

**Gender Equality Practices by the Teachers inside the Classrooms:
A Comparative Study between a Government and a Non-
Government Primary School**

By

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

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Declaration

It is hereby declared that

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

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Approval

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Ethics Statement

There were several ethical concerns anticipated while preparing the research proposal and I have also faced a few ethical issues while collecting the data and analysing them. The concerns which were raised before submitting the proposal, were disclosed and clarified to the Ethical Approval Committee of BRAC Institute of Educational Development. After reviewing my explanations and dispute resolving criteria, the ethical committee approved my research proposal. I have tried to follow the protocols set by the committee to address the challenges. I have explained all the terms and conditions of the detailed consent form to my participants, and only after receiving their signed consent, I proceed for their participation. I have also maintained full confidentiality of my participants throughout this study.

Abstract

Among the multiple education systems that exist in Bangladesh's primary education sector, the major two, the government and the non-government educational institutions hold the majority of students. Apart from having differences in infrastructure, curriculums, and teachers training methods, the practices of gender equality by the teachers inside their classrooms are also different.

In the government primary school, the teachers often consider genders while making any decision. A common prejudice among them is that the female students are weaker and cannot handle any task properly. Therefore, male students often receive harsher punishment than females for any misconduct. On the other hand, the non-government primary school encourages female students to be more active in both the classroom and extracurricular activities.

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Table of Contents

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
Declaration	ii
Approval	iii
Ethics Statement	iv
Abstract	v
Acknowledgement	vi
Table of Contents	vii
List of Acronyms	ix
Chapter 1: Introduction and Background	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 School Types in Bangladesh	3
1.3 Research Topic and Rationale	4
1.4 Statement of the Problem	5
1.5 Research Questions	6
1.6 Purpose of the Study	7
1.7 Significance of the Study	7
Chapter 2: Literature Review	9
2.1 Definition of “Gender Equality in Education”	9
2.2 Gender Equality Practices in Curriculum	10
2.3 Gender Equality practices inside Classrooms	13
Chapter 3: Methodology	16
3.1 Research Approach	16
3.2 Research Site	17

3.3 Research Participants	18
3.4 Sampling Procedure	18
3.5 Data Collection Methods	20
3.5.1 Interview method	21
3.6 Role of the Researcher	22
3.7 Data Analysis	22
3.8 Ethical Issues and Concerns	24
3.9 Credibility and Rigor	24
3.10 Limitations of the study	25
Chapter 4: Result	26
4.1 Findings from Government Primary School	26
4.1.1 Gender Biases in Positive and Negative Reinforcement inside the classrooms by the teachers in Government Primary School	26
4.1.2 Addressing Students' Health and Learning Issues of the Students by the teachers in classrooms in Government Primary School	30
4.1.3 Gender based Decisions in Extracurricular Activities in Government Primary School	31
4.1.4 Use of Examples in Teaching Learning Process Related to Gender in the classroom by the teachers in Government Primary School	32
4.2 Findings from Non-Government Primary School	34
4.2.1 Gender Biases in Positive and Negative Reinforcement inside the classrooms by the teachers in Non-Government Primary School	34
4.2.2 Addressing Students' Health and Learning Issues of the Students by the teachers in classrooms in Non-Government Primary School	35

4.2.3 Gender based Decisions in Extracurricular Activities in Non-Government Primary School	36
4.2.4 Use of Examples in Teaching Learning Process Related to Gender in the Classroom by the Teachers in Non-Government Primary School	38
Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion	40
5.1 Comparative Analysis: Findings Derived from the Government and the Non-Government Primary School using Thematic Perspective	40
5.1.1 Behavioural Reinforcements: Gender Bias is Everywhere	40
5.1.2 Health and Academic Concerns: Different Scenarios	41
5.1.3 Extracurricular Activities: Prejudice vs Modernisation	42
5.1.4 Textbooks: Gender Biased or Not?	43
5.2 Conclusion	44
5.6 Recommendations	45
References:	46
Appendices	51
Appendix A	51
Appendix B	53
Appendix C	55
Appendix D	57

List of Acronyms

DPE	Department of Primary Education
GoB	Government of Bangladesh
GRESF	Gender Responsive Education Sector Planning
MoE	Ministry of Education
NCTB	National Curriculum and Textbook Board
NGO	Non-Government Organization
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Chapter 1: Introduction and Background

1.1 Introduction

“The opportunity and care my friend from a private school receives, I cannot even think of having those”, said a female student of a government primary school in Bangladesh.

Gender equality is a social scenario where women and men share equal rights, power, status, opportunities, and rewards. Gender equality can be broadly described by men and women having equal access of resources, participation in the household and the community, and safety from violence (Rolleri, 2012). Also, gender equality ensures that women’s and men’s rights, responsibilities, and opportunities will not depend on whether or not they are born male or female (Rolleri, 2013). According to UNICEF (2017), “Gender equality is a matter of human rights and is considered a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centred development”.

“Any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on the basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field” [United Nations, 1979. ‘Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women,’ Article 1]. When a decision is made based on gender is known as gender biasness and often led to gender imbalance and gender based violence.

Educating the girls started vastly celebrated in developing countries from not so many years ago. Several international organizations still fight for gender parity and access to education for all. According to the president of the Nike Foundation in UNICEF’s State of the World’s Children

2011, “When a girl in the developing world receives seven or more years of education, she marries four years later. An extra year of primary school boosts girls’ eventual wages by 10 to 20 per cent. Studies in 2003 showed that when women and girls earn income, they reinvest 90 per cent of it into their families, as compared to the 30 to 40 percent that men and boys contribute. Research has also shown that higher levels of schooling among mother correlate with better infant and child health.”

In recent years many developing countries are focusing more on developing their primary education system, and some have also shown rapid expansion of school numbers, infrastructure, and enrolment. However, the quality of education is often overlooked in these countries for a justification that increased number of students will make the human an asset which will eventually help the economy to grow and reduce poverty (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2013). Despite having strong evidence from cross-country studies about the cognitive skills of the people, rather than mere school enrolment, are powerfully related to long-run economic growth (Hanushek and Woessmann, 2010).

Bangladesh provides an interesting context of analysing gender parity in education and practices of gender equality inside the schools. The growth of education, especially education for girls, has been Bangladesh’s most significant achievement in the last two decades (World Bank, 2017). Bangladesh followed a concerted policy for the last two decades to enhance girls’ education through innovative ways that provided stipends to school girls for remaining in school. NGOs too contributed to enhance girls’ education. Simultaneously, the labour market also expanded for the girls during the last decade.

Bangladesh has shown more enrolment of female students in primary and secondary school than India and the other countries of South Asia (Mahmud, Asadullah and Savoia, 2013). Surveying amongst 15-19 years old adolescents of South Asia, primary school completion rate of girls in

Bangladesh is not only significantly higher than boys, it is also higher than that for girls in India and Pakistan (Riboud, Yevgeniya and Hong; 2007). “Because of the lack of systematic and comparable survey data on school quality, the link between schooling and learning is seldom addressed in the developing country context” (Asadullah and Chaudhury, 2013).

Although USAID (2017) said, gender parity in education is essential but not enough for achieving gender equality. According to Roller (2013), to ensure gender equality in education following 3 things needs to be ensured:

1. Equitable Access and Use of Resources
2. Equitable Participation
3. Safety from Violence

1.2 School Types in Bangladesh

There are three main educational streams in Bangladesh: General education (provided by both public and private sectors), English schools (provided by private sector and follow NCTB and International curriculum) and Madrasa education (provides religious education with basic subjects like Bangla, English, Mathematics, etc.). The government primary schools and the non-government primary schools are the two largest types of schools in both the terms of number of students enrolled and number of schools established, and both of them follow the Bangla Medium curriculum. Now, this large number of students, separated in two large groups, are experiencing different teachers, different classrooms, and different textbooks. The government schools are government sponsored, monitored under the Ministry of Education’s Department of Primary Education (DPE), and are free or less expensive. The teachers are government employees and they receive training and facilities from the government. Government schools follow the National Curriculum and Textbook Board (NCTB) provided curriculum and this

NCTB is responsible for all the development of curriculum, production and distribution of textbooks at primary and secondary education level. On the other hand, though there were a number of private schools even before the independence of Bangladesh, and the first Non-Government Organization (NGO) enlisted in 1972 in the independent Bangladesh, the government of Bangladesh commissioned the first NGO school in 1991. The non-government schools are obliged to follow NCTB curriculum, but have the independence to attach other educational books and activities in their classes. These schools have their governing body under an organization or foundation, the teachers are the employees of that foundation and receive training and facilities from that foundation.

1.3 Research Topic and Rationale

“Gender equality practices by the teachers inside the classrooms: A comparative study between a government and a non-government primary school.”

Among the different streams of educational institutions in Bangladesh, the government and the non-government primary education holds the majority of the students who experience a different environment and curriculum. Also, the training and monitoring the teachers are having are different. Hence, there is the possibility of having different practices in classrooms including ensuring gender equality.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

“Bangladesh has achieved remarkable success in expanding primary education, especially for girls” (Hossain & Kabeer, 2004). De and Banerjee (2017) claimed that “Bangladesh is among the few countries to achieve gender parity in school enrolment, and have more girls than boys in schools.” The author also stated that the government-led Third Primary Education Development Program (PEDP3), which is also supported by different donors and partners, “initiated in 2011, the primary education aims to enhance the quality of education, and reduce disparities in access and learning.”

Some reports argue that the high enrolment rate of females is not contributing to the development of females overall. “Though the enrolment rate is getting higher, still the literacy rate of females is lower than that of males. Revilla (1998) claimed that “whether or not they are excelling in school, girls are often not given appropriate attention in classrooms”. According to her research, the teachers enforce gender stereotypes in classrooms, and they usually ignore the potential of female students. Intercultural Development Research Associations’ (2007) research found out that, “The teaching structure of most classrooms reflects a bias toward the way boys learn, placing girls at a disadvantage in terms of cognitive development”. Her findings are supported by the World Bank report on South Asian Education (2007), which claims, the patriarchal norms, conservative attitude towards women, and male bias is a common phenomenon in Bangladesh. However, “One of the reasons why the empirical literature on gender equality inside the classroom in South Asia has not progressed much is due to limited data sets that allow for such analyses” Blunch and Das (2015, p. 205). They also said, “Individual questions in the Demographic and Health Surveys have allowed for some analysis of gender parity to these areas, but very few questions allow for an analysis of attitudes to gender equality practices in education”.

According to the Annual Primary School Census (2019), among the two major educational streams of Bangladesh, the non-government primary schools are showing significantly less dropout rate in students, especially among girls. Shubhramanyam (2020) stated that the school-related gender-based actions play a big role in dropout rates. The significantly less dropout rate of female students can be linked with the school-related gender-based actions, though due to the limited data sources available, we cannot concretely say that. Therefore, understanding the actual scenario and hence producing some qualitative data set can help us before going forward to draw the pictures of the whole Bangladesh.

1.5 Research Questions

1. What are the practices of gender equality inside the classroom by the teachers of a government and non-government primary school?
 - a. What are the similarities between those practices?
 - b. What are the differences between those practices?

2. Can the students see the similarities or differences of their teachers' actions to different gendered students?
 - a. Can the male students identify the similarities and differences?
 - b. Can the female students identify the similarities and differences?

1.6 Purpose of the Study

One of the purposes of this study is to explore the teachers' attitude towards different gender students in classrooms. This study will analyse teachers' decisions inside the classroom to find out any gender biases in those decisions. This study will observe teachers' attention to different students' same kind of problems and concerns, and will look deep in the gender comparative lenses. Also, how the teacher is delivering the subject contents and how s/he is addressing gender balance in those will be another analysing area. Then we will look through those interpretations from two different types of schools and draw differentiations between them. At the same time, this study also tries to explore if the students are able to identify their teachers' behaviour to different gendered students and particularly which gendered students are most of the time notifying those actions.

1.7 Significance of the Study

This result of this study about teachers' classroom practices towards students based on their gender will help other teachers to understand their own attitudes and may question their own practice. This study will also shed light on how teachers treat and teach students based on students' gender, but through a comparative lens. The finding of this study will help us to understand the differences between gender practices among teachers of those two types of schools. With the found differences, the teachers can analyse which techniques are working and which techniques need to be improved or changed. At the same time, teachers will see the impact of equal opportunity and access to every student in different activities. The results may help them to work on developing the school environment surrounded with more gender balanced decisions, where equitable opportunity to resources is ensured to ensure gender equality in the teaching learning process. This study can also help the school management authorities to ensure

a safe environment in school for all the children through micromanaging gender aspects in every decision, every classroom, and every teacher. The students can be more aware of their rights and dormant competencies. They will also be aware of their and the teachers actions, and how those actions impact on understanding their inherent talents. Also, the parents will be more aware of the school environment of their students. Last but not the least, this study will help the policymakers to identify the differences, incorporate the positive aspects in policies, and practice those in every school to ensure equal opportunity for all students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Definition of “Gender Equality in Education”

Gender equality is a global priority for UNESCO. It is linked to promote the right to education and support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Through the Education 2030 Framework for Action, SDG 4 aims to “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” and SDG 5 to “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls”. The agenda of Education 2030 shows that gender equality requires an approach that “ensures that girls and boys, women and men not only gain access to and complete education cycles, but are empowered equally in and through education”. UNESCO also claims that large gender gaps exist in many countries in terms of access to resources and opportunities, learning curve and continuation in education. Most often the girls are the sufferers of these. Poverty, geographical isolation, minority status, disability, early marriage, pregnancy, gender-based violence, and societal attitudes about the role of women, are among the many obstacles that stand in the way of girls to fully exercise their right to participate in, complete and benefit from education.

A report of Global Partnership for Education (GPE) in 2019 claims that, “despite significant gains in recent years, education outcomes for girls in developing countries continue to lag behind those of boys”. CEDAW general recommendation number 36 (2017) on the right of girls and women to education urges that “achieving all the sustainable development goals depends on gender equality, which in turn hinges on realization of rights to, within and through education”. GPE’s 2019 Results Report reveals that “while completion rates are rising for both girls and boys, the gender gap has not changed over the past year”. Ensuring that gender concerns are involved in every aspect of a country’s decisions is a systematic way to generate more gender-equal education outcomes. GPE and the United Nations Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI)

have developed the guidance for developing gender-responsive education sector planning to identify gender barriers in education systems, and put strategies in place to address these for the governments, development partners and civil society.

According to the Ministry of Primary and Mass Education (2019), the female students' ratio in the classroom is 50.87% of 16,336,096 students enrolled, and 66.52% of them are enrolled in a government primary school. But the study also found that the dropout rate of female students in non-government primary schools is comparatively lower than the dropout rate of female students in government primary schools (Ministry of Primary and Mass Education, 2019). According to Sabates et al (2010), females from the poorest economic quintile in Bangladesh are more educated than males. Based on their findings, they said poverty is not the major issue linked with dropout in the context of Bangladesh. One of the reasons for dropout she identified is 'unequal learning environments'.

2.2 Gender Equality Practices in Curriculum

The curriculum characterizes the subject matters instructed in a school, which often reflects the norms and the culture of the society. As society changes, the educational plan will likewise change, just as the manner by which it is seen and what is viewed as significant. Educating and learning materials, assessment and appraisal techniques, and language strategy are likewise segments of the curriculum.

To expand the interest for female schooling, the worth and significance of the instruction should be clear. The manner by which females, their families, and educators see schooling and the substance of the educational program, will be impacted by gender uniformity in the more extensive society. "In many societies, it is assumed that girls are not good at mathematics and

that boys cannot learn about the care of young children” (Shakeshaft, 1995, p. 75). These types of curriculum assumptions and the teaching-learning methods that execute them, may reinforce gender inequalities, with girls often placed into “lower status” subjects. Textbooks often reinforce the low expectations from women and girls, as same as the curriculum and examination materials, moreover the use of physical space in schools also marginalizes girls (Amott, 2004).

Curriculum and textbooks are key factors to reduce gender bias. The UN Human Rights Council requires all countries to periodically review and revise their textbooks, curriculum and teaching learning methods to eliminate gender stereotypes. Many African developing countries like Kenya, Liberia, Gambia, and Guinea include training to address gender bias and eliminate gender stereotypes in their education sector plans to ensure girls can learn as same as boys which focuses considering gender perspective in teacher training, textbooks, curriculum, learning materials, subject choices, pedagogy, assessment systems and the management structures (Kane, 2004).

To fight the gender imbalance in curriculum, G7 leaders gave the declaration of Gender Responsive Education Sector Planning (GRESPE) in August 2019. GRESPE is a whole-system approach to ensure gender equality in and through education, including learning environments, teacher education and practice, textbooks, curriculum and materials development, and leadership and administration. “In many schools, the curriculum and learning resources promote specific notions of ‘femaleness’ and ‘maleness’, and teachers encourage/discourage students based on gender and/or assign students gendered tasks and roles within the classroom” (Kane, 2004).

Though Bangladesh has remarkably achieved gender parity in school enrolment, in 2017 the Government of Bangladesh unexpectedly changed the contents of the national curriculum textbooks. The current secular government led by the Bangladesh Awami League (BAL)

allegedly surrendered into the demands of Hefazat-e-Islam, the country's most challenging Islamist organization representing thousands of unrecognized madrasahs, by noiselessly modifying school textbooks in a way that can do damage to the country's voyage toward gender equality. In January 2017, the education ministry printed millions of textbooks for schools with unbalanced gender representation. The Bangla language textbooks have been revised, swapping the secular content to make space for the Islamic materials. Not only have poems and stories of open-minded, non-Muslim writers (including the work of Tagore) been replaced by Muslim authors, lessons have been swotted in a way that favours Islamic cultures and views concerning a woman's social roles and identity (Sajen, Mahtab, and Nowshin 2017). The pictures of girls in Bangladeshi outfits have been replaced with the ones in Islamic attire.

According to Asadullah, Islam, and Wahhaj (2018), the most contents of the textbooks were written by men. The gender division of labour portrayed a strong regularity of female stereotypes. Women appear in a constricted range of occupational roles. While females are primarily engaged in household chores, the males are coupled with power, prestige and wealth (e.g. king, prophet, caliph, professor, landlord). Women hardly appear as a prominent character. According to a study by Islam in 2018, the women only shares as below as 37.3 percent in Bangladeshi NCTB textbooks. While the sitting BAL government takes credit for the dispersal of millions of copies of textbooks to school students on the first day of every year, textbooks are habitually printed with mistakes and errors (Sajen, Shamsuddoza, Mahtab, and Nowshin, 2017). Therefore, the issue of eliminating gender stereotypes in textbooks has to be part of the refining learning quality for both boys and girls in schools (Asadullah, Islam, and Wahhaj, 2018).

2.3 Gender Equality practices inside Classrooms

Development of the curriculum to address gender imbalance cannot transpire in isolation from other aspects of schooling, specifically ways of teaching, learning and interaction within the classroom. Whatever the content of the curriculum, equality will not be attained if girls are dejected from speaking, if boys attract a inconsistent amount of the teachers' energy, nor if the physical atmosphere does not support equal access to education for example, the establishment of girls' toilets (Akpakwu, 2009). International researches suggests that boys have a top-heavy share of contributions in whole class communication due partly to their being selected by the teacher more frequently than girls, but also to their capability to create both positive and negative circumstances which attract teachers' attention and aid their participation and leading position in classroom interaction (Shakeshaft, 1995). This prevailing position of the boys provides them with an imperative learning experience, i.e. the self-confidence of being attended to and responded to within the communal domain, thus encouraging them to participate more (Howe; 1997). Girls may thereby be inadvertently pushed out of the centre of the action, learning to expect a lower participation level than boys. There is considerable evidence internationally (Smith, 1992), that teachers-even those well are willing to the question of equal opportunities - interact differently with their boys and girls and that this may function to the inconvenience of girls. "Observations in the classroom have shown that boys both demand and get more teacher attention" (Wilson, 1991). Studies have also recommended that, within the classroom, teachers often start a competitiveness between the sexes to motivate or manage students. Boys tend to control classroom talk and there is evidence to advocate that teachers intentionally gear the content of lessons towards boys' interests in order to maintain attention and control (Wilson, 1991). Girls remain mostly submissive and "invisible" in class and teachers have been found to relegate their achievements (Stanworth, 2003). Previous guidance in classroom interaction

approaches has been found to be suggestively related to classroom performance, with trained teachers more dependably providing an unbiased classroom environment (Omvig, 2005).

According to Skelton as cited in Amott (2004, p. 36-62), “a gender-equality programme should make an assessment of the school by looking at four key questions such as: 1. What perceptions of masculinity and femininity are children bringing to school, and what are they acting out in the classroom and the playground? 2. What are the dominant images of masculinity and femininity that the school conveys to them? 3. Is gender equality a concern in terms of what the school wants and expects of its teachers? 4. What initiatives, strategies, and projects can the whole school undertake to develop a program for gender equality?”

According to UNICEF (2017), “school-related gender-based violence is a particularly concerning form of discrimination, affecting an estimated 246 million boys and girls in 2014”. Girls and boys often face different types of violence which can be physical, sexual, psychological and can include bullying, corporal punishments, sexual harassment and assault, and verbal and emotional abuse. Globally there is little complete data on school-based sexual viciousness.

The UN Girls’ Education Initiative (UNGEI) report in 2012 claimed that males often receive harsher corporal punishment from teachers. Later Shayan (2015) said that the female students often suffer sexual harassment by the teacher and/or male classmates. “Gendered practices inside schools may affect student retention patterns, as well as shaping children’s perceptions of their capabilities, life chances, and future work/educational prospects” (Hunt, 2008, p.12). One study in Guinea concluded that “classroom and school environments in Guinea appear to be significantly less conducive to learning for girls than boys, negatively affecting their chances for promotion as well as their later productivity and earnings potential” (Glick and Sahn, 2000, p. 166).

The gender of teachers can have a substantial influence on whether girls go to school or not and how well they are competent to learn. “The presence of female teachers often makes parents more willing to send their daughters to school and these teachers also serve as role models for girls” (Haugen et al, 2014).

In the context of Bangladesh, according to the UNGEI, “lack of female teachers in schools and classroom environments that are not conducive to girls are key causes of female dropouts from school in Bangladesh” (IRIN, 2009). A quantitative study about the reasons for drop-out by Khan and Samaddar (2010) found that, 24% of urban females feared their teachers, 24% of urban females and 20% of rural females think their teacher is performing poorly.

Now, some researchers have already found a connection between dropout and gender practices while the latest data shows more dropouts in government schools in Bangladesh. But there is inadequate research on gender equality practices inside the classrooms and less attention has been given to a comparative study that looks explicitly into a government and a non-government school’s gender equality practices by the teachers inside the classroom. In India, studies have shown that developing materials and curriculum for out-of-school adolescent girls calls for planned and applicable partnership in practice (Sharma, 2003). This would ensure a sharing of proficiency between university professionals, women groups, Non - Governmental Organizations (NGOs), and education bureaucrats, for the transforming prospective of the course to be fully explored.

Though a lot of the studies talked about the curriculum, gender equality, gender norms in Bangladesh, none has yet explored the classroom practices in government and non-government primary schools in Bangladesh. Therefore, through this study I seek to understand the classroom practices and teachers attitudes towards male and female students in the largest two school groups through a comparative lens.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Research Approach

This study was a comparative research which intends to compare the available information on the same notions between two different sets of cultures (Bereday, 1967). This study pursued a sample-based comparison technique following the guideline of Sarana (1975).

At first, I studied the background of the education system in Bangladesh, keeping in my focus what I am going to finally do research about. The interesting coexistence of multiple education streams in Bangladesh, interested me to dig deep down to see how different streams are performing to ensure gender equality. I have found some data sets which glorify the remarkable success of Bangladesh in ensuring gender parity in enrollment after 1990. However, some studies I found, focuses on the higher dropout rate of female students and gender-bias education system. At the same time, the Annual Primary School Census (2019) showed a lower dropout rate in non-government schools. I have correlated these two significant results and tried to understand the difference between the practices of gender equality in those two types of schools.

Finding literature on the gender equality practices inside the classroom by the teachers in Bangladesh was difficult. There was some quantitative study which only shows the number, and assumed the presence of gender based decisions in overall society, but no specific research has been done to see the teachers' practices inside the classroom. Therefore, I have interpreted the available data around the World and South Asia and tried to assume the picture of Bangladesh. With the little information available, the only way to figure out the actual scenario and then analyse the data would only be possible after interviewing the students and teachers.

To get that a sample open ended question set was prepared to depict the picture of gender equality inside the classroom. Then, the questions were rehearsed in a mock interview among 2

students of BRAC University who are also primary school teachers. After interpreting their answers, the questionnaire was more elaborated to let the student think more about the scenario of their classroom. At the same time a partially different set of questions was prepared for the teachers of those schools. These two sets of questions allowed us to get the view of both the students and teacher. The questionnaire of the students is set in such a way, which also interprets their ability to identify some gender based decisions in classrooms by the teachers. These interpretations help to answer the second research question. With the questionnaire I have reached my potential participants which is more elaborately described on the data collection method.

3.2 Research Site

The targeted participants of the research were the students and the teachers of a government primary school and a non-government primary school. Therefore, to make the context and the environment similar for both the schools I have selected both the research site in Dhaka and both the schools are situated in the same community. The community is also closer from my resident area, which helps me to access the schools, the head teachers, and the participants in pandemic situations.

1. “G” Government Primary School, Dhaka
2. “N” Non-government Primary School, Dhaka

3.3 Research Participants

To understand teachers' practices inside the classroom, I needed the data from both the teachers and the students. Also, as this study will explore the practices of gender equality, I also needed equal numbers of male and female participants in my study. Therefore I have included an equal number of students and teachers from each of the schools while maintaining equality in gender ratio.

In-person interview guidelines for the students: semi-structured

Students from government primary school: 4 (2 male, 2 female)

Students from non-government primary school: 4 (2 male, 2 female)

In-person interview guideline for the teachers: semi-structured

Teachers from government primary school: 2 (1 male, 1 female)

Teachers from non-government primary school: 2 (1 male, 1 female)

Total participants: 12 (through purposive sampling)

3.4 Sampling Procedure

Purposive sampling procedure was followed to select the desired participants. As the number of participants was very limited in this study, it was crucial to find out the people who can provide the most reliable information. That is why strict inclusion and exclusion criteria were followed to select the participants. I have also selected the research site as such where I am new to get any unbiased information.

Inclusion criteria:

1. The student participant should be a regular student with an attendance rate of more than 80% for the last 6 months.

- a. S/he should be a student of the research site school for more than consecutive 6 months.
 - b. S/he should also have experienced a classroom environment of the research site school for more than 3 months.
2. The teacher participant should be a regular teacher with an attendance rate of more than 80% for the last 6 months.
 - a. S/he should have completed the basic teacher training provided by the government or the school authority.
 - b. S/he should have experience teaching the observed classroom for at least 1 month.

Exclusion criteria:

1. The parent or the guardian of the student denies giving consent,
 - a. The parent or guardian withdraws consent during/after the interview.
 - b. The student is taking private tuition from any of the research sites' school teachers.
 - c. The student has special needs considered under the definition of "Children with Disabilities" by National Children Policy 2011, Bangladesh.
2. The teacher is serving voluntarily at the school.
 - a. S/he has any relatives among the students of the observed classroom.
 - b. If any of the students of the observed classroom is the son/daughter of the same school teacher or the head teacher.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

At first I prepared two questionnaires, one for the students, and the other for the teachers. All the questions were open ended and some were elaborated to help the participants to understand the question clearly and to be focused on relevant answers. The questionnaires for the teachers and the students were slightly different to correlate the output of the interview.

The questionnaires and the forecasted target participant's area were submitted to the ethics committee of BRAC University. After receiving approval from them, I have reached the head teacher of a government primary school and a non-government primary school. I have explained the purpose of my research, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and asked for their help. I have also assured that their given information of the participants and their identity will remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes. I told them to ensure the confidentiality of the interviewees codes will be used instead of their names and institution name. As the schools were closed, the head teachers gave me the house addresses and phone numbers of the potentially eligible students and teachers for my research. With the reference of the head teachers I called some of them and asked consent for participating in my study. Most of the interviewees agreed to participate over the phone call. Upon some interviewees request I have visited their homes to collect data.

I have called 3 teachers, 4 students' parents over the phone. I have introduced myself and explained how I received their number and how important is their and their children's participation in my study. The head teachers already informed them about me and requested them to help me, so they agreed to be a part of my study. Then, I read the full consent letter first and clarified all of their questions. After being clarified, I asked for the teachers and the parents of the students' verbal consent and received it from all of them. Then I described each question elaborately to the teachers and the students and gave them time to think and answer openly and

with as much depth as possible.

I have also visited the house of 1 teacher and 4 students. As the head teachers previously informed them, they welcomed me into their house. I again explained the purpose of my study. I read the consent letter to the teacher and the parents. After receiving their signature in the provided consent letter, I asked for privacy to talk only with the participant. Here, I again tried to give them enough time to think and answer with depth.

3.5.1 Interview method

I have personally interviewed each participant. On an average each interview took about 30 minutes. I interviewed 2 male students, 2 female students, 1 male teacher, and 1 female teacher from the government primary school. I also interviewed 2 male students, 2 female students, 1 male teacher, and 1 female teacher from the non-government primary school. I recorded the conversation with their permission. The interviews were helpful to have received detailed insights (Cresswell, 2014).

My questions towards the students were surrounded around their understanding of gender based decisions and how the teachers usually portray their actions in classrooms. Through my questions I let the students think deeply about every action of their teacher inside the classroom from teaching to extracurricular activities. I let them answer spontaneously about the actual scenario of their classrooms. Through their answers I also tried to understand how well they identify and flag the gender based decisions of their teachers. Additionally, I tried to question their understanding of the situation of the opposite gender student in the classrooms.

I asked the teachers about curriculum, daily teaching-learning practices in their school, and their actions towards different scenarios in classrooms. I also let them talk about their own actions, beliefs, and views in the existing gender based decisions practices inside their classrooms.

3.6 Role of the Researcher

The researcher's role in qualitative research is critical, as s/he collects data and implements analysis (Creswell, 2014). As I was the primary person to collect and analyse the data, my role in this study was as a data collector and observer (Glogowisky, 2020). I had some biased information from the vast relevant and non-relevant literature I have studied. My experience in teaching in a government primary school filled me with some preconceived notions. Thus, it was challenging to get over those fixed mind-sets and act as a neutral non-judgemental object while collecting and analysing data. However, I tried to assess those moments of biasness and included myself as a neutral observer during the research process.

I see myself in this research as an internal researcher. I had seen the practices of the teachers in both types of schools and was myself a teacher in a government primary school. I already knew the context and basic ideas which helped me to make a quality questionnaire that would definitely strike the vulnerable points of the system. However, this also raised a chance of taking some crucial aspects as obvious. There is a high possibility that I might have overlooked some basic concepts and did not consider them as important.

3.7 Data Analysis

Data collection was conducted in a government primary school and a non-government primary school following the data collection methodology. Purposive sampling was used to identify the participants. A total of 8 students and 4 teachers were selected as participants for this study. They were named as different codes to maintain confidentiality. Informed consent letters were provided to the guardians of the student participants. The participants went through a semi-structured in-depth interview with the principal researcher which was recorded with their

permission. Their recorded interviews along with the researcher's notes was stored in a 2 different folders designated for each school. Then all the recorded data was manually transcribed. Since this is a comparative study, I have used a four-step analysis process described by Bereday (1964). Firstly, I have compiled the raw data received from both the research sites in 2 different Microsoft word files. Then the similar kind of data I have received from different participants was removed. However, I had marked how many participants were delivering similar kinds of datasets and which datasets were unique. Secondly, I have interpreted the compiled data school wise. I tried to identify the patterns of the datasets and put them in thematic areas. As the interview questions were open-ended, I had received a lot of data which are not relevant with my research questions. I have omitted those data at this part. Thirdly, after having the thematic interpretations of each school in separate files I have put the themes side-by-side and tried to identify their similarities and differences. Once I found the similarities I marked them in green, and once I found the differences I marked them in yellow. This marking helped me to see the common and disputed ground at a glance. However, there was some data which I have received from only one school, and could not find similar themes to compare with the other schools. I have omitted those data in this study. Lastly, I have compared the key findings of both the schools thematically. The similar kind of datasets were compared here whether the results are same or different. Also, I have tracked back some similar results though their themes can be different to have a better understanding of the teachers' practices on gender equality.

3.8 Ethical Issues and Concerns

To address the ethical issues in regards to my study, I have submitted a filled format for ethical issue form to the ethics committee in BRAC Institute of Educational Development. After properly explaining all the ethical issues of my study, I have received the permission letter from the committee to collect the data from the field.

Before collecting data from my interviewees, I had disclosed all the aspects of my research and ensured their confidentiality. After having their signed permission in a well-described consent letter, I have collected their data. Later, I have also assured to protect their identity I will use codes in my research report instead of their original name. As this study has participants aged below 18, I took consent from their parents. As I described in my ethics form, I will destroy any evidence related to any participants who are a part of this study to maintain their confidentiality after getting the final approval of this research.

3.9 Credibility and Rigor

To determine the accuracy of my finding I have used both the triangulation of data and the peer debriefing method described in Cresswell (2007). Firstly, I have taken data from different sources and use those to build a coherent justification of themes. I have prepared thematic questionnaires for students and teachers. The tools on those questionnaires indicated the same theme and thus the data was automatically triangulated around similar themes.

Secondly, I have located a person who acted as my peer debriefed, reviewed and asked questions about my study. According to Cresswell (2007), this strategy of involving an interpretation beyond the researcher adds validity.

3.10 Limitations of the study

The major limitation of this study I think is, this study has been conducted with a very small sample size. Therefore, there is a possibility that the larger scenarios throughout Bangladesh can be different from my findings. Secondly, the participating teachers received training and instructions to ensure gender equality in their teaching learning practices. Therefore, the teachers might feel that s/he has to respond positively to gender equality. As a result, there is a risk that the data I have received from the teachers are fabricated data instead of a regular scenario. Thirdly, the head teachers informed the students and the teachers about myself and my research prior. They could also instruct the participants to respond in such a way which shows gender equality in their classrooms, and positive environment of their school. Last but not the least, as the schools were closed due to the COVID-19 distressed situation I could not observe the classrooms nor arrange any focus group discussions. Therefore, the finding of these data was solely based on the interviews.

Chapter 4: Result

The aim of the study was to see a clear picture of the gender practices inside the classrooms by the teachers. This study was conducted in two major streams of primary education in Bangladesh: Government Primary School and Non-Government Primary School. After analysing the data, I have found some significant themes. I have represented the findings under those themes in this section.

4.1 Findings from Government Primary School

To conduct the study, I have taken 6 interviews from the Government Primary School. Among the participants, 2 were male students named GB1 and GB2, 2 were female students named GG1 and GG2, 1 was male teacher named GTM, and 1 was female teacher named GTF. In the studied government primary school, I have found most of the time the response of the students was similar, which later I found contradicted with the response of their teachers. However, I have tried to reflect all their opinions and bring a theme among those.

4.1.1 Gender Biases in Positive and Negative Reinforcement inside the classrooms by the teachers in Government Primary School

Positive and negative reinforcement are staples in any teachers' classroom management toolbox. For decades, teachers have leveraged reinforcement strategies to mould students' behaviour (Brain Blog, 2020). Skinner (1953) first presented the theory of operant conditioning - a method of learning that happens through the connection of rewards and punishments through the use of reinforcement. The goal of positive reinforcement is to encourage students' positive behaviours

by giving a gift, whereas negative reinforcement pursues to inspire positive student behaviour by eliminating a negative condition. According to DiTullio (2014) some implementation techniques of reinforcements are:

1. Rewarding good behaviour
2. Thinking about small units
3. Encouraging a group management plan
4. Promoting trust
5. Promoting choices and consequences (as described by Kelly and Pohl, 2018)

Some of the questions in the questionnaire were about the use of reinforcements by the teachers and focused on identifying the gender biases among those decisions. While responding to those questions I have found students are mentioning gender based reinforcements. Often the male students receive harsher treatment for similar kind of behaviour than female students. At the same time, I have found the teachers are using punishments on a more frequent basis. They rarely use positive behaviour reinforcement. One female student said,

“The teachers say good things about us (male and female) when we do the good work, but not often. If everyone in the class does the home works they are happy, but at that time they do not praise someone. They were sometimes overwhelmed with the amount of home works on their table, and failed to take regular class that day. So, often if everyone brings homework, they do not check. They only check if someone do not bring and then punish those students” (Female student from government primary school-2)

When asked about the difference between the teachers' actions towards different students, there was not much difference in terms of actions based on positive behaviours. The students responded that teachers often do not use much praise or positive behaviour reinforcements in their classes. On the other hand, teachers were strict when dealing with negative behaviours of students. For some reason, the male teachers are more protective towards female students. If a female student shows some negative behaviour, the punishments she gets are often lower from

the male students. However, the parents are not vocal about the excessive use of punishments in the schools. The head teacher, who was supposed to monitor the well use of the reinforcement and ensure a safe environment for all the students, is herself applying corporal punishments.

One student said,

“When we (female students) do something bad or mischief, our madams (Female teachers) first give us warning and scold us. Even after that, if we continue to do the same, madams beat us. But, the sirs (Male teachers) do not beat us. They think that if we beat the girls, they will get more hurt. And if a girl gets sick, then he will be in big trouble. The guardians will complain, so the sirs do not beat us. They call the madam to beat us (the participant was laughing indicating it is a funny thing) or take us to the Boro Apa (the head teacher). Now, we all fear the Boro Apa. She doesn't care if it is a boy or girl, she just beats. As girls are weak, often they get sick after beating. But, when the parents get to know that the Boro Apa beat their daughter, they do not complain. Because, where will they complain? Boro Apa is everything. Everyone fears her” (Female student from government primary school-1)

The male students also talked about the harsher punishment they usually receive from the teachers. They identified these discriminations clearly and think of themselves as a victim of gender biases. With their responses it was clear that they were not happy about the treatments they are receiving, which may lead them to apply gender discrimination in other aspects too.

“Sirs don't beat the girls, madam beats the girls less than us, and even Boro Apa sometimes beats the girls less than us. We (male students) always get more punishments. Girls are lucky as the sirs do not beat them. Sirs are stronger, and beat the hell out of us. They feel that we do not feel pain, or feel less pain than girls, so they all beat us.” (Male student from government primary school-1)

When I have asked the teachers about the reinforcement mechanism they use in classrooms, their responses were polished and it seemed like they know well about the positive and negative reinforcement techniques. However, the teachers avoided the alleged corporal punishments from the students. They said they do not impose any corporal punishments.

“Corporal punishment is prohibited from government. As a government teacher we do not beat the students at any means. If they misbehave or do many mischievous activities, at best we call the parents.” (Male teacher from government primary school)

They have also tried to give some examples of positive behaviour reinforcement they usually use in the classrooms. One female teacher said that they use the positive behaviour reinforcement in the following ways:

“Yes we praise the students who do good in home works and behave properly. We make them class captains, we give them responsible tasks, we give them gifts, we say good things about them to all the parents and students.”

However, both the teachers said they are often more empathetic towards the female students before evaluating any situation. If a female student does something wrong, they try to find out the reason behind, which they sometimes can not do for the male students due to several reasons and prejudice like males are mischievous and prone to misbehave often.

In short, the presence of positive behaviour reinforcement in the researched government primary school is minimal, whereas they use a lot of negative behaviour reinforcement to control their classrooms which often led to corporal punishments. Most of the cases the male students receive harsher punishments.

4.1.2 Addressing Students' Health and Learning Issues of the Students by the teachers in classrooms in Government Primary School

Though in Bangladesh the students go to school six days a week, the actual contact hours between the teachers and the students are around only 40 minutes each day (Amin, 2007). In the long school hours with very little contact time it is presumably that teachers often do not put enough attention towards students' health and learning issues. When the students were asked about teachers' responsiveness towards their needs, all the students said that their teachers give more attention to the female students than the male students. A female student said,

“When we say we are feeling sick, we want to go home, most of the time teachers let us go home after a few questions. But, if one of my male classmates requests to go home, most of the time the teacher ignores the request. Teachers think that the boy is lying, he does not have any problem, which is often true. Rarely male students get permission to go home, even after that we see some of them play cricket at the field, riding cycles though they received leave for illness.” (Female student from government primary school 2)

Teachers are also more careful towards female students' problems in the classroom. They give priority to female students while clarifying any difficult topic discussed in the classroom. The teachers also said that they give girls more attention. They responded that to ensure gender equality in classrooms, and to reduce female dropout rate it is essential to give the female students priority.

“You see, in Bangladesh it is difficult to educate a girl and there are a lot of obstacles present outside. We the teachers try to make the classroom the safest for them. We always give their educational, health, and mental needs priority. So, when 2 students raise the same concerns, we give the female student priority.”

To summarize, the teachers from government primary schools are more cautious about the health and learning issues of the female students than the same concerns raised by a male student.

4.1.3 Gender based Decisions in Extracurricular Activities in Government Primary School

Extracurricular activities are those exercises performed by the students that fall outside the domain of the typical educational program of an educational institute. Students participate in different kinds of activities like sports, music, student associations, etc. Often helping the teachers and the schools in different regular administrative works falls under extracurricular activities. By participating in any of these events, the students achieve a sense of self-respect, self-esteem, and self-confidence (Begum et al. 2020).

It was a common response among the teachers and students of the researched government primary school that all of them think girls are weaker than boys. All the students from the researched government primary school said that the teachers select male students most of the time to perform any tasks.

“What are the tasks we have? Carrying biscuit boxes is difficult, we boys do that. Cleaning the field is difficult, boys do that. Working at the garden is difficult, boys do that. Carrying the notebooks of all the students is difficult, boys do that. Girls only decorate the classroom. They are good at decorating.” (Male student from government primary school1)

Teachers also think the same way. They do not want to give any activities which require physical strength to the female students. At the same time, teachers do not put the female students in positions where they can practice their leadership potentials. They do not think that a female student can lead a class or a group in any activities, or that the other students will welcome a female as their leader. One teacher from government primary school said,

“Often the tasks require physical energy, which most of the girls do not have. If they face any accidents while doing physical tasks, who will take the responsibility? Also, other students will not obey the rules of a female captain. Students fear a strong male captain

and obey him always. If I select a female as the class captain, the classroom will be a fish market (difficult to control).” (Female teacher from government primary school)

In short, the teachers think that the male students are stronger and are more susceptible in leadership positions than their female classmates. Therefore, the opportunities of female students are low.

4.1.4 Use of Examples in Teaching Learning Process Related to Gender in the classroom by the teachers in Government Primary School

To explain any topic to students, teachers are often advised to use examples outside the textbooks which is more relatable to school and the students environment. The teachers also receive training and are provided with a teachers guide which helps them to produce the examples. However, the students from the researched government primary school said that their teachers do not use any extra examples outside the textbooks. They just use the same content from the textbook and the class is mostly conventional lecture styled. They also said that the teachers do not use any tools or visual aids to make the contents easier to understand.

“Teachers do the example maths of the book. Then give us the homework to try from the practices. They sometimes follow guidebooks.” (Female student from government primary school2)

When the students were asked about whether they could see the presence of gender biases in their textbooks, three of the four were not able to answer. Which shows that they are not aware of the examples used in their textbooks and do not seek to find out the gender biases among them. Regardless of these, one male student seemed slightly aware of the examples and said,

“I think the questions and examples are ok. I do not think there are more boy names, or more girl names. (However, the student was uncomfortable while saying it. It seems he doesn't want to talk about it)” (Male student from government primary school1)

The teachers also believe the examples in textbooks are gender-balanced and well researched, and providing outside the textbook examples can create confusion among students. They have also mentioned about using the teachers' guide provided by the government. Though they acknowledged their limitations of using visual or gamification tools for not having proper training and equipment.

“The examples in the books are sufficient. We also follow the teacher's copy of the textbooks, which is provided from NCTB separately. There are a lot of examples given. We often give students home works from there. We don't need to make examples on our own. Those examples are gender balanced. And it doesn't matter what is the name or activity we are using in the textbook, as long as the children are learning. That is sufficient.” (Female teacher from government primary school)

To summarize, the teachers do not feel the need to put extra effort in evaluating the textbooks through gender lenses, and therefore provide any outside the book examples. Also, as they are government employees, they are prone not to criticize the government about this issue.

4.2 Findings from Non-Government Primary School

To conduct the study, I have taken 6 interviews from the Non-Government Primary School. Among the participants, 2 were male students named NB1 and NB2, 2 were female students named NG1 and NG2, 1 was male teacher named NTM, and 1 was female teacher named NTF.

4.2.1 Gender Biases in Positive and Negative Reinforcement inside the classrooms by the teachers in Non-Government Primary School

Analysing the responses of the students and the teachers in the researched non-government primary school, I have seen a better understanding and application of positive and negative behaviour reinforcements than the same from the researched government primary school. In the researched non-government primary schools, the students often receive the same kind of responses from their teachers despite their gender. When they behave the same as the expectation of their teacher they often receive positive reinforcements.

“When we do good work, the teacher praises us, gives us stars (positive reinforcement). When we perform well as a team, teachers give stars to all of us. It is the same for both the male and female students.” (Female student from non-government primary school-1)

However, corporal punishments for male students is also present at the researched non-government primary school. Female students do not receive any corporal punishments from the responses we receive. Most of the time teachers use negative behaviour reinforcements to control the environment of the school and the attitude of the students.

“Sometimes, when we do too many mischievous activities, when we disturb the class too much, teachers give us small punishments. They deduct our stars, they reduce our points, and rarely they beat us. But they beat only us (the male students). They only scold the female students.” (Male student from non-government primary school2)

From the teachers' responses we get that they apply positive reinforcement and use fun activities in classrooms. The results of using positive reinforcement are quite sufficient that they rarely take any actions towards students' negative behaviour.

“We focus more on positive reinforcements. We appreciate their positive works, we track their progress on visible trackers, we give them gifts for outstanding achievements. Students are so competitive here to earn those, they never try to do otherwise. However, they rarely behave badly. We give them negative reinforcements.”(Male teacher from non-government primary school)

When the teachers were asked about students alleged responses of using corporal punishment towards male students, both the participant teachers denied the claim.

In short, there are significant use of positive behaviour reinforcements and minimum use of negative behaviour reinforcements. However, there is minimum use of corporal punishments, but when it happens, it happens only to male students.

4.2.2 Addressing Students' Health and Learning Issues of the Students by the teachers in classrooms in Non-Government Primary School

In the non-government primary school, the teachers are more attentive towards students' needs and concerns. S/he puts an effort to address all the issues with similar sincerity. When asked about the teachers' response towards students' concerns, all the students responded that the teachers treat each student's concerns equally.

“Teachers try to solve all of our problems. If everyone has questions, the teacher tries to answer all the questions. If anyone is feeling sick, the teacher asks about the conditions, gives primary medication, and if necessary sends home.” (Male student from non-government primary school2)

The teachers also responded that they give the same priority to female students and male students. No issue should be given more or less priority based on gender .

“We (the teachers) try to answer all the questions of our students. No matter how difficult or how silly the question is. The same goes for his/her sickness. If a student is sick or feels uncomfortable, s/he needs attention. It doesn’t matter if s/he is a boy or girl. Anyone can feel sick and they need equal attention. We talk with the students to understand his/her needs and provide help accordingly.” (Female teacher from non-government primary school)

To summarise, the teachers try to give equal attention to each students concerns. They do not discriminate any issue based on gender. Also, having a para-medical appointed at their school, helped them to address the health issues faster.

4.2.3 Gender based Decisions in Extracurricular Activities in Non-Government Primary School

The researched non-government primary school is more active in extracurricular activities. It arranges different types of sports, games, and cultural activities to nurture the potential of every student. Participating in at least one co-curricular activity is mandatory for every student. Nevertheless, it also focuses on building leadership capacity in all students. Every student is given the opportunity to play their part in different leadership positions in different tasks. All the students from the researched non-government primary school said that they receive equal opportunity not being treated by their gender to perform any tasks.

“So, when there is a task, the teacher says to the class who wants to do that. Then, interested students raise their hands. From them, the teacher often selects an equal number of male and female students. Also, you can see in our class, the 2 class captains of the 3 are female. Though we selected them from voting, the teacher appreciates us for

selecting a female as our class captain.” (Male student from non-government primary school-2)

However, one male student responded that the female students get more opportunities. As most of the classrooms have more female students than male students, he claimed that the teachers give the opportunities mostly to females. He also thinks that some male students are less active than girls in classrooms. According to him this can be the reason the females are getting more limelight.

“In most of the classes, there is a female majority. So, teachers give more opportunities to females. In extra curricular activities the females raise more hands, so the teacher also selects more females. I think boys should also raise their hands, but they don’t do that. They are often remiss and lazy. And girls are enthusiastic, they want to do everything.” (Male student from non-government primary school1)

By providing examples from different cultural and sports activities, the teachers said they try to give every student equal opportunities. They also maintain democracy and prioritize students' favour while choosing the leadership positions. Also, they do not think that having more female students in classrooms works as an advantage towards implementing gender equality practices.

“In our singing group, you can see there are equal numbers of boys and girls. In our sports group, it is the same. We encourage everyone to participate in everything. In class activities we let the students choose their captain. Though we appreciate if they choose a girl to be their captain, but we never force them to do so”.(Male teacher from non-government primary school)

In short, most of the participants (5 out of 6) said that each student receives equal opportunity to participate in different extra-curricular activities based on his/her potentials and interest. Also, there is a lot of regular activities, and all the students are encouraged to play leadership roles.

4.2.4 Use of Examples in Teaching Learning Process Related to Gender in the Classroom by the Teachers in Non-Government Primary School

In the non-government primary schools the teachers are advised and trained to use examples using the context of the students to explain the subject matter in a more clear way to the students. All the students said that the teachers give them lots of examples outside the textbooks. The teachers also use different activities and games in their teaching-learning methods to make the difficult chapters easier for them.

“When teachers give us homework, they give us examples which are not in the textbooks. I think they made up those examples, because I never found them anywhere. Also, we play games and learn, we sign and learn, we dance and learn. These are not in books”
(Male student from non-government primary school-2)

Understanding the students' concept about gender biases in their textbooks was necessary. When deliberately asked about the gender biases in those examples, the students could identify the presence of gender biases in their textbooks. However, they said that they do not believe everything the textbooks say. They believe the textbooks just cover a part of their world, and they are more pretentious to overcome any barriers or prejudices. Their teachers help them understand the world in a better way than the textbook does.

“So, when books say that the boys are doing these, and girls are doing these, the teacher always says that everyone can do everything. We also believe that everyone can do everything. The teachers tell us stories about female cricketers, female workers, female engineers, female doctors. The teachers also say the same about the males. We know that males are chefs in restaurants, males can design homes, males can make clothes. So, there are no gender specific jobs.” (Female student from non-government primary school-1)

Teachers also have a broader perspective about the lessons used in textbooks. Both the teachers said that they think that the examples given in the textbooks are not sufficient and some are gender biased. They use a lot of examples outside the textbook from the real world, and they often use those to break the gender barrier.

“See (by showing me an example from NCTB math textbook) here, Mushfiq (a male cricketer from Bangladesh) has made some runs, Shakib (another male cricketer from Bangladesh) has made some runs, but where is Salma, Fahima, Lata (some female cricketers from Bangladesh)? If we do not tell the stories of Salma, Fahima, and Lata there is a possibility they may never know about them. They may think cricket is not for them, football is not for them, actually everything is for them. The same goes for a male student. If he doesn't know boys are cooking, boys are dancing, boys are nursing, he may never help in household works. There should be a balance” (Female teacher from non-government primary school)

To summarize, the teachers think that the examples of the NCTB textbooks are gender biased, so they use many examples outside those books. Also, the impact of using the examples which break gender stereotypes was visible among the students.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusion

I have tried to pull up the major information I have received in the results section. Most of the findings I have received are the same in the same school. However, I have also received significant differences on some themes from the students and the teachers. So, in this discussion chapter I will only discuss the topics where most of the participants gave the same opinion. Also, in this chapter I will try to compare the results from two different types of schools. To get a better understanding of the research questions, seeing the schools from comparative lenses was necessary.

5.1 Comparative Analysis: Findings Derived from the Government and the Non-Government Primary School using Thematic Perspective

A comparative analysis between the two different data sets on the similar theme is useful to get a clear picture of how the two different data sets are performing and why they are performing similarly or differently (Bereday, 1967). In this study, I have used the comparative method described by Bereday to put the findings side-by-side and to identify the similarities and differences between the gender practices of the teachers in the classrooms. This will be a systematic response to identify the reasons behind their attitude towards different students and decisions based on genders.

5.1.1 Behavioural Reinforcements: Gender Bias is Everywhere

Though the corporal punishment is illegal in South Africa, it is vastly used which limits the approach to gender equality in schools (Hunter and Morrell, 2021). We have seen the same in both the researched primary schools. In Bangladesh, it is also illegal to impose any corporal

punishments towards the students, but the law is not obeyed. Moreover, the teachers often measure the level of punishment based on the student's gender. In government primary school, we could see most of the participants responded that the teacher is less harsh towards female students than the same behaviour from male students. This finding is up to a scale similar between the two schools irrespective of the gender of the teacher. After conducting the same bad behaviour most of the time a female student only receives some warning, criticism, or small punishments from the class teacher at maximum. But, the same behaviour from a male student is handled more strictly, and in the government primary school, the consequences are more strict. A male student from a non-government primary school receives some corporal punishments from the class teacher and sometimes the teacher discusses the behavioural issue with the guardian. But in a government primary school, the male student often receives corporal punishments from the class teacher, and complaints are passed towards the headteacher. Sometimes the headteachers warn him, give corporal punishments, or call the guardian of the male student for further discussion about the scenario. However, good behaviours are often not celebrated or receive positive reinforcement in government primary school. Those are often overlooked. Opposite scenario is present in the non-government primary school. The teachers give high value to the positive behaviour and give much appreciation to the students.

5.1.2 Health and Academic Concerns: Different Scenarios

Teachers' action patterns towards students' concerns can be divided into two different categories. First of all, if the student is under any academic problem, teachers from both the schools give the same priority to the students irrespective of gender. Most of the time, teachers try to solve every student's problem, and students from different genders get the same priority while attending extra classes. But the second scenario differs from a non-government primary

school and a government primary school. A male students' physical needs like illness, permission to visit the washroom, urgent issues from home, etc are often given less priority than the same need of a female student and sometimes even neglected considering it as a false statement.

This scenario is completely different in the researched non-government primary school. The school has a trained paramedic appointed by the authority who investigates any health issues of any student immediately. Also, teachers often consider family issues of any students' after cross-checking with the parents.

5.1.3 Extracurricular Activities: Prejudice vs Modernisation

Here a big difference in the practices is visible between the two schools' teachers. In the researched government primary school, every student reported that all of the time only male students are selected to perform any task like being class captain/monitor, counting homework, cleaning the classroom/board/field, carrying tools and materials, etc. which teachers slightly disagreed with. Even if a female student wants to take responsibility for herself, she is discouraged. Students anticipated and one teacher agreed that they consider female students as physically weak. The teachers think that a female will be unable to do those tasks because of the malnutrition and weakness they already have.

The same scenario is present while selecting students for any extracurricular activities. Most of the segments of annual sports are only permissible to male students. Male students are holding a majority in numbers while being part of the scouting and the student council. And teachers often do not feel comfortable taking female students in outside school extracurricular activities

and competitions. They think taking the responsibility of a female student is risky and do not want to take that.

On the other hand, in the researched non-government primary school, teachers encourage all the students to take equal responsibility for the tasks and activities. They try to maintain an equal environment inside and outside the classrooms. Even female students are often more nurtured to be a part of different extracurricular activities. Their approach is backed by several researches. According to Carbonaro and Malony (2019), participation in extracurricular activities is optimistically related to cognitive and socio-emotional outcomes for children and adolescents. Some authors have unambiguously acknowledged access to and participation in extra curricular activities as a source of benefit that subsidizes to socioeconomic condition and racial/ethnic/gender inequality in school outcomes (Nelson 2017).

5.1.4 Textbooks: Gender Biased or Not?

A research about gender equality in Bangladesh's primary level English textbooks by Suchana (2020) found that, linguistic sexism, male domination, and subjugation of women are present in the NCTB textbooks.

In the researched government primary school, the teachers either do not use examples from outside the textbooks, or they do take from some guidebooks. They do not try new examples and they do not think the examples are gender biased. They think that the provided examples from the government through their textbooks are sufficient and appropriate for the students.

On the other hand, the teachers from the researched non-government primary school use a lot of examples, audio-visual aids, gamification tools, etc. outside the textbook and they make those examples gender-balanced. They use a lot of examples of the work of females, responsibility,

and capability of females which they believe is not adequate in textbooks. Also, the teachers reported that by following this way they feel the female students can connect more with the subject topic and be motivated to use the learning in real life.

5.2 Conclusion

This study started with an assumption that the non-government primary schools are doing something different from the government primary schools in terms of ensuring gender equality inside the classroom by the teachers.. The data collected from the participants also gives us the same kind of information.

The researched non-government primary school has some initiatives to ensure gender balance inside the classroom. They provide equal opportunity to all the students and nurture female students more to ensure equality. They provide more female-based examples in classrooms which makes a female student more interested in the study. Also, the absence of corporal punishments, use of audio-visual tools, gamification of subject matters, etc. is playing an important role to reduce the overall dropout rate.

Also, the awareness of gender equality is much less in the government primary school. The students often stumbled to see the asked questions through the lens of gender. Even after the questions were elaborately described to them, they were not able to go towards a deep conversation or felt discomfort to discuss. On the other hand, in the researched non-government primary school, the students were more flexible to talk about gender related concerns. They were aware of their views, their differences, and their opportunities.

In government primary school, with fewer opportunities to participate in different activities and experience different roles, a female student eventually finds it hard to keep her attention only on textbooks. There is not much left for her to do in school other than attending class lectures and examinations. These are the reasons that can play a vital role when it comes to standing not strongly enough against getting dropped out of a female student by herself.

However, in the researched government primary school a male student often faces more punishments than a female student for the same kind of behaviour. Is this a reason for male dropout? needs further research.

5.6 Recommendations

This study comes up with the following recommendations for both the government and the non-government primary school to ensure gender equality practices by the teachers inside the classroom:

1. Stopping corporal punishments and using different methods to address negative behaviour traits.
2. More segments should be introduced in sports and extracurricular activities and encourage female students to participate in different leadership roles.
3. Using outside textbooks' examples to break the patriarchal prejudice of society and motivate female students to grow.
4. Emphasize on ensuring gender equality in the professional development training of the teachers.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Parent Informed Consent Letter

অভিভাবকের সম্মতি পত্র

Research Title: “Gender equality practices inside the classrooms: A comparative study between a government and a non-government primary school.”

গবেষণার নামঃ শ্রেণীকক্ষে জেন্ডার সমতার অনুশীলনঃ একটি সরকারি ও একটি বেসরকারি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের তুলনামূলক আলোচনা।

Principal Researcher: J M Saiful Islam, 19357088, BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University.

প্রধান গবেষকঃ জে এম সাইফুল ইসলাম, ১৯৩৫৭০৮৮, ব্র্যাক ইন্সটিটিউট অফ এডুকেশনাল ডেভেলপমেন্ট, ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

Purpose of the Study: Your child is being asked to participate in a research study following the above identification. The purpose of this study is to find out the gender equality practice in his/her classroom. This study will contribute to the researcher’s completion of his Master’s Degree.

গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্যঃ উল্লিখিত বিষয়ে আপনার সন্তানকে গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণে অনুরোধ করা হয়েছে। এই গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্য আপনার সন্তানের শ্রেণীকক্ষে জেন্ডার সমতার অনুশীলন খুঁজে পাওয়া। এই গবেষণাটি গবেষকের স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি অর্জনে সহায়তা করবে।

Research Procedures: Should you decide to allow your child to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. Your child will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to the study. The researcher will make audio recordings of those answers.

গবেষণার পদ্ধতিঃ আপনার সকল প্রশ্নের সন্তোষজনক উত্তর পাওয়ার পর আপনি যদি আপনার সন্তানকে এই গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণের অনুমতি প্রদান করেন, আপনাকে এই সম্মতিপত্রে স্বাক্ষর করতে হবে। আপনার সন্তানকে এই গবেষণার সাথে সম্পর্কিত কিছু প্রশ্ন করা হবে, এবং তাঁর প্রদত্ত উত্তরগুলোর অডিও রেকর্ড করা হবে।

Time Required: Your child may need 30-45 minutes to complete the whole interview.

প্রয়োজনীয় সময়ঃ ইন্টারভিউ সম্পন্ন করতে আপনার সন্তানের ৩০-৪৫ মিনিট সময় লাগতে পারে।

Confidentiality: The results of this research will be presented in the final research paper. Your child will be identified in the research records by a code number. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your child’s identity. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information including the audio recordings will be destroyed.

গোপনীয়তাঃ এই গবেষণার ফলাফল গবেষণা পত্রে লিখিত থাকবে। একটি গোপন সংখ্যা দ্বারা আপনার সন্তানকে চিহ্নিত করা হবে। এই গবেষণার ফলাফল প্রকাশ বা কোন সম্মেলনে আলোচনার সময় আপনার সন্তানের কোন ব্যক্তিগত তথ্য সংযুক্ত থাকবে না। তাঁর সকল ব্যক্তিগত তথ্য নিরাপদ স্থানে সংরক্ষিত থাকবে যা শুধুমাত্র প্রধান গবেষক জানবেন। এই গবেষণা সফলভাবে শেষ হলে সকল ব্যক্তিগত তথ্য ও অডিও রেকর্ডিং সম্পূর্ণরূপে ধ্বংস করা হবে।

Participation & Withdrawal: Your child's participation is entirely voluntary. He/she is free to choose not to participate. Should you and your child choose to participate, he/she can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

অংশগ্রহণ ও প্রত্যাহার: আপনার সন্তানের অংশগ্রহণ সম্পূর্ণরূপে ঐচ্ছিক। আপনার সন্তানের অংশগ্রহণ না করার পূর্ণ স্বাধীনতা রয়েছে। আপনি ও আপনার সন্তান অংশগ্রহণ করার পরেও যেকোন সময় প্রত্যাহার করতে পারেন, এবং এর জন্য কোন প্রতিকূল পরিস্থিতিতে পরবেন না।

Questions about the Study: If you have questions or concerns during the time of your child's participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

J M Saiful Islam
19357088, BRAC Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University.
Email: saiful.islam@teachforbangladesh.org
Phone: +8801933826515

গবেষণা সম্পর্কিত প্রশ্ন: গবেষণার সময় বা পরে আপনার কোন প্রশ্ন থাকলে, বা আপনি যদি গবেষণার চূড়ান্ত ফলাফলের একটি কপি পেতে চান, তাহলে যোগাযোগ করুন:

জে এম সাইফুল ইসলাম
১৯৩৫৭০৮৮, ব্র্যাক ইন্সটিটিউট অফ এডুকেশনাল ডেভেলপমেন্ট, ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।
ইমেইল: saiful.islam@teachforbangladesh.org
ফোন: +৮৮০১৯৩৩৮২৬৫১৫

Giving of Consent: I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested of my child as a participant in this study. I freely consent for my child to participate. I am also giving consent for my child to be audio recorded during the interview. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form.

সম্মতি দিচ্ছি: আমি সম্মতিপত্রটি পড়েছি এবং আমার সন্তানকে কেন অংশগ্রহণ করতে অনুরোধ করা হয়েছে তা বুঝেছি। আমি স্বাধীনভাবে আমার সন্তানকে অংশগ্রহণের ও তাঁর কথা অডিও রেকর্ডের অনুমতি প্রদান করছি। আমার সকল প্রশ্নের সন্তোষজনক উত্তর আমি পেয়েছি। প্রশ্নকর্তা আমাকে এই ফর্মের একটি কপিও দিয়েছেন।

Name of Child (Printed)/সন্তানের নাম (লিখিত)

Name of Parent (Printed)/অভিভাবকের নাম (লিখিত)

Signature of the Parent/অভিভাবকের স্বাক্ষর

Date/তারিখ

Signature of the Researcher/গবেষকের স্বাক্ষর

Date/তারিখ

Appendix B

Teacher Informed Consent Letter

শিক্ষকের সম্মতি পত্র

Research Title: “Gender equality practices inside the classrooms: A comparative study between a government and a non-government primary school.”

গবেষণার নামঃ শ্রেণীকক্ষে জেন্ডার সমতার অনুশীলনঃ একটি সরকারি ও একটি বেসরকারি প্রাথমিক বিদ্যালয়ের তুলনামূলক আলোচনা।

Principal Researcher: J M Saiful Islam, 19357088, Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University.

প্রধান গবেষকঃ জে এম সাইফুল ইসলাম, ১৯৩৫৭০৮৮, ব্র্যাক ইন্সটিটিউট অফ এডুকেশনাল ডেভেলপমেন্ট, ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।

Purpose of the Study: You are being asked to participate in a research study following the above identification. The purpose of this study is to find out the gender equality practice in your school. This study will contribute to the researcher’s completion of his Master’s Degree.

গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্যঃ উল্লিখিত বিষয়ে আপনাকে গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণে অনুরোধ করা হয়েছে। এই গবেষণার উদ্দেশ্য আপনার শ্রেণীকক্ষে জেন্ডার সমতার অনুশীলন খুঁজে পাওয়া। এই গবেষণাটি গবেষকের স্নাতকোত্তর ডিগ্রি অর্জনে সহায়তা করবে।

Research Procedures: Should you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to sign this consent form once all your questions have been answered to your satisfaction. You will be asked to provide answers to a series of questions related to the study. The researcher will make audio recordings of those answers.

গবেষণার পদ্ধতিঃ আপনার সকল প্রশ্নের সন্তোষজনক উত্তর পাওয়ার পর আপনি যদি এই গবেষণায় অংশগ্রহণের সিদ্ধান্ত গ্রহণ করেন, আপনাকে এই সম্মতিপত্রে স্বাক্ষর করতে হবে। আপনাকে এই গবেষণার সাথে সম্পর্কিত কিছু প্রশ্ন করা হবে, এবং তাঁর প্রদত্ত উত্তরগুলোর অডিও রেকর্ড করা হবে।

Time Required: You may need 30-45 minutes to complete the whole interview.

প্রয়োজনীয় সময়ঃ সম্পূর্ণ ইন্টারভিউ সম্পন্ন করতে আপনার ৩০-৪৫ মিনিট সময় লাগতে পারে।

Confidentiality: The results of this research will be presented in the classroom. You will be identified in the research records by a code number. When the results of this research are published or discussed in conferences, no information will be included that would reveal your identity. All data will be stored in a secure location accessible only to the researcher. Upon completion of the study, all information will be destroyed.

গোপনীয়তাঃ এই গবেষণার ফলাফল গবেষণা পত্রে লিখিত থাকবে। একটি গোপন সংখ্যা দ্বারা আপনাকে চিহ্নিত করা হবে। এই গবেষণার ফলাফল প্রকাশ বা কোন সম্মেলনে আলোচনার সময় আপনার কোন ব্যক্তিগত তথ্য সংযুক্ত থাকবে না। আপনার সকল ব্যক্তিগত তথ্য নিরাপদ স্থানে সংরক্ষিত থাকবে যা শুধুমাত্র প্রধান গবেষক জানবেন। এই গবেষণা সফলভাবে শেষ হলে সকল ব্যক্তিগত তথ্য ও অডিও রেকর্ডিং সম্পূর্ণরূপে ধ্বংস করা হবে।

Participation & Withdrawal: Your participation is entirely voluntary. You are free to choose not to participate. Should you choose to participate, you can withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind.

অংশগ্রহণ ও প্রত্যাহার: আপনার সন্তানের অংশগ্রহণ সম্পূর্ণরূপে ঐচ্ছিক। আপনার অংশগ্রহণ না করার পূর্ণ স্বাধীনতা রয়েছে। আপনি অংশগ্রহণ করার পরেও যেকোন সময় প্রত্যাহার করতে পারেন, এবং এর জন্য কোন প্রতিকূল পরিস্থিতিতে পরবেন না।

Questions about the Study: If you have questions or concerns during the time of your participation in this study, or after its completion or you would like to receive a copy of the final aggregate results of this study, please contact:

J M Saiful Islam
19357088, Institute of Educational Development, BRAC University.
Email: saiful.islam@teachforbangladesh.org
Phone: +8801933826515

গবেষণা সম্পর্কিত প্রশ্ন: গবেষণার সময় বা পরে আপনার কোন প্রশ্ন থাকলে, বা আপনি যদি গবেষণার চূড়ান্ত ফলাফলের একটি কপি পেতে চান, তাহলে যোগাযোগ করুন:

জে এম সাইফুল ইসলাম
১৯৩৫৭০৮৮, ব্র্যাক ইন্সটিটিউট অফ এডুকেশনাল ডেভেলপমেন্ট, ব্র্যাক বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়।
ইমেইল: saiful.islam@teachforbangladesh.org
ফোন: +৮৮০১৯৩৩৮২৬৫১৫

Giving of Consent: I have read this consent form and I understand what is being requested as a participant in this study. I freely consent to participate. I have been given satisfactory answers to my questions. The investigator provided me with a copy of this form.

সম্মতি দিচ্ছি: আমি সম্মতিপত্রটি পড়েছি এবং আমাকে কেন অংশগ্রহণ করতে অনুরোধ করা হয়েছে তা বুঝেছি। আমি স্বাধীনভাবে আমার অংশগ্রহণের ও কথা অডিও রেকর্ডের অনুমতি প্রদান করছি। আমার সকল প্রশ্নের সন্তোষজনক উত্তর আমি পেয়েছি। প্রশ্নকর্তা আমাকে এই ফর্মের একটি কপিও দিয়েছেন।

Name of Teacher (Printed)/শিক্ষকের নাম (লিখিত)

Name of Teacher (Signed)/শিক্ষকের স্বাক্ষর

Date/তারিখ

Name of Researcher (Signed)/গবেষকের স্বাক্ষর Date/তারিখ

Appendix C

Research Tool: Semi-structured guideline for students' in-depth interview:

1. What are your teachers' actions when a male student does something good in class? (i.e. doing homework properly, coming to class on time, being regular in class, completing classwork in time, etc.)
2. What are your teachers' actions when a female student does something good in class? (i.e. doing homework properly, coming to class on time, being regular in class, completing classwork in time, etc.)
3. Do you see any difference in your teacher's action on the students' behaviour between the above 2 cases?
4. What are your teachers' actions when a male student does something bad in class? (i.e. not bringing homework, being irregular, cannot complete the classwork, fighting with other students, using slang, etc.)
5. What are your teachers' actions when a female student does something bad in class? (i.e. not bringing homework, being irregular, cannot complete the classwork, fighting with other students, using slang, etc.)
6. Do you see any difference in your teacher's action on the students' behaviour between the above 2 cases?
7. When 2 opposite gendered students raise the same concern at the same time, what gendered student grabs teachers' attention most of the time?
8. Do you see your teacher giving more attention to a particular gendered student most of the time?
9. While selecting students to perform any task (i.e. being class captain/monitor, counting homework, cleaning the classroom/board/field, carrying tools and materials, etc.) does your teacher take any gender-based decision?

10. While setting up an example for the class (i.e. a good student, a bad student, good behaviour, bad behaviour, etc.) does your teacher take any gender-based decision?
11. While selecting students for extracurricular activities (i.e. scouting, student council, sports, etc.) does your teacher take any gender-based decision?
12. While providing examples or using materials outside the textbooks (i.e. in tests, in exercise, etc.) do those examples are gender-based?
13. Do you think your teacher often gives more favor (i.e. consultation time, attention, extra marks, fewer punishments, etc.) to a particular gendered-student? In which way do you think he/she does that?

Appendix D

Research Tool: Semi-structured guideline for classroom observation:

1. What are teachers' actions when a boy does something good in class? (i.e. doing homework properly, coming to class on time, being regular in class, completing classwork in time, etc.)
2. What are teachers' actions when a girl does something good in class? (i.e. doing homework properly, coming to class on time, being regular in class, completing classwork in time, etc.)
3. Are there any differences between the above 2 cases?
4. What are the teachers' actions when a boy does something bad in class? (i.e. not bringing homework, being irregular, cannot complete the classwork, fighting with other students, using slang, etc.)
5. What are the teachers' actions when a girl does something bad in class? (i.e. not bringing homework, being irregular, cannot complete the classwork, fighting with other students, using slang, etc.)
6. Are there any differences between the above 2 cases?
7. When 2 opposite gendered students raise the same concern at the same time, what gendered student grabs teachers' attention most of the time?
8. Does the teacher give more attention to a particular gendered student most of the time?
9. While selecting students to perform any task (i.e. being class captain/monitor, counting homework, cleaning the classroom/board/field, carrying tools and materials, etc.) does the teacher take any gender-based decision?
10. While setting up an example for the class (i.e. a good student, a bad student, good behaviour, bad behaviour, etc.) does the teacher take any gender-based decision?

11. While selecting students for extracurricular activities (i.e. scouting, student council, sports, etc.) does the teacher take any gender-based decision?
12. While providing examples or using materials outside the textbooks (i.e. in tests, in exercise, etc.) do those examples are gender-based?