

Role of Primary School Teachers in Achieving Quality Education (SDG 4) in Rural Bangladesh

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A thesis submitted to the Department of BRAC Institute of Languages in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
MA in TESOL

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

1. The thesis submitted is my original work while completing my degree at BRAC University.
2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through complete and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material that has been accepted or submitted for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
4. I have acknowledged all primary sources of help.

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Ethical statement:

The thesis is conducted following all the proper ethical guidelines.

Abstract

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) offer a framework for tackling important global issues. Among all the goals, SDG 4 deals with quality education for all. However, achieving quality education for all is challenging in developing countries like Bangladesh, especially in rural areas. Teachers in rural Bangladesh often face challenges due to a lack of resources and proper training. It is vital to understand how important primary school teachers are to quality education, especially as primary education is an inalienable right to all. Providing ‘equitable’ and ‘inclusive quality education’ in rural areas is more challenging than in urban areas. This study investigates the perceptions of rural primary school teachers in the context of Bangladesh regarding their roles in relation to the strategies they undertake to maintain the quality of education and the impacts of their involvement in teachers' training programs on their practices towards the targets set by SDG 4. This study followed the qualitative research method, where a Semi-Structured interview was conducted. In this study, eight primary school teachers participated to share their insights. The data was analyzed thematically to explore teachers' perceptions of their role in achieving SDG 4, the strategies they used in their classroom, the challenges they faced, and their professional development. This investigation is expected to provide important insights into how rural primary school teachers in Bangladesh critically understand their roles in relation to SDG 4. Furthermore, this study also reveals some specific ways teachers have resorted to in response to offering quality education for their students. The paper also analyses the effect of teacher training on the quality of education at primary level. This study reveals that the rural primary school teachers considered themselves key contributors to achieving quality education. However, they face several challenges due to a lack of resources and training. The study also provides insights that can inform policymakers and educational stakeholders on supporting teachers in resource-constrained rural settings.

Key Words: Sustainable Development Goals, SDG 4, Quality Education, Teachers' Role.

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Table of Contents

Declaration	ii
Approval:	iii
Ethical statement:.....	iv
Abstract.....	v
Acknowledgment:	vi
Chapter: One.....	1
Introduction	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Background of the Study.....	3
1.3 Problem Statement	4
1.4 Aim of the Research	4
1.5 Research Questions	5
1.6 Research Objectives	5
1.7 Significance of the Study.....	5
1.8 Limitations of the Study	6
Chapter Two.....	7
Literature Review	7
2.1 Sustainable Development Goals.....	7
2.2 SDGs and Quality Education (SDG 4)	8
2.3 SDG 4 and Teachers’ Role.....	9
2.4 Bangladesh and SDG 4	11
2.5 Conceptual Framework	12
Chapter Three	14
Methodology	14
3.1 Introduction.....	14
3.2 Research Design	14
3.3 Data Collection	15

3.3.1 Participants.....	15
3.3.2 Instruments	17
3.4 Data analysis.....	18
3.5 Setting	18
3.6 Research Ethics	19
Chapter Four	20
Findings	20
4.1 Introduction	20
4.2 Teachers' Understanding of Quality Education	20
4.3 Teachers' Role and Responsibilities in Providing Quality Education	22
4.4 Challenges Faced in Rural Settings.....	23
4.5 Training and Professional Development Related to SDG 4	25
4.6 Pedagogical Strategies to Support Quality Education.....	26
Chapter Five.....	29
Discussion	29
5.1 Introduction	29
5.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Their Role in Achieving Quality Education (SDG4)	29
5.3 Alignment of Training with SDG 4 and Teachers' Role	31
5.4 Pedagogical Strategies to Ensure Quality Education	32
5.5 Challenges Impacting Teachers' Role	33
Chapter Six.....	36
Conclusion	36
6.1 Conclusion	36
6.2 Recommendation	37
6.3 Pedagogic Implications and Further Study.....	37
References.....	39
Appendix:	43

Chapter: One

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Education plays a significant role in individual and societal development. It creates a critical mindset and thinking that helps develop ideas and empowers individuals with the right skills to survive in a competitive world. According to Hysa and Jakupi (2024), education is essential as it helps individuals organize their lives, face challenges, and become worthy citizens of society. Education is necessary to build a nation; as people say, 'education is the backbone of a nation.' No nation can develop without educating its people. However, education is not just about getting into schools; the effect of education will depend on the quality. It allows individuals to acquire abilities, experience, and belief systems that empower them to improve themselves and help to maintain a better community. There is an integral relationship between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and quality education. The SDGs offer a global approach to address problems such as 'poverty', 'inequality', 'health', and 'environmental sustainability' by 2030. All U.N. members adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015. The objective is to make sure everyone is included and no one is left behind in the Sustainable Development Goals. "The Sustainable Development Goals" are part of the agenda to respond to current problems and to avoid future problems. The 2030 agenda seeks to ensure education for all, as education is identified to be a key driver in the SDG agenda, with a strong linkage to SDG 4. SDG 4 focuses on the quality of education. It also seeks quality education for all people and lifelong learning, regardless of gender and social status. All citizens should be empowered through education by 2030. This goal highlights the importance of inclusion in delivering quality education at all levels, from early childhood to higher tertiary education. SDG4 has seven targets, targeting: 4.1: 'Free elementary and secondary education', 4.2: 'Equitable access to pre-primary education', 4.3: 'Inclusive and equitable access to quality higher education or TVET', 4.4: 'Relevant skills for employment', 'decent jobs and entrepreneurship', 4.5: 'Reflecting diversity and gender equality in education', 'equity in access to advanced education-specialization', 4.6: 'Literacy and numeracy skills for all', 4.7: 'Global citizenship'. Quality education is not only the means for the people of this country to achieve social unity, economic growth, and environmental sustainability, but it is also the means for them to overcome poverty.

In Bangladesh, the government has also taken the SDGs into account. Bangladesh has made significant progress in incorporating the SDGs in the national development agenda, indicating a strong commitment towards achieving the 2030 Agenda. Evidence of the country's progress in poverty reduction, access to primary education, and health improvements is appreciated. A top-level coordination mechanism has been created within the government to integrate the goals and targets into national development plans, for example, five-year plans and programs in specific sectors. The government conducts programs, projects, policies, and strategies to help achieve the education sector's targets (Akhter, 2022). The government has taken SDG 4 into consideration in Bangladesh as well. The state seeks to provide citizens with inclusive and equitable access to education. The country achieved outstanding success through its educational system by achieving the greatest number of students entering primary level education. Various government programs exist to support inclusion through their provision of free primary education alongside free textbooks and stipends for disadvantaged students. In addition, initiatives such as the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) are focused on improving not only physical standards but also the quality of education through teacher training and the incorporation of digital technologies in classrooms. According to the Annual Primary School Census (APSC 2021), the main focus of the PEDP4 is to ensure quality primary education for everyone from pre-primary up to grade 5 through an inclusive and equitable education system.

However, the success of all the initiatives highly depends on the role of teachers. Teachers stand at the front lines of the education system, shaping students' learning experiences and educational outcomes. Their role in rural areas, where challenges such as incomplete infrastructure, teacher shortages, and socio-economic barriers are further exacerbated, becomes even more critical. Adhikary (2018) mentions that education is a process mainly dependent upon teachers. Teachers are the cornerstones of society and change-makers for a sustainable societal transformation. They are also essential contributors to strengthening the overall education system as well as to quality at the institutional level in higher education. This study examines the role of primary school teachers in achieving quality education in rural schools. Teachers of primary education professionals have been identified for more attention as they are often the first point of contact when children enter the formal system of education. They are called upon to offer quality education to all the students with equity and inclusiveness. As they are the primary source of formal education, understanding how they perceive their role in achieving quality education is

crucial. Moreover, the study focuses on rural primary teachers because teachers in urban areas are more equipped with resources and training than rural teachers. Primary school teachers in rural Bangladesh face unique challenges that hinder their ability to provide quality education, as many work with limited training, minimal resources, and under-resourced facilities. The research provides rural primary school teachers with tools for their professional growth while revealing their perspectives regarding quality education. The investigation will examine how teachers develop particular methods to enhance quality education, alongside the effectiveness of training programs toward achieving SDG 4 targets.

1.2 Background of the Study

Education is the backbone of the country's socio-economic development. In Bangladesh, where education serves as an intermediary engine for growth, the primary education system is at the forefront of achieving equitable and inclusive learning outcomes. The primary education system of Bangladesh is one of the most important sectors in the country. After independence in 1971, the government undertook various initiatives and interventions to attain Universal Primary Education in Bangladesh. The same aim is clearly defined in Article 17 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, which provides that "the state shall adopt effective measures for establishing a uniform, mass-oriented and universal system of education and for extending free and compulsory education to all children to such a stage as may be determined by law." Since then, this vision has been progressively integrated into the country's legal, policy, and development frameworks (Annual Primary School Census, 2021). Bangladesh has made considerable progress in the educational sector through providing free education and stipend programs. To improve the primary education system, the Government of Bangladesh started a broad program called the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) in 2005 with the assistance of Development Partners (DPs). The fourth tranche of this program, PEDP4 (2018-2023), is in progress to enhance quality at all levels. The fourth Primary Education Development Program (PEDP4) seeks to promote and improve quality education for every child in Bangladesh, covering pre-primary education to grade five. This program will be carried out over five years, from 2018/19 to 2022/23, covering one year of pre-primary schooling and grades one to five (The World Bank, 2018). Even though the government has taken initiatives to improve the education system, the quality of education, students' learning outcomes, and the ratio of dropouts in Bangladesh have not yet made a remarkable breakthrough. Especially in rural Bangladesh, the

progress is not very noticeable. Rural educational facilities face numerous challenges because their facilities are insufficient, while teachers and educational resources remain scarce alongside economic and social problems. The achievement of universal primary education in Bangladesh has shown limited advancement, yet the fulfilment of SDG 4 in rural areas remains an ongoing struggle

1.3 Problem Statement

Bangladesh has come a long way in terms of access to education. The enrollment rates have increased significantly with the introduction of programs such as the Primary Education Development Program (PEDP) and mass literacy and equitable scholarships programs for the underprivileged. Nevertheless, the issue with the rural primary education quality is still very serious. In addition to unequal utilization of teaching facilities, educational resources, and qualified teachers throughout the nation, numerous other barriers exist to equality in education in rural primary schools, which is reflected in students' academic achievements, school drop-out rates, and limited educational equality. According to Masoom et al. (2024), one of the most noticeable inequalities in Bangladesh's primary education system is how unevenly resources are distributed, especially when it comes to teacher-student ratios. Although the teachers in general play a critical role in shaping the education system, teachers in rural primary schools in Bangladesh face limited opportunities for professional development, scarce resources, and difficult working conditions. The perceptions of teachers regarding their educational role, along with their training effectiveness and their approach to delivering quality education, remain insufficiently studied. The implementation of quality education in rural Bangladesh depends on understanding the role of teachers, as this understanding helps to verify whether intended outcomes are being achieved. The research aims to study how primary school teachers in rural Bangladesh contribute to quality education through their understanding of SDG4, as well as their training and educational methods.

1.4 Aim of the Research

The research aim is to analyze how primary school teachers contribute to reaching the SDG 4 objectives. The research investigates how teachers perceive their duty to fulfil quality educational standards, specifically in remote locations. The research analyzes how teacher training, along with educational approaches, function to deliver fair, sustainable education

throughout rural educational settings. The research investigates the real-world situation regarding primary education in rural areas of Bangladesh. The research aims to guide governmental decision-makers to implement policy changes together with improved training for teachers and enhancements to the educational system to reach the SDG 4 goals.

1.5 Research Questions

1. How do primary school teachers in rural Bangladesh perceive their role in contributing to quality education (SDG 4)?
2. How are teachers' various training modules aligned with SDG-4?
3. What strategies do rural Bangladeshi primary teachers follow to ensure quality education?

1.6 Research Objectives

1. To explore rural Bangladeshi primary school teachers' perceptions of their role in contributing to quality education as outlined in SDG 4.
2. To explore how teachers' training modules contribute to achieving SDG-4.
3. To identify rural Bangladesh's primary school teachers' strategies to promote and sustain quality education.

1.7 Significance of the Study

Every research impacts the individuals, communal, professional, national, and global communities. Various social groups will experience beneficial effects from this research. Some research exists that examines SDGs in the Bangladeshi context. The research about teachers' contribution to achieving SDG 4 targets through primary education has yet to be conducted. The study presents new viewpoints because researchers have not yet conducted an adequate investigation on this topic. This research provides fundamental knowledge about effective ways to achieve SDG 4 targets. The research examines primary school teacher roles through an investigation of their professional responsibilities and work-related obstacles. The teacher represents the education system's front line, so their viewpoint about this matter requires understanding because they determine student learning outcomes. The research aims to identify different sections within a training program which connect to the SDG 4 targets. Policymakers will direct their attention toward training reform to improve teacher quality after solving this gap. The study will offer vital support to policymakers, together with

curriculum developers who want to build better teacher training programs. In addition, the study can help teachers become equipped with higher skills and means to meet the challenges posed by the rural scenario. The attention of various stakeholders will be drawn to this study because rural teachers encounter resource shortages in their educational settings, which leads to inadequate teaching materials. This research examines the various methods which rural primary school teachers implement to deliver quality education. The research findings enable other teachers to apply these strategies within comparable situations for solving different educational problems. The research reveals the genuine conditions of rural primary schools and evaluates the current success rate of SDG 4. The research study establishes essential groundwork for further investigations about how teachers contribute to SDG achievement across different educational settings. The study supports the global community in achieving SDG 4 targets.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

This study aims to explore the roles of primary school teachers in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4. This study finds several insights in this regard. However, this study also has some limitations. This study includes only eight participants, which may limit the generalization of the findings. Moreover, this study focuses solely on the rural areas of Bangladesh and, therefore, may not accurately reflect the situation or experiences of teachers in urban areas or other rural areas with different socio-economic conditions. Furthermore, some teachers gave interviews in Bangla, so while translating them into English, there is a possibility of meaning loss or misinterpretation. Additionally, I was unable to observe more than two classes due to time constraints. This limits the possibility of examining whether the teachers incorporate the strategies in the classroom as they mentioned in the interview. Lastly, this study only focuses on the teachers' perspectives, excluding other stakeholders such as students, parents and the community.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

2.1 Sustainable Development Goals

The Sustainable Development Goals are an enhancement of the Millennium Development Goals. The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) failed to achieve complete success by 2015. World leaders felt the necessity to continue the agenda of the MDGs, which led to the proposal of the SDGs. The SDGs provide a complete framework to guide actions for human development and environmental protection while fostering economic growth (Diouf, 2019). Another study by Junior and Kokofele (2019) asserts that the framework of the MDGs benefits world leaders in organizing the goals of the SDGs. The SDGs also work to complete the unfinished targets of the MDGs while addressing new issues such as inclusiveness and equity. Moreover, the SDGs framework is applicable to all developing and developed countries, which was not the case for the MDGs. The MDGs had a focus on the developing countries, whereas the SDGs aim for participation from both developed and developing countries to achieve sustainability.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are an internationally recognized framework to advance a safe and sustainable world for all. They emphasize inclusion and underline that all nations are responsible for promoting this aim. They state the moral that no individual or nation should be left behind. The SDG goals apply universally to all countries, as they address the issues and challenges faced by both developed and developing countries. The Sustainable Development Goals address problems such as poverty, education, health, and gender (Osborn et al., 2015).

Ossai (2022) described sustainable development goals as an initiative by the United Nations (UN) that aims to unite different stakeholders, such as governments and non-governmental organizations to address fundamental global challenges, including poverty, inequality, environmental sustainability, education, and health. According to him, there is no universally accepted definition of sustainable development. Different organizations and scholars interpret the concept based on their expertise and focus areas. Another study by Barbier and Burgess (2017) discusses that ‘the United Nations General Assembly’ adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in 2015 as part of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, establishing

attainable goals. These objectives include 169 particular aims and about 230 suggested indicators. The 2030 Agenda emphasizes how the SDGs are interrelated and how achieving sustainable development requires integration across all 17 objectives. Furthermore, each SDG is primarily linked to social, environmental, or economic development, demonstrating the wide-ranging nature of these global goals.

2.2 SDGs and Quality Education (SDG 4)

Nazar et al. (2018) argue that UNESCO prioritizes education as a fundamental human right and essential for building peace and achieving sustainable development. Education contributes to attaining various Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by breaking the cycle of 'poverty', 'minimizing inequalities', and empowering individuals to lead healthier, more sustainable lives. It also promotes tolerance and helps create a more peaceful society. Quality education is a fundamental human right. According to Saini et al. (2023), SDG 4 aims to create a sustainable education system for all among the seventeen SDGs. The seven main objectives of this goal are to decrease gender disparity in education, lower elementary, secondary, and postsecondary dropout rates, and increase educational opportunities for underprivileged groups. SDG 4 also includes three sub-objectives to help achieve these seven main goals. According to Islam et al. (2019), Quality education is the cornerstone of sustainable development. It enhances lives and equips communities with the skills to address global challenges. Achieving SDG 4 has the potential to transform lives worldwide. Education is fundamental to building a sustainable, fair, and thriving world, and failing to meet this goal could hinder the progress of all 17 SDGs. It is widely acknowledged that education is essential for poverty eradication and plays a key role in shaping a vision for sustainable and prosperous development.

Adipat and Chotikapanich (2022) assert that quality education facilitates the development of more resilient and stable societies by increasing social tolerance and opening up new opportunities. The main goal of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) is expanding learning opportunities to make education a powerful catalyst for significant advancements in sustainable development. Moreover, achieving long-term sustainability requires universal access to high-quality education. This view of Adipat and Chotikapanich complements Unterhalter (2019), perspective that education is critical in fostering long-term global growth, particularly in less-developed regions. Goal 4 of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda aims to allow everyone

to access and complete quality education, promoting employability and personal development. Moreover, access to high-quality education profoundly impacts human dignity. Furthermore, it provides pathways to social mobility and reduces social inequality. This contrast highlights that SDG 4's impact is multifaceted, spanning both societal resilience and economic growth.

SDG4 focuses on providing accessible, fair, and high-quality education for everyone to ensure that every child can complete primary school, secondary school, and higher education, free from financial burden. This goal emphasizes not just access but also the effectiveness of education, aiming for learning outcomes that equip students with essential knowledge and skills. Additionally, SDG4 promotes lifelong learning, recognizing that education extends beyond formal schooling to continuous skill development. It also aims to empower young people and adults with the competencies needed for employment, entrepreneurship, and decent work opportunities (Sørensen,2024).

However, some studies highlight various challenges and limitations of SDG 4. According to Fernando and Kularathna (2024), many developing countries lack adequate infrastructure for quality education. Sub-Saharan Africa faces the most significant challenges, with less than half of schools having electricity, internet, computers, or safe drinking water and rural-urban disparities. Financial constraints hinder SDG 4 progress, as only one-third of countries meet the recommended education budget. Despite progress in the Asia-Pacific, most countries remain off track. South Asia continues to struggle with low literacy rates, especially among women in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Nepal, with minimal improvement. Ossai (2022) highlights some challenges of Sustainable Development Goal 4. These include the inability to set appropriate educational objectives, as traditional views often shape curriculum design rather than modern needs. Additionally, low enrollment rates result from inadequate resources, infrastructure, and ineffective teaching strategies. Moreover, many institutions struggle to achieve their goals due to outdated methods and insufficient facilities, leading to high dropout rates. A lack of funding further weakens the education sector, limiting access to quality learning. Moreover, the outdated curriculum fails to produce the desired educational outcomes.

2.3 SDG 4 and Teachers' Role

Bedir (2021) urges that the role of teachers in the 21st century has evolved into a new model that integrates interdisciplinary knowledge alongside core subjects to enhance understanding.

Gaining expertise in core and interdisciplinary disciplines empowers teachers to drive change and equip students for the unpredictable challenges of the modern era. Enhancing education quality to prepare learners for linguistic, cultural, social, and economic diversity necessitates changing teachers' beliefs. Furthermore, teachers' perspectives on sustainability are essential in shaping their teaching and preparing students for the future. Khoiriyah et al. (2024) state that teachers' professionalism is essential in creating a quality and sustainable education system. Good teachers teach more than lessons; they teach values; they nurture and lead in the classroom. It involves modifying teaching towards 'diverse learning styles', 'fostering inclusivity', and changing curricula to meet the needs of individuals. Furthermore, they have to take care of students' development and well-being by providing a favorable learning environment and helping those in need. Rajesh (2024) argues that teachers are indispensable for good quality education. The instructor gives students knowledge that equips them with skills and awareness to take on huge problems like poverty, climate change and inequality. Moreover, teachers also help students develop critical thinking and problem-solving skills that are essential for success in the global workforce.

Another study says teachers' leadership can be crucial in achieving the SDG 4 goals. The teachers can contribute to developing the curriculum and teaching materials aligning with the objectives of SDG 4. Moreover, the leaders can share their expertise and mentor other teachers, leading to higher education. To ensure that all students have access to inclusive, high-quality education, teacher leaders can help to improve education quality by encouraging creativity, teamwork, and advocacy (Padhan & Biswal, 2024). According to Adhikary (2018), the quality of education is never neutral; values somewhat always influence it. Quality education should give students chances for personal growth and the confidence to adapt to or change new situations. The quality of education depends on good teachers, especially effective teaching and learning. Teachers are essential for society's progress and play a key role in improving the education system and upholding high standards. Another study argues that the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) report highlighted that teachers are crucial in determining school quality. According to the report, teachers with strong academic backgrounds, prior teaching experience, and proper training play a vital role in enhancing school quality through effective instruction. It also emphasized that the quality of a school is closely linked to the quality of its

teachers, as they have both a direct and indirect influence on student learning (Ahmed et al., 2022).

2.4 Bangladesh and SDG 4

Bangladesh has made improvements in terms of basic education. According to Hossain et al. (2017), Bangladesh faces social, economic, political, and organizational challenges in improving education quality despite its rapid expansion like other developing countries. However, in the 1990s, Bangladesh became a "star performer" in education by eliminating gender disparities and significantly increasing primary and lower secondary enrollment rates. While these efforts marked a significant milestone, ensuring high-quality education remains challenging.

Bangladesh has taken different initiatives to achieve the goals of SDG 4. Akhter (2022) states that the government has initiated various programs and projects to achieve education sector targets. To achieve SDG 4, initiatives such as the 'Primary Education Development Program' (PEDP) in different phases, 'the stipend program', 'the Reaching Out-of-School Children (ROSC) project', and 'the school feeding program' in poverty-affected areas have been introduced. Currently, PEDP 4 (2018-2023) is underway to enhance the 'quality of primary education'. Similarly, the 'Secondary Education Development Program' (2017/18–2022/23) was launched to strengthen 'secondary education' (grades 6-12) and 'post-secondary', 'technical', and 'vocational training'. Siddik and Kawai (2020) note that Bangladesh has adopted inclusive education in all government primary schools (GPSs) to achieve SDG 4. The 'Directorate of Primary Education' (DPE) regulates a total of 66,540 primary schools in Bangladesh, including 'GPSs', 'registered non-government primary schools', and recently 'nationalized primary schools'. However, studies suggest that Bangladesh still has a long way to go in enrolling children with special needs into elementary-level inclusive classrooms, particularly in preparing teachers to support children with disabilities in regular classroom environments. Islam and Alam (2024) noted that the government has introduced various programs and policies to enhance Bangladesh's educational quality. 'The Ministry of Primary and Mass Communication' introduced "The National SDG4 Strategic Framework for Bangladesh" to support and achieve the 4th goal of the SDGs. Moreover, non-governmental organizations work alongside the government, mainly in rural areas and at the grassroots level. They work on issues related to dropout rates, life-long learning, female education, and inclusive education, focused on SDG 4. Primary education is

now considered a fundamental human right and is officially acknowledged by Bangladesh's Ministry of Education (MoE). As a result of this recognition, the country has achieved over 90 percent of primary school attendance and improved gender equality. This progress was driven by the Bangladesh Primary Education (Compulsory) Act of 1990, which made 'primary education' mandatory and free for all citizens. Furthermore, this initiative encouraged the nation to prioritize enhancing the quality of education (Alam et al., 2022).

Bangladesh has made significant progress in attaining the 4th Goal of the SDGs at the primary level. In 2022, the reading pass rate for grades 3 and 5 was 51% and 50% respectively. For grade 3, the rate for mathematics candidates rose slightly to 39% but fell to 30% for grade 5. This report also indicates that the primary completion rate has been on the rise from 2015 to 2022, and has become 86.05%. In addition, the enrolment in the pre-primary session has moved from 86.7 to 94.17 between 2016 and 2019. The Gender Parity Index at the primary level has changed from 1.02 in 2015 to 1.002 in 2022, indicating that boys and girls have equal access. The aim is a GPI of 1.00 by 2025. Finally, ICT infrastructure and materials for learners with disabilities increased from 34% in 2015 to 40.16% in 2022. (DPE, 2024)

However, Bangladesh faces various challenges to ensure quality education. According to Toba (2024), Bangladesh, as a developing country, faces challenges in keeping up with global development because many people still lack basic digital skills. This digital gap has far-reaching consequences, making it harder to achieve several Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 4, which focuses on ensuring quality education for all.

2.5 Conceptual Framework

This study focuses on the role of primary school teachers in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities. The conceptual framework of this study serves as a visual model that illustrates the relationship between key variables and outlines how they interact to support the achievement of quality education in rural settings. The national education plans and development projects in Bangladesh, such as the 'National Education Policy 2010' and the 'Fourth Primary Education Development Program' (PEDP4), emphasize inclusive and competence-based learning. This research contributes to the achievement of SDG 4: 'inclusive' and 'equitable' quality education and promotes lifelong learning opportunities for all. Moreover,

based on the research questions of this study, the key research areas are teachers' perceptions and the strategies they use to ensure quality education and training that teachers receive to align their work with the SDG 4 goals. In the context of rural Bangladesh, teachers face various challenges which influence the quality of primary education. While Bangladesh has made some achievements in quality education, there are still challenges that remain. Even though the enrollment rate increased in primary education, challenges such as the dropout rate, inadequate infrastructure, and a lack of training and resources remain. Instead of these challenges, the teachers play a crucial role in achieving quality education in rural Bangladesh. Therefore, this study explores how rural primary school teachers portrayed their role in achieving quality education.

Conceptual Framework: Teacher's role in achieving SDG 4 in rural Bangladesh

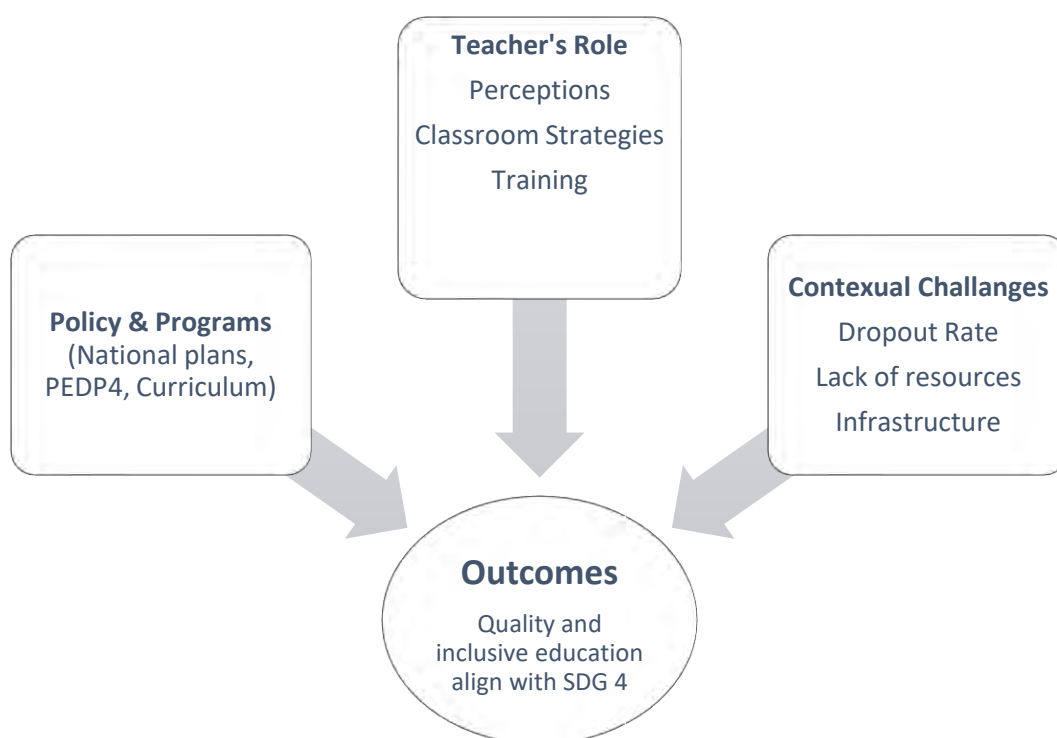


Diagram: 1

Chapter Three

Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The methodology used for this study is described in this section of the chapter. This chapter is composed of the following sections: design, data collection, and data analysis of the research. It also explores reasons for the preferential use of a qualitative approach. This section also describes the participants, context, ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Design

In this study, the literature section includes existing data relevant to my topic. The literature review in this paper provides an overview of what other researchers have said about quality education and the roles of teachers in achieving this goal. Furthermore, the present study has utilized qualitative research design to explore the contribution of primary school teachers towards quality education. I also found that qualitative research is preferred for this study as it allows the researcher to tackle the topic with an open mind and assists in the discovery of areas one does not expect. Additionally, qualitative research permits the researcher to explore the point of view of the participant toward a given condition by using the participant's own subjective perceptions, feelings, or opinions. It allows researchers to concentrate on deep and rich exploration and to gain insight into complex phenomena in a natural context (Creswell, 2014). Furthermore, a qualitative approach allows researchers to collect rich data by observing and interviewing. In the course of this research, I have examined the contributions of primary school teachers to quality education. To uncover teachers' perceptions, qualitative research is more appropriate, since it offers an in-depth exploration. This is why I have taken a qualitative research design to investigate teachers' perceptions of quality education in rural Bangladesh. Furthermore, this method is suitable because it focuses on learning about how participants experience their "real" life-world and social world. In this study, I have adopted an interpretivist perspective as opposed to a positivist position because I have provided a subjective interpretation of the interview. According to positivism, a study should be objective and support its findings with statistical evidence. A positivist's epistemological stance will be predicated on observable, quantifiable facts and regularities. Conversely, interpretivism focuses on contextual details and identifying personal interpretations and contributions (Saunders et al, 2012). In this research, I did not examine the facts and numbers related to teachers' roles in achieving quality education

and measure how accurately teachers fulfil their roles. Instead, I examined how teachers felt about SDG 4 and how they perceived their role in delivering high-quality education in rural primary schools. The open-ended questions in the Semi-Structured interview helped me as a researcher to gain new insights into how teachers see things and perceive their roles by analyzing and comparing the data. To examine teachers' subjective views, this study followed a qualitative approach to conduct the research.

3.3 Data Collection

3.3.1 Participants

The participants were rural government primary school teachers in Bangladesh. The participants were chosen purposively. They had already attended one compulsory Professional Teaching Initiative (PTI) session and had at least ten years of experience in teaching. The existing study specifically intended to examine the role of primary school teachers; therefore, it was necessary to select the participants who had training and experience in quality education. Newly recruited teachers with less experience were excluded because they would not be able to effectively participate in the research. As a result, I purposefully chose experienced teachers. Moreover, the teachers were chosen from different schools with varying student populations and socio-economic conditions to get different perspectives. Eight teachers from different schools took part in the study. The teachers consisted of five women and three men. This reflects the present gender ratio of teaching in many rural elementary schools in Bangladesh, where female teachers have become an important component of the teaching profession, because of the push for higher female recruitment and favorable policies toward women entering the teaching profession. The latter, in turn, allowed for a more profound understanding of how gender can be involved in the enactment of quality education in rural settings. Also, this number was assumed to be adequate, given the small-scale nature of the study. The recruitment was initially facilitated by the headteachers, who helped me to contact the teachers. I have sent formal invitations to each teacher, and written informed consent was obtained before the interview session.

Moreover, since qualitative research emphasizes depth over quantity, the rich, experience-based insights provided by these trained teachers added value to the findings. The number of participants was also influenced by the practical consideration of teacher availability, as many had multiple responsibilities and limited time to participate in the research.

Participants' Profile

Participant's Name	Gender	Qualification	Teaching Experience (Years)	Training
T1	Male	MA	17 years	Subject-based training, Pre-primary, and ICT training.
T2	Female	BA	13 years	Subject-based training, Pre-primary training.
T3	Female	BA	15 years	Subject-based training, Pre-primary training.
T4	Male	MA	20 years	Leadership training, ICT, SEND, and Subject-based training.
T5	Male	MA	19years	Leadership training, Pre-primary, SEND, and Subject-based training.
T6	Female	B.S.C	22 years	Leadership training, ICT, SEND, and

				Subject-based training.
T7	Female	MA	19 years	ICT, Pre-Primary, and Subject-based training.
T8	Female	BA	16 years	ICT, Pre-Primary, and Subject-based training.

3.3.2 Instruments

I have used a Semi-Structured interview schedule as the primary data collection instrument for this research. Although a Semi-Structured interview begins with predetermined questions, it also opens the floor to discuss new ideas and topics that arise during the interview sessions. I have chosen this method because it offered me the necessary flexibility to explore the research topic in depth, particularly given that the role of rural primary school teachers in achieving quality education (SDG 4) remains a relatively under-explored area. The semi-structured format permitted the researchers to include some open-ended questions that were pre-determined, as well as the opportunity to ask follow-up or probing questions as a result of participants' responses. This flexibility was necessary for the research to obtain rich, nuanced data and to be able to follow up on emerging topics during the interviews. I have designed the interview guide respectfully with the aim of answering the research questions and purpose. It featured questions on how teachers perceived quality education, ways in which they promoted quality education, and the training they had on Sustainable Development Goal 4. During the interview session, I also asked additional questions where I felt I needed more clarity on a topic raised by the teacher. I took the interview individually with each participant, lasting roughly 15 to 20 minutes. The interviews were audio recorded with the consent of each participant. To examine the effectiveness of the interview schedule, I conducted a pilot test before conducting the actual interview. I conducted the pilot interview session with one experienced primary school teacher who was not included in the main interview. The purpose of performing the pilot interview was

to identify any issues related to the clarity, relevance, or flow of the questions. I made some minor revisions to the questions after piloting based on the feedback received from the participants.

3.4 Data analysis

When the interviews were complete, transcribing them was the first step. A complete transcription of the questions and the responses of the respondents was made. Upon completion of transcribing the data, I initiated the process of thematic analysis. Thematic analysis, as proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), is most suitable for this research as it enables a researcher to systematically identify, organize, and provide insight from a dataset by focusing on meaning or themes. In this study, I have examined the role of primary school teachers in achieving quality education. While coding the data, the first step was to get familiarized with the data. I read and re-read the transcriptions to deeply understand the content and took initial notes on recurring words, important phrases related to teachers' role, their perceptions, and challenges. I have colour-coded significant and reappearing words or phrases from the transcription, and the same procedure was followed for the transcription of all the participants. I have used reviewing and refining coding procedures to identify similarities, differences, and patterns where initial codes were compared across participants. After that, related codes were grouped to form broader themes that convey key concepts of the data. Themes were continually reviewed against the transcripts to ensure they accurately reflected participants' perspectives and experiences. The themes were finalized based on their relevance to the research questions and focus of the study. Finally, the themes were interpreted in the context of the study, linking them to existing literature and theoretical framework where relevant.

3.5 Setting

The face-to-face interviews with the teachers were conducted in the respective participants' schoolrooms. My research is based on the context of rural Bangladesh. Rural primary schools face more challenges in implementing new initiatives compared to urban settings. Moreover, the students of the rural primary schools mostly live below the poverty line, which is why the parents are not serious about their children, especially the female children. The dropout rate in rural areas is higher than in urban areas. As parents are often unaware of the importance of education, teachers play a crucial role in this scenario. They need to work harder to provide

education to students due to the scarcity of necessary educational resources. That is why I have chosen the rural context of Bangladesh for my research. Moreover, I have chosen the rural context as the setting because rural areas of Bangladesh have a higher number of primary schools. Therefore, if the implementation of SDG 4 succeeds in rural contexts, it is likely to be successful in urban areas as well, as urban areas generally have more access to resources than rural areas. As the research is conducted in the context of Bangladesh in the paper, I have analysed the data by keeping the social conditions of Bangladesh in mind.

3.6 Research Ethics

Research ethics cannot be separated from any research. Research ethics can be described as a set of moral principles applied to the conduct of research. It preserves the sustainability of the research and maintains the protection of the subjects enrolled as participants. One of the most important aspects of research ethics is informing the participants about the details of the research. In this study, I have ensured that all participants have access to all information regarding the purpose, procedures, risks, and benefits of the study before participation. It is also important in research ethics that respondents are kept confidential and private. It's the researcher's job to take care of people's data. I have not used the names of the participants in this report to avoid causing harm to them. I have not plagiarized material in this research, and have not fabricated any data. Moreover, I do get the participants to sign a form specifying all the concerns about the study. Moreover, before recording the interview, I asked for their consent. Finally, I have not given the participants any false hope. Moreover, before recording the interview, I asked for their consent.

Chapter Four

Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents detailed findings from semi-structured interviews with eight primary school teachers in rural Bangladesh. The primary objective of this paper is to examine the experiences and perceptions of these teachers regarding the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4), which aims to provide inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) thematic analysis framework in order to interpret the data. The data were methodically coded, categorized, and analyzed to identify themes that represent teachers' perspectives on quality education in rural primary schools. The findings are organized around five overarching themes that emerged during the data analysis. The five major themes are as follows:

- (1) Teachers' understanding of quality education.
- (2) Their role and responsibilities in providing quality education.
- (3) Challenges faced in rural settings.
- (4) Training and professional development related to SDG 4.
- (5) Pedagogical strategies to support quality education.

4.2 Teachers' Understanding of Quality Education

The participants demonstrated a broad understanding of what constitutes quality education. The teachers explained that quality education extends beyond academic achievement. It includes inclusivity, practical skills, and holistic development of the child. In response to the question, "What do you understand by 'quality education' in SDG 4?", all participants stated their understanding clearly. According to their knowledge, quality education asks for equity and inclusivity. It ensures all children, regardless of gender, socio-economic background, or physical ability, have access to meaningful learning opportunities. The participants show an in-depth understanding of quality education. One of the teachers, T1, with 17 years of teaching experience, stated that, "I believe that quality education means providing inclusive and equitable educational opportunities and lifelong learning for all. It helps children to become good citizens of society."

This statement supports the statement by Sørensen (2024), where he said SDG4 promotes lifelong learning, recognizing that education extends beyond formal schooling to continuous skill development. It also aims to empower young people and adults with the competencies needed for employment, entrepreneurship, and decent work opportunities.

As previously mentioned, quality education is not merely about academic excellence but also about creating a safe, equitable, and inclusive learning environment for all. Gender equality is a crucial component of quality education. Moreover, quality education should empower marginalized people, as one of the participants stated, ‘quality education refers to inclusive learning that eliminates gender discrimination and is accessible to everyone, including women, men, children with disabilities, indigenous communities, children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, and people living in remote and hilly areas.’

Moreover, one participant elaborated on the importance of engagement and joy in the learning process. He said, “For me, it means a classroom where every child is actively engaged, feels safe, respected, and encouraged to learn, and where teaching methods are inclusive and effective.” The participants also discussed the holistic nature of quality education. For example, one teacher summarized that “Education is more than academic results. It means helping children develop good character, confidence, and social skills. It is about making learning interesting and relevant to their lives.” These statements reflect the teacher's understanding of student-centred learning and quality education. Their views go beyond the traditional approach of teaching. Overall, all participants exhibited a thorough understanding of quality education, as described in Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4). A common aspect of their comprehension is the recognition that quality education encompasses more than merely academic success; it also includes equity, inclusivity, and the consideration of the needs of marginalized groups, such as girls, children with disabilities, and economically disadvantaged students, as well as the holistic development of learners.

The overall passage shows the participant’s perspectives that reflect on the student-centered and inclusive approach, directly linked to SDG 4 targets, especially targets 4.1 and 4.5. Target 4.1 demands universal quality primary education, and 4.5 demands eliminating disparities in education. The participants’ collective voice shows that the teachers of rural Bangladesh work to

provide an inclusive learning environment for their students to ensure quality primary education for all.

4.3 Teachers' Role and Responsibilities in Providing Quality Education

The participants stated that their role as primary school teachers goes beyond classroom instruction when answering the question "How would you describe your role as a primary school teacher in ensuring quality education for your students?" A sense of responsibility exists in them which extends past teaching. The duty includes mentorship, advocacy, and community participation. According to the participants, their position serves as the fundamental element which delivers quality education to students. The participants dedicate themselves to leading students toward becoming confident, responsible, well-rounded individuals. The educational approach focuses on supporting academic performance, developing creative abilities, promoting ethical principles, and fostering self-confidence. The teachers actively work to help students who face academic difficulties because they believe every child deserves support. The participants believe that teaching students how to feel empathy, respect others, and understand their societal responsibilities holds great significance. As one participant affirmed, "As a primary school teacher, my role is multi-dimensional. I facilitate learning through creative and student-centred methods. Moreover, I strive to create a safe, inclusive, and supportive environment. I collaborate closely with parents and the community to help support children."

Teachers also regard themselves as role models and figures of safety. As a teacher, one should focus on creating a comfortable learning environment for all students, as children spend most of their time in school. The teachers bear the responsibility to meet the different needs of their learners. They hold the belief that creating a supportive classroom atmosphere remains their duty. The participants demonstrated an equivalent level of concern regarding this matter. One teacher explained that "rural students encounter various challenges during their educational experience. In my classroom, I work to build a safe space which allows students to freely share their thoughts." The participants also stressed that their responsibility extends to addressing social issues. They see themselves as social advocates. They also work for social injustices like child marriage and child labor. The participant shared, "We try to prevent early marriage and child labor by talking to parents and students about the value of education. This is part of our duty to the community." Another teacher conveyed that they hold regular meetings, including mothers'

assemblies, courtyard discussions, and parent sessions, to address students' progress and challenges. The social advocacy role of teachers contributes to achieving quality education in rural areas, as it contributes to the completion of primary education for both boys and girls.

A recurrent assertion from teachers was that they believe it is their responsibility to ensure equal opportunities for all students in the classroom, without fostering discrimination between boys and girls. The participants stated that they clearly explain subject-related knowledge and concepts to their students in every class. They conduct lessons with thoughtful attention to each student's individual needs and interests. Furthermore, they inspire students to engage in creative activities and encourage them to be curious and ask questions.

A particularly critical aspect that emerged is the proactive role teachers play in reducing dropout rates. Six out of eight teachers spontaneously shared stories of how they intervene to retain students at risk of dropping out. One of the participants said, "When I notice a student has missed classes for several days, I visit their home. I talk to their parents and try to understand the reason. Often, it's due to financial hardship, domestic chores, or early marriage. I explain the importance of continuing school and sometimes even help them find a solution."

They also mentioned that they collaborate with school management committees and local leaders to mitigate dropout.

The narratives of the participants indicate that they perceive their role not only as teachers but also as mentors, motivators, and community advocates committed to providing quality education despite challenging circumstances. Their role somehow contributes to target 4.1 by ensuring quality primary education for all. The teachers also work to achieve target 4.5 by reducing gender disparities and promoting girls' education. Their role also contributes to target 4.a by ensuring safe, inclusive, effective learning environments. The teachers also contribute to target 4.7, which promotes sustainable development, global citizenship.

4.4 Challenges Faced in Rural Settings

In rural areas of Bangladesh, teachers face numerous challenges that hinder their ability to deliver quality education. When asked, "What challenges do you face while trying to fulfil your role in delivering quality education in rural areas?" respondents revealed a multitude of structural, social, and economic barriers affecting their work and diminishing educational quality.

Participants noted that the difficulties of providing quality education in rural regions are greater than those in urban areas. One of the reasons is that many parents in rural areas do not understand the importance of education and sometimes prevent their children, especially daughters, from attending regularly. One participant highlighted irregular student attendance and the lack of awareness among mothers and guardians as significant obstacles. Students' dropout rates remain a persistent issue. Many families in rural areas live in poverty, which often leads parents to resort to early marriage or have their children engage in income-generating activities. Consequently, many children leave school before completing primary education. One teacher stated, “Children often miss school because they help with household chores, work in fields. Girls, especially, leave school early due to marriage or family pressure.” The absence of students makes it difficult for the teachers to provide quality education.

From the interviews, it became clear that a significant challenge is the inadequacy of infrastructure and educational resources. Nearly all participants identified shared obstacles that impede quality education, including a lack of classrooms, a shortage of learning materials, insufficient teachers, and inadequate training. Teachers reported that they received insufficient professional support and training to address these challenges. The participant directly stated that the assistant teachers have no training about SDGs and quality education, while the head teachers receive such training. The participant stated that they lack knowledge about conducting classes to deliver quality education because they have not received training about SDGs as an assistant teacher. One participant articulated this challenge, stating, “It is hard to give individual attention when I have to teach three grades together. Some children are left behind because I cannot spend enough time with them.”

The participants expressed their worries about how technology is used in their educational settings. Most participants have a minimal understanding of technology. Additionally, there are insufficient numbers of computers and projectors in the school. According to a participant, the school has only one laptop and one projector. Another teacher mentioned teachers' inability to use technology. Moreover, electricity shortages create barriers for practical implementation. Additionally, the limited availability of internet access in rural communities creates obstacles.

The mentioned challenges by the teachers of rural Bangladesh pose a significant barrier to achieving SDG 4. These challenges mostly affect target 4.4, which aims to develop relevant

skills, including ICT and digital literacy, for lifelong learning and future employment. These challenges also create barriers for target 4.a, which is to ensure adequate infrastructure and 4.c, which is related to qualified and trained teachers. Addressing the mentioned challenges has been crucial to achieving the SDG 4 targets.

4.5 Training and Professional Development Related to SDG 4

I asked questions about training and professional development activities related to SDG4 to understand their impact on teachers' practices. I found the answers disappointing, as most participants indicated that they had not received training directly linked to SDG 4, except for the headteachers. The teachers participated in various training sessions that provided them with the context of quality education. However, they felt that these training sessions were insufficient to equip them to deliver quality education. There were three head teachers among the eight participants who attended training related to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). They attend the 'Special Education for Needs and Disabilities' (SEND) training, which is related to the SDG 4 goal. They stated that during this training, they learned about the educational opportunities available to all types of students. The teachers gained knowledge about educational discrimination along with practical methods for its elimination. Furthermore, the Primary Education Office conducted a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program, which these individuals attended to learn about inclusive education approaches for children with different needs. In addition to their training, they acquired skills in Information and Communication Technology (ICT), which helps students learn better and develop digital skills. However, the assistant teachers lack this training. They often receive subject-based or curriculum-related training.

The participants demonstrated a positive stance when asked about the effectiveness of the training in delivering quality education. They think this training is beneficial and effective. Although the assistant teachers did not receive direct training related to SDG4, they also feel the necessity of training associated with SDG4. They said they believe training can enrich them to deliver quality education. The headteachers said they have learned to differentiate instruction based on students' abilities and needs. They also gained practical knowledge regarding quality education from the training. However, the participants urge that these trainings are insufficient and there needs to be more follow-up training and monitoring.

Training helps to improve teachers' understanding and ability related to SDG 4; however, insufficient training programs and a lack of practical application hinder its effectiveness. The participants believe to enhance teaching quality truly, training must be ongoing, context-specific, and supported by regular follow-up and mentoring. They also emphasized the need for more inclusive training opportunities that involve all teaching staff, not just headteachers.

The above part highlights both progress and gaps in teachers' training to achieve SDG 4. This is related to target 4.c, which demands qualified and trained teachers to achieve quality education. To achieve SDG 4, achieving target 4.c is necessary.

4.6 Pedagogical Strategies to Support Quality Education

Teachers developed various approaches to provide quality education even when teaching materials were scarce. All teachers hold the responsibility to provide meaningful learning opportunities for students from every background and gender in their classrooms. Through the interviews conducted, I found that teachers established distinct objectives for each class and utilized various techniques to attain these objectives. While answering the question “What teaching methods or strategies do you use to ensure students are actively engaged and learning effectively to ensure quality education?” the teachers highlighted their adaptive pedagogies and resources to elicit the answer. One participant said that,

“I employ differentiated instruction by customizing tasks to align with each student's abilities. To make learning more meaningful, I incorporate local stories, objects, and real-life examples that students can easily relate to. For children with special needs, I strive to create an inclusive environment by employing flexible seating arrangements and utilizing multisensory approaches.”

The above statement reflects on learners' learning diversity, application of contextualized learning, and inclusive education. In a classroom setting, students possess different learning styles and interests. The educational approach known as differentiated instruction takes into account student learning differences while providing learning opportunities at their current comprehension level. The educational strategy supports SDG 4 because it focuses on maintaining equity among students. The method of relating educational materials to student experiences makes learning more interesting because students connect with the content and understand their learning process. This approach helps students acquire knowledge that will benefit them throughout their entire lives. The adaptive strategy developed for special children embodies the

fundamental principles that guide inclusive education. The use of multisensory teaching helps to break down barriers for children with late development. This method helps to ensure equal access to all students.

The participants said that to provide quality education, they assign tasks in pairs and groups. This approach fosters leadership qualities among the students. It also helps eliminate inequalities between stronger and weaker students and boys and girls. They also try to use multimedia, which allows students to become familiar with modern technology and makes learning more lasting. The teachers also highlighted different strategies to address the diverse learning needs of the students. One participant said, “I try to address the diverse learning needs of my students in various ways, such as observing the students closely and identifying their personal needs, abilities, interests and limitations. Moreover, I use technology to make the lessons easier and interesting.” Another teacher mentioned, “To ensure quality learning, I conduct regular informal assessments. I use short quizzes, oral questions, and mini-tests to see who is doing well and who needs help. The students who need help receive assignments according to their learning level.” The data show that teachers contribute to the goals of SDG 4 by ensuring all students receive attention and equal opportunities, despite having limited resources. It shows that rural primary school teachers in Bangladesh employ adaptive, inclusive strategies, such as differentiated instruction, group work, and informal assessments, to support their students.

In order to teach reading and writing, the teachers use different techniques. They set different objectives in different classes. They follow NCTB’s guidelines and textbooks to teach vocabulary to the students according to their learning requirements. They use matching pictures and multiple-choice questions to teach vocabulary. They also use repetition techniques to teach reading to the students. The goal is to teach reading and writing to the students before they enter into secondary school.

The approaches used by the teachers in the classroom help to ensure quality education in the rural areas. Their approaches, to a great extent, contribute to achieving SDG 4. These approaches support targets 4.1, 4.4, 4.5, and 4.7.

The chapter presents all results obtained from interviews with eight rural primary school teachers based in Bangladesh. The chapter demonstrates how rural primary school teachers constitute a fundamental component for implementing Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) in

Bangladesh. The research shows that the participants maintain a complete understanding of the genuine meaning of quality education while facing multiple systemic obstacles and socio-economic barriers. The participants show a dedication towards their students which extends beyond teaching academics to include the complete development of their students. The teachers consider themselves as mentors, advocates and community members instead of instructors because they help children develop educational and social potential.

Chapter Five

Discussion

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I will discuss the results detailed in Chapter 4, with respect to the research questions and the main objective of this research project. This chapter aims to provide an overview of how primary school teachers are contributing to quality education in rural Bangladesh. The chapter critically examines the consonance between teachers' perceptions, practices and challenges and the intended expectations for achieving equitable and inclusive education. This chapter discusses the interpretations of rural primary school teachers regarding their roles in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4. It also includes the impact of training, the challenges teachers face, and the methods they use to maintain education quality.

5.2 Teachers' Perceptions of Their Role in Achieving Quality Education (SDG4)

The results showed that primary school teachers in rural areas perceive themselves as key to achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4. According to Khoiriyah et al. (2024), teachers' professionalism is essential in creating a quality and sustainable education system. Good teachers teach more than lessons; they teach values; they nurture and lead in the classroom. It involves modifying teaching towards 'diverse learning styles', 'fostering inclusivity', and changing curricula to meet the needs of individuals. Furthermore, they have to take care of students' development and well-being by providing a favorable learning environment and helping those in need. The results show that teachers see themselves as mentors, community leaders, and facilitators rather than just as educators. They feel that their accountability goes beyond academic success. Since teachers lay the groundwork and introduce children to formal school, they regard themselves as crucial to attaining high-quality education. The results demonstrated that their views on the position are consistent with SDG 4, which prioritizes inclusive and equitable quality education and encourages opportunities for lifelong learning for everyone. The findings show that teachers understand the value of creating an inclusive classroom environment for children with disabilities and underrepresented groups. They know that in order to offer quality education, one must address issues like poverty, gender inequality, and social stigma. This fact reveals that they know SDG 4 focuses on equity and inclusion.

This finding is consistent with Rajesh (2024), who proposes that teachers are pivotal to quality education delivery. The teacher equips students with knowledge that can be used to develop the practical skills and awareness to address issues of poverty, climate change and inequality.

Teachers play a crucial role in ensuring quality education. The findings highlighted that the teachers contribute to reducing the dropout rate. They take various initiatives to raise awareness about the importance of education. As the findings showed, they arrange regular meetings, including mothers' assemblies, courtyard discussions, and parent sessions. They also visit the students' homes to ensure their attendance in the classroom. Under SDG 4 in Bangladesh, a remarkable success has come from the declining rate of students dropping out of primary school. The teachers are the integral component for accomplishing this. According to Islam et al. (2019) quality education is the cornerstone of sustainable development. It enriches lives and prepares communities to solve world challenges. SDG 4 has the power to change lives around the world. The results reveal that the teachers sensitize the parents to the value of education. They created awareness among the parents and students that education can increase the quality-of-life. The teacher emphasizes the importance of community involvement in achieving quality education. They consider themselves a bridge between the community and education. They recognize that community and institution cooperation is essential to maintaining the educational process, so they include parents and other community members in the educational process. The results of Rahaman et al. (2024), who stress the value of community involvement in inclusive education practices in Bangladesh, are consistent with this strategy.

However, there is a lack of institutional support to sustain these community involvement strategies. The teachers often do this voluntarily and without incentives from the institutions, which means this largely depends on individual teachers' motivation rather than systemic provisions. From the teacher's perspective, they exercise personal initiatives to address the dropout challenge, however, their agency is constrained due to the lack of systemic structures.

Furthermore, the results highlight how important teachers are in advancing gender equality, a topic that SDG 4 also addresses. Both male and female students are given equal opportunities by the teachers. Additionally, they take action to prevent underage marriage, which hinders the education of girls. Target 4.7 of SDG 4, which focuses on education for sustainable development,

is in line with teachers' emphasis on their duty to foster empathy, creativity, and ethical values in their students.

The above discussion highlights that the teachers perceive their role not only as mere instructors but also as mentors, motivators, and community advocates, who play a vital role in ensuring quality education in the rural areas of Bangladesh. However, systemic constraints such as inadequate training and resources, and socio-economic challenges limited their ability to perform their role. From a teacher's identity and agency perspectives, even though they aspire to transform learning and support students, structural barriers limit their ability and create a gap between their perspective and the realities of the system. The above discussion aligns with research question 1, which aimed to investigate teacher perceptions and their contributions to SDG 4.

5.3 Alignment of Training with SDG 4 and Teachers' Role

Professional development is an integral part of a teacher's life. Teacher training is very important to manage the new curriculum, methods, and also the modern world, in addition to subject knowledge improvement. Training sessions cannot be overlooked if teachers are to be empowered with the skills needed to meet the demands of quality education delivery. Siddik and Kawai (2020) emphasize the importance of providing teachers with suitable qualifications and understanding for inclusive education. They go on to note that adequate teacher training must focus on the development of teachers' skills, like differentiated instruction, the use of technology efficiently and good classroom management.

They argue that effective teacher training should focus on developing teachers' competencies, including differentiated instruction, classroom management, and the effective use of technology. The data, however, indicate that training programs in rural Bangladesh do not contain these elements and that teachers may be under-equipped to address their responsibilities. The findings suggest that there is a distance between the aspirations of SDG 4 and teachers' professional formation in rural Bangladesh. The participants reported that school headteachers were exposed to some training on SDG 4 with specific reference to special education needs, inclusive education methods and ICT. But the assistant teachers are usually limited in having access to that kind of targeted professional development. Insufficient training sessions for all teachers limit the teachers' ability to provide inclusive and quality education. Further, there is no follow-up or

monitoring, which prevents SDG 4 from being successfully implemented. Teachers' interest in using the knowledge acquired from training does not come into use, as there is no system of monitoring, which hinders successful implementation. Consequently, teachers commonly do not continue applying and sustaining changes in their teaching. Teachers are the key 'actors' of SDG 4, and therefore it is vital that they are properly trained.

The preceding analysis indicates that there is some congruence between training and SDG 4. However, there are still severe disparities, as assistant teachers still lag behind. For teachers to be able to realize their responsibilities in ensuring quality education in rural Bangladesh, appropriate training and support are essential. These findings are an immediate response to research question 2, which was designed to assess the role of teacher education for SDG 4. The results demonstrate that there is a lack of proper training in the areas of interest. While RQ2 is intended to find out how closely teachers' training programs meet SDG-4, it is apparent from the findings there are little training programs on the quality of education.

Unfortunately, the assistant primary school teachers have not received any training regarding quality education. The data show that the teacher believes adequate training can help them contribute more to quality education.

5.4 Pedagogical Strategies to Ensure Quality Education

This part seeks to answer Research Question 3: What are the teachers' strategies to offer quality education? The results indicate that rural primary teachers confront a series of struggles. There is also a lack of teachers, materials, and training in the rural regions. Irrespective of the crisis, teachers use several strategies in ensuring quality education. The strategies are differentiated instruction, cooperative learning, the use of culturally responsive teaching materials, and technology. The teachers use a variety of strategies to meet the unique requirements of learners. They use differentiated instruction by adapting lessons and using visual support for children with learning issues. The teachers administer informal exams or quizzes to assess student progress on a regular basis. They help teachers pinpoint areas of need in the students and add interventions to help target those areas better. This allows teachers to adapt tasks as necessary to support inclusive teaching and learning settings. They also provide an inclusive environment with flexible seating and multisensory activities that accommodate children with special needs.

Also, there is group teaching in which there is mutual respect among students and leadership development. Moreover, this approach would be a means of reducing the spread between male and female high and low performers. The teachers also occasionally use local narratives, items and life incidents to make the learning more interesting and exciting for the children. The teachers relate lessons to the students' lives to increase their understanding and retention of information, a strategy substantiated by Vygotsky's (1978) socio-cultural learning theories, and the significance of context and environment to education. This also contributes to inclusive education.

The integration of technology in the classroom was also addressed by teachers in the interviews. They indicated several problems in the use of technology in school, including the shortage of technological resources, expertise and internet access. Nevertheless, despite the obstacles, some teachers' work includes using information technology so that teaching quality can improve. In villages what falls short is that students don't have the money to access the internet and connect themselves with the global world. Under this setting, rural primary teachers are significant agents to assist to develop children for a global citizenship.

The above strategies employed by rural teachers demonstrate their sense of responsibility in providing quality education to students. Based on the approach taken by the teachers, it can be said that teachers, especially those in rural primary schools, play a crucial role in advancing quality education in rural contexts. Even though the teachers employ various strategies, their agency is often limited because of the rigid curricula, large class size, insufficient support, and ineffective monitoring within the system. These barriers hinder the consistent implementation of these strategies and create a gap between the intentions and actual practice. Despite experiencing challenges with infrastructure and resources, their commitment to substantive learning affirms research question 3 regarding the teaching approaches that lead to and maintain quality schooling. Combining several strategies emphasizes the teacher's agency in attaining quality education.

5.5 Challenges Impacting Teachers' Role

The primary focus of the study is to examine teachers' roles in advancing quality education; however, the discussion would be incomplete without discussing the numerous challenges that rural primary school teachers face. The implementation of inclusive quality education in rural

Bangladesh faces several challenges, which affect the teacher's ability to fulfil their role in advancing quality education. A study reported by Mullick and Sharma (2017) also found infrastructural constraints to be a key challenge to inclusive education in Bangladesh. The teachers informed that the infrastructural constraints are insufficient classrooms and less training. These problems prevent them from meeting the needs of students.

Furthermore, the teachers encounter difficulties because of a lack of support. The availability of appropriate learning materials is generally lower in rural Bangladesh than in the urban areas. This lack of resources also interferes with teachers' opportunities to offer personalized help to students.

Moreover, most of the students of rural primary schools live below the poverty line. Therefore, most students drop out of school before completing the mandatory primary education. Even if teachers want to provide quality education, they sometimes fail to do so because of this issue. Furthermore, parents in rural areas often do not perceive the necessity of education, especially for female students, which is also an issue that teachers face.

Previously in the discussion, it was mentioned that teachers incorporate technology despite various challenges. However, they face challenges in integrating technology into their teaching, as most students lack access to the internet or technology at home. This result is consistent with Fernando and Kularathna (2024), who stated that several underdeveloped countries do not possess a good education infrastructure. Schools in Sub-Saharan Africa were most affected, with less than half with access to electricity, internet, computers, or safe drinking water. The findings from the interview indicate that limited electricity and poor internet connectivity significantly hinder the integration of technology into teaching. It becomes increasingly challenging for rural primary school teachers to introduce their students to the global world, which also hinders their ability to contribute to the advancement of quality education. Thus, the various challenges faced by rural primary schools in Bangladesh hinder teachers' ability to contribute to achieving quality education (SDG 4). It is evident from the above that rural primary school teachers have the potential to be major contributors to the attainment of quality education as envisaged in SDG 4. Albeit with different difficulties, the teachers held a positive attitude about inclusion and they employed a wide range of teaching methods to accommodate the needs of the students.

The teachers are committed to achieving quality education, however, inadequate training opportunities, infrastructures, and societal attitudes towards education hinder the effective implementation of quality education. Moreover, for various reasons, in some classes there are not enough students, so the teachers cannot employ the strategies appropriately. From the lens of teacher agency and identity, this creates a persistent tension. The teachers aspire to lead transformative change, yet systemic constraints limit teachers' ability to act on these professional ideas. They fail to perform their agentive role. Even though they understand the importance of quality education, they fail to fully contribute to achieving it due to various limitations.

Chapter Six

Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion

It is evident from the findings that teachers show a positive attitude towards Sustainable Development Goal 4. They consider themselves an essential part of SDG 4. Teachers play a multidimensional role. The participants show a holistic understanding of the principles that align with SDG 4. The teachers understand that quality education is not about academic outcomes, but also about inclusivity, equity and lifelong learning. The teachers contribute to achieving quality education by ensuring an inclusive learning environment for all students. They provide equal access to education regardless of gender, socio-economic condition, or other marginalized groups. The teachers work to reduce gender disparities in the classroom by providing equal opportunities to both boys and girls. They are the main workforce working behind the reduction of the dropout rate in primary education. They do regular home visits and parent-teacher meetings to reduce the dropout rate and create awareness among the students and parents about education. The teachers also play the role of social advocates. Moreover, the rural primary school teachers apply various strategies to make their students competent. They build leadership qualities among the students. They contextualized their lesson, such as the use of a local story or connecting the lesson with practical applications. This strategy contributes to the lifelong learning of the students. Furthermore, they use differentiated instructions to address the diverse learning styles of the students.

This study also highlights various challenges the rural primary school teachers face. These challenges hinder the contribution of teachers to quality education. There is a scarcity of teaching materials and training programs. There is limited access to the internet in rural areas, which negatively affects the teachers' role. However, instead of these challenges, the teachers work hard to provide quality education to the students. They introduce students to the global world and help them become global citizens.

To conclude, this study has explored primary school teachers' perceptions of their role in achieving Sustainable Development Goal 4, which focuses on quality education. While exploring the teachers' role, this study also highlights various strategies adopted by teachers, teachers'

training programs and challenges faced by teachers in the rural context of Bangladesh. This study offers in-depth insights into the contributions of teachers to achieving quality education in rural primary schools in Bangladesh.

6.2 Recommendation

This study highlights various challenges faced by rural primary school teachers in Bangladesh. To achieve quality education, these challenges should be addressed. To begin with, there is a scarcity of teacher training programs regarding quality education. The government should focus on providing teachers with adequate training programs related to inclusive pedagogy, ICT integration, and classroom management in multi-grade rural settings. Moreover, institutions and other stakeholders must ensure that there are sufficient teaching materials to accommodate the diverse learning styles of students. This includes not only the textbooks but also supplementary materials, visual aids, and locally adapted resources to address the diverse needs of the students.

Furthermore, the government should take steps to ensure that technology is available in every classroom. For instance, providing solar-powered digital kits, internet access, and an adequate number of computers in rural schools. Overall, the teachers need more support from different stakeholders to fulfil their responsibility in achieving quality education. Collaboration among different stakeholders such as government, NGO's, communities, and international organizations can be beneficial for providing resources, monitoring, and professional growth of the teachers. For the TESOL discipline, English teachers must integrate strategies for multi-lingual and rural contexts. They should adapt context-related materials, bilingual texts to support the rural students and promote research aligning with TESOL and SDG 4.

6.3 Pedagogic Implications and Further Study

This study highlights the role of rural primary school teachers in achieving SDG 4 while investigating teachers' perceptions of their role, training aligned with SDG 4, and various strategies teachers use to ensure quality education. From a pedagogical perspective, this study indicates the need for teachers' professional development that is adequate to address various challenges of rural schools. The findings highlight that the teachers do not get proper training that aligns with SDG4. Therefore, one pedagogical implication of this study is that it suggests teacher training programs should integrate modules that focus on equitable and inclusive quality education. Moreover, this study suggests that teachers should be equipped with appropriate

teaching materials and a supportive system to ensure 'equitable' and 'quality education' for all. This study also mentioned various strategies adopted by the teachers to deliver quality education. Teachers can adapt these strategies in their teaching and contribute to quality education.

This study opens new fields for future researchers. This study is solely based on the rural context of Bangladesh. The researchers can examine the role of teachers in urban areas in further studies. The researchers can extend this study by examining the contextual differences in teachers' practices of urban and rural teachers. Moreover, future researchers can also include other stakeholders, such as students, parents, and other community members, to explore their perceptions. The researchers may investigate how coordinating among different stakeholders can strengthen the delivery of quality education in Bangladesh.

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Appendix:

Interview Questions:

No of Questions	Interview Questions	Background	R1	R2	R3
1.	How long have you been teaching?	✕			
2.	Which courses do you usually teach?	✕			
3.	Have you done any workshops/trainings related to SDG?	✕			
4.	What do you understand by “quality education” in SDG 4?	✕			
5.	How would you describe your role as a primary school teacher in ensuring quality education for your students?		✕		
6.	What challenges do you face while trying to fulfill your role in delivering quality education in rural areas?		✕		
7.	In what ways do you think your contributions as a teacher positively impact students’ learning outcomes?		✕		
8.	Can you describe any recent training or professional development programs you have attended?			✕	
9.	How relevant do you think these training programs are to your work in achieving			✕	

	quality education (SDG 4)?				
10.	Do you feel the training has equipped you with the necessary skills to provide quality education? If yes, how? If not, why not?			✕	
11.	What teaching methods or strategies do you use to ensure students are actively engaged and learning effectively?				✕
12.	How do you address the diverse learning needs of your students, especially in rural contexts?				✕
13.	What resources (e.g., materials, technology) do you use to support quality education? Are they sufficient? Comment on its adequacy and efficacy				✕