it could be harmful for them in future.

- During data collection some poor parents sought for economic help to the research assistants. The research assistants could make them understand the purpose of their work and their limitations.
- None of the school authorities showed us their financial accounts. What they disclosed orally was only a partial picture. Even they did not show the register, where the accounts of the government subscription are kept. Full accounts of the income generating activities were out of question.

This chapter presents the standalone case studies done under this study. The chronology of the schools is Jessore, Nawabganj, Pabna, Dhaka, Chittagong and Bandarban.

Case 1. A Government Primary School in Jessore

1. School Profile

This rural school was established in 1930. It started functioning in a temporarily made thatched-roof house with a teacher and few students. The government took it over in 1973 along with other schools. The school achieved significant progress during the last decade, which reflected in the primary scholarship examinations.

1.1 The location

The school is situated at the extreme north of a village in Monirampur upazila under Jessore district. It is about fourteen kilometres away from the *upazila* town and is accessible by bus, motorbike or van. The catchment area of the school is comprised of two neighbouring villages. Total area is about 2.8 kilometres in length and 2 kilometres in breadth. There are three other government primary schools in the nearby villages surrounding the catchment area of this school. Nevertheless, the children of the village where the school is situated enrolled in this school. The children of other villages generally enrol in three neighbouring schools.

Majority of the people in the school catchment area are poor agriculture labourer, 99% are Hindu. Although it is a Hindu inhabited area some Muslim families migrated there recently. There are seven Brahmin families in the village with different socio-economic background. From the very beginning they have been aware of their children's education. With their zeal and effort the people of the entire village become aware of education, which somewhat accelerated the progress of the school.

1.2 Historical background

With the initiative of some zealous persons the school was established in 1930 in a thatched-roof house on a small piece of land. In 1945, a teacher of the school bought 40 decimals of land and transferred the school from the other side of the village to its present place in a tin-roofed house. From that time the number of students in the school

was increasing. In 1955, the father of the present head teacher joined the school as its head teacher. At that time there were only three teachers in the school. The condition of the school was poor. The students were used to sit on the sack. There was no blackboard, even there was no chair and table for the teachers. The members of SMC were mostly illiterate, however, they were aware of their responsibilities. They campaigned for awareness building among the parents regarding the need of education for their children.

Gradually the school became well known in the area as the students of this school were doing well in the high schools. In 1965, for the first time a girl student of this school obtained primary scholarship, thus the school became famous. After taking over by the government in 1973, the number of students started to increase again. Besides, due to the effort of the head teacher the involvement of the community enhanced. The community provided necessary materials to rebuild the roof of the schoolhouse when it was blown away by storms.

In 1984, a new head teacher joined after retirement of the previous head teacher. It was known that the new head teacher was not committed to the school like as the previous one. He had a frosty relationship with other teachers and the SMC members. He was also aloof from the community. The villagers informed that during his time the quality of education of the school deteriorated. Nevertheless, during his period through the initiative of SMC, some government funds were approved to construct a building with three rooms.

At the end of 1995, after the transfer of the above head teacher, the present head teacher took over the charge. As soon as he took over the responsibilities, he called his colleagues to cooperate him to improve the quality of education in the school. He also invited the villagers and the SMC members to visit him during school hour. He thought that if they visit him during school hour they would be able to understand the actual condition of the school. The villagers and the SMC members were impressed by the activities of the head teacher. They provided financial support to do better seating arrangement for the students. With the assistance of the villagers the head teacher also took measures to increase the attendance of the students in school. Simultaneously, care was given to do better performance in primary scholarship examinations. He selected potential students for the scholarship examination and tried to have at least one scholarship by providing necessary coaching to the examinees. With all these efforts, from that time almost every year the students of this school obtained scholarship.

In 2000, except the head teacher all other teachers were transferred to the neighbouring schools and three new teachers joined. According to the head teacher, as the new teachers were young and previously worked in a non-government registered school they were not committed enough to obey the rules and regulations he adopted in the school. Additionally, they were not satisfied with their job in a primary school. The head teacher drew attention of the SMC regarding the matter. The SMC chair called a meeting, where the teachers agreed to obey all the rules and regulations of the school.

1.3 Present material condition

At present, the school is housed in a one storied building. The total amount of land of the school along with the playground is about 40 decimals. There is a playground in front of the school building. There are two flower gardens near the school building, which the students and the teachers look after. There are four rooms in the school building; three of which are used as classrooms and one as staff room. As there is no separate room for the head teacher, he shares the same room with other teachers.

There is no library in the school, however plenty of books are kept at a corner of the teachers' room. Some sports materials are also there in the teachers' room, which the students can use. The teachers' room is furnished with 10 chairs and seven tables. Adequate number of benches are there for the students in the classrooms. The school does not have the electricity facility. In times of need, the teachers use hurricane lantern. The only tube-well in the school is contaminated by arsenic. Therefore, the students are to go to the neighbouring houses for drinking water. There are two toilets at the west side of the school building, which are open for the students and the teachers.

2. Students

According to the latest census done by the school, there are 244 children eligible for primary schooling (6-10 years) in the catchment area of this school. Among them, only 113 children enrolled in this school. The remaining children enrolled in three neighbouring government primary schools. Among the students of this school, 59 are boys and 54 are girls. Following table gives the distribution of students by grade and sex.

Table 3. Distribution of students by grade and sex in Jessore school, 2003

Sex	Grade					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Girls	8	6	9	14	17	54
Boys	9	16	12	11	11	59
Both	17	22	21	25	28	113
% of girls	47.0	27.3	42.9	56.0	60.7	52.4

The students of this school bear various socio-economic background. Nevertheless, the majority of them are from the poor day labourer households. The children of the solvent families of the village were also found studying in this school. Almost all the students are Hindu. Only nine Muslim students are there in the school.

2.1 Attendance of students

According to the official record, attendance rate of the students varies from 86 to 90%. The teachers informed that during rainy season the mud roads in the village became slippery, so the students did not come to school. In addition, there are many shrimp cultivators in the village, which require plenty of snails as feed. During rainy season the children of the poor households usually remain busy in collecting snails, which they sell to the shrimp cultivators. Therefore, the attendance of the students deteriorates. The attendance of students in the school also impedes during harvesting season.

The head teacher and the SMC members keep on trying to increase the attendance of the students. Home visit and individual contact with the parents are the means of raising awareness. In this regard a story of a girl is significant.

She was a meritorious student of class IV and was willing to continue her study. Her parents work as agricultural labourers in a distant rice field. She often missed her classes to reach her parents' meal to the field. The head teacher noticed it. Once he went to her home and talked to her mother. He made her understand that regular school attendance is important for her daughter. Their daughter has the competence to do well in study. In future she would be able to change her status through education. Considering the matter the parents started carrying their meal with them in the morning to the field. However, the parents pay heed to the head teacher and assured him that she would be regular in school. Eventually the girl did very well in the primary scholarship examination.

The head teacher has divided the catchment area among the assistant teachers for home visit. However, he does more than the other teachers do. Regular home visit made the parents aware of their children's education. The case cited earlier illustrates the situation better. However, during home visit the head teacher not only enquires about the present students of his school but also asks about the former students of the school, who are now in the high schools. He provides necessary suggestions to the former students too.

2.4 Enrolment criteria

Enrolment criteria of the school have an effect on the quality of education. The children are admitted in the school through a selection process. To admit students in class I, a verbal and to some extent a written test are taken. The students are categorised into three groups viz., A, B, and C, based on the test results. Usually the children of A category are admitted. If there are available seats relatively elder children from B category are given priority. The remaining children are kept again in the pre-primary class. Test is also taken in the case of admission in upper classes.

2.5 Students' intra relationship

The students are competitive in doing good results but friendly among themselves in social relations. The students of the same neighbourhood come to school together. The senior students are affectionate to the junior students. They are noted to let them play with the school equipments and help them preparing lessons. The students of class IV and V exchange books among the classmates.

2.6 Students' assessment

The students are assessed mainly on examination results and attendance in school. The SMC members also assess the students in classroom. One SMC member stated:

Some of us visit the school every week during class time. To assess the students we ask them from the lessons they were taught earlier. Sometimes we ask to do maths on the blackboard. If the students can do it we consider that they are learning well. If we find students incompetent we talk to the head teacher.

Formal assessment of the students is done through two mid-term and an annual examination.

2.7 Student promotion rate

In 2002, 92.5% of the students attended in the annual examination. Of them, 96% was promoted to the next classes. Although some students failed to pass in several subjects, they were also promoted to the next classes. The head teacher opined that it was a special consideration for promotion. In some cases, if the teachers are convinced that the students of the poor households spent more time for wage earning and could not give enough time for study, which result failure in the annual examination, such students are also promoted to the higher classes. The teachers think that otherwise these students may lose their interest in education.

Previously, there was no repetition in any class as the then AUEO was very strict in this. He instructed to make all students capable and to promote to the next grades. However, to save job, the teachers promoted all students disregarding capability. As a result the students remained weak in every class. However, the present AUEO emphasised on the promotion of only the capable students. This improved the quality of students in every class.

3. Teachers

There are four teachers in this school including one female. Except the head teacher there age ranges between 20 and 30 years. One teacher has masters degree, one has bachelor degree, and the head teacher and the remaining female teacher is with HSC. Two teachers received C-in-Ed and one male teacher and the female teacher received subject-based training in local URC. The teachers are almost new in their occupation. They have only three years experience in teaching. The head teacher and two male teachers are Hindu and the female teacher is Muslim.

3.1 Workload of the teachers

It is a two shifts school. The teachers remain busy with the classes from 9:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. On average, each teacher conduct six to seven classes daily. Except the head teacher, the assistant teachers conduct subject-based classes – for instance, one teacher takes Bangla classes in all the grades, other one takes all English classes, and so on. The subjects are distributed in a meeting where the teachers express their option. Therefore, each teacher is satisfied with the subject s/he teaches. However, according to the head teacher if a teacher teach only one subject in different classes s/he becomes a skilled and experienced teacher for that particular subject, which ultimately contribute to the quality of education. The teachers are also responsible for home visit to ensure the attendance of the students.

3.2 Teacher attendance

In exploring teachers' attendance in the school it was revealed that in previous days the assistant teachers were used to come late and they were irregular as well. The head teacher tried to make them aware of their duties and the negative impact of such irregularity. He told them that as they are coming late in the school they are to conduct classes without any preparation, which makes teaching weak. The head teacher also drew

SMC's attention in this regard. Accordingly, the SMC Chair called a joint meeting of SMC and the teachers. At that meeting the SMC warned the teachers to attend the school timely and regularly. As a result the teachers became regular and punctual in attending the classes.

3.3 Teacher student relationship

The teachers of this school are friendly and supportive to the students. Especially, the students adore the female teacher in the school. At the beginning of class the female teacher tries to understand the mental condition of the students. If they are found distracted, she tries to retain their concentration. She enquires about the well-being of the students in the class and then ask them to sing a song. Sometimes she tells them stories. During tiffin hour the teachers distribute sports equipments among the students and encourage them to play. The teachers are careful to various needs of the students.

3.4 Teachers' intra relationship

The quality of education in a school reasonably subjected to the intra relationship of the teachers. The relationship between the head teacher and two male teachers is unpleasant. The head teacher complained that they do not follow the rules and regulations of the school, they are irregular as well. However, the other teachers raised objections regarding the issue. The head teacher then asked them to write the time of attendance while signing in the register. The head teacher also informed the SMC about the matter and the members become annoyed. However, to avoid the adverse situation the head teacher attempted to get mutual transfer to another school. The villagers convinced the head teacher not to leave the school. The head teacher was drenched to feel their adoration. He then assured them that he would stay in this school. As was mentioned earlier that subsequent to the incident the SMC called on a meeting where they warned the teachers to be regular in school. However, the head teacher told that such conflict among the teachers has been resolved, but it was observed that their relationship was yet indifferent.

To retain cooperation among the teachers the head teacher often arrange staff meeting and share what he learns in the cluster meeting. He also discusses about academic issues and rules and regulations in the school.

3.5 Teachers' evaluation

The teachers of this school are evaluated in various ways. The head teacher often observes class teaching in order to understand the performance of the teachers. He discusses about the lapses with the teachers and provides them necessary suggestions for improvement. During inspection, the AUEO observes the classroom delivery strategies, use of teaching materials, etc. and takes notes. He also shares his observations with the teachers at the end of the classes. For evaluation of the teachers the SMC members often attend the classrooms and assess the students by asking questions from previous lessons, indeed they do it for evaluating the teachers as well. If the students can answer their questions correctly they consider it as good performance of the teachers.

3.6 Commitment and job satisfaction

Except the head teacher the other teachers are not committed to their job, as they are not satisfied at all on the remuneration they receive. Some of them are looking for a better

job and some are maintaining extra earning. Therefore, the effort they provide to the school is very nominal. In recent years, due to the pressure of the SMC they obey the rules and regulations of the school.

4. Management

4.1 Role of head teacher

The head teacher of the school is 50 years old. He has completed higher secondary schooling (HSC). He has done C-in-Ed course in 1966 and received training under the ESTEEM project recently. Additionally he obtained subject-based training. He has been serving as a teacher for the last thirty years. He is very dedicated to his work. When his father was the head teacher of this school he had the aspiration that if he could join this school as head teacher he would make his best effort to develop the school as an ideal one. With this aspiration he has started to work in this school since 1995.

The head teacher takes classes of grades III to V. According to him, he enjoys teaching any of the subjects in any class. He teaches music to the students of pre-primary class. The head teacher has a very friendly relationship with the students. He has adopted various strategies to develop the eagerness of the learners. Sometimes, he distributes chocolates among the students in the classroom and often tell them stories without drawing any end. When the students request to tell what happened at the end, he replies that he would tell it in the next class. The children do not forget to come to school to listen the end of the story. Such a strategy has impact on attendance of the students.

The students have a great respect to him. When he passes through the way in the village they come running to him to convey their regards and to invite him to their homes. He generally comes to school 15-20 minutes earlier to provide necessary help to the weak students. He provides special coaching to the weak students on Mathematics and English at his home.

The head teacher has warm relationship with the SMC and the community. He made the SMC members aware of their responsibilities. In this regard he stated,

I have told SMC that the school is their institution. The well-being of the school mainly depends on their activities. If they do not cooperate, it is not possible for me alone to improve the quality of the school.

Through motivating the SMC and taking help from the young people in the village various national days, annual sports and festivals like *Swarasati Puja* (worship to the goddess of education) are observed in the school. To ensure full participation of the members in the SMC meeting, he schedules meeting according to their convenient. Sometimes, the SMC meetings are held at night (using hurricane lantern) to make the time convenient to all members.

To raise awareness in the community the head teacher has provided lots of visit to the households. On his way from school to home he meets the parents of the students to alert them and to notice whether their children are studying at home. However, he is so attached with the villagers that they consult him regarding their personal matters too. He is also a respected person in the community. He is a common guest in the ceremonies of

the villagers. New brides are brought to him to do *pronom* (nod to show respect) seeking his good wishes.

It was mentioned earlier that the relationship between the head teacher and the other teachers is somewhat indifferent. Nevertheless the head teacher always attempt to involve them with the school activities. The following is an example in this regard.

One day the head teacher told his colleagues that the education department of the government instructed to arrange coaching classes for the scholarship examinees during vacation. The teachers refused to attend the coaching classes. He tried to console them saying that if the duty is properly distributed one would need to come for three to four days only. Nevertheless, the teachers were not convinced. The head teacher then asked them to give him a written objection. As a result, the teachers compel to attend the coaching classes.

The head teacher maintains all kinds of official papers neatly. According to the respective AUEO, the register books and the papers of this school are very consistent. The AUEO appreciated the sincerity, transparency, and professionalism of the head teacher. He further stated that the head teacher is capable in guiding the assistant teachers. The AUEO often ask the head teacher to inspect other schools. The head teacher consult with the SMC members to take decision for the school. The SMC meetings are held regularly. Nevertheless, the head teacher plays a major role in decision-making process.

4.2 Role of SMC

To improve the quality of the school the role of SMC is enormous. Certain points are considered during formation of the SMC. First of all, the members are selected in such a way that they come from every corner of the school catchment area, so that they can take care of the students in their area. Secondly, degree of interest of the person in education is considered. Finally, personal workload of the person is assessed. If any person is unable to provide adequate time to the school, he/she is considered as disqualified to be a member of the SMC. However, when the term of previous SMC was over the head teacher called a joint meeting of the parents and the elite in the village to form a new committee. Earlier the same persons remained in the committee for years. Nevertheless, if any member realise that he would not be able to contribute adequate time to the school, proposed not to be in the committee for the next term.

All the SMC members received training under ESTEEM project. According to them they learned how to manage a school effectively. Through the training they understood that quality of school can be improved through an effective management. All the members regularly attend the weekly meeting where they discuss about the attendance of the students, students' quality and development of infrastructure.

The study revealed that the SMC members raises awareness of the parents of respective area to send their children to school. If any student stop attending the school they visit the respective parents to convince them to send their child to the school. Even they assure them, if necessary, SMC would provide pen, copybook, etc. The members of the SMC

also helped in selecting the students for stipend. Additionally the members of SMC are accountable to ensure the attendance of the learners of respective area in the school.

The SMC members also notice the punctuality of the teachers. If the teachers do not attend the school timely, the SMC seeks explanation in the meeting. Besides, as mentioned earlier that they evaluate the performance of the teachers through assessing the students in the classrooms. The SMC members watch over the assistant teachers whether they skip any class in absence of the head teacher.

The SMC members often visit the students' home in the evening to inspect whether they are studying or not. They tell the parents not to switch on the television before 9:00 p.m. Even they request them not to provide dinner to their children before preparing the lessons. According to one SMC member, early dinner brings early sleep.

For the development of infrastructure of the school the SMC attempts to motivate the community to provide subscription. Previously, the community contributed in repairing the furniture of the school. Recently, the SMC approached the *union parishad* Chairman to help develop the playground of the school.

4.3 Role of AUEO

According to the head teacher the role of the AUEO is significant in improving the quality of the school. He pointed out that the head teachers of other schools usually become fretful when they know about the visit of the AUEO to their schools. But he takes it positively. According to him, if the AUEO visits frequently the teachers become more regular and sincere to their duties. Thus, overall quality of the school improves. During inspection the AUEO observes the performance of the teachers in the classrooms and takes notes. After class time they discuss about the good method they adopted, the lapses, and the ways of improvement, etc.

4.4 The regulations

Similar to other schools, there are certain regulations for the students and the teachers of this school. The head teacher and the SMC always make effort to ensure that the teachers and the students follow the regulations. As mentioned earlier, how they ensure teachers following regulations of the school. The students are bound to attend the school wearing school dress, but almost half of them come to school with casual dresses. Poverty is the major reason behind this. The head teacher often suggests the students to ask their parents to provide them school dresses instead of any new casual dress during *puja* festival. Sometimes he persuades the parents by saying that if the children come to school with school dress and stay here for the whole day they will require less number of casual dress for rest of the time.

4.5 Stipend

The head teacher along with the SMC members selected the children for stipend. According to a teacher of a neighbouring school:

Generally most of the schools adopt unfair means regarding stipend, but the teachers of this school do not need to do so. Here the head teacher is

very honest, the parents are aware, and as the attendance of the students are good; they usually do well in the examinations.

The parents are satisfied with the selection of students for stipend. On implementation of the stipend programme the attendance rate and the quality of the students increased in this school. If by any chance any unruliness take place regarding stipend the head teacher always tries to solve it through his compassion. The following case is such an example:

Forty-four students of this school are entitled for stipend. Once the amount of money received from the government was less, which could cover only 24 students. Therefore, a SMC meeting was called to shorten the list of the students discarding the names of 20 students. In the meeting the head teacher reasonably pointed out, *"it is true that the poorer students should receive the stipend. Nevertheless, students who are slightly better-off but regular and doing well should not be removed from the list. It will dishearten them and they may not comply with the study."* The SMC agreed with the point and asked the head teacher to take a sensible decision regarding the matter. The head teacher decided to distribute the money equally among the 44 students in the list.

5. Community participation

Community participation in school activities increased the quality of the school. The enormous role of the head teacher in ensuring community participation has been stated earlier. The villagers are so attached with the school that they participate in various activities. They have participated in the infrastructure development of the school including some maintenance works. The former AUEO stated:

The villagers are very spontaneous in cooperating with the school. Once in my presence they planted sapling for the flower garden of the school.

The villagers often donate in cash or kind for the infrastructure development of the school. Sometimes they help the teachers to develop education materials. In the absence of teachers the qualified young men and women in the village come forward to take classes.

In observance of various national days, festivals, annual sports and other occasions like *Maa samabesh* (mothers' rally) the participation of the community is spontaneous. The villagers informed that in *Shwarasati puja* they usually stay during the whole day in the school and participate in the rituals. They further stated that they love to attend the sports and other cultural activities in the school as their children participate and sometimes receive awards.

Usually two *Maa samabesh* (mothers' rally) are organised in the school every year. During our fieldwork one *Maa somabesh* was arranged and several issues like attendance of children, mothers duty during vacation, importance of installation of slab latrine at home, etc. were discussed. The mothers complained in the occasion that their children did not want to study in the evening due to television programme. The head teacher suggested them not to switch on the television before 9:00 p.m. and also to convince their

neighbours to do so. The head teacher also asked ten eager mothers from different corners of the village to oversee how his advice is followed.

6. Teaching learning process

Teacher student ratio has direct effect on the teaching learning process of any school. It is 1:29 in this school. Such a ratio is much better than the national average, but the school authority considers it as hindrance of providing quality education in the school. One teacher usually spend 40 to 45 minutes in a class of 29 students. However, the teachers of this school think that during this time it is difficult for them to deliver the lesson and assess the students after recording their attendance. Therefore, it is not always possible to communicate with all the students in the class. The teachers tries to guide the weak students during leisure period or tiffin time.

6.1 Classroom environment

The classrooms are well decorated which easily attract the children to come to school. Number of students in this school is less than the other schools. The seating capacity in the classrooms is adequate. Enough natural light and air can pass through. The favourable condition in the classrooms help the teachers to be sincere and cordial and make their participation spontaneous.

6.2 Technique of teaching

The teachers are very cordial. Before entering into the actual lesson the teachers try to create an environment that helps retain learners' concentration. After conveying greetings in each class they tell the students to sing a song or recite a rhyme. The head teacher opined that the mind of the learners is mostly distracted while attending the classes, it requires to concentrate before starting the main lesson. Following example shows how the head teacher brings students concentration in his class.

At the beginning of the class he usually asks the learners to listen to him closing their eyes. The students close their eyes. He then starts his story, *"you imagine that you are going to your maternal uncle's house by bus. Now you are at the bus stand. You have bought some peanuts and have your seat in the bus. The bus is running to your maternal uncle's village. After some hours, you have reached your maternal uncle's house. You are having fun there. There is plenty of ripe plum in a tree. You have climbed up to a plum tree. Suddenly a thin branch of the tree is broken and you fall down ----- dhopash!!! You have awoken up from your dream."* He tells the story very slowly so that the children can dream the situation.

According to the head teacher listening the story with closed eyes the distractive mind become concentrated in the classroom. It also cheer up their mind and increase the power of thought. The teachers are, in general, skilful in relating the lessons with the surrounding environment, which helps increase the scope of idea of the students. For example:

One day the head teacher asked the students to tell him the way they reached in the school. The students replied that they walked through the way. He then asked, "if you want to go to Jessore how would you reach there." The students replied, "we can get there by a bus, a motorcycle, or a

car.” Then, the head teacher showed them some pictures of several vehicles and told them these are called transports.

The teachers of this school do not encourage the students to read any supporting books other than the textbooks. However, the students who are preparing for the scholarship examination are given the photocopy of the suggestions. It was known that the divisional office of DPE sent the suggestions.

The teachers often use teaching materials in the classrooms to make the lesson more attractive and easily comprehensible. There are adequate teaching materials and textbooks for the teachers. These are very much useful for them in delivering the lessons in the classrooms. DPE provided most of these materials in the school. Nevertheless, the teachers also develop some materials of their own and sometimes the villagers help them in this regard.

6.3 Private tutoring

Almost 80-85% of the students of this school has private tutor at home. None of the teachers of this school are involved in teaching privately to their own students. However, they encourage the parents to provide private tuition to their children at home. Following is the opinion of a parent.

My son was not doing well in the school. I met his class teacher. The teacher advised me engage a private tutor for my son at home. I have followed the teachers' advice.

Some other parents also agreed that their children require private tuition at home for a better result in the examination. Usually the students who have completed their HSC and are getting ready for admission in the colleges provide private tuition to the children in the locality. Two elders in the community are also involved in private tutoring, which bring them extra money. The parents are to pay Tk. 40 to 45 per student per month for private tutor, which some poor families cannot afford.

The AUEO also implicitly emphasised the necessity of receiving private tuition at home. According to him, it was thought earlier that due to poor socio-economic condition the students would be unable to study at home. Therefore, completion of their study during the school hour was a must. Nevertheless, due to the large number of students per teacher in the schools, the teachers are unable to see all the students in the classrooms. Consequently the lesson learnt in the classrooms need to be revised at home.

The parents also think that the teachers are unable to pay attention to all the students in the classrooms. Consequently many students remain weak. If there is no private tuition at home to make the children able to catch up, they hesitate to participate in the classroom activities, which may reduce their interest in attending the classes. Some of the poor parents reported that they spent the stipend money to provide private tuition to their children at home.

6.4 Management of low achievers

The teachers identify weak students during classroom teaching and then provide them extra time during leisure period or tiffin hour. The head teacher takes extra classes for one and a half hour for the weak students after the official school hour. On his way to home the head teacher visits the weak students at their homes to make their parents aware of education. His general advise is to take extra care of the children's study at home, and provide private tutor if needed. The teachers often divide the learners into groups – putting both weak and good students in a group and allowing them to discuss the lessons taught. This is helpful for the weaker students to learn from the good students.

7. Fund management

Apart from receiving tiny funds from the government the main source of income of this school is the financial contribution of the SMC members and the villagers. The school has 42 trees, which did not grow up enough to sell. The SMC and the villagers come forward to provide necessary assistance in maintenance work. In this regard the role of the head teacher is enormous. The head teacher continuously motivated the villagers and the SMC members to provide necessary support for the school. The SMC is mainly responsible in managing the funds, but the head teacher plays a major role in this regard.

8. Co-curricular activities

The teachers admit necessity of co-curricular activities in the school. According to them, it cheer up the children and make them attentive to school. They further state that the co-curricular activities have influence on the overall quality of the students. Good performance of the students in co-curricular activities is also helpful in publicity of the school. A Hindu student of class III achieved third position in *Hamd and Naat* [Islamic song in admiration of Allah and Rasul Hazrat Muhammad (SM)] competition. It increased the fame of the school. Although the head teacher is a Hindu but he teaches *Hamd and Naat* to the students along with other songs. One teacher is responsible for the co-curricular activities of the students, however, the young villagers also play important role in this aspect.

The co-curricular activities are, in fact, a part of teaching learning process in this school. The head teacher always encourages the students to take part in singing, dancing or rhyme recitation. He often joins with the students in these activities. In the fine arts (*charu kala*) class along with drawing the teachers encourage the learners to make fruits, birds, mobile telephone, etc. with mud.

9. Annual examination

The teachers help the students take necessary preparation for the annual examination – revision of the whole syllabus few weeks before the examination is significant. During examination seating arrangement is done mixing the students of various classes, which does not allow the students to see each others examination paper. The students are asked to bring the papers from home. The head teacher reported that if the school provided exam papers higher fees are to be charged to the students.

While explaining the questions, the teachers almost indicating the answers. For example, in the question paper the students were asked to identify the even numbers, however, all of them circled all the numbers given. Noticing the matter one teacher explained them about odd and even numbers, so that all the students could answer correctly. It was also found that one student of class III was unable to answer any of the questions in a paper, but he was given 23 marks. According to the teachers, they often do so in order to continue learners interest in education.

In a question paper the students were asked to answer five out of seven questions. Some students answered all the seven questions. When the respective teacher was asked about it he replied that if the students answered all the seven questions what was the harm in it? During assessment the best five answers from those seven were considered. Naturally, the students who answered all the questions did well compared to the students who answered the required five questions.

10. Scholarship examination

To assess a school, the number of students obtain primary scholarship is an important consideration for the officials. The learners of this school obtained at least one scholarship each year from 1996 to 2000. The coaching provided to the students was not up to the mark during last two years. As such, the students failed to obtain any scholarship during the period. It happened due to indifferent relationship among the teachers. The assistant teachers were not cooperative with the head teacher.

The students start taking preparation for the scholarship examination one and a half year before the examination schedule. Six months long special coaching classes are arranged for the students of Class IV during the second half of the academic year. Among those promoted to class V, six/seven are selected for scholarship examination. They are provided training during the whole academic year of class V – during tiffin period and after the official school hour. The head teacher ask them to come to school for coaching even in the weekly holidays. They are mostly kept in the head teachers' house for study three to four months prior to the examination. In this regard, the head teacher remembered that his father also did the same during his tenure.

Case 2. A Government Primary School in Nawabganj

1. School Profile

This school was established in 1945 under the auspices of some elite of the village where the school is situated. The school was set up on a 50 - decimal land as a rural school. The government has taken up the school in 1973.

1.1 School location

This school is located in a village, which is 30 kilometres away from the *Shibganj upazila* town under Nawabgonj district. The river Mahananda is passing by the side of the village. The local bazaar is very close to the school. The catchment area of the school is the entire village. The village has 945 acres of land with 5,545 inhabitants, majority of whom are poor daily labourers. The others are mango traders, teachers, NGO workers, and other service holders. Most of the people in the poor households are illiterate. Most of the inhabitants are Muslim and few of them are Hindu. A non-government girls' high school is there beside the school.

1.2 Historical background

Initially the school had three classrooms and an office room. There was a wall made of bricks and mud surrounded by the school area. There had been no door or window in any of the classrooms for long time since inception.

During its early age, the school had four teachers including the head teacher. Few students were admitted in the school, the teachers had to collect them from door to door. After retirement of some founding teachers, the function of the school became stagnant for about twenty-four years. During that time many students left the school and the children of the village were used to enrol in a school located in the neighbouring village. The children of the then head teacher also moved there. Meanwhile, the head teacher also involved with other profession and resigned from the post. The present head teacher was then working in a neighbouring school. He applied for the post of head teacher to the UEO. From two candidates, he was selected as head teacher in 1971.

When the present head teacher took the charge there was only 45 students in the school. The newly appointed head teacher initiated various development activities. He strived to develop the school with the help of four other colleagues. He called a meeting with the then SMC and sought its cooperation. The SMC members came forward to help the head teacher – the first task was to increase the number of students. With a joint initiative of the head teacher and the SMC two girls of the school obtained primary scholarship in 1972. It created a sensation in the community. The villagers in a general meeting assured the head teacher that they would provide all kinds of support in school development. The number of students gradually increased. The students who left the school earlier started to come back again. Furthermore, students from the neighbouring villages began to enrol in this school.

Fund raising activities started in 1974-75. The school authority realised that monetary solvency is a must for implementing development plans. The head teacher also thought that it would not be appropriate to seek financial assistance continuously from the SMC

and the community. They might not be able to support always. With this thinking the head teacher himself contributed some money and asked his colleagues to contribute according to their capacity. A nursery was developed in the school compound with support from a gardener. The fund raised from selling saplings was divided into two – a half was given to the gardener and the rest was deposited to school fund. This money was spent for making benches, cupboards, and other materials needed for the school. Some mango trees were planted and a flower garden was developed. The teachers were so enthusiastic that they went to Rajshahi town to collect various types of plants for the garden.

In 1977, the members of the Divisional Education Committee came to visit the school. One of them was from the same village. With his initiative Tk. 45,000 was sanctioned from the government. This accelerated the infrastructure development of the school. In the same year, the local upazila chairman sanctioned Tk. 190,000 for school development. The total money was used in constructing of the main building of the school. Meanwhile to economise the expenditure of construction, in consultation with the SMC, a brickfield was established in the school compound. After completing the construction work, excess bricks were sold out and the money was put in the school fund. Some benches, chairs and tables were also made with the remaining money. During construction the teachers supervised the activities even on holidays.

From the beginning, there were two rich influential families rival to each other. The head teacher used to stay in one family's house as a lodging teacher. In 1973, when he thought to form the School Management Committee he was in a dilemma. Considering the situation of the two families the head teacher sought advice of the family where he used to stay. They advised him to take their rival in the SMC and as he was staying in their house they would remain to support him.

At the beginning of 1980, the school started to earn money from selling mangoes. Besides, the then *upazila* nirbahi officer (UNO) helped the school generously. Once all on a sudden the UNO visited the school – he was charmed to see good attendance, consistent result and cleanliness of the school. When he was transferred from the place he requested the next UNO to continue *upazila* administration's support to the school. He also sanctioned 100 mound of wheat for the school. The school received assistance through sanctioning wheat for several times.

During the same decade, the head teacher tried to increase the school land. With the help of SMC members he bought some amount of land near the school compound. The SMC motivated the rich landowners to sell their lands to school in cheap price. One rich old woman, who had a piece of land near the school area, donated her land and encouraged others to donate or sell their lands with minimal price. School boundary was expanded with the new lands before the full price was given to the landowners. Some more lands were bought during the following years.

Not only at *upazila* level, the district level education officials also helped the school in various ways. Once, when the head teacher went to the district primary education officer (DPEO) for some official work and to collect first instalment of the allotted money, the

DPEO asked the accountant to give the whole amount of the money at a time. It was not the rule to provide the full amount at a time, but the DPEO did it in favour of the head teacher – it was because the DPEO had faith on the capacity and sincerity of the head teacher. To get repeated help from the government officials good performance of the students in the annual and scholarship examinations played a significant role.

Another remarkable development in the history of this school was the formation of Cub team. Once the head teacher went to visit a school in Nawabganj sadar. There he found a number of students showing physical display with the rhythm of instruments. Having moved observing this, he envisaged a Cub team in his own school doing so. It was in 1980, when the head teacher initiated Cub team in the school. The SMC managed Tk. 2,000 for buying some musical instruments and other necessities. A man of a nearby village was a member of scout movement. He was asked to provide training to the students.

In 2002, the LGED constructed a two-storied building for the school. Before this, the school also received Tk. 240,000 from LGED. The money was spent for constructing a guest room and some classrooms and buying sofa-set and some mats. During construction of the two storied building the head teacher continuously supervised the progress. To make sure of quality construction he met with the UNO, DPEO and the respective contractor. Due to close supervision of the head teacher and the SMC members quality of work was very good.

The school had been suffering from inadequacy of teachers for a long time. The number of teachers varied from four to eight and each of them had to take additional classes. The teachers often asked the students of class V to teach the students of class I. To overcome the situation the SMC recruited some part-time teachers. Thus, the number of teachers increased. At present, the school has 16 teachers – 14 full time government and two are part time recruited by the SMC.

In its journey to success, this school achieved the award of best school in the division in 1994 and 2002. Besides, the head teacher was also awarded as the best teacher of the division in 1986, 1990 and 2002.

As the school was becoming famous day-by-day, many teams and individuals from different districts visited the school. Each year about 4/5 teams visit the school. Some visitors from foreign countries also came to see the school. The visitors put their remarks on the visitor's book. These opinions are regarded as asset of the school. Once a district primary education officer wrote in the visitor's book, which is a nice reflection of the school in outsiders' eyes.

Tile tile gora prathomic vidyayal na dekhle bojha shamvob noi (without watching it one cannot understand how much attentive effort has been given in developing the school).

1.3 Present material condition

At present, the school is situated on two acres and thirty decimals of land. A boundary wall surrounds the school compound. There is a big field containing many mango trees in

the school compound. At the left side of the main entrance the new building of the school is located and at the right side there is a tin-roofed classroom. In the main building there are seven classrooms, one teacher's common room, one storeroom, one rest room and a prayer room. In the first floor, there are five classrooms and a room for teacher's residence. There is a separate structure in the backside of the main building, which is mainly used as kitchen and dining room for the teachers.

A beautiful garden fenced by grill is situated just in front of the school building. There are two tube-wells and one motor pump in the school. There is also a tap in the first floor of the school, from which the students can drink water. The school has electricity facility. Some classrooms are decorated. In every classroom there is a fan and a electric light. These are controlled from the teachers' common room. In addition, every classroom has a blackboard and a material box. Some classrooms has wall clock. A library has planned to develop in 2003, some shelves are made and some books are collected. The school has a computer received recently from UNICEF.

2. Students

According to the school record, there are 757 students in the school. Distribution of students by grade and sex is given in Table 4. Among the students, 334 are boys and 423 are girls. Proportion of girls is higher than the boys in each grade. Some students from outside the catchment area are also enrolled.

Table 4. Distribution of students by grade and sex in Nawabganj school, 2003

Sex	Grade					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Girls	86	95	88	69	85	423
Boys	69	76	78	53	58	334
Both	155	171	166	122	143	757
% of girls	55.5	55.6	53.0	56.6	59.4	55.9

The school has a disabled child who read in class II. She has some extra mussels developed on fingerers of her hands and feet. She has been suffering since she was born. Her face has swollen slightly. According to the teachers, she is a mediocre student. No social discrimination is there in the classroom. Other students were found to sit beside her. Teachers ask her lessons and the students mix and play with her as usual.

About 80% of the students are from the poor households – a large proportion of them are suffering from mal nutrition.

2.1 Attendance of students

About 90% of the students attend the school regularly. Sometimes in some classes the attendance rate raises up to 100%. The teachers pay special attention regarding this. After the roll call the teachers usually identify the absent students. They then ask some other students to call the absentee students who live nearby. According to the teachers, they usually send those students who are regular and show good performance in the class, thus it does not disrupt their education.

The parents often come to see the teachers to inform about the causes of absence of their children. If the parents do not come, the teachers keep the books of the students with them and send message to their parents to collect the books from school. This ensures parents visit to school and inform the teachers about the causes of absenteeism. Sometimes, if any student does not come to school for three days or more, they are threatened not to allow to sit for the examinations. As a result, many students regularly attend the school.

Once some students had stopped coming to school because of poverty. The head teacher went to their homes and assured that he would provide them with necessary pen and copybooks. In addition, many of the parents are the former students of the head teacher so they follow the head teacher's advice. According to some parents their children are enthusiastic to go regularly.

The head teacher and the assistant teachers often perform home visits and ask their parents to send their children to school regularly. They also talk to the parents when they meet with them in the common places. In elaborating the head teacher's role one parent expressed the following:

One day he asked his son to assist him in *haat* instead of going to school. His son is a good student of class IV. On the day the boy was surprised to see his classmates in his place. They said, "we are here to take you to school. Head Sir sends us to take you with us if you are not sick." However, the boys failed to take him with them. Afterwards when the head teacher found him at *haat*, he said to his father, "You did wrong by asking your son to serve your interest instead of going to school." After such remark of the head teacher the parent never told his son to be absent from the school.

Generally, during mango harvesting season, students' attendance decrease. The poor students involve them in earning money by selling the collected mangoes from the grove.

2.2 Student intra relation

The students are friendly to each other. Constructive competition is there among the students of class V. They compete with each other for being better student. The competition in achievement between the boys and the girls is noticeable. The boys and the girls are found seating separately in two sides of the classrooms. As the number of girls is larger than that of the boys, sometimes the girls are to share the boys' seat. Some girls do not like to do so and they often complain to the teachers.

2.3 Student assessment

To assess the students three examinations take place in a year – first-term, mid-term and the final examination. Various class tests are taken before the final examination. In the classroom, the teachers assess the students by asking questions, providing exercises in the copybook and asking to write answers on the blackboard. One teacher stated the following:

Through classroom exercise we assess how much the students learned the lessons. If we understand that they could not follow the lesson we take necessary measures.

2.4 Promotion rate

A flexible standard is maintained in promoting the students of class I and II. The students are assessed through written examination from class III and onwards, students performance in these examinations are considered for promotion. According to the school record of 2002, the promotion rate was 100% in class I, 94% in class II, 93% in class III, 88% in class IV and 95% in class V. Students failing in one or two subjects are also considered for promotion.

The number of students repeated in the same class was 48 in 2002; 27 boys and 21 girls. Five students of class V repeated in the same class to have a second chance for scholarship examination. According to the teachers, these students remained in the same class because their parents wanted so.

3. Teachers

The school has 16 teachers - four of them are females. Only two of them are employed by the SMC as part-time teacher and the others are government employees. Among the teachers six have masters degree, five have bachelor degree and the rest passed HSC. Seven teachers have done C-in-Ed course from PTIs. A teacher is a subject trainer for English in the local URC.

Age of three teachers ranges from 50 to 55 years, one is 42 years and the rest are in between 23 and 30 years. Two of the senior teachers have been working since 1978-79. Two joined in 1990 and the rest in 2003. The teachers, on average, take six to seven classes daily. They get leisure for sometime after the tiffin period.

3.2 Teachers' attendance

A strict rule is followed regarding teachers' attendance in the school. All teachers must be present in school before 9:30 a.m. Nobody can be absent without taking leave. Moreover, the teachers are instructed to write the right time of their arrival in the register, which is hardly done. In one case, a female teacher wrote 9:30 in the attendance register instead of her arrival at 12 noon. The head teacher did not take any action against her, because she had some family problems at that time. The SMC also considers such situation easily. The members of the SMC casually visit the school and often check the attendance register and leave application of the teachers.

3.3 Teacher student relationship

The relationship between the teachers and the students is very cordial. The students adore the female teachers in the school. The students often ask the teachers to write their names on the new copybooks. Many students go to the female teachers to show their work, especially to those who live in the school hostel. Some visit them to learn music or to listen stories. If the teachers remain absent the students become worried to know their situation.

The students do not afraid of their teachers, but respect them. The teachers try to keep the students in a disciplined manner, but this is not a barrier in building good relationship between the students and the teachers. According to the teachers, over rebuking is bad for the students. They always try to maintain an easy relationship with the students. However, according to the head teacher –

Warm relationship between the teachers and the students is very important because the students, in many cases, give value to the teacher's words more than that of their parents or relatives. They consider that teachers are always right.

3.4 Teacher' intra relationship

Relationship among the teachers is pleasant. During tiffin break or leisure time they are found to chat among themselves. It can often be seen that junior teachers bring drinking water for the seniors and ask them to sign first in the attendance register. Apart from this, if the senior teachers get tired in taking the classes they often ask the junior teachers to conduct their classes. Sometimes the senior teachers also take the classes of junior teachers to provide them the opportunity to study for their graduate examinations. The junior teachers have the mentality to learn from the seniors. The senior teachers also welcome the juniors in this regard. The newly appointed teachers are also cooperative and competitive to each other.

3.5 Teachers' evaluation

The head teacher assesses the teachers' performance through observing their classroom activities. He provides feedback during weekly staff meeting. During inspection the AUEO also assesses the teachers. The head teacher intensively monitors the classes of the new teachers. From his observation he reported that the new teachers have skill in delivering lessons, they always adopt new strategies and the scope of their knowledge is also vast. However, the AUEO usually emphasize necessary information on the blackboard. He also provide feedback after observation. Once he observed that a teacher was using umbrella as a pointer; he then asked the teacher to use a stick instead of an umbrella. Pedagogical feedback is rarely found from the AUEO.

3.6 Commitment and job satisfaction

The senior teachers are satisfied with their job. They do not even avail casual leave, rather they work for extra hours. On the other hand, most of the junior teachers are looking for better job. They state that as the remuneration is very poor in teaching profession and there is no chance to be promoted to the post of AUEO or the UEO. Thus, it cannot be taken as a career. Although the junior teachers are looking for better opportunity, they are committed to their present work too. One of them stated,

I need to study more to have better opportunity in life. That's why I want to sit for public examination for higher degrees. On the other hand, I am in a service. I need to take preparation for the classes that I am responsible to. I cannot be dishonest in taking the classes. I cannot deprive my students.

However, it was noted that most of the teachers in the school are financially solvent. Some of them are owner of mango groves.

4. Management

4.1 Role of head teacher

The head teacher is about 55 years old. He has completed HSC and got C-in-Ed training. He joined this school in 1971 and since then he has been working in this school. The head teacher plays key role in the school management. He supervises all the activities in the school and takes necessary measures. He is supposed to conduct six to seven classes everyday, but due to official work he cannot manage it always.

The head teacher maintains a pleasant relationship with other teachers in the school. He tries to convince the teachers to attend the classes timely. He regularly observes the classes and provides feedback to them. The teachers follow his advices and ask for help if needed. The head teacher also takes help of other teachers in office work. Even though the senior teachers are experienced in office work, the head teacher often asks the new teachers to do so. In this regard he stated, "This is the right time for the junior teachers to learn. If they learn how to do office work, they will be able to work in any school in future." One female teacher who joined in service few months back stated, "I have heard about this school before my joining. I am lucky enough that I got him as the head teacher. This is a great opportunity for me to learn from him about how to be a good teacher."

Boarding facilities for the new teachers have been arranged in the school hostel as their home is far away. The head teacher grants leave to the junior teachers as and when required. When the head teacher takes leave, he shifts his responsibilities to one senior teacher. Nevertheless, during his absence the administration of the school collapses to some extent. For example, many teachers at that time delay 5-7 minutes in attending the classes, which normally do not happen in presence of the head teacher.

The head teacher is very strict especially regarding discipline, attendance and regularity in study. He always checks the students' attendance registers and asks them questions to know how much they learnt. Before inspection or visit of outsiders, the head teacher asks the students to clean the classrooms and the school ground.

The head teacher maintains a very good relationship with the government officials. In this regard the maid of the school hostel stated, "Whenever the high officials visit the school, Sir (the head teacher) entertains them with good refreshments. During the mango season he invites the UEO and the DPEO and offers them bags full of mangoes."

According to the villagers, the head teacher has some controlling power over the high officials of the government. However, the UEO also stated that the head teacher could maintain good relationship with every one and that was his virtue. The head teacher has good relationship with the community too. Sometimes he is paid fatherly respect. According to them, the development of the school was possible only for the devotion of the head teacher.

The head teacher plays a major role in decision making. According to him, he takes decision consulting with the SMC members and other teachers. However, the teachers opined that the head teacher listen to every ones' suggestion but act according to his own decision. During development of the annual plan of the school the head teacher invites

the UEO, and the members of the SMC and the PTA. He also invites some good students to participate in the planning session to reflect the students' views in the plan. This is something innovative in this school.

4.2 Role of SMC

The school has a well-established SMC with 11-members. The local member of the parliament (*Jatiya Sangsad*) and the Chair of the local *union parishad* are the advisors of the SMC. Only one member of the SMC is female. Although the SMC members are from different socio-economic and political background, they have very good intimacy. In the meeting, they are found to solve various problems related to school through consensus.

The SMC members are noted to monitor the student and teacher attendance, and teaching learning process in the classrooms. They provide financial support and sometimes organise mobilisation activities. For example:

A prize giving ceremony for the successful mothers was introduced in 2002. In this ceremony, the mothers of five best students of every class are awarded. According to SMC chair, the ceremony makes the mothers enthusiastic, which ultimately raise the quality of education. Furthermore, in the same year, every teacher was awarded acknowledging their hard work for the school. Earlier, the SMC has decided to award some best teachers of the school. Accordingly, the SMC members tried to score the performance of the teachers. Afterwards they realised that such an attempt might disappoint the teachers who would not succeed. Consequently they have decided to give prize to all the teachers in the school.

4.3 Role of government officials

The role of the government officials is enormous in improving the quality of this school. The UEO and the respective AUEO often visit the school. Some years ago, the then UEO stayed one night in the school hostel and discussed issues related to school development with the SMC members and the local elite. As already mentioned that the UEO and the AUEO participate in developing the annual plan for the school. Sometimes they provide extra favour to the teachers and the school as well. For instance, once the UEO sanctioned unauthorised leave to the teachers. For development of infrastructure of the school financial assistance was provided time-to-time. The head teacher opined, the government officials know that the teachers of this school are honest, work very hard, and supportive to the school. It was reported that when the AUEO saw that the teacher student ratio is higher in this school compared to the other schools in the area he then proposed for more posts of the teacher for this school and provided teachers accordingly.

4.4 The regulations

The school starts at 9:30 a.m. everyday and the students are instructed to attend the school on time. Assembly is held regularly at the beginning of the school hour where all the teachers and the students are suppose to participate. Nevertheless, some of the teachers do not participate in the assembly. The students of the school have fixed uniform but it is not followed strictly. The students are to take prior permission before going for leave. The students are responsible to keep the classrooms and the playground clean.

4.5 Stipend

Three hundred students of this school receive the government stipend. In selecting the students for stipend the head teacher and the Chair of the SMC consulted with the assistant teachers. They together assessed the socio-economic condition of the families of each of the students. Such an exercise was not difficult for them because they know all the parents especially the fathers of all the students. During student selection for the stipend, many parents request the SMC to consider their children. However, the SMC is very strict in selection.

According to the teachers, as most of the students are from the poor families, it is difficult for them to select the students for stipend. However, they prefer the poorer students. The parents also told that the student selection for the stipend was quite fair. If a student is unable to attend 85% of the days in a month, he/she is not given stipend of that month. On the other hand, if a student scores below 40% marks in the first two examinations of the year, stipend continues. If the same result continues up to the final exam, the stipend is postponed till the first term exam of the next year. To qualify for the stipend one is to show competency in exams.

4.6 Home visit

Some of the teachers and the head teacher sometimes do home visit of the students. During their visit they talk to the parents to raise their awareness in education. Such attempt is also made when the teachers meet the parents in common places like street or *bazaar*. Sometimes the teachers send 'home visit form' through the students to their parents asking them to sign it. These false statements are sent to the UEO office. The SMC members and the upazila office know about this, however do not consider it as unfair.

5. Community participation

The school has a close relationship with the local community. Some people often come to the school mosque for prayer. When people come to the school ground for chatting they also exchange their views with the teachers. The community people assist the school authority in organising different cultural functions. Their support includes decorating the school and arranging refreshment for the guests. Although many people come to enjoy the cultural functions the female participation is few.

Sometimes the community takes assistance from the school in many ways. Some of the former students use two classrooms for their private tutoring in the afternoon. A netting training class, run by a local man, is held in every Friday in the school. Benches are borrowed from the school during private functions of the villagers.

6. Teaching learning process

Teacher student ratio is 1:51. Such a high ratio affects the teaching learning in the classrooms. According to the teachers the classes could be managed better if the ratio was smaller.

6.1 Classroom environment

The classrooms are big enough and the seating capacity in each classroom is adequate for the students. Almost all the blackboards in the classrooms are in good condition. The classrooms are well decorated, neat and clean. The students take the responsibility of cleaning the classrooms every morning after coming to school. In each classroom there is a world map and a map of Bangladesh. There is a bed at a corner of a classroom, which is inconsistent with the overall environment. A curtain hides the bed.

6.3 Technique of teaching

The teachers have devised some innovative teaching techniques, which reflect their training and teaching experiences. The subjects comparatively harder to the students are taught before the tiffin break. This allows the students grasp those easily with full attention and energy. Nevertheless, some such classes are also taken after the tiffin break. In this regard the head teacher pointed that some alteration in the routine needs to be done always for better use of the trained teachers. Duration of each class before the tiffin break is about fifty minutes, so that the teachers get enough time to teach harder subjects to the students.

At the beginning of the first period, after roll call the teachers ask the students to show home task. They often ask the students to read out loudly from the home work done. However, it was observed that in most cases the backbenchers are overlooked. The teachers know the names of many of the students. They draw attention of the students calling by their names or making sound striking duster on the table. They often invite them to write on the blackboard. However, competition regarding good teaching exists among the junior teachers. This is somewhat helping in development of teaching learning in the school. Sometimes the good students are asked to teach other students of the same class.

The teachers, in general, do not see the class work of all the students. Some of the students are also not willing to show their class work to the teachers. The teachers often overlook it. General practice is to see the works of 20-25 students and write the correct answers on the blackboard. Sometimes, some teachers follow the IDEAL pedagogy in the classrooms. On the other hand, some teachers do not like the method. One of them stated,

It takes 10 minutes to raise emotion. Therefore, it is better to start lesson after conventional greetings. We only follow the method during the inspection of any visitor. Otherwise, we do not follow the method. Actually we do not feel the need to follow it.

However, the teachers conduct various types of amusement activities in the classrooms – story telling, singing and showing different physical expressions.

In general, the junior teachers do not prepare any lesson plan before taking the classes, whereas the elders do. However, the junior teachers told that they always think for appropriate teaching technique before conducting a class. Whenever they encounter difficulties they take help from the head teacher or the senior teachers. It can be seen that the junior teachers are very popular to the students. The teachers use various materials in there classes. It is not difficult because the school has lots of teaching aids and learning

materials. Moreover, the head teacher and the SMC are thinking to improve the quality of science teaching in the school. A plan has made to develop a laboratory in the school, for which two teachers are given responsibility to take necessary steps.

Punishment is one of the salient aspects of teaching learning in this school. Some teachers enter into the classrooms with sticks. According to the teachers they carry the sticks only to frighten the students, not to use it on them. In this regard, one teacher mentioned the following story.

Once a saint forbid a snack to bite. The snack abides by the saint's entreaty and stop biting in any case. But once being attacked and bloodied the snack complained to the saint '*You are responsible for what happened to me*'. The saint replied '*I asked you not to bite but I have not forbid you to fosh fosh (pretend biting)*.'" "*So we do in that way*" teacher commented. He concluded: "*We must have to show strictness otherwise students would not obey us.*"

6.5 Management of low achievers

Various strategies have been adopted to manage the low achievers. The students of grades II, III and V have been divided into some sections on the basis of academic performance. The higher achievers are kept in a section, the mediocre students in another and the rest in the other section. This system has initiated in 2003 when the eight new teaches joined the school.

The teachers try to concentrate more on the weaker group of students. They use various kinds of materials while teaching the weaker students. They provide relatively fewer home works to these students and follow various methods to make the lesson clear to them. For example, if necessary, they repeat the same lesson for 4/5 times. They ask the students to raise hand if they do not understand the lesson. In these cases they try further to make the lesson understand.

One teacher told that at the beginning of a class he used to ask lesson to all the students. However, all the students could not give correct answer. After some days, the students understood that each one would be asked questions in the class. Therefore, they started studying at home. Now they come to the class with adequate preparation.

All the new teachers praised the role of the head teacher. He advises them to behave carefully with the weak students and cheer them up by appreciating. One of the new teachers said,

The head teacher always reminds us not to give shame to the low achiever in the classes. He asked, "Do not say 'no' to your students. You should not say that they are not good. You should say that they have done well and you can ask them to try for better result. For example you can say, 'yes, you are doing well.... or yes, your hand writing is developing."

The teachers try to focus more on those subjects in which the students are weak. Sometimes, some topics are taught repeatedly. When the syllabuses of the easy subjects complete, long hours are taken for harder subjects.

6.6 Private tutoring

A few students of this school have private tutor at home. On request of the parents some teachers of this school teach some students privately. According to these teachers, they are impartial, so, their involvement with such tutoring does not affect the examination results of the students. Majority of the teachers do not support private tutoring at the primary level. Some parents opined that they are not able to see their children's study at home, thus private tutor is required. They also said that it is not possible for the teachers to see all the students adequately if a class contains about 50-60 students. They do not want to see their children deprived and thus extra care is provided at home.

7. Fund management

Apart from receiving financial support from the government the school has its own sources of income. One important source is the mango grove. In addition to the bi-annual government funds, the government regularly grants lump-some amount of money for repair/reconstruction purposes. Recently, the UEO was supposed to provide Tk. 5,000 to each of the schools in the *upazila*, but he thought that this amount is insufficient for a school. Thus, consulting with the *Upazila* Education Committee, the UEO has decided to provide all the money of this cluster (Tk. 30,000) to this school. According to the head teacher, "*Upazila* Education Office has *neak najoor* (good impression) to our school." The head teacher told that the accounts of the money taken from the government is maintained clearly in a register. The members of the SMC, the UEO, and the AUEO check the register during their visits. Sometimes, they contribute the surplus money to the school fund.

The school earns a good amount of money from its own resources. As mentioned earlier, the school has a mango grove and some wood trees. In 2003, the school earned Tk. 48,000 from selling mangoes. In several occasions, the school received donation from the solvent elite of the village, UP chairman and the members of the SMC.

The school fund is used to implement the annual plan. Besides, different casual needs are also met from this fund. The school spends a good amount of money for paying the electricity bills and buying electronic amenities. They also spend money for school decoration and development. Once they bought a sofa set by the surplus money out of the construction work.

The school has a bank account, which the head teacher and the SMC Chairperson jointly operate. During any urgent need the head teacher borrows money from other sources, which is refunded later on.

8. Co-curricular activities

Various types of co-curricular activities are arranged in the school. The students regularly practice songs, dances and recitation of poems. The students participate in different cultural activities at various national occasions. Various sports instruments are also there. Furthermore, the school has Cub activities.

A particular group of students always dominate in co-curricular activities. They are at the same time the members of the Cub group. They also do well in the curricular activities as well. Their performances are displayed during the visit of any visitor in the school.

A grand cultural show is arranged every year. The students participate in the show spontaneously. The parents and the villagers enjoy the performances of the students. In addition, a students' rally is arranged every year in observance of Education Week. Thus, the students of this school work for awareness building too.

Study tours are arranged occasionally for the teachers. Once the teachers and the SMC members jointly visited a school, which is known as one of the best primary school in the country. In 2001, the teachers visited historical places like *Shona* Mosque. A group of good students (roll numbers 1-10) were also taken with the teachers. The head teacher and the SMC chair are aware of the importance of study tour, but they usually confront some practical problems in arranging tours involving all students. According to the teachers, it is very expensive to include everybody and difficult to assure every students' security. Once they thought to arrange a tour to National Zoo, but the plan went in vain due to lack of money. The students were asked to provide Tk. 50 each, but many could not provide. However, in some occasions, a portion of the expenditure is spent from school fund and the SMC members provide another portion.

9. Annual Examination

The final examination for the year 2003 was held during the fieldwork after a long vacation of *Ramadan*. The teachers tried their best to make use of time before the vacation starts. This includes helping the students in revision of syllabus. Examination fees are imposed to the students. However, some poor students are unable to provide the examination fees and some are able to provide a partial amount. The school authority is very much flexible in this – all the students are allowed to sit for examination compensating from the school fund.

On the day before examination the teachers take necessary preparations including preparation of answer sheets and seat distribution. One teacher visits the examination halls to ensure proper seat distribution. Question papers and answer sheets are arranged accordingly.

The examinations are held in two shifts – from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. noon for classes I and II and from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. for classes III to V. The examinations in the morning are held in the first floor and the day shift examinations are held in the ground floor. In each classroom, 40-45 students sit for the examinations. Room-wise duties of the teachers are fixed earlier. But some young teaches are inclined to take duty in those rooms where good students seat as they think that the good students talk less and make less disturbance in the examination hall.

Attendance in the exams was found to be very high. According to the teachers it is a usual scenario in this school. The chair and other members of SMC and some parents came to see the examination on the first day. It was observed that an influential guardian entered into the classroom where his son was seating for examination. Unusually, he

stayed there for half an hour and was frequently asking his son whether he would be able to answer all questions. A teacher, finding no way out, called him out.

It was found that the teachers read out the question paper for the students of class II and III. They added some remarks with each question. Furthermore, they sometimes replied with some hints to the questions asked by the students. This helped the students to answer the questions. The mediocre and weaker students of class IV were found talking to each other and copying from others answer papers.

10. Scholarship

Since 1971, the students of this school have been taking part in the primary scholarship examination. Performance was always well. According to the head teacher, "If the union quota was not being a barrier, more students would have got scholarships." The students selected for the scholarship examination are to undergo a laborious study process for 5/6 months before the examination. Few years ago, the school authority created a special section for coaching of the students selected for the scholarship examination. The teachers take extra care of these students. The head teacher also provide them coaching after school hour. The coaching starts in the evening and continues up to 11 o'clock at night. Therefore, the students come to school in the evening with their food. They stay in the school hostel at night. They again take coaching at the early morning and then go back home to have their breakfast. They come to school afterwards to attend the usual classes. Usually no money has been taken from the scholarship examinees against special coaching, but this year Tk. 100 was taken from each of the students of well-off families.

Case 3. A Government Primary School in Pabna

1. School profile

This school was established in 1953 on a piece of land provided by a local *Zaminder* with the exertion of some zealous elite of the village where the school is located. After four years of initiation the school became a registered non-government primary school. In 1973, the government took over the school.

1.1 The location

The school is situated at the end of a municipal area under Pabna district – three kilometres away from the municipal town. Although the school is located in the municipal area a big portion of its catchment area is outside the municipal area. The catchment area of the school is about 2.5 square kilometres. It encompasses the whole village and a nearby village. The other educational institutes in the catchment area are: one hafezia madrassa, some non-formal primary schools of BRAC, and a number of kindergartens.

There is a 100 years old Tuesday *haat* near the school. It has an impact on the lives of the villagers and the school as well. Because, the place become crowded after 11 a.m. on the *haat* day. The school authority has changed the school time for Tuesday – from 7:30 to 11:30 in the morning. Nevertheless, it is difficult and unsafe for the children to cross the *haat* while returning home from school. Therefore the teachers often help them in this regard. The students' attendance in the school become lower on the *haat* day. Due to the same reason on Tuesday the female teacher leaves school by 11 a.m.

Majority of the villagers are poor. They do not have any particular source of income. Livelihood of 80% of them directly or indirectly depend on the *haat*. A major portion of the students work in the *haat* on Tuesday instead of attending the school. Some of them sell grass, some students sell rope or dry cow dung, some supply water to the tea stalls at *haat*. In terms of religious belief 98% of the villagers are Muslim and 2% are Hindu. Black marketing of fencydil (a kind of drug) is quite prevalent here in this *upazila* due to easy communication with the neighbouring country.

1.2 Historical background

Little could be explored regarding the historical background of the school. It was revealed that in 1953, due to the zeal of the influential villagers, the local *Zaminder* donated 33 decimals of land to establish a school in the area. The contribution of a poor farmer was substantial during the establishment of the school. He sold out his cattle for ploughing and donated the money to build the schoolhouse. He also provided physical labour.

After the independence of Bangladesh a brickfield owner provided free bricks to construct a building for the school. The former Chair of SMC accumulated the bricks in the school field with the assistance of his contemporaries. They also collected subscription to employ construction labourers. Thus, they constructed a tin-roofed building consisted of three rooms.

In 1986, the government sanctioned some money to construct a school building in the *upazila*. The *upazila* Chairman offered the money to the SMC of this school saying that they use the money if adequate land can be managed to construct a building. The land belongs to the school was inadequate. To resolve the problem the local elite and the SMC Chair pleaded the *Zaminder* to donate some more lands to the school – because he was the owner of land surrounding the school. Considering the circumstances he contributed some more land to the school.

When the two-storied building of the school was being constructed it came in the mind of the *upazila* chairman that according to the rule two-storied building can only be built in the urban areas. Considering the situation the school authority renamed the school adding the word *Shahar* (meaning urban) with the name of the school.

In the previous days, the local people were not aware of education. Stealing and drug addiction were prevalent in the area. The circumstances affected the quality of the school. Before 1985, many teachers were transferred to this school as punishment. The situation has started to be changed since 1986. To improve the quality of the school the SMC Chair consulted the matter with the head teacher of a neighbouring school, which was renowned for its quality. The head teacher advised him to obtain at least one primary scholarship by any means and make a gorgeous arrangement of annual sports. According to his advice the then head teacher of this school initiated coaching class for the students of class V. Necessary arrangements were made for these students to stay in school at night. The head teacher also started to stay in school at night with the students. With all these efforts, in 1987, one student of this school obtain a primary scholarship. At the beginning of 1988 the annual sports of the school was organised gorgeously. Besides, to improve the quality of education the SMC Chair took initiative to bring good teachers from the neighbouring schools.

Among the good teachers who newly joined two are given the responsibility of developing a scientific laboratory, where different teaching materials and model of various famous structures are kept. Initiative is also taken to make a flower garden in the school. One teacher is the best Cub (junior scout) teacher in the Rajshahi division. With his effort the school gradually become well-known to others. The other teacher, who has been involved with a local newspaper, has started to provide school related news in the newspaper since 1990. Publicity of the school has been strengthened during these days through distributing handbills highlighting various positive sides of the school.

1.3 Present material condition

The school is now housed in a two-storied building, which contains six rooms. Three of these are located at the ground floor, which are used as classrooms. The laboratory, office room for the teachers and a classroom for the scholarship examinees are at the first floor. Adequate number of tables and chairs for the teachers are there in the office room. Besides, few chairs made of cushion are also placed in the office room for guests and the members of the management committee. Apart from two shelves, one wooden *almirah*, a steel *almirah*, and a black and white television are there in the office room.

The laboratory is decorated with various teaching materials. Models of some renowned bridge and monuments like *Jamuna* bridge, *Hardinge* bridge, *Jatio Smriti Shoudho*, etc. are there in the laboratory. A model of solar system is also there, where the students can learn alphabet through lighting system.

A tin-roofed building and a house fully made of tin are there at the west side of the school boundary. The tin-roofed building is mainly used as student hostel. Few months before the fieldwork, a former director of DPE inaugurated the hostel named "*Udayan chatrabas*". Thirty-four students are currently staying in the hostel. The capacity of the hostel will be increased. As there is shortage of land, the former SMC chair allowed extension of the hostel on his own land for the time being.

In addition, two classrooms in the main building are also used for hostel purpose, this created shortage of classrooms there. Therefore, the students of two grades are shifted to the tin-shed house. There are two toilets in the school – one for the girls and one for the boys. The hostel has two tube-wells. As there is no bathroom in the hostel the students take bath beside the tube-well. Two flower gardens are there in front of the school building. The school has no library, however some books are kept in a shelf in the office room.

The school has electricity. An electric fan and a light are there in each classroom. The classrooms has adequate natural light and air. The office room has three fans. Four wall clocks are there in the walls of the office room and the classrooms; two of which are out of order.

2. Students

There are 466 students in the school, 236 are boys and the rests are girls. Distribution of students by grade and sex is given in Table 5. According to the latest census done by the school there are 630 children eligible for primary schooling in the catchment area of this school. Among the remaining children in the catchment area who are well-off enrolled in the local Kindergartens or in a nearby primary school. Relatively poorer portion enrolled in the BRAC non-formal primary schools, the others still out of school.

Table 5. Distribution of students by grade and sex in Pabna school, 2003

Sex	Grade					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Girls	53	51	35	45	46	230
Boys	36	62	61	49	28	236
Both	89	113	96	94	74	466
% of girls	59.6	45.1	36.5	47.9	62.2	49.4

The majority of the students of this school are from the poor day labourer households and a few from the solvent families – whose fathers are farmers or businessmen. Children of the elite are also there in the school; most of them enrolled in class IV or V after completing three/four years schooling in nearby kindergartens.

2.1 Attendance of students

On average, 56-60% of the students attend the school regularly, however, the official record shows 75-76%. According to the school authority, if the actual situation is recorded the government allocation might be curtailed and the number of teachers would be reduced. They further justified that:

According to the government rule the attendance rate of the students' should be 90%. We do not show the attendance rate of our students to that extent, rather we only mention it as 76%. If we show the actual attendance rate we will lose our job.

The school authority reported that the students' attendance rate fluctuate during rainy and harvesting seasons. As a regular event due to the weekly *haat* many students prevent them from coming to school on Tuesday (the *haat* day). Some of the students involve in income earning activities in the *haat*. On the other hand, cinema show is there in almost every tea stall, which attracts the students on the way to school. The teachers report that the parents are not aware of this at all. Such arrangement is there in some homes too, which has bad impact on both attendance in school and study at home.

The school authority sometimes take measures to increase the attendance of the students. Once the authority observed that the attendance of the learners has gone down significantly, the head teacher stopped the usual activities of the school for a day and send the teachers with the student brigade to all the absentee students' homes. The head teacher opined that,

Even though the normal activities of the school obstructed for the time being but it worked very well. The attendance of the students increased from the next day. Besides, if we only send the student brigade in the community, the parents do not pay that much heed to them. Therefore, we have planned to make a student- teacher brigade.

The other teachers stated that when they met with the parents at tea stalls or in the market places they always requested them to be careful in their children's study. During home visit, the teachers not only visit the homes of the targeted absentee students; neighbouring students are also visited. Once the school authority introduced a penalty system – the absentee students had to pay a sum of money as penalty. Nevertheless the system did not work. Sometimes the students kept absent for a long period, which increased the total amount of penalty. When they were asked to pay the penalty, the parents became annoyed with the teachers.

2.2 Students' intra relationship

Despite various socio-economic backgrounds the students are friendly among themselves. The good students help the weak students to learn lessons in the classrooms. A competitive environment is there among the girls and the boys of the same grade. Gender segregated attitude reflects in some other activities too. The boys names appear first in the attendance register, although the position of the girls were better than the boys in the previous annual examination. In terms of work distribution, the girls are given works like sweeping the floor, dish washing, etc. Otherwise, the boys are asked to water the plants in the garden, clean the weeds, etc.

2.3 Student assessment

Three formal examinations are held in a year to assess the students. Regarding daily assessment, the teachers often ask questions to the students on the lessons given as homework. Questions are also asked on the lessons taught in the previous days. The teachers often invite the students to write the answer of certain question on the blackboard. However, the teachers usually ask the good students to come to the blackboard or those he/she know by name. The good students complete the class work faster than the slow learners. On the other hand, the relatively weak students are noted to be inattentive in this regard. According to the teachers, they are unable to assess all the students in the class due to time constraints. Nevertheless, the teachers always attempt to encourage the weak students by providing right mark on their copybooks without assessment.

2.4 Promotion rate

Students actual performance in the annual examinations are not reflected in the promotion of the students. In 2002, all the students appeared in the annual examination were promoted to the next classes. Only 3% of the students were said to be absent in the examination. However, review of the performance registers shows a different scenario. Nearly 15% of the students did not attend in the annual examination in 2002. Of the attendees, 92.6% were shown as passed and others failed. Interestingly, those students scored below the pass marks (at least a third of the total score) were also shown as “pass” in the performance registers. In this regard the head teacher stated,

Due to several reasons we cannot take the right decision. We cannot refuse the request of the parents to promote their children to the next classes. Some parents ask for promotion of the girls because they think that as soon as their daughter would complete the primary level they would be able to arrange their marriage. Besides, it is a poverty stricken area, most of the boys are planning to involve in different income earning activities after completing the primary level. If we can provide them the certificate of completion of primary level (class five) they would be able to get a better opportunity. Cycle completion gets priority than quality of education.

3. Teachers

Including the head teacher the school has seven teachers, one of whom is female. The female teacher joined in 2001. Among the remaining male teachers, two are comparatively new who joined in 2003. The remaining teachers have been serving in this school since 1980's.

Age of the teachers ranges from 28 to 50 years. Four teachers have masters degree, one has bachelor degree, and the remaining two have completed higher secondary certificate (HSC). All teachers have completed the C-in-Ed course – the basic teacher training at primary level. They also got various training from IDEAL project. In addition to basic training, one teacher received BEd and MEd degrees and another one received training of Cub Scout. In 1998, the former head teacher of this school was awarded as the best

teacher in Rajshahi division. The present head teacher was awarded as the best teacher in the same division in 2000.

3.1 Workload of the teachers

Each of the teachers of this school take seven to eight classes daily. All teachers teach all the subjects in different classes. The class routine is jointly prepared by the teachers at the beginning of the academic year. In addition to conducting classes the teachers are responsible to visit at least one student's home in a month. According to the teachers, if any student remain absent for seven days they are asked to visit the student's home. However, during fieldwork no teacher was found to go for home visit, but seven reports of home visit are produced every month. In this regard the head teacher opined that the teachers meet the parents in various common places (for instance, in market place or on the street) and ask the reason of absenteeism. This is the way how the teachers fill up the home visit forms, these forms are sent to the UEO. Actual home visit is not practiced in this school.

3.2 Teachers' attendance

The teachers come to school regularly. They are punctual too. According to the head teacher as the school is regularly inspected, the teachers become aware of their timely attendance. In case of leave they send application immediately or inform the head teacher over telephone.

3.3 Teacher student relationship

The relationship between the teacher and the students is cordial. Especially the female teacher in the school is very affectionate to the students. Whenever the students see her entering into the school they run to welcome her. They often come to her to take help like sharpening pencils, drawing margin on their copybooks etc. The other teachers are also caring to the students. Sometimes, if the students become sick the teachers visit them. On the other hand, if a teacher remain absent for some days the students enquire about them. The teachers are sympathetic to the poor students. They often help them financially. Considering the poor economic condition, sometimes the teachers allow them to work outside for a day instead of coming to school. Following is a case of a poor student.

This is a student of class three. His father is a poor day labourer. One day the boy told his class teacher, *"I need to buy a shirt, but I do not have necessary money. To collect the money I have to work. Therefore, please allow me to leave the school early on Monday. On that day I shall cut the grass for others."* Considering his condition the teacher allowed him to skip from school on Monday. In addition, the teacher gave him some money as his earning was not enough to meet his need.

3.4 Teachers intra relationship

The overall relationship among the teachers is good but a hidden grievance against the head teacher is there. The nepotism of the head teacher implicitly created two groups among the teachers. Clearly, the head teacher and a teacher, who is also his relative, is in one group and the remaining teachers are in another group. The relationship among the remaining teachers are cordial. They help each other in conducting classes – during one

teacher's off period s/he takes the class of other teacher. Such a cooperation is helpful for the teachers to do personal work during school time without disrupting any class.

3.5 Teachers' evaluation

The teachers are not evaluated regularly, meaning that the head teacher does not oversee the classroom activities. The head teacher observes the classroom activities occasionally, however, rarely provide feedback to the teachers. In his routine inspection, the AUEO is suppose to assess teachers' performance. During inspection, the respective AUEO observe the classroom activities of some teachers and sometimes ask questions to the students. The AUEO shares his observations with the teachers including the head teacher. The AUEO's inspection does not impact on the pedagogical improvement of the school. He keeps him busy with students attendance and infrastructure of the school.

3.6 Commitment and job satisfaction

The senior teachers of this school are more committed compared to the junior teachers. The junior teachers are not satisfied with their job. One of the senior teachers stated,

We consider the school as our family and it is our moral obligation to teach the young children. The profession brings honour for us. We feel proud when any of our former students come to see us and convey regards. Our satisfaction is in the success of our students.

All the teachers contributed financially in the development of the school hostel. The seniors feel that the school brings immense honour for them. On the other hand, the juniors think that it is good to involve with a good work.

Indeed all the teachers of this school are economically solvent. Along with the remuneration from the school they have extra sources of earning, for instance, fish and poultry farm, agriculture, etc. In addition, the head teacher and other three assistant teachers are engaged in private tuition, which is again a significant source of income for them. Therefore, they are not that much dissatisfied with the remuneration they receive from the government, rather they are happy because they are honoured due to their teaching profession.

4. Management

4.1 Role of head teacher

The head teacher is a man of about 50 years. He started his career in 1987 as an assistant teacher in another government primary school after obtaining higher secondary certificate. In 1990, he was transferred to this school as an assistant teacher. In 2002, he joined another government primary school as the head teacher. By this time, he has earned MA and MEd degrees. However, within forty-two days of joining he again transferred to his previous school, i.e., the present school. In response to a question regarding his quick transfer to this school the head teacher said,

Along with others I also contributed in the development of this school. I love the school more than my children. Therefore, I have the aspiration to work in this school as head teacher. I have many dreams concerning the school. As such, I pleaded the high officials to transfer me to this school.

In defining his role the head teacher compared the school with a train and stated that he is the engine of this school. In this regard he mentioned some points from the address of the DPEO during hostel inaugural function. According to the head teacher, the DPEO stated that the quality of the school depends on the quality of the head teacher. The head teacher also added, "I took the statement in my heart and always try to increase the quality of my school." According to him, his activities in the school are multi-dimensional. He performs many activities like planning, conducting classes, supervision of teachers, preparation of papers for UEO, and public relations. In 2000, he was awarded as the best teacher in Rajshahi division.

According to the class routine the head teacher is suppose to conduct three classes daily, but he never does it. He does not even observe the classes of other teachers regularly. He spends most of his time in updating the office registers and filing up various forms. As the coaching classes for scholarship examinees are held beside the office room, he provides instruction to the students from his office.

As already mentioned that the relationship among the teachers is somewhat indifferent. The head teacher mainly takes the decisions regarding school without consulting his colleagues. In distribute responsibilities among the teachers he just let them know his decisions. It makes the teachers unenthusiastic. Sometimes they do not pay heed to the head teacher. However, apparently it seems that the teachers do not like the instructions of the head teacher but out of their sense of responsibility they complete the assigned tasks. They opined that even though they cannot stand with the situation of imposing the decisions on them but they complete the task as they respect the post of the head teacher, not the person.

Indeed once the head teacher was the assistant teacher in this school. Four of his colleagues of that time are still in the school, therefore the head teacher do not have that much control on them. His colleagues reported that while the head teacher was the assistant teacher in this school, he was mostly busy with his own career. He was busy in completing his BEd and MEd and provided least time to the school, but presently he boasted off his contribution to the school. Protesting the above the head teacher said that during that period he had to do most of the office works for the school. Thus, he had to spend most of his time outside school.

The teachers in this school has the grievance that the head teacher enjoys absolute liberty in taking decisions regarding the school, as there is no SMC for several years. He does not pay any importance in consulting with the teachers. He sometimes noted to consult with only one teacher in the school who is his relative. In this regard the other teachers grumbled,

The two Bir shreshthos (the highest honour for the sacrifice to the nation during liberation war) of our school (the names of the head teacher and his relative are according to the names of two Bir shreshthos) understand all the matters in the school better than us.

The teachers reported that the former head teacher always consulted with them in taking any decision regarding the school. At that time they were like as members of a family.

It was observed that except few issues the head teacher takes the decisions himself and during meeting he places his decisions before other teachers and asks them to take necessary measures to implement the decisions. Thus, the teachers become obstinate in carrying out the decisions, which results lack of coordination. The following is such an example:

Once the head teacher decided that during vacation some teachers would stay in the hostel and conduct the coaching classes for the scholarship examinees. Without consulting with anybody the head teacher made a schedule and then let the other teachers informed. Three teachers disinclined to follow the schedule. But the head teacher was very reluctant to change. He told, *"It will remain as it was, if there is any problem let me inform through my mobile phone. I shall change the duty."* As a result two of the three teachers attended the coaching classes according to the schedule but the remaining one did not take any class.

According to the head teacher he has to take many decisions immediately as per need of the school. In many situations it is difficult to consult with other teachers in the school. Nevertheless, the teachers opined that they live in the same locality; if the head teacher wants them for any discussion they can reach to him immediately.

The head teacher pays special attention to the cleanliness and gardening in the school. He often supervises whether the students take part in cleaning the school premises and nurturing the plants in the garden.

The head teacher has warm relationship with the high officials of the government, thus he receives extra facilities for infrastructure development of the school. He also maintains such relationship with the local elite. For example:

Recently the head teacher arranged Eid reunion in the school. Along with the local influential elite and the government officials like UNO, UEO and AUEO were invited in the ceremony. In his speech the UNO gave word to provide his best support in the infrastructure development of the school. The influential local elite who were also the successors of the land donor contributed Tk. 5,000 in the school fund and assured to provide a computer to the school and to help in constructing a new building. The local businesspersons also assured to provide necessary support in this regard.

The head teacher has the capacity to adopt strategies to convince the teacher coordination committee at the *upazila* level. For example:

In a teacher coordination meeting at the UNO's office the head teacher submitted an application to the UNO seeking one more teacher. In his application the head teacher mentioned that his school is an exceptional one, to maintain the quality of education one more teacher is required. The head teacher did it because he knew beforehand that the teachers of other schools are planning to raise an issue regarding excess teachers in his school. The head teacher realised that the coordination committee may

take one teacher from his school. Therefore, he mobilised the community and other teachers of the school, and collected their signature in favour of his application before putting it in the meeting. However, as a result of his effort it was decided in the meeting that as it is not possible to provide any extra teacher at this moment, transfer of a teacher from the school is thus withheld.

The head teacher conducts meeting with the AUEO, the local elite and the teachers before preparing the annual work plan. The suggestions made in the meeting are well appreciated by the head teacher. The suggestions are considered as helpful in terms of community involvement and implementation of the plan.

The head teacher gives emphasis on the publicity of the school. He also keeps good relationship with local journalists. He also likes his own publicity, which sometimes make him a laughing stock to his colleagues. However, the head teacher has a very good management capacity, which is visible even in his absence from the school. During his absence the school administration become loose. The other teachers enter into classes late and during school hour they pass time through gossiping.

4.2 Role of SMC

No SMC exists in this school for last few years. There is a lawsuit regarding SMC since 2000. Primarily a three-member ad hoc committee was formed in absence of SMC. Another eight-member committee called school development committee was formed afterwards. Recently a hostel managing committee with 11 members was formed, consequently the activities of the other two committees disappeared. This is because most of the members of those committees are taken in the hostel management committee. In addition to the issues related to the hostel, the committee oversees other administrative and academic issues too. For instance, in their last meeting during the fieldwork they discussed about bringing a good teacher from other school. The hostel managing committee works for various development activities of the hostel. No teacher except the head teacher is there in the hostel managing committee. Therefore the interaction between the committee members and the teachers is very minimal. It seems that in absence of SMC an alternative committee has been formed to run the school in the name of hostel management committee.

4.3 Role of AUEO

The AUEO visited the school once during the fieldwork. On his entrance into the school the AUEO meet the head teacher to have various information on school situation and then started to observe the classrooms. In each classroom, he estimated the attendance rate by head counting of the students. He wanted to know why all students do not have school dress. The teachers replied that due to the poor socio-economic condition all the students are not able to make their school dresses. The AUEO emphasised the following point,

This school is considered as an exceptional school in the upazila. Thus, all the students should have school dress. Those who are not able to make school dress should not be allowed in this school. The head teacher should be strict in this regard during enrolment. The students who have the

affordability to have the school dress should only be enrolled in the school.

During inspection the AUEO also inquired the disciplinary situation of the school. The AUEO had grievance that the head teacher often superseded him in doing any activities of the school. He stated,

The head teacher often goes directly to the high officials for any solution that can easily be done by the AUEO or the UEO. As he has good relation with the high officials, he often brings the DPEO or the director for school inspection. He shows only the good sides of the school and arranges programmes in honour of them. Thus, the lacking is concealed. These activities create a positive image of the school. Thus, the school became well reputed.

4.4 The regulations

The teachers of this school tries to maintain the rules and regulations of the school. Nevertheless, they are not punctual in the classrooms. The school has a bell, but it does not ring on time. Sometimes no bell rings for long hours. This creates problem in timely starting and ending the classes. They often take either more or less time than allotted. For instance, there are two successive classes like arithmetic and English, if the arithmetic teacher takes more time than allotted the English teacher has to rush to complete his class. However, the time often adjusted with the fine arts (*charu kala*) class. In adjusting the schedule the fine arts class is often omitted.

The students were not punctual in some cases. Some students often come to school 10 to 20 minutes later than the right time. However, the teachers are not strict in this regard. Nevertheless, those who come to school timely attend the assembly. The assembly is held regularly at the middle of two shifts.

5. Community participation

It is clearly mentioned in the historical background section that community played a significant role in the improvement of this school. Spontaneous participation of community in school development activities is a crucial issue for this school. The community provides a good portion of the annual expenditure of the school especially regarding the socio-cultural functions.

The teachers become intimate with the parents of the students through home visits. The parents and the teachers talk to each other when they meet in common places like on the streets, in tea stalls, or in *haat*. Thus, the parents get teachers' opinion about the educational progress of their children. Many parents are the former students of this school and some are direct students of the teachers. Therefore, they have a pleasant relationship with the senior teachers.

6. Teaching learning process

Teacher student ratio in this school is 1:67; separately 1:29 in the morning shift and 1:38 in the day shift. Such a ratio is not much helpful in providing quality education. The teachers face difficulty in taking care of all the students in the classrooms. It was

observed that a large number of students were not assessed and hence did not receive necessary feedback for improvement.

6.1 Classroom environment

The school building is not old enough, however has broken down here and there. The classrooms are damp. Although plenty of windows are there in each classroom, but due to the location of the building sunlight can hardly enter into the classrooms. There are shortage of benches in the classrooms. Only one fan is not enough for the whole class. In the tin-roofed classrooms, due to the thin partition between two classrooms, the noise of one classroom can easily be heard from the other. When both the classrooms are used simultaneously it does not create much noise, but in absence of teacher in one classroom the teaching learning of another classroom hampers. However, plenty of sunlight is there in these classrooms.

6.2 Technique of teaching

The teachers mainly adopt student-centred teaching leaning method. They provide class work to the students. Group work is often given – this allows the students to discuss various issues with each other. However, the teachers always make the groups according to the sex of the students. To assess the students, competition between the groups are arranged. The defeated group become depressed after the class which affect the following class.

The teachers often invite the students to write answers to the questions on the blackboard. Answer written by a student is often checked by another student. In teaching Bangla alphabet in class I the teacher starts it with a word and then goes back to the alphabet, if possible shows photos or dummy objects. Such a method is helpful for the students to learn words and alphabets and to know the objects. The teachers relate the lessons with the surrounding environment too. For example:

In one class the teacher is teaching land erosion. He draw attention of the students to the nearby lowland. He addressed them, *"See the land there. The land is disappearing by the wave of the water. This is land erosion."*

If the students become unmindful in the class, the teacher starts doing some physical exercises. Sometimes the teacher ask the students to sing a song. The teachers also take part with them. If the teachers go out of the classes before the end of the class they hand over the responsibility to the class captains. If any student shift his/her place or make noise, the class captain writes the name of the guilty on a piece of paper and gives it to the respective teacher. As punishment the teachers ask them to keep standing during the whole class.

If the teachers feel it necessary, they take the students to the laboratory. The students work their in group. Besides, the teachers usually use materials in everyday class to make the lesson more attractive and comprehensive. Most of the materials were found from the IDEAL project and some were developed by the teachers themselves.

6.3 Private tutoring

The parents tend to provide private tutors to their children, as most of them are unable to see their children at home. According to them, often the children are not able to follow the lesson in the classroom, private tutors at home assist them to catch up; otherwise they remain weak.

According to some of the teachers, private tutor is not that much needed for the students of this school, as they can take special coaching from school in the morning and in the afternoon. Some young people of the locality are employed for providing coaching to the students of the school. The students can take the opportunity with a minimum cost. In the coaching classes, the students get help for preparing them for usual class. However, the parents also consider this as a good initiative. However, due to poor economic condition of the families many students are unable to take the opportunity. It is quite impossible for them to come to school twice.

6.4 Management of low achievers

The school authority initiated coaching classes on payment to assist the weak students of the school. Nevertheless, it is not that much successful in helping the low achievers. The weak students are mainly irregular in the class. Due to poverty they are to involve in income generating activities. In addition, they cannot afford to pay Tk. 100 for the coaching classes. Although the teachers do not create any pressure on the poor parents for money but they stop sending their children after few months, if they fail to provide money. The coaching classes are arranged mainly for the students of classes III to V, therefore the students of classes I and II do not get benefit of it. There are other ways to help the weak students. The teachers ask the good students to sit beside the weak students so that they can help them. According to the teachers, group exercises are very much helpful in providing support to the weak students.

7. Fund management

The head teacher plays a major role in the management of school fund. Besides the government assistance the school takes various measures to raise funds from the community. With the solvent elite of the locality, who have contributed, a committee was formed for hostel construction. The school receives donation from the local Truck Owners Association. At the beginning of each year, Tk. 10 to 20 is taken from each student to pay salary of the night guard and to meet other expenses.

The head teacher stated that as there is no regular fixed income of the school, visitors entertainment cost and the cost for publicity sometimes remain unpaid. These are paid later after receiving assistance from the solvent elite of the locality. Recently a 'poor fund' was created with support from the successor of the land donor. The former students of this school who are now well established were asked to contribute in the poor fund.

8. Co-curricular activity

Different co-curricular activities are there in the school, these include Cub (junior scout) activities, dancing, and singing. A teacher is responsible for Cub activities, who is known to be the best Cub teacher in the whole North Bengal. One local female singer teaches

music to the students. The students who attend the music class are to pay Tk. 20 per month.

The students who are smart and good-looking are selected for cultural and Cub activities. The school regularly participates in various events arranged in observance of several national days. During the visits of the high officials the students show their performance in cultural activities to impress the guests. It brings good impression about the school and the head teacher as well. The students who participate in the co-curricular activities are those who got the top positions in the annual examinations. The teachers pay special attention to these students.

9. Annual examination

During annual examination the seats are not arranged randomly; the students take their seat according to their choice. Although there should not be any written examination for the students of class I and II, but they are to seat for written exam. According to the head teacher, in order to develop students habit in written examination they take written test from the very beginning.

In the name of explaining the questions the teachers tell the correct answers to the students. Sometimes the students are given chances to see each other's answer papers. The teachers defended that if they did not do so, the students might be deprived of stipend. When he was reminded that the students of this school are not eligible for stipend, the head teacher replied that when stipend will be given to the students of this school it will not be a problem. However, during examination some parents also help their children in answering the questions.

10. Scholarship examination

The school authority is very much conscious about the primary scholarship examination. At the beginning of the year they separate the students who are likely to participate in the scholarship examination and put them in a separate section. The teachers pay special attention during the whole year. Every year 2/3 students from this school get scholarship and the pass rate is over 70%. In 2002, 18 students participated in the scholarship examination, of which 13 students passed and two obtained scholarship (one in talent pool and one in general).

Generally, the students of the Kindergartens are not eligible for primary scholarship examination. Thus, the good students of the neighbouring Kindergartens admit in this school in class IV or V. Some even admit in the middle of the academic year. This benefits both the students and the school. However, according to the government rule only two students can obtain general scholarship in a union. Except this school, there is only one government primary school in this union with whom this school has to compete. However, quality of the other school is not that good. There is no other non-government registered school which can compete with this school. Therefore, the students of this school do not get any strong competitor in scholarship examination.

Case 4. A Government Primary School in Dhaka

1. School profile

This school was established in 1960 with the initiative of the local housing estate authority. It is an urban school situated at the west of Dhaka city. Initially it was a non-government primary school. After the liberation of Bangladesh the school came under the umbrella of the Dhaka municipality. In 1973, it became a government school.

1.1 The location

The school is situated near the local bus stand. The head teacher or the other teachers do not have any idea about the catchment area of the school. They know the areas from which the children enrol in this school. It reveals from our discussion with the students that they mostly came from the eastern and southern sides of the school. Children of distant localities also enrol in this school because the road communication to this school is much better than the other nearby schools. Moreover, the infrastructure of the school and educational qualifications of the teachers are considered better. There are some educational institutions in the nearby areas; these include some kindergartens and English medium schools.

People of different socio-economic background live in the areas where the students of this school come from. There are few slums too. Most of the people of these slums are domestic helpers, rickshaw pullers, sweepers, night guards etc. There are bus/truck drivers, shopkeepers, garments workers as well who are slightly better off and live in tin-roofed house. Well-off families also live in the areas nearby the school, however, they do not send their children to this school; they prefer other good schools in the city.

1.2 Historical background

The school was established in 1960 on 60 decimals of land provided by the local housing estate authority. It was started as a non-government school and came under the supervision of the Dhaka municipality in 1971. Similar to other schools in 1973 the government took it up. During 1960-79, the school was reputed for good academic performance and excellent co-curricular activities. During that time, one or more students achieved primary scholarship every year and the school was often awarded at the divisional level for its outstanding performance in co-curricular activities. Massive development of the school infrastructure was held in 1980-2003. The school was awarded as the best school in the *thana* twice – once in 1985 and again in 2003. One female assistant teacher was awarded as the best teacher in the *thana* in 1985. Attempt was made to know more about the history of the school, however, none of the head teacher, teachers, SMC members, *thana* officials, or the local people could say more than this.

1.3 Present material condition

There are four structures and a playground in the school compound. The eastern building is one storied with six rooms – two rooms are used as parents waiting room and the remaining four as classrooms. Two buildings are there at the western side – one is two-storied with four rooms in each floor. Three rooms at the ground floor are used as classrooms and the rest is unused. The four rooms at the first floor are classrooms. Another building in the western side is three storied with four rooms in the ground floor,

three in first floor and one in second floor. One room in the ground floor is head teacher's office and another one is teachers' common room. The remaining two are classrooms. Two rooms at the first floor of this building are used for the upazila education office and the remaining one as the computer room of the school. A big hall room is there in the second floor. In the northern building the gatekeeper of the school lives and no other room of this building is used.

There is no library in the school, but some books are kept in a shelf in the head teacher's office. These books were bought as prize items for annual sports and cultural ceremonies, but not yet used. The head teacher uses these books as gift items for the visitors.

Electricity facility is there in the school. The school has two gates – one at the northern side and the other at the eastern side of the school. However, the northern gate is closed always - it has no use. Some sports instruments are there in the playground, these include two slippers, one jungle jeep, and a swing.

It is a two-shift school – morning and day. The morning shift runs between 9.30 a.m. and 12.00 noon for grades I and II, and the day shift from 12.00 noon to 4.30 p.m. for grades III to V.

2. Students

The school has 1,103 students - 542 girls and 561 boys. Table 6 shows the distribution of students by grade and sex. Most of the students are Muslims except 15 Hindus, one Christian and one Buddhist.

Table 6. Distribution of students by grade and sex Dhaka school, 2003

Sex	Grade					All
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Girls	182	101	96	90	73	542
Boys	202	106	106	66	81	561
Both	384	207	202	156	154	1103
% of girls	47.4	48.8	47.5	57.7	47.4	49.1

The students are divided into twenty-two learner groups – seven in class I, five in class II, four in class III and three in classes IV and V each. Thus, 12 learner groups come to school in the morning shift and 10 in the day shift.

Approximately a third of these students are over-aged and few under-aged. Majority of the students are from the lower socio-economic category. The parents send their children to this school because they get monetary assistance for this from some NGOs. Only one disable student is there in the school.

Seventy-seven Bihari students enrolled in this school. They often use some Urdu vocabularies during conversation; however, the other students are familiar with this. The teachers also said that they were friendly with the Bangali students.

2.1 Attendance of students

Attendance rate of the students is very low in this school. An estimate of the head count of the students shows that the average attendance rate is only about 40%. However, it varies from shift to shift and class to class as well. The attendance rate is higher in the morning shift than the day shift. The students also leave school after the tiffin period. Relatively the easier subjects are taught after tiffin period and the teachers often do not attend those classes as they become exhausted. Therefore, the students also loose their interest in attending the classes. The attendance rate become much higher in two different occasions especially at the beginning of the year when textbooks are distributed and when sports and other cultural functions are held. Again, before examination, with an intension to get idea about the possible questions in the examination and to collect admit card and increase the attendance.

The biscuit distribution programme of the World Food Programme (WFP) attracts some students to attend the classes. However, some of the students said that the biscuit distributed in school were not tasty, so they were not interested to it. On the other hand, the students who come to school with empty stomach like these biscuits very much. They come to school regularly to have biscuits.

The World Vision, an NGO, provides monetary assistance to the poor students of this school. Regular attendance in school is a strong criterion for getting World Vision's assistance. Therefore, the parents of the World Vision beneficiaries send their children to school regularly. Sometimes the teachers also ask the students to know the reason of absenteeism and call the parents of the absentees. It helps increase the attendance of the students.

Some other organisations like Marie Stopes and Lions International provide health services to the students in the school, which also help increase the attendance. The playground of the school is attractive. Some students are always seen playing in the playground during class hour. The teachers do not say anything to these students. The teachers do not visit the absentee students' houses.

2.2 Student assessment

To assess the learning skills of the students, three examinations are held annually – two mid-term and one final examination. Majority of the students take part in these examination. If some students fail to participate in any mid-term examination, provision is there to take special examination for them. The examinations are written. Students performances are recorded in a registers. These registers are shown to the visitors as important documents.

2.3 Promotion rate

The promotion rate varied between 83 and 88% during last five years. However, this performance was not consistent with that achieved in primary scholarship examinations. Only the meritorious students of class V participate in the scholarship examination, and the pass rate was only 26-30%. The teachers reported that they generally assess the students in a flexible manner, which is not the case in the scholarship examination. The students who receive 25% marks in the school examination are also promoted, although

the minimum pass mark is 33%. Again, if any student fails in two successive annual examinations also gets promotion automatically. The teachers elaborated this case as follows.

We are to promote the students to the next classes if they remain in the same class for two years. Meanwhile they cross their age for primary education. It affects the school environment. Sometimes the parents come to us requesting for their children's promotion. They think, their children can try for better option in job market as soon as they complete the primary cycle.

3. Teachers

Including the head teacher the school has 14 teachers, 11 of them are females. The head teacher is a male. Eleven teachers are between 45 and 55 years and two are below 30 years of age. Three teachers have masters degree, three have bachelor degree, four are with HSC, three are with SSC and the remaining one is below SSC. Thirteen teachers have academic training on teaching – ten have C-in-Ed training, two have BEd and the remaining one has MEd degree. Apart from the teacher training, most of the teachers have gone through various short-training courses on curriculum dissemination, population, etc. One teacher is trained in teaching disable children and other one in Cubing (junior scout). None of the teachers has any subject-based training. It was reported that all the teachers have participated in a number of sub-cluster training, which is now stopped. The head teacher told that the *upazila* resource centre (URC) of this *thana* will be established in this school campus. The teachers will then get the opportunity to receive subject-based training. The teachers of this school are experienced enough in teaching. On average, they have 22 years of teaching experience mostly in this school.

3.1 Workload of the teachers

Twelve teachers conduct eight to nine classes everyday. The head teacher has no provision of taking class in the routine. In few cases, the head teacher takes class in absence of his colleagues. The other teacher, who is a female, conducts only four to five classes daily. She is a relative of a powerful political leader. It is difficult for the head teacher to control her like others. She is also a relative of the head teacher.

3.2 Teachers' attendance

The teachers do not come to school timely. A half of the teachers come late regularly. The teachers enjoy leave as and when they want. Sometimes they take leave without informing the head teacher or anybody. When the particular teacher come to school, he/she puts signature in the attendance register for the previous as if s/he was present. In few cases, the head teacher records these as casual leave. Some teachers, who are known as powerful, leave school according to their wish before the end of school hour. However, majority of the teachers leave school on head teacher's permission. The teachers often call proxy teachers for taking the classes assigned to them. In such cases, the respective teacher provides money to the proxy teacher. A former student of this school is a renowned proxy teacher.

3.3 Teacher student relationship

According to the students, they have better relationship with the female teachers than the males. Regarding the male teachers they stated, "The male teachers often beat us and do not love at all. The female teachers as well beat us but they love us." However, the students show respect to both male and the female teachers. The students occasionally give greeting cards to the teachers.

3.4 Teachers' intra relationship

The intra relationship of the teachers is superficially good. Majority of the teachers are unhappy with the head teacher, because of his favour to the powerful female teacher. Indeed the biasness of the head teacher creates conflicting attitude among the teachers. On the other hand, the head teacher warned his colleagues against any conflict among them. He also said that in case of any conflict the concerned teachers would be punished by transferring to other school. The assistant teachers believe that the head teacher has the power to take such measure. So they remain quiet in this regard.

3.5 Teachers' evaluation

The teachers of this school are mainly evaluated by the UEO and the AUEO. The *upazila* education office is situated at the first floor of the school building. Therefore, the UEO and the AUEO can visit the school as and when they want to do so. Besides, when the officials from the district education office come to visit the upazila education office, they also visit the school. Different government officials visited the schools last year and provided their comments on the school. The visitors commented that the quality of teaching in the school is not satisfactory. Among the teachers, five teach well, and only two have excellent teaching quality. Some visitors suggested the head teacher to oversee the quality of the assistant teachers and to provide feedback regularly. However, no such attempt was there in this regard.

3.6 Commitment and job satisfaction

The teachers are not satisfied with their job. As they said, people in Dhaka city do not consider them as respected people. Again with the same mentality the government assigns different out of school responsibilities to them. They stated,

We are the permanent servants of the government and we are used for many odd jobs. If a minister visits this area, we are responsible to collect children to attend the meeting. Isn't it disgusting!

The teachers grumbled that their devotion is not assessed hence they become frustrated. They are not satisfied with the remuneration they receive. According to them a family in Dhaka city cannot live on the amount they receive from the government. The families of a third of the teachers are economically solvent – they can spend more than they earn. The male teachers have various other businesses, which brings them more than what they get from teaching profession. Only two teachers are dependant only on the remuneration they receive from the school. As most of the teachers are not satisfied with the remuneration they get, they are not committed to their profession. Only two teachers can be said committed, who love to teach young children beyond their economic demand.

The newly transferred officers depend on the head teacher to adapt with the new environment. It was known that regarding socio-political connection the head teacher is more powerful than the officers. The head teacher is one of the top leaders of the primary teachers association, so the government officials also maintain good relationship with him. The government often use him to stop teachers' movement. So, the head teacher got many opportunities from the government. He has the capacity to transfer the *thana* and district level education officers through lobbying. The high officials do not visit the school without informing the head teacher earlier.

One supervision team asked the head teacher to take some measures to improve the quality of education in the school within shortest possible time. No initiative was taken in this regard. Even the *thana* education office did not ask the head teacher about the matter. It was interesting to see that the teachers of this school help the TEO and the ATEOs to update the official reports. The officers use the telephone of the school as and when necessary. *Thana* level meetings of the education officers are held in this school. Thus, the *thana* education officers are dependent on the school in many ways. As the head teacher is powerful and has access to many places, the education officers often fear him. They do not take any action against the school or the head teacher even they have many complains against the school.

4.4 Stipend

This school is not covered under stipend programme because the government do not have stipend programme in the urban schools. NGO run stipend programme is there for the poor students of this school. World Vision provides stipend to the poor students to maintain their educational expenses. This plays a vital role in the education of the poor children. Another NGO feed the students during school hour. This is also effective in increasing the attendance of the students. Such helps are necessary for the students because of the poor condition of their families.

5. Community participation

Due to the interest of the head teacher the involvement of the community leaders in school activities is very high. He often invites the local political leaders, journalists, businesspersons, and higher officials in school. Participation increases during annual sports. Some of them told that they love to attend the school functions and enjoy the ceremonies.

The head teacher maintains good relationship with the local elite through various ways. He often offers the elite to use the school telephone free. When they come to school he entertains them warmly. The head teacher uses this relationship in improving the physical facilities in the school. Following are some examples of this kind.

Once the water pump of the school became disordered. On request of the head teacher a local elite donated a motor to the school. Besides, the head teacher requested some journalists to write features on the newspaper about the school. The journalists wrote features about the school in the three different newspapers. Another person donated five electric fans to the school. A man provided 20 seedlings to the school. During annual sports local elite share a portion of the total expenditure.

them. A teachers' meeting was held before the annual sports. There were many issues to discuss, but it did not happen, the head teacher took decisions individually.

4.2 Role of SMC

The SMC members are selected in an annual meeting of the previous SMC. No election is held in this regard. There is no representative of the guardians of the students in the present committee. The head teacher plays the vital role in selecting the members. Most of the members in the present committee are well known in the area. Of the 11-members, three are females. Among the SMC members, four are teachers of other educational institutions, two are journalists, two are service holders, one is engineer, one is businessperson and the rest one is a writer. The relationship between the members of SMC and the head teacher is very good. The SMC members come to visit the school now and then. The other teachers know the SMC members and greet them when they meet. The resolution book of SMC meeting shows that the meetings are held regularly once a month. However, when the issue was discussed with the teachers they informed that this was not true. They claimed that there is no regularity in organising the meeting but the resolution book is updated regularly once a month. However, they said, the head teacher has regular communication with the SMC members. It is a general practice that the head teacher takes decisions alone and informs these to the SMC members. His decisions are written in the resolution book. When the members come to school they provide their signatures in the book. All the members know the process and they have no objection at this. The head teacher also admitted the process and claimed that it is often necessary to take a decision quickly for the sake of the school. According to him, "the process we follow is not bad because the members do not object to this."

The SMC members play active role in developing the physical facilities of the school. The members give donation to the school in various occasions. They help the school in getting aids from different government and non-government agencies. However, they are not aware of the quality of education of the school. They have very little role in decision making process. The TEO and the respective ATEO also know all about this, but they say nothing to the head teacher or the SMC chair in this regard.

4.3 Role of ATEO

The *thana* education office is situated at the first floor of the school building. So the school is in front of the eyes of the *thana* education officers. This office is the authority to oversee the activities of the school. However, it is interesting to see that the officers consider the head teacher as their guardian. "The head teacher of the school is our direct guardian" – Told an ATEO. It was observed that the officers are dependent on the head teacher. Following is an example.

In one evening some local boys involved in an unfair activity in the school campus and an ATEO asked them not to do such thing in the school. The boys are known as terrorist in the area. They attacked the officer. Suddenly, the head teacher reached there. The officer got rid of the danger with the help of the head teacher. Following this, the officers consider the head teacher as their guardian.

The head teacher is responsible to distribute the classes and other responsibilities among the teachers. He does this tactfully. He entrusts the responsibility of preparing false documents to reliable teachers only. Others are considered incapable to do such work. Two teachers are very good in conducting classes, but one of them is often engaged in preparing various documents. This hampers quality teaching. The head teacher is aware of this. According to him, "All the teachers are not efficient in doing official work. This teacher is engaged more in official activities because she is very efficient in this." It was observed that some good teachers are over-loaded with work but others have no or little work at that time.

The head teacher has an intention to convince the high officials showing them good performance of the teachers in the classrooms. There are two classrooms at the front side of the school, which are located nearer to the head teacher's room. On appearance of any visitor the head teacher ask two best teachers in the school to teach in these classrooms. The visitors are taken only to these classrooms. During our fieldwork a number of visitors were seen happy about the school seeing only these two classrooms.

The teachers are not pleased with this head teacher. Some teachers complained that the head teacher does not distribute classes with justice. According to them, the teachers who are liked by the head teacher get the preferred subjects; others do not. The head teacher made other teachers bound to attend the classes regularly but doesn't supervise their teaching. "Some teachers go to the classes and come out after staying a while. They are not sincere in teaching. The head teacher does not observe any classroom activity. He has no supervision or feedback to any teacher" – Said a teacher with a disappointing voice. The other teacher complained that, "The head teacher deprive the assistant teachers." The opinion of the teacher who was awarded as best teacher is interesting. She said, "I was awarded as the best teacher of this *thana*, but I am not utilised according to my capacity. I do not enjoy taking classes. The head teacher is a corrupted person." The teachers are, in general, unhappy working with the head teacher. However, they do not protest. According to them, if they protest they would be transferred to other schools. Most of the teachers of this school are female and are residents of the nearby areas. If they are transferred they may face housing problem.

The head teacher has very good connection with the higher-level of management – both educational and administrative. Once some people complained against the head teacher to the Bureau of Anti Corruption. The Bureau had decided to investigate the issue. When the head teacher came to know this, he contacted to the higher-level management and was successful to stop investigation against him. The powerful female teacher of the school helped the head teacher in this connection to a great extent.

The head teacher informed that the major decisions regarding school management are taken in the meetings of the School Managing Committee (SMC). However, no SMC meeting was held during our fieldwork, so the research assistant missed the opportunity to see the decision making process. Sometimes he discusses with the TEO and the ATEO before taking decisions. There is no provision of teacher's meeting. In the case of emergency, the head teacher meets with the teachers and discusses relevant issues with

4. Management

4.1 Role of head teacher

The head teacher of this school started teaching about 36 years ago. He has completed HSC and received C-in-Ed training. Besides, he got training on CLE, population problem, curriculum dissemination, etc. He has been in this school for the last 25 years. The head teacher is a member of the mathematics committee of the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB). He jointly wrote a teacher's guide published by the NCTB. He is a joint secretary of the Primary Teachers Association. Besides, he is a famous person in the community. He has been associated with a local community centre for the last 20 years as its general secretary. He used his social influence to develop the infrastructure of the school. He has the capacity to bring government support. On his request, an NGO provided 20 pairs of benches, an *almirah*, some chairs and tables to the school. He is very proud of his contribution to the school. In his words –

People do not know the real name of this school; they know this school as my (mentioning his own name) school.

The head teacher maintains a good relationship with the local political leaders. One former parliament member of the area made a report on the school in the parliament. As a result the school received lots of teaching aids from the government. With the intention of smooth flow of government support, the head teacher forms the SMC taking people of various political backgrounds.

He is very tactful in managing the teachers. One day the teachers were gossiping in the teacher's common room after the lunch break. The class time has started but the teachers were still in the common room. At that time, the head teacher entered into the common room and said, "You are not going to the classes yet. If any outsider comes and see you in this situation, anything can happen." After this all the teachers went to their respective classrooms but the powerful teacher was still in the common room. The head teacher didn't say anything to her rather sought her help regarding some other issues.

The head teacher had to face lots of problem during his earlier days. He tried hard to manage everything with care. He didn't take class but made other teachers bound to take classes regularly. "The head teacher threatens us now and then. We know that he can punish us, so we obey him" – Told a teacher when he was requested to say about the management of the head teacher. The head teacher prefers some teachers and dominates others. If any teacher seeks leave for part of the day, the respective teacher has to manage proxy teacher for conducting her/his classes.

Official papers, documents and registers of the school are found updated and accurate. It is because the head teacher is very serious about this and gives responsibility to some teachers to keep these accurate and update. Some false documents are also needed to prepare occasionally. For instance, there was no mother's meeting during the year 2003, but a document was prepared saying that a mother's meeting was held. The responsible teachers with the instruction of the head teacher prepared the false report. In return to this, the head teacher approved leave for some days and provided other facilities to these teachers.

When these people were met to ask about the quality of education in this school they said that they were not aware of it. According to them, the head teacher is the best person to answer this question.

6. Teaching learning process

This school has 14 teachers and 1,103 students, thus the teacher student ratio stands at 1:79. If the head teacher is excluded, because he does not take any class, it stands at 1:85. The ratio become lower if shift segregated analysis is done – 1:42 for the morning shift (classes I and II) and 1:37 for the day shift (classes III to V). The learners are divided into 22 groups but the groups are not equal.

6.1 Classroom environment

There are enough windows in each of the classrooms. There are enough benches in the classrooms. The classrooms are neat and clean. The teachers are responsible to keep the respective classrooms neat and clean. They take help from the students in this connection. The blackboards in the classrooms are in good condition. In each classroom there are provisions to hang charts and maps. The students can hear the voice of the teachers easily. Electric fans and bulbs are of good condition in all the classrooms, teachers' common room and head teacher's room. The CLE authority provided a computer to the school but it has no use. Someone claimed that it is out of order and no teacher can use a computer.

The classrooms located nearer to the head teacher's room are well furnished. Significant difference between these two classrooms and other classrooms can easily be identified. An ideal situation is made there - the benches are arranged in such a way that the students can sit in groups, adequate teaching aids are always kept in these classrooms. Five bookshelves, four boards, and five calendar charts are there. These two classrooms are always kept decorated for the visitors.

6.2 Techniques of teaching

A number of classrooms of both the shifts were observed to know the classroom culture. Provision of block teaching is there in the morning shift – meaning that one teacher conducts all the classes of a particular learner group. In total 12 teachers for 12 learner groups. A very similar technique is used in the NGO-run non-formal primary schools in the country.

The culture of teaching learning is very good only in two classrooms, which are located in the ground floor, nearer to the head teacher's room. Concentrated Language Encounter (CLE) method is used in teaching in these classrooms. The students are divided into some groups each having a group leader. The students read together and try to solve problems through group activities. This is a student centric teaching technique. The teacher moves around the classroom to help the student groups. The teachers often use teaching materials. The group leaders are changed in cyclic order. So, all the students have the opportunity to be the team leader. Through this process, leadership quality of the students enhanced to a large extent. The teachers assess the students through asking oral

questions, asking to read or write. The teachers try their best to make the students understand the lessons.

The block teaching, which is there in the morning shift, has some good sides. Each teacher teach a certain group of learners for two and a half hours in a day which continues for the whole year. The respective teacher allocates time for the subjects as per need. They generally keep more time for two subjects – English and Mathematics. This provision helps the teachers to know the needs of their students better. The teachers also get enough time to identify the weaknesses of the students and to provide necessary corrective measures. If the teachers are not committed enough such a provision can be an obstacle of quality education. If the respective teacher of a certain learner group deprives them there is none to help them. The following is an example of block teaching in class II, which shows a disappointing picture of teaching learning in this school.

The respective class teacher entered into the classroom after eight minutes. She recorded attendance of the students first – 57 students were present. The teacher then asked the students to read a certain paragraph from their Bangla textbook and she left out of the classroom. Majority of the students begun to read but some started to make noise. After 25 minutes the teacher came back and asked questions to some of the students. Some provided correct answers and some could not. Surprisingly, the teacher did not provide corrective measures to the unable students. The teacher then asked the students to open their English book and copy some words. When the students started writing the teacher get out of the classroom again. The students started to make noise. At this stage the research assistant entered into the common room and found the teacher gossiping with other colleagues.

The other day in a mathematics class of grade V the teacher entered into the classroom after 6 minutes. He asked the students to bring their homework to him. A boy collected those from the students and kept on the table. The teacher then checked and signed on the workbooks. The teacher did not see the workbooks appropriately. He sometimes made tick on incorrect answers and did not provide any corrective measures on the wrong answers. The teacher then wrote a problem on the blackboard and asked the students to solve it in their copybook. In reply to his question some students told that they were able to solve the problem. However, he solved the problem on the board and asked the students to copy it. He then asked a boy to solve another problem on the blackboard. He solved it. The teacher then provided homework to the students. The other classes are not different from this one. No creativity is there in teaching style, everything is conventional.

One teacher has to take two classes simultaneously in absence of respective teacher, which is common in this school. This hampers quality of teaching. Teachers also face difficulty in managing two classrooms at a time. Although, there is a provision of putting proxy teacher in absence of regular teacher, but it is not maintained always.

On the basis of classroom observations the teachers of this school can be categorized into three groups viz., good, moderate and poor. Of the teachers, two are good, eight are

moderate, and three are poor. This excludes the head teacher because he does not take any class. It was understood that, on average, all the teachers could perform well but they did not do it due to various constraints. In general, the teachers do not use any teaching aid. However, during school visit of any official all the teachers remain very careful in conducting classes betterly. They use teaching materials at that time and the use of class time is also effective then.

6.3 Management of low achievers

In general, the teachers are not sensitive enough to the low achievers. Few exceptions are seen in the classrooms nearer to the head teacher's room. Here the learners have the opportunity to learn in group, thus the slow achievers can learn from the good students. The teachers also take care of the slow learners. No such attempt is made in other classrooms.

7. Fund management

The school has a number of income sources. It receives money from both the government and the non-government agencies and individuals. The government provides Tk. 3000 annually for maintaining general expenditures of the school. Besides, the school receives money for construction work after every three or four years. The head teacher collects money from the local elite as and when necessary.

Other important regular source of income is various fees taken from the students. It includes admission fee, other charges, examination fees and fees for transfer certificate and progress card. Besides, the students are to pay some amount of money as festival fees. There are some coconut trees in the school ground. The coconuts are sold after every 3/4 months. The head teacher is mainly responsible for the management of income and expenditure of the school. On behalf of the head teacher one teacher keep the accounts of the school. No other teacher can interfere in this regard. The head teacher was unwilling to show any document related to income and expenditure of the school. The teachers are very unhappy with the accounting system of the school. Everyone complained that there was no transparency in accounting.

8. Co-curricular activities

Provision of arts and craft classes is there in the class routine, but no such class is held. Generally, the last periods are assigned for such classes. Both the teachers and the students are uninterested in these classes. Some students leave school before these classes. Every year the teachers teach very few things before the final examination and all of these appear in the question paper.

If the students make serious noise in the class, the teachers ask them to sing or recite or draw pictures. The school has a Cub team but the research assistant does not see any activity during the fieldwork. The head teacher informed that the Cub activities are done prior to a competition. The annual sports are held at the beginning of each year. Two teachers are given responsibility to maintain the list of the winners. The prize giving ceremony takes place during April-May. The school authority invites a number of government and non-government officials in this ceremony. This is the only glorious ceremony in the school throughout the year.

Case 5. A Government Primary School in Chittagong

1. School Profile

This school was established as a rural community school in 1932 with the initiative of some local elite. Initially it was in a tin-roofed house on eight decimals of land. The school became a government school in 1973.

1.1 The location

The school is located in a village nearer to the Karnafuli river. The distance between the school and the *upazila* town is about 20 kilometres. The catchment area of the school consists of only one village, which is about 3.87 square kilometres. The other educational institutions in the village are a community school, a satellite school, two *hafezia madrassas*, 10 *forkania madrassas* and an *ebtedayee madrassa*.

This village is densely populated with about 12,517 inhabitants. Majority of them are daily wage labourer, boatman, and fisherman. There are some dry fish factories in the village, which provide employment to many villagers. The local children also work in these factories. It is a cyclone prone area, which has visible impact on the village life.

1.2 Historical background

The history of the school can be divided into two phases. The first phase is from 1932 to 1964 – the school was then located in the riverbank and affected several times by cyclone. In 1964, the then UP chairman brought a head teacher from a neighbouring school who was very good in school management. From this year a new phase has started in the history of this school.

According to the suggestion of the new head teacher a new school managing committee (SMC) was formed. Considering the existing constraints of the school the new SMC decided to sought financial support from the government. Prerequisite to getting government support the district primary education office (DEPO) asked the school SMC to shift the school to a distant place from the riverbank and to procure more land for the school. Getting motivated by the head teacher six local elite donated one acre of land. In 1966, the government granted Tk. 18,000 to the school. This amount was not adequate to construct a new building, subscription was thus collected from the villagers. In addition, the head teacher strategically collected some amount of money from the local smugglers. However, at one stage the construction work was hindered due to lack of money. Then the Chair of the SMC mortgaged some ornaments of his wife and also sold one decimal of his own land to supplement the deficit money.

However, the school started its activities in the new building of three rooms with 154 students. The SMC members visited every house of the village to motivate the parents to send their children to school. The SMC also arranged various types of indigenous games in the school. They thought that the games would attract the children to come to school. With all these efforts the number of student increased within a few months. The head teacher with the assistance of two other teachers made an effort to enhance the quality of the school. At that time an examination was held where the students of ten local schools participated. The students of this school obtained the first ten positions in the

examination. It took nine years to achieve such an excellent performance and since then the school is known as a good school.

After taking over by the government in 1973, several government officials visited the school and felt the need of increasing the number of classrooms and teachers. Subsequently, the government has granted some amount of money in two phases to construct more classrooms. Nevertheless, the space was not adequate for the increasing number of students. With the initiative of the SMC the villagers provided Tk. 94,000 to the school fund – the local elite shared a good amount of it.

According to the villagers, until 1980 the overall quality of education was very good. The teachers at that time were more considerate to the needs of the students, because they came from educated as well as well-off families. All of them were males. They did many other activities for the school besides teaching. The SMC members were also aware of their responsibilities.

Since 1980, 11 new teachers came to this school - nine of them were female. Once due to prolonged illness of the head teacher the management of the school became weak and the overall quality deteriorated. At the same time several other schools like BRAC's non-formal primary school, community school satellite schools were established in this village. The children of the catchment area were divided into these schools. However, the school authority did not erase their names from the registers. The intention of the school authority was to draw attention of the government officials with large number of students. The authority thought that they would receive funds for infrastructure development and would get more teachers, which would eventually improve the school quality. In 1997, after the retirement of the head teacher, a new head teacher from a neighbouring school joined.

However, the new head teacher erased the names of the false students from the school registers. Thus, the number of students dropped from 1,355 to 813. Due to strong administration of the new head teacher, other teachers started to attend the classes regularly in time. At the same time frequent visit of the then ATEO (presently the post is called as AUEO) contributed in implementing the system in the school. The head teacher took initiative to provide special coaching to the students participating in the primary scholarship examination. As a result three students obtained scholarship in 2001 – one in talent pool and the others in general. In this way the school restored its reputation.

1.3 Present material condition

There is a pond and a big graveyard at the entrance of the school. Trees and bushes surround the school. The school has three buildings and a playground. One building is quite old, which was affected several times by cyclone and earthquake, numerous fractures are there on the walls of the building. The school authority stopped using the building for safety reason. The other two buildings are relatively new – constructed with assistance from the government and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). Altogether, there are eleven rooms in the buildings - three are not in use, six are used as classrooms, one for the head teacher, and the other one for the assistant teachers.

Each classroom has a chair, a table, a blackboard and a number of high and low benches. However, the classrooms are not decorated and the seating arrangements are inadequate for the students. Due to shortage of the classrooms, the pre-primary class (*shishu shreni*) is held in the veranda of the unused building. Construction of two more rooms at the west side of the playground is incomplete, one of which is used as classroom. About the infrastructure of the school the head teacher stated,

It is an immediate need to construct a boundary wall around the school. The learners cannot be attentive in the classes as their attention goes to the road beside the school. But we are unable to do this due to lack of money. In addition, we do not have fan in the classrooms. During summer the tin-roofed classrooms become very hot. Therefore, the children do not want to come to school. Due to lack of benches in the classrooms the students are to sit on the floor. The parents are also worried to send their children to school because of unsafe condition of the old building. Thus, we work under this unfavourable situation. Furniture in the teachers' room are also insufficient and we do not have electricity.

2. Students

The school record shows that the number of students was 676 in 2002 and 713 in 2003. In 2003, there are 398 boys and 315 girls (Table 7). According to the latest census done by the school there are 981 children eligible for primary schooling (6-10 years) within its catchment area. Among them, 705 children enrolled in this school including eight from outside the catchment area.

Table 7. Distribution of students by grade and sex in Chittagong school, 2003

Sex	Grade					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Girls	49	71	67	68	60	315
Boys	101	70	89	73	65	398
Both	150	141	156	141	125	713
% of girls	32.7	50.4	42.9	48.2	48.0	44.2

2.1 Attendance of students

The attendance rate of the students usually fluctuates from 60% to 75%. According to the teachers and the parents, the attendance rate deteriorate during rainy season and the month of *Ramadan*. The poor socio-economic condition of the students also affect their attendance. Due to poverty, some students are to work with their fathers in boats in the nearby river. Some of them work in the dry fish factories. Few students remain at home for domestic help. Besides, the villagers report that the TV programmes and cinemas in the VDO at tea stalls tempt the children on way to school. Hence, the surrounding situation prevents children from attending the classes.

The school authority takes various measures to ensure the attendance of the students. The student brigade is sent to the absentee students' house to bring them to school. Besides, courtyard meeting, mothers rally (*maa samabesh*) are done to aware parents. The SMC

requests the parents on every Friday in the mosque before and after *Jumma* prayer to send their children to school regularly. Sometimes the members visit the absentee students' homes to ask their parents to send their children to school. Once the attendance of the students drastically decreased, and then the head teacher asked the female teachers to split into three groups and to arrange courtyard meeting with the mothers in different areas of the village.

If the attendance of the students do not increase after various efforts, false attendance is shown in the register. This is done to show the minimum attendance rate of 80% for stipend purpose. Thus, the students' attendance figure given to the UEO is over reported. Due to the same reason, during daily roll call, the teachers call those students first who are in the stipend list.

2.2 Students intra relationship

The students, in general, are friendly and helpful to each other. When they come to school they invite the neighbouring students to join them. The good students help their slow classmates to understand the lessons. Such exercise contributes in improving the quality of education.

2.3 Student assessment

In assessing the students in the classrooms the teachers usually ask them questions on the lessons they learnt during the previous day. Sometimes the students are invited to write answers on the blackboard. If the students show good performance, the teachers applaud them by clapping hands. In order to improve the incapable students they ask the capable students to impart them the correct responses. Nevertheless, it is not possible for the teachers to assess all the students in the classrooms due to time constraints. They usually ask questions to those students whose names they know and those sit in the front row. The teachers cannot see the class works of all the students. In most cases, the teachers just put a tick and a signature on the students works.

2.4 Promotion rate of students

According to the school record, 93% of the students got promotion to the next classes in 2002. Some of them were unsuccessful in the annual examination, but promoted to the next classes. In this regard the head teacher opined,

We undertake all kinds of initiatives to promote the students to the next classes. Students repetition in the same classes is not expected at all. There are already excess number of students in the classrooms. Due to lack of adequate benches the students often sit on the floor. The number of sanctioned teachers in the school is also inconsistent with the increasing number of students. If a large number of students repeat in the same classes the government may reduce the number of teachers as well. Consequently the overall quality would collapse. Considering the overall consequences the Chair of SMC also compel us to increase the rate of promotion than the actual situation.

According to the respective UEO, similar practice exists in almost all the schools he inspects. All the students who participate in the annual examination are promoted to the

next classes. If the examination papers are wanted to reassess, the common response of the head teachers is, "The termites have eaten up the examination papers."

3. Teachers

This school has 11 teachers including the head teacher. One of them is on deputation to another school. Only the head teacher is a male and the remaining 9 teachers are females. Age of the teachers ranges from 25-40 years. Seven of them are Hindus and the rest including the head teacher are Muslims. Five teachers have BA degree, four of them are with SSC and one with HSC. Among the teachers eight received C-in-Ed (Certificate in Education) training and two received BEd (Bachelor of Education) degree. All the teachers have participated in a number of sub-cluster training. As there is no URC in this *upazila*, none of the teachers has any subject-based training. Most teachers are involved in teaching for more than 10 years. Only two teachers have two years experience in teaching.

3.1 Workload

According to the teachers, they are over burdened. On average, each of them are to conduct eight classes daily. Their performance could be better if they had four to five classes daily. In this regard one of them stated,

As we have been teaching the same thing for many years, it is not difficult for us to conduct the classes without preparation. But it seems very tedious to us. If we could prepare ourselves to deliver in a different way we would have a better feeling, but that needs preparation.

The teachers sometimes prepare lesson plan at home or during leisure period. Workload of the teachers increases if someone remain absent. In such a situation one teacher has to conduct two classes simultaneously. Besides academic activities the teachers remain busy with the activities like stipend, child survey, preparation of voter list, plantation, sanitation and home visit. The amount of home visit the teachers do in a month is not enough to protect the absenteeism or dropout of the students. The problem is more deeper than what the teachers can do.

3.2 Teacher attendance

Teachers attendance is quite good. They come to school regularly. The head teacher takes various measures to ensure their regular attendance. First of all, he verbally warns them to come to school in time and regularly. If it does not work as expected then he mentions it in the monthly teacher performance report, which is sent to the *upazila* education office. Consequently the respective teacher is given a show-cause notice.

Despite the above efforts, one teacher is much irregular than others. Her husband is a high official in a government office. By means of such power she ignores the warning of the head teacher. Due to her irregularity, the other teachers are to conduct extra classes to complete the syllabus. The other teachers expressed their dissatisfaction in this regard. They raised the following question, "Why should we attend the school timely, as she is always irregular? Why should we work hard by taking extra classes?" The dissatisfaction of the teachers prevails for long. The head teacher and the SMC made several attempts to make her in order but could not succeed totally.

3.3 Teacher student relationship

The teachers are very cooperative in general. They listen to the students' problems carefully and patiently and try to provide solution. The students sometimes receive copybook and pen as gift from the teachers.

3.4 Teachers' intra relationship

Relationship among the teachers is good. The cooperating attitude of the teachers is one of the major feature in this school. The teachers admire the head teacher for his behaviour, working spirit and proficiency. The head teacher encourages other teachers to be cooperative to each other.

In the weekly staff meeting the head teacher shares the instructions received from the *upazila* education office. He also discusses the weekly assessment of the teachers. Problems related to stipend, attendance and assessment of students, home visit, etc. are also discussed in this meeting.

3.5 Teachers' evaluation

To assess the teachers, the head teacher usually oversees the classroom activities of the teachers and take necessary notes on their performances. During weekly meeting the head teacher provides his feedback to the teachers. He also suggests for improvement based on his observation. One teacher was less skilled than others. The head teacher conducted some of her classes and asked her to observe him, so that she could learn and improve. During inspection, the AUEO also observes the classroom activities of the teachers and discusses their lapses, if any. Sometimes he demonstrates in the classroom and the teachers follow him.

3.6 Commitment and job satisfaction

The teachers of this school are not satisfied with the remuneration they receive, however, they are committed to their job. Some of them said, "We should not say more and more about our dissatisfaction with the remuneration, because we knew it before joining." Nevertheless, workload makes them exhausted. According to them, sometimes they are not being able to give time to their families. However, they expressed their satisfaction by saying, "We are contributing to the nation through this profession." As observed, due to their commitment to profession they are providing continuous effort to develop the students.

4. Management

4.1 Role of head teacher

The head teacher is a man of forty-seven years. He has obtained higher secondary certificate and received a training in English teaching. He has been serving in primary education for about 30 years. He has started his teaching career as an assistant teacher in this school in 1972. After 12 years he was transferred to a neighbouring school as head teacher. In 1997, he came back to this school as head teacher.

The head teacher deals with the academic and administrative matters. If necessary, he communicates with the SMC members for their advice. Despite of dealing with multi-faceted problems, the head teacher is very dynamic in enhancing quality education. He

has adopted various means in this regard. In addition to performing his own duties in school he visits the homes of the absentee students. He regularly meets the parents and other elite in the community to keep in touch with them. He often discusses with them about school matters. He raises funds for the school development through motivating the solvent parents and the local elite. Sometimes he contributes money from his own for the school.

The head teacher always makes a sincere effort to improve the quality of the assistant teachers. The assistant teachers zeal in providing quality education to the students has been developed by the head teacher through continuous motivation and maintaining good relationship with them. The head teacher regularly assesses the classroom performance of the teachers and provides feedback for their improvement. Sometimes, he takes classes in the absence of other teachers.

Coaching for the scholarship examinees has started with the initiative of the head teacher. He is often found in the school almost for 24 hours with the students to make them competent in obtaining scholarship. As a result, nine students from this school received scholarship in 1997. The activities of the head teacher inspired the other teachers to be committed to their work. In this connection, they also conduct coaching classes on holidays.

Students respect the head teacher is receptive to the students. He listens to everybody – the teachers and the students, to know their problems and tries to take measures accordingly. He provides special assistance to the potential scholarship examinees during home visit. He helps poor students through providing pens, copybooks, etc.

4.2 Role of SMC

The SMC members are selected through a general meeting. The present SMC Chair has been in the same position for last 48 years. The Vice Chair is a former head teacher of this school who is also in the committee for the last 40 years. The Chair was awarded the certificate of best SMC Chair in the *upazila* in 2002.

Only the Chair and the Vice Chair of the SMC are familiar and very much cooperative to the teachers; the others are not at that much. These two persons are known as the local guardians of the teachers. They achieved such a position due to their seniority, and ability to help the teachers in various occasions. If the SMC members become dissatisfied due to any activity of the teachers they discuss the matter with them instead of rebuking. This enhance good relationship among them and ultimately impact on the teaching learning activities of the school.

The SMC meets once a month. The issues discussed in the last few meetings are repairing of infrastructure, selling resources of the school for fund raising, dealing with the government officials regarding any problem, etc. The SMC meeting is also held on urgent basis, if necessary. Moreover, the head teacher seeks advice from the SMC Chair as and when necessary.

One monthly SMC meeting was observed during our fieldwork. One big issue for discussion was roof construction over the incomplete building. Due to lack of classroom, this roofless room was used. It was an urgent issue because in absence of roof, bats make the benches dirty at night. The students are to clean the room everyday. Donation was sought from the solvent elite of the village in this regard, but not much response was received. The local UP Chairman assured to contribute some tin in coming December. Considering all these as too late, the SMC has decided to sell some of the branches of the trees in the school to construct the roof of the incomplete building.

The SMC takes necessary action during any crisis. For example, some days ago the attendance of the students has drastically reduced, and the head teacher raised the point before the SMC. The head teacher clarified that the student brigade was sent to the absentee students' homes for several times, but mud and stones were thrown to the brigades. The head teacher then requested the SMC members to get involved in home visit and to talk with the parents. In a meeting the SMC has decided to send letters to the parents to join in a *maa samabesh* (mothers rally). The rally has planned to be held in coming vacation.

The SMC deals with the crisis of the teachers too. All the assistant teachers are female, they are not interested to do any outside work. Administrative work outside school is thus hinders, the head teacher has to do all alone. Apart from this, seven teachers are Hindu, so the religious studies of the Muslim students are also obstructed. Therefore, to get a skilled male Muslim teacher in school, the SMC is lobbying with the *upazila* and district level high officials of the government.

4.3 Role of AUEO

According to the head teacher the role of the former AUEO, who has been transferred recently, was enormous regarding quality improvement of the school. He made frequent visits to the school. Due to his sudden visits the teachers become very regular in school. He always observed classroom teaching during his visits and often demonstrated the teachers the ways of conducting classes in a better way. Based on his observation, he drew the teachers attention about their imperfection. A good environment of teaching has thus developed in this school. As a result, the students of this school receive talent pool scholarship every year. Due to keen supervision of the AUEO the quality of the school has improved in many ways, and thus, the school has shifted from B-grade to A-grade.

4.4 The regulations

The school has certain regulations, which the teachers and the students are suppose to follow. The school is suppose to start at 9:50 a.m. but it takes 15 minutes more to reach all the teachers to school. Majority of the teachers come to school between 9.30-9.45 a.m. Thus, they often fail to join the assembly. Some students also do the same. However, the teachers who come to school on time start assembly at 9.30 a.m. The students are suppose to wear a fixed school dress, but many students can be seen with casual dresses. According to the head teacher, due to poor socio-economic condition some students are not being able to maintain the dress code of the school. Regarding late attendance of the students it is revealed that the students are to attend the *Moktob* in the morning before coming to school. This makes them late to prepare for the school. On the

other hand, the teachers live far away from the school, thus they are unable to reach the school timely. The SMC has taken initiatives regarding punctuality of the teachers, but could not achieve much.

4.5 Stipend

The government stipend programme plays important role in enhancing students' attendance and hence the quality of education is improving. The teachers report that due to the stipend programme a competitive attitude had developed among the parents. They have started to provide greater attention to their children's study, which rightly reflected in the mid-term and annual examinations. According to some parents, when they come to get the stipend money the teachers scold them saying that they do not pay attention to their children's attendance in school. However, they did not notice it before. The parents also blamed that the teachers pay less than the sanctioned amount. On the other hand, the teachers said, "We are to entertain the stipend-distributing officers; thus, taka ten is deducted from each student."

The teachers have decided that the students who were enlisted once for the stipend, will remain in the list for next five years. Due to the complexity of the process the school authority is not willing to change the list. Some parents aggrieved at this decision of the school authority. They described it as totally unfair. This is an obstacle for other students' improvement, they might not be interested to do better.

5. Community participation

The community participation in school improvement was more before, but now reduced. Some parents noticed that the community people are dissatisfied with the activities of the SMC. One villager grumbled,

The SMC is not honest. The members were selected though favouritism many years ago, it has no change. Our judgement is never honoured. They just extend the duration of the same committee for years and years. The school has a good amount of income by selling fishes of the pond and fruits and braches of the trees. But we do not know where the money goes. If we raise question we will not be able to live in the area. The SMC members are very powerful in the society.

The community do not have any complain against the teachers. Nevertheless, they opined that if cultural activities of the school increase it will raise community interest to the school. According to the school authority, due to lack of funds they are not being able to arrange cultural activities. The parents usually do not come to school to talk to the teachers. The parents said that they can visit the school if they are called.

6. Teaching learning process

The teacher student ratio is 1:71 in this school. Two teachers are on leave, thus the ratio stands at 1:89. Such a big ratio has a negative effect on teaching learning process. However, separate estimate by shift segregation shows that the teacher student ratio stands at 1:36 in the morning shift and 1:53 in the day shift.

6.1 Classroom environment

The seating capacity is not adequate for the students in the classrooms. Therefore, the students who come late seat on the floor. Due to the bushes the sunlight cannot enter into the classrooms. The electrical light is not used as well. As a result light in the classroom is inadequate. There is only one fan in each classroom, which does not cover the whole classroom. During excessive heat of the summer, the classroom environment become sultry. Due to lack of bench in the classrooms some students put the workbook on other students' back during class work. A group of learners have their classes at the veranda of the old building, where they seat in two rows in two sides of the veranda. The blackboard is kept on a chair in front of them. The students bring sack or polythene from home to sit on it on the floor.

In such a situation the majority students hardly get quality education. It is also difficult for the teachers to ensure 100% participation. Not all the students bring textbooks, copybooks, or workbooks. The teachers ask them to follow the textbooks of their nearby classmates. The teachers help them providing unused sheets of the examination papers.

6.2 Technique of teaching

Before starting the classes the teachers often rearrange the seats of the students - taller students are send to the back rows and the shorter students in the front rows. The teachers adopt various strategies to draw students' attention in the classrooms. They often sing songs or tell stories to the students. They make easy for the students to memorize times tables by reciting rhymes matching with the tables. During *Bangla* class the teachers discuss about the lives of famous people to make the lesson attractive and lively. The head teacher often divide the students in a class into a number of small groups, so that they can discuss among themselves and grasp the lesson easily. Besides, the teachers encourage the students of classes III to V to read supplementary books in addition to the textbooks.

To make the lesson more comprehensive the teachers often use the pertinent materials provided by DPE. The head teacher also collected some materials locally with his own initiative. The other teachers stated that due to time constraints they are unable to develop materials.

6.3 Private tutoring

Extra coaching from the private tutors play a significant role in teaching lessons of the students. A large number of the students have private tutor. For some students the private tutors go to the students house to teach privately and individually. On the other hand, many students take tuition in batches at some common places or at the teachers' places. Surprisingly observed that the students of class V provide tuition to the students of lower classes. The parents consider it as a must, because they know that it is not possible for the teachers to teach the students in present classroom environment. According to some parents, their children require tuition at home along with attending in school, otherwise they will be left behind in the class.

Classroom observation shows that due to large class size the teachers are unable to take care of all the students. Thus, in most cases the students do not understand the lesson in the classroom. Additionally, as most of them are the first generation learners, they have

none to help at home. As a result, they need private tuition at home to keep pace with the class teaching and obtain good performance in the examinations.

6.4 Management of low achievers

There is a provision to take extra class for the low achievers although on irregular basis. Such classes are arranged after the usual school hour. According to the SMC Chair, it is difficult to arrange extra classes for the slow learners because most of the teachers are female. They want to return home as soon as the school hour is over. The head teacher has to take extra classes daily, which is not always possible. At present, the head teacher is sick, so no extra class is arranged. In few cases, the class teachers try to take care of the slow learners putting them in a group with the good students.

7. Fund management

The financial support from the government includes the salary of the teachers, Tk. 3,000 per annum as contingency, and grant for school development in every alternative year. Nevertheless, according to the school authority, the government grant is not sufficient to meet the needs of the school. Thus, the school authority tries to supplement the fund through various sources. The school owns a pond and over fifty trees. The school annually earns a small amount of money through selling fishes, fruits and branches of the trees. Earlier the local elite provided financial support.

The head teacher and the SMC Chair are jointly responsible for managing the external funds. They often discuss the issue in SMC meeting and try to find a solution. Sometimes general meeting is called to request the local solvent people to help.

8. Co-curricular activities

Co-curricular activities are not given much importance in this school. Sometimes the teachers ask the students to sing song or recite poem, but no organised activity is there. In explaining the reason the head teacher said,

Mainly fund constraint is responsible for this. After the introduction of the stipend programme in the school, different government officials come to visit us. They often ask the parents whether we want donation from them. Thus, we do not collect subscription from the parents for cultural activities. We have a small playground which is not adequate for sports. In addition, we do not have any teacher in the school who can take responsibility of co-curricular activities. Earlier, we had a teacher whose salary was drawn from the grants of ADB. After getting a job where salary comes from the revenue budget, he left this school.

The parents informed that during the period of previous head teacher the number of students was less. Due to good public relation of the present head teacher the local elites have provided support to arrange cultural programmes and sports in the school. At present, the community has lost reliance on SMC, so the people are unwilling to provide financial support to the school. The present head teacher is ill as well, therefore there is no enthusiastic person to arrange such activities.

9. Annual examination

The annual examination we observed was held in three shifts – the first shift for the students of classes I and II, middle shift for classes III and IV and the last shift for class V. However, many students did not attend the annual examination as they considered the model test as annual examination. A model test was held before the annual examination. Some of the students could not understand the importance of the annual examination, thus they did not attend.

During examination, the students were found copying each other's answer paper, which the teachers overlooked. In some cases, in response to the students request, the teachers also told the answers to the questions. According to the teachers, they do it to increase the promotion rate. If any student miss any examination she/he is asked to continue the examination with the assurance to take the missed examination later. The following is such an example.

During examination one parent came to school and informed the head teacher that both of his sons are sick, they are unable to attend the examination. One of his son got fever and the other has abscess in the fingers. The head teacher asked him to send his son who got fever from the next day to attend the examination and allowed the son with abscess to attend the examination after three days. He assured the parent that the examinations they missed will be taken with special arrangement.

10. Scholarship examination

The school has been doing very good in the primary scholarship examinations during the last several years. In 2002, the pass rate was 90%; three students obtained talent pool scholarship and one received in general grade.

Special emphasis is given in preparing the scholarship examinees. The examinees are selected two years back on the basis of the performance in the annual examination of grade III. Thus, the selected students can take necessary preparation for two years. The teachers take care of this students in classroom – they are asked questions more than others, and the teacher often remind them that they are different than others and it is shame for them not to know the correct answers of the questions. The head teacher provides special visit to these students' homes to check whether they study at home. Special coaching is arranged at the beginning of grade V. The head teacher provides roster duty to the teachers for subject-based coaching of these students in holidays.

Case 6. A Registered Non Government Primary School in Bandarban

1. School Profile

This school was established in 1991 with the initiative of a person, who became a commissioner of the local municipality later on. A significant number of students from *Marma* community are enrolled in this school. Initially the school was in a thatched-roof house.

1.1 School location

The school is situated in a village of the sadar upazila under Bandarban district. The river *Shankha* is passing by the side of the village. Although the community considers the location of the school as a village but it is under the municipal area. The distance between the school and the Bandarban town is about three kilometres. The mode of communication from the village to the town is boat; the people can walk through the hilly areas and riverbanks. Two bridges made of bamboo and wooden logs are to cross while walking.

The catchment area of the school consists of three small villages; no municipal facilities are there in two villages, but some facilities are there in one village. Mostly the children of the village where the school is located enrolled in this school. The children of one village usually enrol in the schools in Bandarban town and the children of other village are unable to come to this school or to go to the town schools due to remoteness.

Majority of the inhabitants of the village are *Marma*. There are few *Bangalee* families who live in the *Bangalee para* of the village. The *Marmas* mainly involve in slash and burn agriculture (*Jum chash*). Some of them live on day labour and some sell bamboos collecting from the hills. There are few service holders as well. Only 5/6 elders in *Marma para* are literate. In the *Bangalee para*, the inhabitants established their dwellings mostly in 1980. Most of them came from different areas of Chittagong district. They are mostly boatmen, fishermen or bamboo sellers like the *Marma* people. Some of them are farmers; they cultivate land beside the river acquiring from the indigenous people or from the nearby Cantonment authority. Mostly similar situation can be seen in all three villages, however, some service holders are there in one village. Three NGOs have various types of activities in the catchment area; one of which has education programme in the catchment area.

1.2 Historical background

The school was established with the initiative of its present SMC Chair. He started a school in Bandarban town in 1988. He encountered some difficulties there – some of his relatives and other local people forced him to provide them employment in the school. At the same time, he wanted to be a commissioner of the local municipality. The area where this school is located is within his constituency. He observed that there is no school in the area. The children of this locality had to attend schools in Bandarban town after crossing the river or walking through the bushy-hilly areas. However, considering the situation he has decided to shift his school from Bandarban town to its present place. He discussed the matter with the elderly villagers and the *Karbari* – chief of the local *Marma* community. The villagers welcomed him to establish a school in their locality and assured their full

support in the up-coming election. The *Karbari* donated 40 decimals of land for the school. Indeed, the whole land of the *Marma* para belongs to the *Karbari* and he has the power to allocate. After fulfilling the government requirement the school commenced in 1991. During construction of the schoolhouse the local people contributed *chhon* and bamboo. The initiator provided financial support and collected subscription from the elite for buying chairs, tables and benches. It can be mentioned that he won in the said election.

When the question of forming the School Management Committee came, a meeting was held with the local elite, the *Karbari* and other interested persons. In fact, these people were involved with the school from its beginning. The participants of the meeting selected the initiator as the Chair of the SMC. In this regard the *Karbari* said:

He paid his best effort to commence the school. It is our privilege to select him Chair of the management committee. He is educated and capable. He is the commissioner of our area and can give more effort for the school.

After selecting the chair the other members were selected. Then the SMC appointed a head teacher and three assistant teachers. Among them, one was male and the other two were females. One female teacher was from the *Marma* community. The SMC was obliged to appoint her because her family was living on the land where the school is established and was unwilling to shift from the place. However, providing the job and some money to the family the SMC Chair managed to shift the family to another place. They then collected students by visiting every household of the locality.

The head teacher and an assistant teacher have been replaced by this time. Once the schoolhouse has damaged. On request from the SMC, an NGO assisted to reconstruct the schoolhouse in 1998. The new schoolhouse was made of bamboo and corrugated tin. It has three rooms. In 2002, the same NGO again assisted in rebuilding the schoolhouse by bricks.

Meanwhile, the head teacher and the SMC Chair took initiative to get registration from the government education department. With their effort the school became a registered non-government primary school in 1994. As a result the teachers got Certificate in Education (C-in-Ed) training. The school building was constructed, sanitary latrine and tube-well were installed. With the initiative of the head teacher the AUEO visited the school for several times and became aware about the strengths of the school. The school obtained 'B' grade in 2000.

1.3 Present material condition

The present schoolhouse is a tin-roofed building, with two classrooms and a teachers' common room. The classrooms are specious enough but the teachers' room is stuffed. The teachers' room is full with chairs, a table, a trunk and an *almirah*. The classrooms are furnished with benches, tables and trunks. Due to shortage of classroom, one room is used for two classes during the day shift.

The school has separate toilet facilities for males and females, and the Family Health Development Project installed a tube-well in the school premise. The school has no library. Some books are kept in an *almirah* and some are on the floor of the teachers' room. No electricity is there in this locality.

The school has no boundary wall. The new building at the west corner and the damaged old building at the south corner indicate the school area. There are some coconut, jackfruit and lemon trees in the school compound. The *Marma* people consume these fruits because they planted the trees. There is also a tin-roofed '*Kiang*' (a place of worship for the *Marma* people) in the school area. The school has no playground.

2. Students

According to the census done by the school authority in 2003, the number of eligible children (6-10 years) in the catchment area is 139. Of them, 103 enrolled in this school. A third of the students are from the indigenous community (*Marma*). Among the students 60 are girls and 43 are boys. Table 8 shows the distribution of the students by grade and sex.

Table 8. Distribution of students by grade and sex in Bandarban school, 2003

Sex	Grade					Total
	I	II	III	IV	V	
Girls	18	15	8	9	10	60
Boys	14	6	12	6	5	43
Total	32	21	20	15	15	103
% of girls	56.3	71.4	40	60	66.7	58.3

The majority of the students are from the poor families. Their parents are mainly agricultural workers, *Jum* cultivators, boatmen, day labourers, and bamboo sellers. Some of them are involved in low paid jobs like forest guard or peon of any office. Some *Bangalee* students are involved in income earning activities like boating, cutting and selling bamboo after school hour. They help their parents in the agricultural activities also. The situation impeded their study.

Students' outlook and get up clearly show their poor socio-economic background. Many students attend school with bare-foot and shabby dress. Few students come to school with clean dress and shoes. Most students suffer from malnutrition and different diseases, which hinder their regular attendance.

2.1 Attendance of the students

Scanning of the attendance register shows that the attendance rate of the students is 61%. The teachers reported that the rate increases at the beginning of the year when textbooks, pencils and copybooks are distributed. A number of the students left the school during this year. The *Bangalee* students are less likely to attend in the classes than the *Marma* students. On an average, the attendance rate of the *Marma* students is about 80%. This is primarily because of the short distance between their home and school. The teachers can easily enquire if any student remains absent. On the other hand, the *Bangalee* students

live in a distant place from the school, as such the teachers cannot go for home visit regularly. Thus, their attendance rate is lower.

Moreover, due to workload, it is not possible for many parents to check whether their children go to school regularly. Sometimes the students are to help their parents in income earning and domestic work, and thus they remain absent from school. One *Bangalee* parent said,

We are very poor. You see, I pluck shaak (leafy vegetables) and sell these in the bazaar (market). If my elder child (who is a student) does not take care of the younger one I cannot go for my work. Plucking and selling shaak continues up to 12 noon. How can my son go to school then? His school starts at 10 a.m.

Sometimes the students remain absent due to malaria. On recovery, they do not return to school before any teacher's home visit. During fieldwork, only 40-50 students have come to school after a vacation. The rest remain careless about the date of school reopening.

2.2 Students intra relationship

The students have a cordial and friendly relationship, they do not quarrel. Teachers play a major role in this connection. They encourage the students to build friendly interaction. The students share pencils, pens, books, etc. among themselves. The good students help the slow and absentee students in understanding lessons.

Pleasant relationship between the *Bangalee* and the *Marma* students can also be seen in the school. Some *Bangalee* parents told the research assistant that the *Marma* students sometimes beat the *Bangalee* students, but no sign of it was seen during our fieldwork. However, the indigenous students are kin to each other and they sit together in the classrooms. They often talk in their own language among them. One teacher said,

The indigenous students are very much sensitive – if we rebuke any of them the other students also get hurt. They have a strong feeling to each other. We get information of the absentee indigenous students from the other indigenous students as they live in one area.

The *Bangalee* and indigenous students share the learning materials and food as well. They play and swim together in the nearby river after the school hour.

2.3 Student assessment

The students are formally evaluated through three examinations held in a year. Besides, classroom assessment is there as part of regular teaching and learning. Asking oral questions and asking to write something on copybook are the ways of such assessment. The students are often taken to the blackboard to write answers to the questions asked. The teachers help the unsuccessful students for improvement. Sometimes the able students also take part in this.

2.4 Students promotion

In 2002, about 62% of the students appeared in the annual examination and all of them were promoted to the next classes. In 2003, 54% of the students appeared in the examination, 75% of them were promoted to the next classes. It shows that the rate of

participation in the annual examination reduced over time and the pass rate increased. According to the teachers, "The students who are regular in school do well in the examination and get promotion to the next classes, but who are irregular cannot do well in the examination." The students who fail in the examination are not promoted. In order to learn well, sometimes the parents ask the teachers to keep their children twice in the same class.

2.5 Student dropout

About 20% of the students dropped out from the school during the study year. There are many reasons of dropout. One father asked her daughter not to continue schooling, because there is none at home to do domestic work. The mother of this girl died few days ago. Some students left school due to poverty – they are involved in income earning activities to help their families financially. The teachers tried to get them back to school but failed.

3. Teachers

Including the head teacher this school has four teachers. One of them is sent to another school on deputation. Age of the teachers ranges from 30-40 years. All of them have completed higher secondary school education (HSC) and received C-in-Ed (Certificate in Education) training. They also attended in a number of sub-cluster training. One assistant teacher has training on curriculum dissemination. The head teacher received a four-day training from a local NGO. The other teachers also got short training on health, sanitation and quality education from the NGO which has education programme in the area. Three teachers are Hindu and the remaining one is Muslim. The school has no teacher from indigenous community. All the teachers have started their career from this school.

3.1 Workload

On average, the teachers of this school are to conduct eight classes daily. Thus, they become exhausted at the end of the day. As one teacher is in another school on deputation, this increased workload of rest of the teachers. In addition, they also do home visit of the students.

3.2 Teacher attendance

The teachers come to school regularly, but not in time always. Due to road/river communication problem, sometimes they come to school 20-25 minutes later than the regular starting time. They have to wait for boat to cross the river, as it is not so readily available. Although they come late in the school but never record the actual time of attendance. The record always shows 9:30 a.m. According to the teachers, they do it to save their job.

3.3 Teacher student relationship

An amiable relationship between the students and the teachers is there in this school. The students show respect to their teachers by conveying *salam* or *namashkar* (regards) whenever they meet them. The parents also teach their children to respect their teachers. The students often help their teachers to cross the river by boat. Some of the students earn money on boating in the river but they do not take any fare from their teachers. The students eagerly bring drinking water for their teachers as the tube-well of the school is

out of order. They regularly help the teachers to open and close the doors and windows during opening and closing of the school. They also assist the teachers in hoisting the national flag everyday.

The teachers do not physically beat the students, because some students dropped out from the school due to beating. They elaborated the point as follows,

The parents of the students usually go for income earning activities in the morning. The children come to school with their own inclination. If we beat them in the school they will not be eager to come to school any more. We see our students as our own children.

Above attitude of the teachers' to their students assist in creating a supportive relationship among them. The teachers are also concerned about students' health and they always ask the students about their health. The teachers often draw attention of the parents regarding the health condition of their children. A parent said, "My child was suffering from infectious disease. It is the class teacher, who alerted me first to bring my child to a doctor in the town."

3.4 Teacher intra relationship

The teachers are friendly and cooperative. They address each other as *dada* or *didi* (brother and sister). They often discuss their personal affairs among themselves. They share food in school and cooperate to each other during any crisis. One day a female teacher wish to go home early, as her child is sick and needs to be take to a doctor. One of her colleagues assure that, "You can go home and take your child to the doctor. Do not worry, I will manage all your works." The teachers discuss various issues related to school beyond the formal meeting.

3.5 Teachers' evaluation

The government officials did not supervise the school for last one year, because the post of the AUEO is vacant. Moreover, the other officials also did not visit the school. So there was no way of evaluating the teachers' teaching capabilities from outsiders' point of view.

The head teacher regularly oversees the assistant teachers' classroom activities and provides necessary feedback. When the assistant teachers conduct classes the head teacher let him stand beside the window or take seat inside the classroom. Previously he used to provide feedback or instructions to the teachers in front of the students, which the teachers considered as embarrassing. The situation has changed now. The head teacher discusses the issues later in the teachers' room.

Sometimes, the parents from the *Marma* community come to see how their children are doing in the school. They observe classroom activities standing at the veranda. However, they do not share their assessment with any teacher. According to them, "We are illiterate and thus unable to say anything about what goes on in the classroom. We are not the right persons to assess the teachers."

3.6 Commitment and job satisfaction

The teachers of this school are not solvent enough. Their families are greatly depended on their small salary from the school. Therefore, they are dissatisfied about the salary they receive from the school. One teacher grumbled,

We work in a registered school, so we do not have any importance in the society. The remuneration we receive is not sufficient at all for our livelihood, and we do not get it regularly. Sometimes we get it after two months, which creates crisis in our daily life. That's why we have to engage ourselves in other income generating activities. In fact, we do not receive remuneration according to our contribution. Nobody cares to know whether we are alive or not!

The teachers are not satisfied enough as the parents do not pay any attention to their children's education at home. The parents are illiterate and thus unable to guide their children at home. In addition, due to poverty they are unable to keep private tutor at home. Consequently, the students of the school are unable to compete with the students of the school in the town. The teachers want the parents to be conscious.

Nevertheless, the teachers are proud of their profession. The assistant teachers noticed that many women of their age are unemployed, but they are not – they at least can contribute something to their families. According to the teachers, the responsibilities of their family obstruct them to concentrate fully to their work in the school.

4. Management

4.1 Role of head teacher

The age of the head teacher is about 40 years. He started his career as a teacher in this school in 1993. He has completed higher secondary school education (HSC) and C-in-Ed. He received sub-cluster training and short training from a local NGO. He also obtained a number of short training courses from another NGO in health, sanitation, and quality education.

The head teacher conducts four classes everyday. He also participates in co-curricular activities with the students. He likes gardening, which he does along with the students. He is also careful in keeping the surroundings of the school clean. Similar to other teachers' the head teacher is not satisfied with the remuneration he gets. For extra earning he is involved in private tuition. Nevertheless, he is proud of his profession. The head teacher mentioned, "My father was a teacher too. I inherited the morality of the profession from my father. My position is not strong enough in the society, because I am a head teacher of a non-government primary school. However, I always try my best to enhance the quality of education in my school." The head teacher applies various techniques to teach the students – learning through games and role-playing are some of those. The community also acknowledges his efforts in this regard. No government official inspected the school for last one year, but the head teacher took all kinds of initiative in his own sense of responsibility. He regularly observes the classroom activities of other teachers and provides necessary feedback.

The head teacher is sympathetic and cooperative to his colleagues. He does all the official work and carries papers to *upazila* office. He does not ask his female colleagues to visit the homes of those students who live in distant places. The female teachers acknowledge his cooperation. They stated, "The head teacher never asks us to do the official work or to do home visit to distant places. He performs all such activities by himself. He is very sensible and thus understands our problems." The assistant teachers call the head teacher as *Bara Dada* (elder brother). In this regard the teachers elaborated, "Our relationship with the head teacher is like brother and sisters. Sometimes he scolds us for our mistake but after cooling down says sorry for rebuking. It seems to us that he is our *Bara Dada*."

The short cut way from the locality to the school through the cantonment area is only open for the males. The head teacher do not avail the opportunity as he is sympathetic to his colleagues. Moreover, he made an appeal to the cantonment authority to give permission to use the short cut way to the female teachers of his school. Similarly, in case of sickness of other teachers the head teacher conducts their classes. The head teacher has control over the assistant teachers. One day the head teacher sent one of his colleague to do a home visit, but the teacher did not find the parents at home and thus he returned. The head teacher asked her to go again and stay there until the parent returns.

The study revealed that the head teacher has a loving and caring attitude for the students. The head teacher has no class in the morning shift. Therefore, he asked the students of day shift to come to school early so that he can guide them. Some of the students positively reacted to the head teacher's proposal. Every morning, the head teacher can be seen with the students in the playground of the school. If any student hesitates to answer the question that the head teacher asks, he often takes the student on his lap. It helps the student to answer the question without fear. The head teacher sometimes plays with the students and participates in gardening. There is a hearsay in the community that, *the head teacher always runs and plays with the students*.

The head teacher keeps in touch with the SMC Chair and the members regularly. He arranges SMC meeting and communicates with the community. He is the key person for the official work and planning of the school activities. The head teacher maintains a good interpersonal relationship with the government officials. There is no AUEO in the *upazila* to visit the school, thus the head teacher meets the *upazila* education officer once a month to update him about the school.

The head teacher is the key person in terms of decision-making regarding academic and administrative purposes. He is often found discussing with the teachers in this regard. Although the head teacher is mainly responsible for distributing classes among the assistant teachers, but the teachers are free to share their opinion with him. Even after distribution of the classes, the teachers can reshuffle the classes among themselves. Recently the head teacher has taken initiative to involve the assistant teachers in official work, which they hardly performed before.

4.2 Role of SMC

As it is a non-government registered school the SMC is suppose to play a major role in decision-making process. The SMC of this school played very important role during its

earlier stage, but now the situation has changed. The SMC meeting does not held regularly because the Chair of the SMC, who is also the founder of the school and a municipal commissioner, can hardly give time. He is also a contractor of an NGO. The members are the elder citizens of the community. The SMC meeting is only held when he has time. Only three meetings were held during last one year.

In fact, the head teacher plays an important role in communication between the SMC Chair and the members. He often has informal discussions with the chair. The chair provides necessary instructions to the head teacher and he then informs these to other members of the SMC. The instructions of the Chair are written down in the resolution book of the meeting. Afterwards, The head teacher collects the signature of the other members on the resolution book visiting their homes. None of the SMC members bothers to come to school; they provide signature without any wavering.

The residences of the SMC members are closer to the school, however they do not come to school to see its activities. As the chair does not come to the school regularly the SMC members are not eager to come to school. Some of them claimed that they sometimes ask the parents to send their children to school. Being a commissioner of the municipality the SMC Chair often uses his influence in favour of the school. He managed some funds twice from an NGO to build and renovate the school building.

4.3 Role of AUEO

The post of AUEO is vacant for a year, so the UEO is the only person who can inspect the schools in the *upazila*. However, this is not done. This school was last visited by the AUEO on August 2002 and by the DPEO at the beginning of 2003. It was reported that when there was an AUEO in the upazila the school was inspected once in every three/ four months and the AUEO inspected the classes along with assessing the documents.

4.4 The regulations

The school has some regulations, which the students and teachers are supposed to follow. However, these are not followed. Assembly is a part of the regular activities of this school. Earlier it was the responsibility of the teachers to conduct the assembly everyday, but now the students do it. Two students of class V lead the assembly. According to the teacher, they taught some students how to conduct an assembly. The students of various religious believes enrolled in this school. It is a good practice in this school to recite from the holy books of every religion. This is a very good initiative to develop religious harmony among the students. This helps in developing integration among the children of various religious groups. The students can learn to respect the other religions also.

4.5 Home visit

The teachers of this school usually visit homes of those students' who remain absent in school for five to six days. The teachers prefer those students who are most irregular in school. The head teacher is very serious in this regard, because he has to submit home visit records to the UEO during monthly coordination meeting.

Considering the location of residences of the teachers, the head teacher allocates areas for home visit among them. It is convenient for the female teachers to visit the homes nearer

to their residences. The head teacher usually goes to the distant places. The teachers are interested to do home visit after the school hour – on the way to go home. Due to poor socio-economic condition, the parents work outside for long hours. Thus, the teachers often do not find them at home in the afternoon. The teachers are to visit the absentee students home in the evening. Thus, the teachers gradually lose their interest in home visit. However, the effect of home visit in raising attendance of the students is positive.

5. Community participation

Not much initiative was taken from the school to increase community participation. The school did never arrange any annual programme or a cultural show where the people can participate. *Maa shamabesh* or any other meeting with the community is also absent where the parents can involve and share their views. Picnic was arranged twice and a programme during opening of the new building was arranged some years ago. The villagers participated in these programmes. During the inaugural of the new building the community took initiative to decorate the school.

The parents often raise the issue of having a *Marma* teacher in the school. However, no attempt is taken in this regard. The parents claimed that the *Marma* students do not understand *Bangla* at their early years in the school, which creates difficulty in following lessons in the classrooms. On the other hand, the *Bangalee* students and the teachers said that the *Marma* children are rather good in *Bangla*. In support of their claim they added that they could follow the *Bangla* programme on television.

The head teacher helps the community in various occasions, which help bridging the relationship between the school and the community. Once the construction of stairs of the *Pagoda* was obstructed. The head teacher helped them in writing an application to the local administration. This enriched relationship between school and the community. The community has good impression about the SMC Chair, even though he does not come to school regularly and lives away from the school. Nevertheless, they respect him, because he is the founder of the school and at the same time a ward commissioner of the municipality. The community has the expectation that in case of any necessity they would receive his support. On the other hand, the Chair also needs the community support for his election. Therefore, he is very cordial with the people in the community.

6. Teaching learning process

The average teacher student ratio in the school is 1:34, separately 1:18 in the morning shift and 1:16 in the day shift. As the attendance rate of the students is about 60% the teachers can provide adequate time to take care of the students in the classrooms. The teachers reported that the school has adequate teaching materials, most of which have been received from the DPE and some were collected with their own initiatives.

6.1 Classroom environment

The school is situated in an open place, thus enough air and sunlight can enter into the classrooms. Nevertheless, the outside environment of the school is dirty. The majority of the people in the area do not have any fixed place for defecation and they often keep the surrounding areas unclean. Most of them have domestic animals like pigs, which pollute

the environment. Several times the head teacher attempted to make them aware of it, but it did not work.

The students, in general, do not do noise in the classrooms in presence of the teachers. They seek permission to enter in the classrooms and to get out. The students learnt it from the teachers. The girls often bring their younger brothers and sisters with them in the school. These young children play in the school veranda and sometimes enter into the classrooms. They often make noise and thus disturb in classroom activities. Nevertheless, the teachers do not scold the girl students for this, because they know that there is none to look after these children at home. If they are asked not to bring the younger siblings to school, it may be difficult for the girl students to come to school.

The seating arrangement in two classrooms is very good – direct communication between the teacher and the students is possible there. In these classrooms, the teachers take seat at the middle and the benches for the students are arranged in a round order. Each classroom has two blackboards, which are mostly damaged.

The school becomes crowded during the morning shift than the day shift. This is because the students of day shift come to school earlier and some of them take seat in the classrooms. Sometimes they enter into the classrooms only to leave their schoolbags. The students lose their attention at this. With the supervision of the head teacher, many students of day shift prepare their lesson seating on the ground of the school. Some of them start playing and making noise, which disrupt the classes of grades I and II.

6.2 Technique of teaching

The teachers of this school are aware about the home situation of the students, especially regarding the socio-economic and educational status of the parents. The teachers know that there is none at home to see their students. Such awareness of the teachers is reflect in the classrooms. The teachers usually attempt to teach the lesson to the students within the class time. The classes begin with writing the topics on the blackboards. The teacher then asks the students to open the respective page in the textbook and put their fingers on the lesson. The teacher then discusses the lesson and makes the students understand it. The teacher can be seen very careful whether all the students are attentive and can follow her. Then the teacher read out the lesson and asks the students to listen to her. After finishing her reading she asks the students to read it one by one. The teacher then asks short questions to the students, if someone fails to answer she asks it to his/her classmates, so that the failure students can learn through listening from the successful students. Such a teaching learning technique can be seen in all the classrooms in this school. Because of small class size, the teachers can ask questions to all students.

Usually there is no homework for the students. However, sometimes very minimal homework is provided. No new things are asked to do as homework, the teacher just asks the students to redo the same thing that is done in the classroom. Homework of each and every student is checked carefully – the teachers give necessary corrective measures. This is possible due to small class size. Class work is provided to the students in every class. The teachers invite the students to the blackboard especially the weak and inattentive students. The students who cannot write correctly are asked to stand in the front of the

blackboard to see the write up on it. Sometimes the teachers read loudly from the blackboard and the students join with them.

The students who were absent in the previous day are asked to learn the lesson from their classmates. The teachers also help them to catch up. In this regard, the teacher often divides the students into two groups. One is called silent group and the other one is vocal group. The vocal group read out the lesson loudly and the silent group listen to them carefully. In case of any mistake the teacher make them correct. The students enjoy such activities very much. During arithmetic classes the teachers usually use teaching aids. When any student is asked to come to the blackboard to do any maths, the others are asked to close the book and pay attention on the blackboard. Sometimes one student's work is assessed by the other one. However, the teachers check all the workbooks later on. The students like this activity too. The teachers and the students speak English in the English classes. The teachers encourage the students to make short sentences in English. When a new word comes, the students try to memorise it through reciting together. The teachers often encourage the students by clapping.

As mentioned earlier, during day shift two classes are held simultaneously in one classroom. Therefore, the teachers adopted some strategies for adjustment. There is understanding among the teachers – while one offers reading, the other one offers writing. For instance, if one teaches Bangla the other teaches arithmetic.

6.3 Private tutoring

The parents do not feel the need of keeping private tutor for their children. This is primarily because they are not aware what goes on in the school and secondly, their economic condition does not permit to do so. Some parents said that the teachers did not ask them to keep private tutor at home. One exceptional case is as follows,

Once the parents heard that this school would come under the stipend programme and only the better performing students would be given stipend. Some of the parents then provided private tutor to their children. However, when they came to know that it was a rumour they stopped providing private tutors.

6.4 Management of low achievers

On identification of the slow achievers in the classrooms through observation and assessment the teachers attempt to teach them lessons repeatedly. The teachers invite them to the blackboard to make them outspoken. Sometimes, special homework is provided to them. The weaker students are encouraged to respond in front of other students or write the answers on the blackboard. The teachers try again and again to upgrade the slow learners. Some *Marma* students have difficulties with *Bangla* language; the teachers also assist them asking the able students to help the unable students. There are some learners who are very much irregular in school, thus they remain slow over time.

The head teacher instructed the slow achievers of the classes III to V to come in the morning shift, so that he can teach them. Indeed all the teachers encourage the weak students of day shift to come to school early so that they can help them to catch up. This

attempt is known as 'private' among the students. This system has started in 2003 to put special emphasis before the annual examination. The teachers also ask the good students to help their weak classmates.

7. Fund management

The main source of school income is the government contingency of Tk. 1,800 yearly. The other source of income is the examination fees taken from the students. As the Chair of the SMC has good relationship with various organizations, he raises funds for the school.

Apart from spending money for buying necessities like registrars, papers, chalks, pencils, pens, carbon papers, office files, staplers, etc. the school authority uses the money for making fence around the garden, planting trees, etc. The school authority has to pay for the transportation and entertainment for the government officials who visit the school. However, such a visit rarely happens. In addition, scholarship examination fees of the selected students are paid from the school fund. The school authority does it, because the parents are almost reluctant to allow their children to send for scholarship examination. In fact due to the poor socio-economic condition they are not eager to continue their children's study after completing primary education, therefore, they are not willing to spend money for the fees of the scholarship examinations.

The head teacher and the SMC chair are mainly responsible for fund management. They maintain a joint account in a local branch of a bank. For expenditure, the head teacher usually takes the decision and then communicates with the Chair for drawing money from the bank.

8. Co-curricular activities

As part of co-curricular activities the students do singing, drawing, acting, etc. Story telling and general knowledge competition is also there. The poor students cannot afford colour pencil, so they draw with the ordinary pencils only. These activities are done under supervision of the teachers. The teachers were not aware of it before getting the C-in-Ed training. The teachers do not know much about these activities, because none of them has training on these. On the other hand, the school authority cannot recruit a teacher for this due to scarcity of money. Thus, the quality of the activities is not good.

Once the *upazila* education office invited the school to participate in a cultural competition. Among the students who perform best in the school were sent to participate in the competition. According to the teachers, due to lack of good dresses and shoes, the students of other schools disliked the students of this school. Thus, the teachers become unwilling to take the students to the town to participate in the competition. The UEO did not invite the school any more. Therefore, such cultural activities become limited in the school. Annual sports or cultural functions are not arranged due to lack of funds.

The students involve in gardening in the school ground. They brought flower plants from their homes and planted in the school garden. The teachers ask the students to make artefacts like boat, telephone, etc. by mud or basket by cane at home and bring those to

school. The students are assessed based on these works. After examination the teachers keep these in the office room.

9. Primary Scholarship

The teachers take extra care of the primary scholarship examinees. Like many other schools, no special coaching class is arranged for the scholarship examinees. However, the teachers keep them in touch in school. The teachers regularly ask them about their progress of education. Moreover, they often visit these students at home, talk to the parents and provide advice. It was reported that on the scholarship examination day the head teacher collects the students from their houses and take them to the examination centre to ensure their attendance in the examination. Scholarship examination fees are provided from the school fund, because the parents are not eager to pay.

The government stipend programme does not cover this school. However, an NGO provides five scholarships for the good and regular students. They provide the scholarships for improving students' educational and health status. The children who get married early are disqualified for the scholarship. The students who obtain scholarship regularly come to school.

CROSS CASE ANALYSIS AND POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

4

Cross Case Analysis

Recent studies based on survey techniques shows that primary education in Bangladesh has made progress due to some affirmative actions taken by both the government and the non-government agencies. However, such progress is concentrated only in quantitative terms, for instance, the net enrolment rate and gross enrolment ratio has gone up and survival as well as the completion rate has increased (Chowdhury *et al* 2002). Gender gap in these regards has also been disappeared. The major concern is that the quality did not go equally with the expansion of the system. Survey based studies like the PSPMP and the *Education Watch* shows that the learners do not achieve adequate competencies on completion of primary cycle. However, the objective of the Government of Bangladesh's Primary Education Development Programme (PEDP) is to improve the quality of primary education for all children. The above-mentioned studies also show that there is a wide gap among the schools in terms of learners' achievement of competencies. That is, some schools are doing very well and some are not (Nath *et al* 2001, PSPMP 2001). This study is, thus, conducted aiming to explore how some primary schools in Bangladesh succeed despite various constraints.

This study adopted an approach that requires an understanding of the ethnographic and qualitative research techniques to obtain a deeper insight into the quality of primary education. Considering the important factors of quality achievement, as mentioned in Craig-Heneveld model six formal primary schools have been selected for the study. The schools were selected through several discussions with relevant persons and on approval of the Steering Committee of the study. Five of these schools are government primary schools (GPS) and the rest one is registered non-government primary school (RNGPS). Six standalone case studies on six sample schools are provided in the previous chapter, where the dynamics of the schools are clearly manifested the process individually that how the study schools succeed despite various constraints. However, the cross case analysis reveals that there are some common factors among the schools which made them successful, but there are some variations in the strategies as well. The similarities and variations against each of the factors (the sub-factors as well) mentioned in the Craig-Heneveld model are presented below.

1. Supporting inputs from outside schools

1.1 Historical background of the schools

The schools under this study were established at different times. The oldest two schools were established over 70 years back and the recent one was 13 years back. Initially, the communities as non-governmental schools established all the six schools. However, the five schools, which were established before the independence of Bangladesh, became government school in 1973. Most of these schools started in temporary places and later shifted to the permanent places. Again, without the government support none of the schools could construct the permanent structures. However, the local people contributed land for the schools and provided partial funding. In some cases, they provided land free of cost and sometimes with a minimum payment. After the local elite, the contribution of the local common people especially the parents was significant. The community people joined in different phases of school development. Their involvement includes providing land, money, labour and influence. A person's interest in winning the local government election influenced him in establishing the school in Bandarban. None of the teachers, SMC members and the parents of Dhaka school know much about the history of the school.

At the initial stage, the community people played important role in publicising the schools and asking the parents to send their children to these schools. However, the pedagogical matters could not be emphasised before joining of a head teacher with qualified leadership. Another important factor emerged through exploring the historical background that the quality of most of the schools enhanced after employing a number of good assistant teachers from the neighbouring schools. These teachers collectively made efforts to involve the SMC and the community with the activities of the school. In many cases they went to every house of the village to bring children to schools. Whatever the attempt was made by the school, community, the head teacher or the assistant teachers, none of these schools got acknowledgement as a quality providing centre or a good school without obtaining at least one primary scholarship. Thus, the quality of the schools studied here is mainly scholarship centred.

Table 9. Information on some input factors outside schools

Issues	Schools					
	Jessore	Nawabganj	Pabna	Dhaka	Chittagong	Bandarban
Year of establishment	1930	1945	1953	1960	1932	1991
Distance from <i>upazila</i> town to school (km)	14	30	3	0	20	3
Location of school	Remote	Remote	Good	Good	Good	Remote
Number of students	113	757	466	1103	713	103
Percentage of girls	47.8	55.9	49.4	49.1	44.2	58.2
Percentage of Muslims	8.0	98.0	98.0	98.5	100.0	60.0
Percentage of eligible children in school	50.4	NA	74.0	NA	72.7	74.0

NA = Not available

1.2 Location served by the schools

Five schools are located in rural areas and one in urban area. Distance between the rural schools and the respective *upazila* towns varies from 3-30 kilometres. Two schools are located three kilometres away from the upazila town, one 14 kilometres away, one 20 kilometres away and another one 30 kilometres away. On the other hand, the urban school is located very near to the *thana* administration. Road communication from the respective *upazilas* to the schools is good in three cases. Bandarban, Nawabganj and Jessore schools are located in remote places. It is evident from the study that majority of the schools are not located at the centre of the catchment areas. This creates problem to the students living in other side of the villages – less proportion of them enrolled in these schools. There are other formal and non-formal schools in the catchment areas of four schools; only a number of *madrassas* are in the catchment area of Chittagong school, and no educational institution in the area of Bandarban school.

1.3 The students and their socio-economic background

Number of students varies from school to school – slightly more than 100 in Jessore and Bandarban schools and over 1,100 in Dhaka school. Among others, Pabna school has 466 students, and Nawabganj and Chittagong schools have over 700 students. Consolidated figure shows that a half of these students are girls, however, girls proportion is 6-8 percentage points higher than the average in Nawabganj and Bandarban, and 6 percentage points lower in Chittagong. We have data on the size of eligible students in the catchment areas of four schools. It shows that nearly three-fourths of the eligible children of the catchment areas of three schools enrolled in the study schools – these are Pabna, Chittagong and Bandarban schools. On the other hand, only a half of the eligible children enrolled in Jessore school. Among the rest of the children, some are enrolled in other neighbouring schools and some are out of schools. This means that none of these schools could bring all the children in the catchment areas to the schools.

The students served by the schools are mostly similar in terms of socio-economic background of the families irrespective of distance between the school and the local town or its urban rural characteristics. Majority of the people in the school catchment areas are poor – agriculture is basically the means of earnings of the rural families and small trading and various types of services are in the urban families. There are few rich families in the catchment areas of the rural schools and many in the urban school. Children of the rich families in the catchment areas of four rural schools do enrol in the study schools, because they do not have alternative choice. School choice of the parents depends on three aspects – quality of school, cost of education and the distance between home and school. In fact, the parents do not find any better school (except the sample schools) within their reach. Other way, these schools could establish themselves as good schools in the areas. On the other hand, such children in the catchment area of Pabna school basically prefer the kindergartens, but after studying three/four years in the kindergartens they move to the study school to take part in the primary scholarship examinations. Otherwise, the rich children of the catchment area of Dhaka school do not enrol in this school – they prefer other good schools in the city irrespective of distance from home to school. The families of the students of the Pabna and Bandarban schools are so poor that the students are to engage in income earning activities. In general, the poor condition of

the families affects the function of the school in various ways. For instance, due to involvement in income earning activities the attendance of the students decrease in specific season. As both the parents are involved in work for long hours in a day, they hardly pay attention to their children's study. Sometimes they prevent their children from going to school and ask them to help in certain activities – in or outside of their homes.

1.4 School community linkage

The linkage between the schools and the communities started at the inception of the schools, which continues over time. The people in the communities are, in general, poor and illiterate; it is not possible for them to provide significant financial support to the schools. However, the case studies reveal that the people helped the schools in different phases of development. One major task the people initiated to develop the infrastructure of the schools, which actually ended with the big support from the government. The people provided help in cash or in kind and some worked as labour. Besides, the people provide financial support in various occasions of the schools including annual sports. In Nawabganj and Pabna schools, it is interesting to know that the community people are involved during development of annual plans for the schools, which enable the schools to obtain necessary support from the community in cash or kind to implement the plans. No other school involves the community in planning stage.

Due to lower educational level of the community people it is not possible for majority of them to take part in the pedagogical development of the students. However, in some schools, community provide volunteer teachers during shortage of regular teachers. For instance, the Jessore school has only four teachers, of whom, two take leave at a time. Two educated villagers come forward to conduct the classes voluntarily, this ensured smooth running of the classes.

One important issue of quality is the home school relationship. Due to poor socio-economic condition, it is not possible for the parents to create favourable condition for study at home. The Jessore school organises mothers rally (*maa samabesh*). According to the teachers, it helps motivate the mothers to education. In one of such rally the teachers motivated the mothers to keep home television off to a certain period (evening to 9:00 p.m.), so that the students can study attentively at home. Some mothers have taken the responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the decision. This initiative helped keep favourable condition for education at home. However, no such attempt is made in any other schools.

It is frustrating to know that at present, the community people do not communicate with the schools without the initiative of the school authorities. Parents even do not come to school to talk to the teachers about the progress of their children. In some cases, when the teachers want to see the parents they are to consider clever strategy – keeping the textbooks and workbooks of the students to them and asking the parents to pick those from school.

1.5 Role of SMC

Five schools have school management committee (SMC) and one does not have. The formation of SMC varies from school to school. In Jessore school, the members are taken from every corner of the school catchment area assessing the degree of interest and workload. People from different socio-economic status and political background work together in the SMCs of this school and the school in Dhaka. In Nawabganj school, the local member of the parliament and the UP Chair are the advisors of the committee. Which is not the case in other schools. SMC is reorganised after every two years in Jessore, Nawabganj, and Dhaka schools. However, the same people are selected for several years in the committees. On the other hand, the same SMC works for many years in two schools viz., Chittagong and Bandarban. The present Chair of the SMC of Chittagong school has been holding his post for last 40 years and in Bandarban since its inception. In Pabna school, where there is no SMC, the hostel committee performs the activities of the SMC. The socially and politically influential people in the areas are placed in all the committees. Again, the head teachers play the key role in the selection of the SMC members. Others have limited influence in the process.

The SMCs have many things to do for the development of the schools. It was known that the SMCs played important role in various phases of the school development. As the SMC members are the influential persons in the community they use their social and political influences to bring facilities for the school. Before 1973, all the five government schools were fully supervised by the school management committees. The SMCs took initiative to build the schoolhouses and creating various facilities for students and teachers. Without SMC and the community in general it was not possible for the schools to run, exist and prepare them to be state owned schools. Recent history of the RNGPS in Bandarban is a good example of how some people (who became SMC members later) can build a community school and gets government recognition over the period.

The Jessore and the Nawabganj schools are the appropriate examples of showing SMCs role in improvement of quality of education. The activities include monitoring the attendance of the students and the teachers, and supervision of classroom teaching. Sometimes the SMC members of the Jessore school do home visit of the absentee students in the evening. Due to the strictness of the SMCs the teachers of these schools become punctual. The SMC members monitor the performance of the teachers through classroom observation and asking questions to the students. Some of the SMC members of Dhaka school also visit the school whenever they wish, but they never oversee the classroom activities. However, they use the school telephone off and on for personal purposes. The SMC members of other two schools do not or rarely visit the schools. The members of the SMC of Bandarban school are not interested in school matters; the Chair of the same committee lives far from the school catchment area, so he is not able to come to the school.

With the initiative of the head teachers, the SMC meetings are held regularly in two of the six schools – Jessore and Nawabganj schools. It is surprising to see that the SMC meetings are not held regularly in other schools. However, false documents are prepared once a month. In most cases, the head teachers take decisions through telephonic discussion with the Chair and some powerful members of the committees or through

informal discussions with them. Such decisions are written as meeting minutes and the meeting registers are sent to the members for their signatures. The signatories have no complain regarding the decision making process. Such practice is not good for democratic development of the schools.

Other important role played by the SMCs is the financial management. The schools collect subscription from the wealthy people of the community with the initiative of the SMC Chair and some influential members. The head teachers and the SMC Chairs are the main actors in accounts keeping. In Dhaka and Chittagong schools, some community people show their dissatisfaction regarding the accounts keeping system, which are not transparent. They urge for a transparent accounts system, otherwise they might withdraw their support from the schools.

1.6 Role of the government officials and other external support

The assistant *upazila* education officers (AUEO) are the first line inspectors of the schools, who are supervised by the *upazila* education officers (UEO). In analysing the individual cases it is noted that the role of these government officials in improving the quality of the schools is positive. It is revealed that the government officials frequently visit the Pabna and Nawabganj schools, and so the teachers are more attentive in taking classes there. In addition, since the study schools are already reputed as good schools, the government officials favour these schools in terms of providing financial support and other facilities like appointing more teachers. Good teachers are also appointed in these schools. Such support from the *upazila* education offices is very much helpful for these schools, which obviously helps them to develop. It has a dark side too – other schools in the *upazila* are clearly deprived of all these.

The study reveals that the government officials mainly assess the schools on the basis of the records and documents provided by the head teachers. Even they do not apply their own judgement. Therefore, the tendency of the head teachers is to keep all documents updated. Sometimes, false statements and over-reporting are also there, especially regarding attendance of students, home visit and students' performance in the examinations. It is surprising to note that in many cases the AUEOs do not perform classroom observation. As such, they do not provide any academic support to the teachers.

In absence of government stipend programme external support is sought to assist the poor students of the Dhaka school. An NGO provides stipend to the students. Attendance of the students of poor families increased due to such programme. This school received material support from many NGOs for infrastructure development. Again, the school in Bandarban also received financial and training support from an NGO. Other schools also mobilized local resources. These are possible due to head teachers' strong commitment and linkages with solvent people. The external support was available because the school authorities, especially the head teachers and the SMC Chairs took positive attempt.

2. Enabling condition

2.1 Material condition

Four schools have adequate number of classrooms. There is shortage of classrooms in Bandarban and Chittagong schools. Of only three rooms in Bandarban school, one is used as teachers' room and the remaining two are used as classrooms. It creates problem when three learner groups come to school in the day shift. Two groups are to accommodate in a room. In Chittagong school, it is not possible to divide the students into sections due to shortage of classrooms.

Each school has some books, but none has a library. The books are kept in the teachers' rooms in *almirahs*. Only the Dhaka school has separate room for the head teacher. All the schools have tube well for drinking water. The tube-well of Jessore school is arsenic contaminated so it is out of use. Four schools have electricity facilities, which does not exist in Jessore and Bandarban schools. Toilet facilities are adequate in all the schools. Separate toilet facility for the girls is found only in two schools. Three schools have garden and four have playground. Nawabganj and Dhaka school have rest room. The head teacher of Nawabganj school live in the school premise, and some students and teachers are also housed in the school hostel. Pabna school has a hostel too, however, only the students are allowed to stay there. Dhaka school has a computer room and a big hall room. None use the computer. But the hall room is rented out to others. Pabna school has a laboratory.

2.2 Role of the head teacher

Before going to detail of the roles and responsibilities played by the head teachers let us take a look at their profile. The age of the head teachers ranges from 40 to 55 years and all of them are males. Except the head teacher of Pabna school all others have completed only the higher secondary schooling (HSC). The head teacher of Pabna school is an MA. The head teachers of the government schools have started their carrier as assistant teacher and then promoted to the post of head teacher. On the other hand, in Bandarban, the head teacher started his career as head of this school. Before joining these schools as head teachers the government school heads worked in other schools too. Majority of them were the head teachers in the neighbouring schools. They were transferred to these schools mostly with the intention to improve the quality of the schools. This indicates that they have shown their competence in this regard in the previous schools. The sample schools flourished after taking over the charges by these head teachers. In the dynamics of the schools the role of the head teachers is very prominent. It can be mentioned that five head teachers spent major portion of their service life in the study schools, which ranges from 9-33 years.

In exploring the workload of the head teachers it is revealed that they are mainly involved with the management of the schools. This includes work distribution among the teachers, ensuring that teachers conduct classes accordingly, updating school documents, maintaining good relationship with the SMC members and the local elite, exploring financial resource for school and so on. During preparation of class routine, some classes are allotted to them too, but due to their involvement in administrative work they can hardly manage to conduct classes. The other teachers mainly take their classes. Only

exception can be observed in Jessore and Bandarban schools. The head teachers of these two schools are to take classes as many as the other teachers take, because the number of learner groups and the number of teachers (including the head) is equal in these schools.

Table 10. Information on some factors related to enabling condition in schools

Issues	Schools					
	Jessore	Nawabganj	Pabna	Dhaka	Chittagong	Bandarban
Sex of head teacher	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age of head teacher (year)	50	50	50	NA	47	40
Edu. qualification of HT	HSC	HSC	MA	HSC	HSC	HSC
Year of experience of HT	30	33	17	36	32	11
Duration in present school	9	33	14	25	19	11
Basic training of HT	C-in-Ed	C-in-Ed	MEd	C-in-Ed	None	C-in-Ed
Number of teachers	4	15	7	14	12	4
Number of female teachers	1	4	1	11	11	3

The study reveals that the head teachers have quality leadership, which plays an enormous role in achieving success. The head teachers have control over their assistant teachers and the society at large. The relationship between the head teacher and the assistant teachers is somewhat good in three schools – these are Nawabganj and Chittagong GPS and the Bandarban RNGPS. However in other schools the assistant teachers complained against the head teachers regarding their authoritarian behaviour and lack of transparency in decision-making and financial matters.

The assistant teachers follow the instruction of the head teachers. The head teachers favour some of them through providing various facilities. For instance, in Nawabganj school the head teacher allocate less number of classes to some teachers as they are preparing for BA examination. In some cases, he also considers late attendance of the teachers. All these make the assistant teachers obliged to him. Although the assistant teachers in Dhaka, Jessore and Pabna schools have an indifferent relation with the head teachers but they carry out the instructions of the head teachers. In the case of conflicts, the teachers remained quiet, as they know that they may be transferred to other schools if they protest. The head teachers have that kind of power, which is one of the controlling factors over the assistant teachers.

The head teachers also take initiatives to develop the capacity of the young teachers. The head teachers in four schools oversee the teachers' quality through classroom observation. They also provide feedback to the respective teachers – in weekly staff meeting in Nawabganj school and through informal discussion in other schools. In Chittagong school, the head teacher sometimes demonstrates the better way of conducting classes to the assistant teachers. The head teacher of Nawabganj school often ask the young teachers to do some official works so that they can learn how to deal with such activities. According to him, it would help them in future when they would manage schools as head teachers. It is noticed that the head teacher of Pabna school do not get time to observe the classroom activities of the assistant teachers, thus no feedback is

provided to the teachers regarding classroom teaching learning. On the other hand, the head teacher of Dhaka school is interested to the teaching learning in two classrooms only, which are nearer to his office room and on the way to the *upazila* education office – these classrooms are always kept prepared for the visitors.

All the six head teachers are noted to be good in maintaining public relations, which enable the schools to receive community support in various purposes. It helps in fund raising during various occasions like annual sports, cultural function, study tour, etc. All the head teachers have very good relationship with the education officers at the *upazila* level and beyond. Due to such relationship with the government officials, the head teachers can manage extra facilities for their schools like having more teachers or receiving government grant frequently for infrastructure development.

2.3 Intra relationship among the teachers

The intra relationship among the teachers in all the study schools is good. The teachers are very much cooperative to each other. Friendly relationship of the teachers made the schools possible to run smoothly especially the teaching and learning activities. If a teacher is unable to conduct any class for personal reason the colleagues help him/her through taking class. For example, in Pabna school, if the responsible teachers are to go out for personal purposes the other teachers conduct classes during their off periods. Therefore, in all the schools, the classes are conducted regularly even if a teacher remains absent temporarily.

2.4 Relation between teachers and students

The relationship between the teachers and the students is cordial; especially the students adore the female teachers very much. It is possible mostly due to good relationship among the teachers. The teachers take care of the students not only in terms of education but in social matters too. For instance, in Bandarban school, the teachers identify the students with ill health and advice the parents to take him/her to the doctor and often provide monetary help to the poor students.

The head teachers and the other assistant teachers often found to help the poor students by providing necessary copybooks, pens, pencils, etc. Sometimes they permit the students to remain absent from classes, so that they can work for income to meet their urgent necessities. The generosity of the teachers makes the students more attentive in the study. Such relationship between the students and the teachers assists in enhancing teaching learning environment in the schools.

2.5 Student attendance

The students' attendance in the schools fluctuates throughout the year. Attendance generally increases during textbook distribution and before the examinations. It goes down during rainy season, flood, and cultivation. When the attendance rate drastically decreases, the school authorities take various measures to increase the attendance. The head teachers, the assistant teachers and the SMC members work together to uphold attendance. All of them try to raise the awareness of the parents in this regard. Apart from home visit they arrange courtyard meeting, discussion after *Jumma* prayer in the

mosques, etc. These are collection of measures considered by the schools during last few years, however none of these measures are considered regularly in any the schools. In some schools, the teachers do not perform home visit of the absentee students, they sometimes meet the parents in common places like tea stalls and bazaars, and ask the parents to send their children to school. Again, instead of doing home visit the respective students are asked to take the home visit form to their parents for signature. The teachers' claim that it is not possible to make home visit to all absentees, but they need to show the AUEO certain amount of forms filled up every month. Over-reporting regarding attendance of the students is there in all the schools. According to the teachers, if they do not do so the UEO might not provide full financial benefit to the school.

Thus, no continuous effort is there in any of the schools to bring all the enrolled students in the classrooms. However, limited measures are taken in all the schools, which can be treated as insufficient. The tendency of over-reporting of the attendance status of the students is very common in all the schools. Even the teachers prepare false reports on home visit and submit those to the *upazila* office. On the other hand, there are some good students in all the schools who are very much regular in school.

2.6 Work distribution and decision making process

The head teachers usually distribute works among the teachers and the teachers accept this with contentment. If they are not satisfied they talk to the head teachers. In Bandarban school, the head teacher introduced lottery system in distributing the tasks among the teachers, earlier they were not satisfied with the work given to them by the head teacher.

The head teachers in all the government schools under study play the central role in all aspects of decision-making including academic, administrative and financial matters. The SMC Chairs and some members also take part in decision-making. In the registered school, the SMC Chair plays the main role, as he is the founder of this school and the teachers were appointed by the SMC. In principle, the SMC meetings should be the centres of taking all the decisions about the schools. However, this is not the case in the study schools. The head teachers take decisions for smooth operation of the schools. Again, they are the member secretaries of the SMCs and thus key to all kinds of communications between the school, the teachers and the SMC members. It is known that major decisions are taken outside the SMC meeting through informal communications, sometimes over telephone. The members put their signatures on the decisions later. In some schools, routine meeting is called to make the decisions justifiable in a democratic fashion. There are some exceptions too. In Nawabganj school, the teachers, parents and the students are consulted before preparing the annual plan. The UEO and the local elite are involved during preparation of annual plan in Pabna school. According to the head teachers, these are helpful in implementing the annual plan. However, the teachers in most of the schools grumbled that the head teacher ask them for opinion but he takes the final decision according to his own judgement without considering their opinions.

2.7 Policies for disable and ethnic minorities

There are some disable children in the sample schools, although the schools do not have any particular activity for them. It is good to see that the disable children take their seat in the classes along with the other students. However, sadly, the teachers pay very little attention to them. In terms of ethnic minorities, there are some *Bihari* students (77) in Dhaka school and some *Marma* students (35) in the Bandarban school. The *Marmas* are about a third of the total students in the school and the *Biharis* are only 7%. Sometimes the *Biharis* speak *Urdu* and the *Marmas* their own language among themselves. Their *Bangalee* peers or the teachers do not see any problem in this. However, all of them can understand *Bangla* instructions in the classes. Students of these groups (*Bangalee*, *Bihari* and *Marma*) do not face problem in mixing with each other.

The Bandarban school is located in a *Marma* para. There are some *Marma* people in the SMC as well, but no such policy is there regarding the issues of indigenous students. The teachers act similarly as they do with the *Bangalee* students. The students are friendly. The *Marma* parents and the elite often raise the issue of appointing a *Marma* teacher, but it is not possible due to non-availability of a qualified person. The *Bangalee* students often help the *Marma* students in understanding *Bangla*.

2.8 Fund raising and management

The schools under this study are state-owned or state supported. However, except the salary of the teachers, the tiny support the schools receive from the government is not enough to run the schools. Thus, each of the schools has alternative sources of fund raising. Such fund raising is needed primarily for the infrastructure development of the schools, although all these schools receive government allocation in this regard. In general, the local rich people especially the businesspersons help the schools. The schools also collect money from these people during special occasions like annual sports, cultural function and other social activities. In two schools they create their own sources of regular income; these are Nawabganj school and Chittagong school. The sources include selling of plants, fish, fruit and trees. The Dhaka school receive donation in kind from some NGOs. The above income is used to bear costs like remuneration of additional teachers, utility bills, etc. In some cases, the poor students are compensated. All the study schools except the Bandarban school are favoured by *upazila* education offices. They receive more funds from the government.

Management of school funds is not transparent always. The head teachers mainly take the financial decisions. The head teacher along with only one teacher keeps all the accounts. The SMC Chair is also involved with the process. The other teachers have dissatisfaction, they often complain about corruption in the system. Most of these schools have bank account, which are run jointly by the head teacher and the SMC Chair.

2.9 Home visit

Though the teachers are responsible to do home visit of the absentee students, very little is done in this regard. The teachers fill up home visit forms without doing the visit and submit those to UEO office. Some teachers do home visit at the time of returning home from school. Only the head teacher of Bandarban school is committed to do home visit.

The catchment area is divided among the teachers – the head teacher visits the houses located far while the female teachers are assigned to visit the nearer homes. If the teachers found parents absent from home, they are not willing to visit the home once again. The teachers sometimes meet the parents outside school at the time of other regular activities. They also consider this type of meeting as home visit. Sometimes the teachers send the home visit form to the parents through the students for their signature. The AUEOs are aware about this unethical occurrence but no action is taken from their end. The parents rarely visit school. Few parents of Nawabganj and Dhaka schools do school visit. Some schools arrange mothers meeting (*Ma Somabesh*).

3. School learning climate

3.1 Students promotion rate

The school records show that about 10% of the total students do not take part in the annual examinations. Among those participate in the examinations, the promotion rate is over 90% in four schools (Jessore, Nawabganj, Pabna and Chittagong), 85% in Dhaka school, and 75% in Bandarban school. The highest promotion rate is in Jessore school (96%). In most of the schools, all the students of grades I and II are promoted to the next grades without any examination. In one school they are to sit for examination to grow their habit.

The promotion rates show very good performance of the students in the school examinations. However, the reality is far from this. The schools, in general, have a tendency to pass most of the students. Some common reasons came out in the discussions with the teachers. Firstly, these schools are known as quality school in the community and to the upazila education offices – thus, to keep their standard up to the mark the schools need to maintain a high promotion rate. Secondly, the schools cannot refuse parents' pressure to promote their children. The parents request for promotion, because on completion of primary schooling they would be able to arrange marriage for their daughters, and their boys would get opportunity for better job. Thirdly, sometimes the students are promoted in order to vacant seats for the next cohort of learners. The promotion rate in Bandarban school is the lowest among the schools. This is because the parents do not create any pressure on the school in this regard. The school has small number of students and scope of income earning activities is also limited in the hilly area. It is interesting to see that in some schools some students of grade V repeat in the same grade to take part in the scholarship examination next year. The other dark side behind such high rates of promotion is described in a later section on annual examination.

3.2 Teachers' motivation and job satisfaction

The teachers in all the schools under study are dissatisfied regarding their salary structure. The teachers are also dissatisfied with the opportunities they get as teachers. Majority of them notice limited carrier path in their profession. However, the senior teachers claim that they are committed to their job. The main motivation, as they said, is that the profession brings honour to them. They feel proud when any of their former

student come to convey regards. On the other hand, the junior teachers dissatisfaction is more than that of the senior teachers. In addition to the reasons mentioned above, they add their educational qualification which according to them does not match with their job. It can be mentioned here that the junior teachers are more qualified than the senior teachers – some of them have BA degree and some have MA. Some of them are looking for new job. Nevertheless, they are professional in the sense that they are noted to obey their duties and responsibilities sincerely. The junior teachers are in general very good in conducting classes.

Job satisfaction is inseparable with the remuneration they receive from the schools. Indeed most of the senior teachers are more or less economically solvent. Along with the remuneration provided by the government they have extra sources of earning i.e. private tuition, small business, fish and poultry farm, stationary shop, agriculture, etc. Therefore, they are not that dissatisfied with their total earnings rather they are happy that they earn honour through the profession.

The extent of dissatisfaction is higher among the teachers of Dhaka and Bandarban schools. Living in Dhaka is more expensive than other towns but the teachers in Dhaka school receive equal remuneration like others. In addition, as they observe, people in Dhaka city do not honour them like their peers in rural schools. They are not considered even for private tutors. On the other hand, the teachers of Bandarban school claimed that they work as long as the teachers of government schools, however, they are less paid and less honoured because of their job in a non-government school.

It is understood through discussing with the teachers that they try to be committed to their job but the realities regarding remuneration, prestige and other facilities do not help them in being so committed. Thus, the teachers are to engage in other income earning activities.

3.3 School order and discipline

Most of the teachers and the students come to their schools on time, however there are some who do not follow this. The teachers do not say anything to the late comer students. The head teachers also keep silent to the assistant teachers who come late. It is interesting to observe that there are few teachers in the schools of Dhaka, Chittagong, and Pabna, who often come late almost everyday. These teachers do not attend the assembly and also do not record the actual time of arrival in the attendance register. These teachers are socially powerful, thus the head teachers have nothing to do. All the head teachers come to the schools on time.

Teachers are, in general, very careful in maintaining discipline among the students. Most of the students come to the schools in time and do not make noise during school hour. However, in some cases, some teachers can be seen careless in this regard in absence of the head teachers. Compared to others, late attendance rate of the students is higher in Chittagong school. Many students of this school go to *Maktab* in the morning, thus they can not reach the school on time. The head teachers and the SMC members of the Jessore and Nawabganj schools always try to ensure that the teachers and the students maintain discipline in school. In Nawabganj school, the students are not allowed to enjoy leave

without written permission of the head teacher. If any student remain absent from school without informing the authority his/her parent has to come to school for explaining the reason for leave. Thus, the maintenance of school order and discipline help function the school efficiently.

The students of all the schools are to attend school with school uniform, but due to poverty almost a half of them are found in casual dresses. To maintain the orderliness in the school the head teachers often suggest the students to ask their parents to provide them school dress instead of any new casual dress during festival. Assembly is held regularly in all the schools, however, it has an enormous impact on students' behaviour and attitude of Bandarban school. The provision is to recite from the holly books of various religion in the assembly, which creates an opportunity to develop a religious integration and harmony among the students. A mutual respect to each other's religion is developed among the students.

The regulations are less maintained in the school in Dhaka. The head teacher is sort of autocratic in behaviour and takes decisions by himself. He favours some of the teachers in support of his own benefit. He provides extra facilities to those teachers as they help him in his uneven activities. This creates dissatisfaction among the teachers. One politically powerful teacher of this school does not care the rules of the school. She attends and leaves school according to her own will. Even the head teacher does not tell her anything. She enjoys unauthorized leave and the head teacher approves her leave later. On the other hand, the head teacher is very strict to other teachers. The head teacher maintains a good relationship with this powerful teacher and also takes necessary help from her.

3.4 Rewards and incentive for the students

The major incentive for the poor, meritorious and regular students is the stipend provided by the government. However, only the three schools have such programme – Jessore, Nawabganj, and Chittagong schools. The teachers, and the SMC tried their best to prepare the list of students with honesty. However, false statement is to submit in the upazilas regarding the attendance and performance of the students. The schools do not hesitate to do this. In absence of government stipend the schools in Dhaka and Bandarban initiated separate stipend programme with support from some NGOs. The teachers of all these schools and the parents of the stipend beneficiaries opined the programme as a good one. According to the teachers, stipend programme is helpful in increasing student attendance in the schools. There is no such incentive for the students of Pabna school.

It can be seen that if the students perform well in the classrooms the teachers and the other students applaud them by clapping their hands. If the students do not know the correct answer, the teacher help them to learn it. The prize giving ceremony for the mothers of the successful students of the Nawabganj school is very much encouraging for the mothers.

3.5 Co-curricular activities

Co-curricular activities are there in all the schools. Cub scouting, drawing, singing, dancing, producing models of various objects, study tour, role playing, etc. are the important co-curricular activities in the study schools. Cub scouting is considered as one of the important activity for the students. Of the six schools, four government schools have Cub activities. No Cub activity is there in Bandarban and Jessore schools. In all the schools Cub activities appear only at the time of competition with other schools and during any function in the schools. Involvement of schools with Cub activities attracts common people and brings fame for the schools. The schools also participate in the singing, dancing and art competition held at the *upazila* and district levels.

The above activities do not occur regularly in any school. The schools have all necessary instruments to do these activities. However, they only practice these before any competition. On the other hand, not all the students are considered for the activities. Only the smart and good-looking students are selected for cultural and Cub groups. The schools regularly participate in different national day functions at the *upazila* and district levels. During the visit of the high officials, the schools usually arrange cultural show to make the visitors impressed. It is noted that the students who are involved with these shows are mostly remain in the top positions of the classes. The teachers pay special attention and call them by name and ask them lessons. In fact, it is very encouraging for them to do well in study. The head teacher of Dhaka school arrange annual ceremony to show the glamour of the school to the outsiders.

The schools acknowledge the necessity of co-curricular activities and in most cases they have necessary arrangements too. However, it is not considered as a means of overall development of the students. In this connection the head teachers mentioned about financial constraints, which is not totally true. Nevertheless, the school authorities are happy with this, because such a limited activity is enough to keep the school in good book of the higher authorities and also to keep its name and fame to the community at large.

4. Teaching learning process

4.1 Teacher student ratio

The teacher student ratio varies from school to school – highest in the Dhaka school and lowest in the Bandarban school (1:79 and 1:26 respectively). It is 1:28 in Jessore school, 1:51 in Nawabganj school, 1:67 in Pabna school, and 1:60 in Chittagong school. Only the two schools have teacher student ratio below the internationally recognised figure 1:40. Higher number of students per teacher has bad impact on students seating with ease and in classroom environment. As mentioned earlier that all the schools are double shifted; shift-wise calculation of teacher student ratio can show a small number, which does not reflect the real picture of the burden of the teachers.

4.2 Seating arrangement

Most of the schools have the capacity to accommodate the students in the classrooms. The Dhaka and Nawabganj schools have spacious and enough number of classrooms. However, in some schools there is shortage of classrooms. The Chittagong school use veranda as classroom; there is no adequate benches in the classrooms and some students sit on the floor during class time. Two learner groups are accommodated in a classroom in Bandarban and Dhaka schools. All these create barrier in creating good environment for teaching and learning. Seating arrangement of only two classrooms in Dhaka school is excellent.

4.3 Classroom environment

Favourable classroom environment is important for better teaching and learning. Natural light and air can hardly enter into the classrooms in Pabna and Chittagong schools. However, in others, no problem is seen in this regard. Three schools viz., Dhaka, Pabna and Nawabganj have electricity facilities. Electric bulbs and fans are also there in the classrooms. On the other hand, the other three schools do not have such facilities. The students of these schools suffer during summer. Only two classrooms in Dhaka school are well decorated with plenty of teaching aids. These classrooms are shown to the visitors. In Pabna school the classrooms are separated by a very thin fence. So the sound can pass easily to the adjacent rooms.

The schools are double shift schools; the crowd is more in the morning shift than the day shift. It has two reasons. Firstly, the number of students is higher in grades I and II compared to other grades. Secondly, in some schools the students of day shift reach earlier and enter into the classrooms to keep their books on the benches. Besides, in Bandarban school the students bring their younger siblings to schools. The teachers forbade them to do so but there is none to look after the younger siblings at home. The younger siblings create problems for the school but there is no alternative.

It was seen in the observed schools that there is no congenial environment for teaching in most of the cases. In some schools there are adequate facilities towards quality teaching and learning. However, teaching learning depends on the respective teachers. It is not possible for many teachers to conduct classes properly for many reasons.

4.4 Techniques of teaching

It is observed that the teaching techniques adopted by the teachers varies from teacher to teacher and school to school. Some teachers exchange greetings with the students, when enter in the classrooms. Before starting the new lessons, the teachers check the lessons of the previous day. In general, a child-centred teaching strategy is followed in most of the cases. Nonetheless, teacher centric techniques are not absent in the observed schools. Of the methods, lecture is the most common method in teaching. Demonstration, group work, writing, problem solving are also practiced. The teachers provide exercises, divide the students into groups for discussion, invite them to write answers on the blackboards, etc. are the general activities in the classroom. Majority of the teachers in these schools are good in teaching, they know how to teach the young children. However, they are not

seen applying their full capacity in the classrooms. This is because of lack of motivation of the teachers and supervision by the head teachers and higher authorities.

The teachers of Jessore and Chittagong schools claim that they follow the classroom pedagogy, which they learnt from IDEAL training. The teachers start their classes with singing a song or telling a story. On the other hand, the teachers of Nawabganj school opine that it is nothing but misuse of time. The teachers relate the lessons with the surrounding environment in Pabna and Jessore schools, which help the students to grasp the lesson easily. However, in Chittagong school, to make the lessons attractive the teachers discuss about the lives of famous people and often encourage the students of upper classes (III to V) to read the supplementary books along with the textbooks. This does not happen in other schools. The teachers use teaching aids in the classrooms to make the lessons more comprehensible. The teachers of Bandarban school use student centric techniques. The teachers divide the students into two groups. One group read a certain paragraph and the students of other group ask questions. After some time the activities occur to an inverse order, that means the previous group ask and the other group read. They enjoy this method very much. It can be mention here that the number of students is small in this school.

Sometimes the teachers conduct the hard subjects in the earlier part of the school time – this is because the students can concentrate easily at the beginning. Most of the teachers do not use lesson plans but they use teaching aids. Some teachers make teaching aids by themselves. Besides, some teachers are very careless in taking classes. They do not care even the duration of class and so, leave classroom before the end of scheduled time.

4.5 Students' participation and assessment in the classroom

The good and outspoken students usually participate spontaneously in the classroom activities. As the teachers know them by name they are often invited to write answers on the blackboard. The weak and introvert students are in most cases ignored by the teachers. The teachers report that in 40 minutes it is impossible to assess all the students in the class. However, the Bandarban and Jessore schools are two exceptions in the sense that the teachers in these schools try to communicate and assess all the students, as the number of students is small. Due to time constraints and bigger class size in other schools it is difficult for the teachers to see whether all the students could learn accordingly.

In most of the schools the teachers usually provide less time to the students to grasp the lesson. Often the lesson of the class is given as homework. It is expected that the lesson, which is learnt in the class, would be revised at home. As most of the students are the first generation learners the parents are not able to supervise them properly at home. Therefore, who are weak and introvert in the class become low achievers. However, the system thus encourages private tutoring. The parents and the teachers as well think that the children need private tuition at home to catch up the study at school. A good number of students in five government schools have private tutors at home.

4.6 Remedial strategies for the slow achievers

To improve the performance of the slow achievers the schools undertake various measures. Only the Dhaka school does not take appropriate measures in this regard. In some cases the weak students are assembled in a group and the teacher asks the good students to discuss the lessons with them. It is expected that the weak students would improve with the assistance from their good classmates. Sometimes extra classes are arranged in Chittagong school for the weak students after usual school hour. In Nawabganj school, the students are divided in sections based on their performance. The teachers try to provide special care when they teach the weak students. This is certainly a useful method but it requires plenty of teachers. On the other hand, the Bandarban school adopted an easier method to help the slow achievers. The head teacher of this school has no class in the morning shift. He asks the weak students of the day shift (Classes III to V) to come to school in the morning shift. The head teacher helps them prepare the lesson taught on the previous day.

The teachers are sensitive to the slow learners. The teachers of Nawabganj and Bandarban schools ask more questions to the low achievers. They praise and help them to learn up to the mark. Thus, the schools are, in general, careful to the slow achievers. They even adopted various methods to work with, but due to lack of teachers and other obstacles it is not possible to achieve at a satisfactory level.

4.7 Annual examination

On an average, about 10% of the students of the sample schools do not take part in the annual examinations. The annual examinations in these schools are observed to see how the students are assessed at the end of the academic year. It is found that a flexible assessment system has been adopted for the students of classes I and II. For classes III to V written examinations are held but the quality of examinations are not maintained properly. However, in all the five government schools, the teachers are almost indicating the answers to the students in the name of explaining the questions. In some cases, the students are given chances to copy from one another. In some schools, the parents are also seen helping their wards in writing in the answer papers. Some students are unable to answer a single question, they just copy the questions in the answer papers.

Answer papers are also loosely assessed. Those copy only the questions in the answer papers are also given some scores. Students getting scores much below the pass marks are also given the additional scores to allow them to move to the next classes. Such assessment increased the promotion rates in these schools. Thus, to promote larger portion of the students to the next classes the teachers adopt a number of unfair means. The *upazila* officials fully aware of all these, but they do not take any action against the schools.

4.8 Scholarship examination

Assessing the schools in terms of their performance in the primary scholarship examinations reflects in the process of school operation. All these schools offer highest priority in preparing their scholarship examinees. For instance, Pabna school identifies

prospective students from class III for scholarship examination. In Jessore school, the teachers select the examinees one and a half years ago and provide special coaching until the examination is over. The other schools select the prospective scholarship examinees at the beginning of grade V. Sometimes these students are kept in a separate section for special attention. In Jessore school, the head teacher keeps them in his own home at night for special care. The scholarship examinees stay in schools with the teachers in Nawabganj school. Nawabganj, Pabna and Chittagong schools do better in the scholarship examination. Since achieving scholarship is a major indicator of success, the Pabna school adopted a different strategy to obtain scholarship. Good students of class IV of the neighbouring kindergartens are admitted in this school. Sometimes, the good students are admitted at the middle of class V. Such a strategy is beneficial for both the school and the respective students. Besides, there is no hard competition for this school to get scholarship as there is a small number of schools in the union.

In all the schools, the good teachers including the head teacher are involved in preparing the scholarship examinees. According to the rule, only 20% of the students of class V can participate in the scholarship examination. Thus, the schools activities regarding preparation of the scholarship examinees not only deprive the remaining 80% students in the same class but also other students in the schools.

Summary Findings

Aiming to explore how do some primary schools in Bangladesh succeed despite various constraints prevail, six case studies are prepared on purposively selected six primary schools in Bangladesh. Five of these schools are government and one is registered non-government. In selecting the sample, the intention of the research team was to take those schools, which have shown examples of providing quality primary education. In this respect the quality of education has been defined in a broader sense, which includes strong community participation in school improvement, leadership quality of the school heads, teachers' active participation in mentoring the learners, healthy teaching learning atmosphere in the classrooms, putting students in the centre of educational setting, and learning achievement of the students. It is recognized that having all these characteristics in one school is too much to want – a school can be successful in any one or more of the above areas.

It might be better if the research team could follow a grounded approach in selecting the schools. This was not possible because the process of school selection was guided by the Steering Committee formed for the study. A long list of good schools was prepared through several meetings with the Steering Committee members and the divisional consultants of the ESTEEM project. People of other two organizations (CSID and CARE Bangladesh) were also consulted in preparing the long list. The Steering Committee then approved six schools from six districts of the country. However, the committee was unable to say the specific characteristics of the schools, which provoked them to select each of the schools. Then it was the duty of the research team to find out the characteristics of the schools for which they were called as successful schools.

The research team was inspired with the advantages of the ethnographic methods from the conventional social science research. Attempts were made to live up to the principles of the ethnographic techniques. However, it was not fully possible to implement the plan due to lack of appropriate resources, timing and resource persons skills etc. Six research assistants experienced in conducting case study research were appointed. Each of them spent two and a half months in each of the school site. The Craig-Heneveld model adopted by the PSPMP study was broadly considered for this study with minor modifications.

At this stage, it seems to the research team that it might be better if two things could be considered. Firstly, making the school selection grounded – meaning that if we could select a number of *upazilas* arbitrarily and ask the respective *upazila* education officers and their assistants to make short lists of successful schools in their *upazilas* mentioning the characteristics of the schools and then select one school from each *upazila*. Secondly, if the research team members could do the case studies themselves. Such an attempt would require more time in fieldwork and hence for preparing the report. This study considered only the two of the eleven types of primary schools in the country. Canvas of the study could be widening including other types of schools. This was not possible again due to advise of the Steering Committee.

The schools brought under the study came from various settings. Each of them has its own way of being successful depending upon the availability of human and material resources. In general, these schools cannot be said as good quality school at the same level. Degree of successfulness varies from school to school. Each of the schools has a number of characteristics those can be considered as factors behind its success; at the same time a number of weak sides are also there with each of the schools. However, each of the schools faces a number of constraints too. Thus, it was possible for the research team to identify and consolidate the good characteristics and weaknesses of the sample schools, as well as the constraints they face. It should be mentioned that sometimes weakness became prominent than the success factors for a particular school. The consolidated list of constraints, good characteristics and weaknesses of the sample schools are presented in the following pages.

Constraints

Followings are the constrains that the study schools face.

1. The teacher student ratio is higher than the acceptable level of at most 1:40 in four of the six schools under study. Thus, the teachers are unable to provide adequate time to the students. Quality education requires attention of the teachers to each and every student, however it is not possible in four study schools.
2. Socio-economic condition of the communities where the schools are situated is poor. Average income of the majority of the parents and their educational level are low. Parents of majority of the students are illiterate. Thus, it became the responsibility of the schools to motivate the parents to education and ensure enrolment of their children. Again, due to poverty many parents do not have ability to create adequate environment for study at home. Majority of the students

are first generation learners. Due to poverty a good number of the students are to involve in work; they cannot attend school regularly.

3. In relation to number of students in the schools or number of eligible children (6-10 years) in the school catchment area it reveals that some of the schools have inadequate number of teachers and some have insufficient infrastructure like shortage of classrooms. Some of the schools lack electricity, playground, drinking water and toilet facilities. Majority of the schools do not have separate toilet facilities for girls.
4. Annual subscription provided by the government is inadequate to bear the day-to-day expenses of the schools. Thus, the schools are to look forward for resource mobilization at the local level.
5. The teachers are dissatisfied with the remuneration they get from the government. They are to engage in other income earning activities to meet the needs of their families. Mostly all the senior male teachers are involved in various types of activities ranges from small trading to private tutoring, which demands good amount of time.
6. In general, there is no provision of incentives or rewards for the teachers or the students for their good performance at school level. Not all the teachers get foundation training like C-in-Ed.
7. To the teachers and the *upazila* education officials, the prime indicator of quality education is the students' performance in primary scholarship examination. Such thinking also covered the parents and the SMC members. Thus, the major activities of the schools concentrate towards success in scholarship examination. Other issues of quality education get less importance. Again, due to overemphasis on the education of small portion of the students i.e., the scholarship examinees by the best teachers majority of the students are deprived.

Success factors

Followings are the characteristics of the schools, which made them good schools.

1. The schools, in general, have very good links with the communities they serve. Such links have been established during inception of the schools. During the early stage of the schools the respected community people mobilized the parents to send their children to the schools. To build infrastructure of the schools the communities provided help in cash and kind including land and labour. They provide financial support to the schools in various occasions. Involvement of community people in teaching in absence of regular teachers and in preparing annual school plan is significant.
2. The leadership of the head teachers is enormous. All the head teachers are serious and remain busy with the management and administration of the schools. They are the key persons of all the activities. All the six head teachers come to school on time and spent longer period in school everyday. They are very much capable to ensure that the assistant teachers attend the classes as per routine.
3. Majority of the head teachers oversee the classroom activities of the teachers and provide feedback accordingly. Weekly staff meetings are held in some schools,

where the teachers discuss about the head teachers' findings of classroom observation and other relevant issues. Except Dhaka school, other five head teachers are committed to their duty as teachers.

4. Influential people of the communities are involved in the SMCs. The SMC Chairs of five government schools are active and do lots of work for the school. They initiate to mobilise funds using their social influence. In some schools, they monitor the attendance of the students and the teachers, and oversee the classroom performance of the teachers.
5. The teachers try their best to teach the students in the classrooms. Except few cases, all the teachers are capable in teaching and are punctual in their duties. They sometimes provide extra care to the slow learners. Good intra relationship among the teachers exists. They are also respectful to the rules and regulations of the schools.
6. A strong emphasis is given in the preparation of the scholarship examinees and participating in the competitions and functions held at the *upazila* level. Winning awards in these occasions bring name and fame for the schools.
7. The attendance rate of the students is higher in all the schools compared to the national average. They are comparatively disciplined.
8. The authorities established students' hostel in two schools. The scholarship examinees and some poor students are allowed to stay there. In one school, some female teachers also stay in the hostel.
9. All the five government schools are considered as better schools by the respective education offices. These schools are favoured through allocating additional funds and appointing more teachers. Good teachers are also appointed in these schools. The AUEOs and other high officials provide more visits to these schools.
10. Majority of the schools have their own sources of income, which help meet the needs of the schools.

Weaknesses

Weaknesses of the study schools are as follows,

1. There is no strong mechanism in at least four schools for professional development of the teachers. General practice is to bring good teachers transferring from the neighbouring schools.
2. These schools developed under autocratic rule of the head teachers. No activity is done beyond the head teachers control or wish. Thus, in most cases, democratic values are not practiced in decision-making.
3. On average, 10% of the students do not attend in the annual examinations. The students, teachers' and the parents' involvement in unfair means in annual examination is common to all the schools. Copying, indicating answers of the questions, loose assessment of answer paper, and giving pass marks to the failed students are the unfair means. Thus, the pass rates declared are far from the reality.

4. The teachers recognise the need of co-curricular activities for overall development of the students. However, a few of the students participate in these. Like scholarship examination these activities are also competition centred. Thus, only a small portion of the students gets the opportunity to practice and participate in the competition at the *upazila* level.
5. Due to outside engagement of the teachers sometimes they are not able to attend the classes. They are to depend on proxy teachers. Quality of teaching of these teachers is poor.
6. There is less interaction between the teachers and the parents. The teachers rarely do home visit. Majority of the parents do not come to school to talk with the teachers about the progress of their children.
7. The schools are not sensitive to the special needs of the disabled and ethnic minority students. No special attention is given to them.
8. As the assessment of the schools is mostly done through assessing the documents, the head teachers keep all the documents updated. Sometimes false statements are also produced regarding attendance of the students, home visit, and students' performance. The AUEOs do not observe classroom activities of the teachers regularly, and they are unable to provide pedagogical feedback. They do not take any step to stop unfair means in the annual examinations.
9. The SMCs do not run democratically. The Chairs and the member secretaries take decisions in most cases. The other members just put their signatures on the meeting minutes prepared by the head teacher. The same people are selected in the committees for several years.
10. Accounts of the school fund are not transparent. Only a few people like the head teachers, SMC Chairs and one/two teachers may have detailed idea about the accounts keeping.

Policy Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings mentioned above. These are a kind of general recommendations applicable to all the schools studied. However, some of these may already exist in one or more schools.

1. Attempt should be taken to reduce the number of students per teacher. Thus, the number of teachers should be increased in the schools. This would help improve teaching quality in the classrooms. Provision of proxy teachers should be stopped.
2. Quality education for all students should be the concern of the schools. Education should be provided from equity perspective and hence special care should be taken for all the students in the schools, not only the scholarship examinees.
3. The students should be properly assessed – during class teaching and annual examination. Adopting unfair means in the annual examination should be stopped. The students should start learning good habits from the primary schools. Students getting scores below the minimum pass marks should not be promoted to the higher grades at all. *Upazila* education office should monitor the system.

4. The AUEOs should be more active. In assessing the school performance they should depend on their own observations and judgements, not on the documents provided by the head teachers. The AUEOs should have the capability to provide pedagogical inputs to the teachers.
5. One or two good teachers may be appointed in one school. However, a process of developing good teachers should be there in the schools. A post of assistant head teacher may be created in each school aiming to create good head teachers.
6. Democratic attitudes should be adopted in operating the schools and the school management committees. Weekly staff meeting can be introduced in all the schools. SMC members should visit school regularly.
7. Each and every student should have the chance to participate in the co-curricular activities. Co-curricular activities should be considered as part of overall development of the students.
8. Steps may be taken in order to increase commitment of the teachers in their profession. Professional development of the teachers should be considered as a continuous process. Time has come to think about career path of the teachers.
9. Each school should try to mobilize resources locally. The schools should be encouraged to initiate income-generating activities. The income and expenditure account of the schools should be kept in a formal way. All concerned persons should have the right to know about the status of school funds. This should be made transparent.

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Annex 1. The Craig –Heneveld (C-H) Model

The conceptual framework around which the instruments and interpretations of data of the PSPMP are organized is an adaptation of a framework of school effectiveness factors known as the C-H factors. There are four factors used by PSPMP. Each factor is divided into three or more subfactors. Table 1.2 lists the PSPMP adaptations to the C-H factors and subfactors.

Table 1: The adapted C-H Factors and subfactors as used in the PSPMP	
Factor 1: Scubfactor 1.1 Scubfactor 1.2 Scubfactor 1.3	Supporting inputs from outside the school Strong parent/community support Effective support from educational systems Adequate material support
Factor 2: Scubfactor 2.1 Scubfactor 2.2 Scubfactor 2.3 Subfactor 2.4	Enabling condition Effective leadership Capable teaching force Flexibility and autonomy Time in school
Factor 3: Scubfactor 3.1 Scubfactor 3.2 Scubfactor 3.3 Scubfactor 3.4 Scubfactor 3.5	School climate High expectations of students Positive teacher attitudes Order and discipline Organized curriculum Rewards and incentives
Factor 4: Scubfactor 4.1 Scubfactor 4.2 Scubfactor 4.3 Scubfactor 4.4 Scubfactor 4.5	Teaching and learning process High time learning Variety in teaching strategies Frequent homework Frequent student assessment and feedback Rewards and incentives

The C-H framework was used to organize the indicators about which data are collected for monitoring schools. The C-H framework provides a way to look for indicators of quality in schools that beyond the traditional input-output approach to school monitoring.

The framework emphasizes the relationships or interactions among inputs and process factors as the causes of quality in instruction. Based on a thorough study of the effectiveness and improvement literature in education, the authors of the C-H framework selected four broad factors affecting the quality of primary education. These are shown in Table 1 as supporting inputs, enabling conditions, school climate, and the teaching and learning process.

To apply this approach one must understand:

- what inputs are coming to a school (supporting inputs);
- how the school is organized, managed to receive, and make use of inputs (enabling conditions);
- the expectations, attitudes, beliefs, incentives for students, and commitment to learning that a school's personnel have (school climate); and
- the instructional methods and student learning behaviors that characterizes a school staff (teaching and learning process).

These four factors can then be related to school outputs (i.e., student achievement).

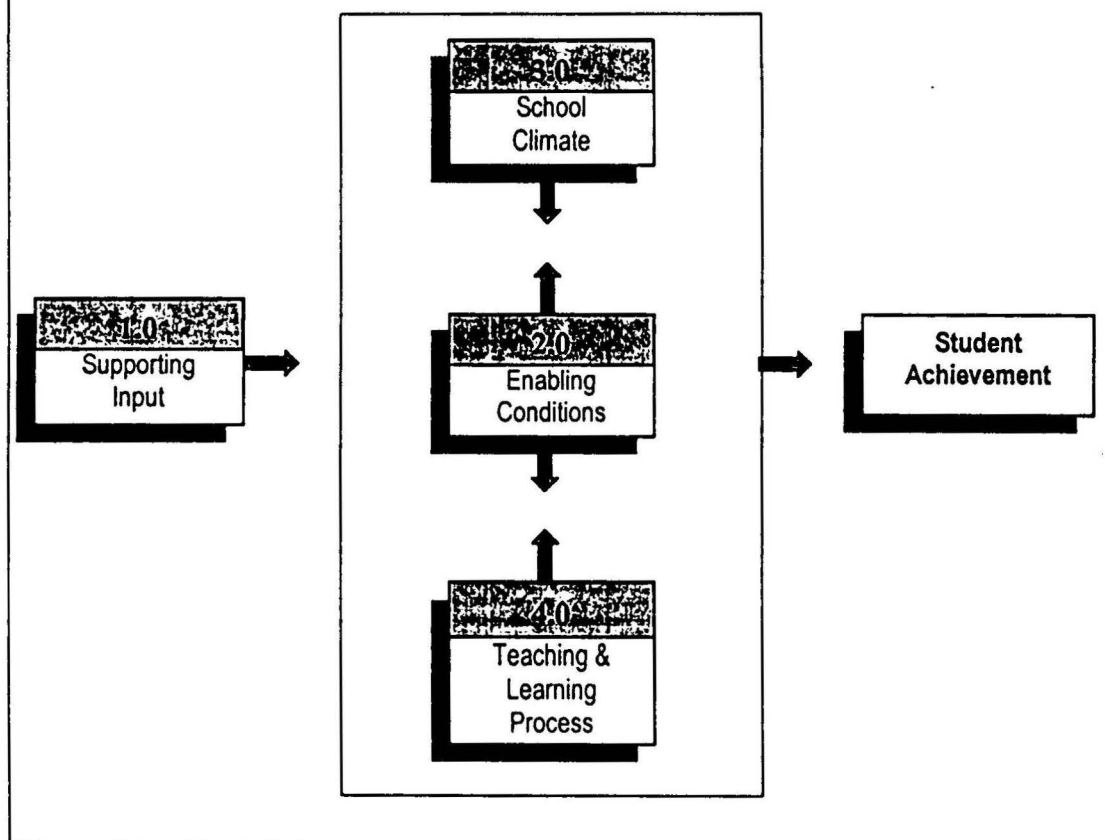
The C-H approach implies that it is important to:

- know about inputs (of various types and from various sources) to a school;
- look beyond inputs to focus on processes in a particular school;
- understand how inputs are actually being used at a school;
- know how inputs from outside (training, advice, materials, policies, community help, and financial resources) are being integrated into the ongoing life of a school and particularly into the ongoing life of individual classrooms at a school;
- understand the actual reaching and learning processes being employed in a school;
- understand teachers' and head teachers' leadership and management at a school;
- understand the dynamics between any particular school and its community; and
- understand cause and effect relationships between these various inputs and process factors at any particular school.

The C-H approach implies that supporting inputs (1.0) to a school are only effective if enabling conditions (2.0) within a school are appropriate and that these are strongly influenced by the school climate (3.0). Further, the teaching (and learning) process (4.0) in a school depend on the other three factors. To understand the achievement of students in a school, it is not enough to know about one of these in isolation, or to know about all of them without understanding the effect of each on the others.

Student outcomes, however measured, result from a complex and dynamic interaction of input and process factors. For example, one might examine a school where material inputs, like books, are adequate. However, if the school is poorly organized or managed (enabling conditions), it may be that the materials are poorly and inequitably distributed or cared for. Over a period of time this will discourage teachers, and perhaps parents (school climate) and negatively affect teaching (the teaching and learning processes). One needs to be able to evaluate how each factor affects the others. Figure 1 summarizes how the C-H conceptual framework operates to lead to school achievement.

Figure 1. The relationship among the four factors in the C-H model



Source: PSPMP (2001). Technical Manuals: Development of instruments, Sampling Techniques, Data Analysis. Dhaka: Primary Education Performance Monitoring Project. Pages 8-10, December 2001.

Annex 2. Various checklists used for data collection**The issues****Students**

1. Number of students in terms of sex, class and socio-economic condition
2. Attendance of the students in terms of sex, class and socio-economic condition
3. Effect of season on student's attendance
4. Age of the students
5. Inter-personal relationship among the students
6. Disable students
7. Assessment procedures of the students
8. Socio-economic condition of the students
9. Admission procedure
10. Catchment area of the schools
11. Promotion rate
12. Rate of repetition
13. Measures for the low achievers
14. Indigenous students
15. Relation between teachers and students
16. Upabritti receivers
17. Home visit by the teachers

Teachers

1. Number of teachers by sex
2. Attendance of the teachers
3. Age of the teachers
4. Their educational qualifications
5. Training of the teachers
6. Relationship among the teachers
7. Work load – number of classes conducted by the teachers
8. Job satisfaction
9. Job commitment
10. Economical solvency of the teachers
11. Teacher politics
12. Mechanism of assessing the performance of the teachers in conducting classes
13. Distribution of classes among the teachers
14. Availability of text and other necessary books for the teachers
15. Teachers' meeting
16. Management of upabritti
17. Home visit by the teachers

Management

1. Relationship between the teachers and the SMC members
2. Rules and regulations for both the teachers and students
3. Rules for the schools
4. Role of the UEO/AUEO
5. Year plan of the schools
6. Freedom in taking decisions
7. Role of the head teacher in school management
8. Management of Upabritti
9. Home visit by the teachers

Involvement of the Community

1. Participation of the community peoples in school festivals
2. SMC-community relationship
3. School-community relationship
4. Private expenditures by the parents for education
5. Role of the community in managing upabritti

Teaching –Learning Process

1. Opinion of the teachers about the textbooks
2. Techniques of teaching
3. Use of teaching materials
4. Teacher-student ratio
5. Study tour
6. Environment of the classroom
7. Tendency of the teachers regarding private tuition
8. Whether the teachers relate the environment with the contents
9. Tendency of the teachers to make the students habitual to read supplementary books

Infrastructure

1. Number of classrooms
2. School building – kanchha or pucca
3. Library facilities
4. Teachers' common room
5. Is there any separate room for the head teacher
6. Play ground for the school
7. Total land/resources of the school
8. Tiffin facilities
9. Electricity facilities
10. Physical facilities
11. Teaching materials]

Funding

1. Who manage fund for the schools?
2. Sources of funds
3. Areas of expenditures

4. Private expenditures for education
5. Poor fund
6. Is there any local scholarship?
7. Income and expenditures of last year for the school

Co- Curricular Activities:

1. What co-curricular activities are in vogue in the school
2. Is there any teacher responsible for co-curricular activities?
3. When does the co-curricular activity take place?
4. Source of income and areas of expenditures regarding co-curricular activities
5. Is co-curricular activity considered as a part of classroom activity?
6. What about charu-karu?

Checklist for the SMC

1. What are the responsibilities of SMC? How do the activities observe?
2. Whether the responsibilities are distributed among the members of SMC
3. Procedure of selecting SMC members. Role of school and community in this connection.
4. Frequency of SMC meeting and attendance
5. Date of last meeting. What were the issues of discussion in that meeting
6. What are generally discussed in the SMC meetings?
7. Is there any provision of emergency meeting? How decisions are made?
8. Is there any year plan for SMC? How it be done?
9. Role of SMC in taking decisions for different issues of school (vacation, annual activities, admission etc.)
10. What about the recruitment of new teachers?
11. Is there any step to train the teachers?
12. What about ensuring teachers' attendance?
13. What about the teachers of the school? Who is a good teacher? Why the teachers of this school are good?
14. Number of female teachers in this school. What about the female teachers?
15. Inter-personal relationship among the teachers. Give example.
16. Teachers-community relationship
17. Did you do child survey in this year? Frequency of this survey. When do you do it? Who help in this regard? Causes of child survey.
18. Does the SMC help in child survey?
19. Use of the result of the survey
20. The role of SMC in increasing attendance of the students
21. What role do the SMC play towards the drop out children? Who take initiative?
22. Role of the SMC in assessing the students
23. Is there any provision of helping the poor students? What is that?
24. Role of SMC in managing upabritti
25. How do you collect fund for the school? What role do the SMC play? Role of the SMC in creating income source for the school
26. Role of SMC in ensuring quality of classroom teaching learning activities
27. What role does the committee play for infrastructure development of the school?
28. Role of the committee in collecting teaching aids
29. What role does the committee play in communicating with the government officials?
30. Type of monetary allocation for the school (Govt, private, individual etc.)
31. Opinion of the SMC regarding the allocation

Checklist for the teachers

1. Where do you live?
2. Length of service in this school
3. Which subject do you prefer to teach? Which subjects do you conduct in different classes? Number of classes you conduct everyday. What do you think about your workload?
4. What types of training did you receive? How many training?
5. Do you use the knowledge of training in the school situation? If no, why?
6. What do you think about the training of the teachers of this school?
7. How do you get preparation in taking class? Type of preparation.
8. How does the school help you in this regard?
9. What other activities do you do besides taking class? Type of activity.
10. What type of opportunity do you expect from the school?
11. Tell about the quality of your school.
12. What are the good sides of your school? Why these are good? Who play what role in this connection?
13. What are the bad sides of the school? Why these are bad? Who play what role in this connection?
14. Number of students in your class. What about their socio-economic status?
15. Who helps the students in their home to study?
16. Relationship between the teachers and the community
17. Relationship between the teachers and the parents of the students. How it be maintained?
18. Relationship between the head teacher and the SMC.
19. Inter-personal relationship between teachers and students
20. Causes behind good result of the students of this school comparable to other schools
21. What are the main factors to do good result by the students? Why these can't be done?
22. What about the teaching learning process of the school? What type of change would be good in this regard?
23. Are there adequate teaching aids in taking class properly? What about the teaching aids for your subjects? Scopes of use the teaching aids.
24. What are the limitations of the students of this school? How these be eradicated?
25. Is there any provision of punishment for the students? Role of punishment in increasing quality of education.
26. Measures towards increase attendance of the students. Who plays which role in this?
27. Measures towards drop out students. What steps do you take regarding this?
28. Measures towards disable and indigenous students.
29. Whether the teachers are bound to attend school timely.
30. Relationship among the teachers
31. Role of the teachers in teachers' meeting
32. Role of the teachers in managing upabritti

33. Necessity of private tuition for the students. What about the role of the teachers in private tuition?
34. What to do to decrease the dependency of the students on private tuition?

Checklist for the parents

1. Occupation and educational qualifications of the interviewed parents.
2. Household size, number of school going children by class
3. Why do you send your wards to this school?
4. What about the quality of this school?
5. Quality of the teachers in teaching. If poor, why? How do you know it?
6. Do the teachers visit your home to discuss about the education of your kids?
7. What do the teachers do at the time of unable to perform by the students?
8. Do the teachers do anything for the students except teaching learning?
9. Did you participate in any occasion organise by the school? How did you feel? Did your kids perform in that occasion?
10. What about the quality of your kid as a student? Would you like to continue education of your child? If yes, up to which level?
11. Does your child regular in school? If not, why?
12. Do the teachers communicate you in case of the absence of your child? If yes, when?
13. What to do for the better education of the children of this school?
14. Did you discuss with the teachers about the quality of education of your child? If yes, what were the issues of discussion?
15. Who helps your children in home for his/her study?
16. Is there any private teacher for your children?
17. Who is the private teacher for your child? What is the necessity of private teacher?
18. Amount of expenditures by you for the education of your children? How much in this year? What do you think about the expenditures?
19. Have you participated in any parents meeting organised by the school? What about the quality of the meeting? What were the issues of the meeting?
20. Who is the guardian member in the SMC? Name the president of the SMC.
21. What role do the parents play in developing the quality of education of your school? What more responsibilities do you want to play? What are the obstacles in this regard?

Checklist for the government officials

1. What are the responsibilities do you play for the schools?
2. How many schools do you visit in a month? How do you select the schools to be visited?
3. What role do you play in implementing the year plan of the school?
4. Is there any provision of meeting at the end of year to review the activities of the school? If yes, what role do you play?
5. What about the accountability of the school authority? To whom they report? Process of accountability.
6. What role do you play regarding school fund? What role do you play to use the fund?
7. Do you manage any scholarship/subsidy for the students? Is there any provision of local scholarship? If yes, who provide it? What are the criteria for getting the scholarship?
8. What is the provision of evaluating the teachers in terms of teaching ability and related other activities?
9. How do you help the students to take part in the national programmes?
10. What is the process of selecting trainers in URC?
11. What is the process of selecting teachers for receiving training?
12. What role do you play to recruit and transfer the teachers?
13. What role do the local elites play in school activities and school decisions?
14. How do you help the teachers in conducting classes?
15. What role do you play in co-curricular activities of the school?
16. What are the major problems of primary education in Bangladesh? What steps should be taken to solve those problems?
17. What do you think about the observed school in terms of quality of education, attendance, drop out etc.?
18. If good, why? If poor, why?
19. What are the criteria of a good school? What is the grade of this school? Why such grade?
20. Evaluate the head teacher of this school. What about the other teachers?
21. What about the SMC of this school?
22. What about the management of upabritti in this school?
23. Who play what role for the betterment of the school?
24. When do you visit the school last? What did you look that day?
25. What measures should be taken to develop the school to a good level? Why those are not taken?

Checklist for the head teacher

1. Tell about the quality of your school.
2. What are the causes for the present status of the school? If good, why? If bad, why?
3. Compare the school with its status of last five years. What are the changes between these times?
4. What more to do for the betterment of the school?
5. How do the new teachers recruit?
6. How do you ensure the attendance of the teachers?
7. What is the provision of providing training to the teachers?
8. What facilities do the teachers receive from the school? What do the teachers think about the facilities?
9. Relationship between the SMC and the teachers?
10. Inter-personal relationship among the teachers.
11. What about the quality of teaching of the teachers? What measures do you take to develop the quality of teaching? What role do you play in this connection?
12. Tell about the admission procedure in the school?
13. What do you do to ensure the attendance of the students?
14. What do you do to prevent drop out of the students?
15. What measures do you take for the disable and indigenous students?
16. What do you do to collect fund for the school?
17. How to communicate with the guardians of the students?
18. What role does the SMC play in taking decisions for the school?
19. What role do you play to increase the quality of other teachers?
20. What should be done to make this school as a good one? Why those can't be done?
21. Are the teachers dissatisfied with the subjects they taught?

Information of the teachers

Name	Sex	Age	Educational qualifications	Training	Experience	Residence

Information of the parents

Name	Sex	Age	Educational qualifications	Occupation	Monthly income	Household size