



PRIMARY EDUCATION ON FLOATING BOATS IN HAOR AREAS; A CRITICAL ANALYSIS FROM BANGLADESH PERSPECTIVE

¹Idris Ali, ²Md Suliman Hossin

¹PhD Student, ²PhD Candidate

¹Kulliyah of Education, ²Business School

¹International Islamic University Malaysia; ²University Kuala Lumpur

Abstract

Floating school boats are one of the main means of getting primary education for the children of the Haor region in Bangladesh. However, the fundamental promise of a floating school boat is to provide free and accessible primary education to these severely flooded areas of Bangladesh. The purpose of this article is to find out the problems which are faced by the children of the waterlogged region of Bangladesh to get their elementary education. This study also explores that the contributions and initiatives of one NGO are not enough to provide primary education for the children of this area. On the other hand, no significant initiative has been taken by the government of Bangladesh to educate them. So, the government of Bangladesh should take some reasonable steps to educate the children of this haor region. Currently, the Floating school boat education is a blessing for the children of these haor areas. This education system needs further improvement and progress by increasing the amount of floating school boats and drawing government attention as well as the proper distribution of the national budget.

Keywords: *Primary Education, Floating School Boat, Haor Areas, and Bangladesh.*

Introduction

Education is the backbone of the nation (Haque, 2018). No nation can prosper economically and socially without education (Alam & Halder, 2018). However, education is one of the fundamental rights of human beings. The per capita income of a country, social development and progress, economic growth, and improved living conditions; everything depends on education (Journal, Advance, & Amran, 2019). A nation that neglects education can never prosper and succeed in their personal and social lives (Suresh & Kumaravelu, 2017). No nation or any specific area of the children should be not deprived of education as deprived the children of haor areas in Bangladesh. As Ahmed, Ashikuzzaman, & Mahmud (2017) mentioned that the majority percent of the children of haor (waterlogged) areas in the northeastern part of Bangladesh are deprived of the fundamental rights of their education. The waterlogged areas are included eight Upazilas (sub-regions) in three key areas in the north, including Singra and Gurudaspur Upazilas in

Nator; Chatmohar, Bhangura and Faridpur Upazilas in Pabna; Ullahpara, Raiganj, and Tarash in Sirajganj Upazilas is the most important wetland in Bangladesh because of its terrain and geomorphological environment (Res & Ali, 1999, & Ahmed, Ashikuzzaman, & Nisha, 2018a). Floating schools are mainly 12.8 meters long, 3.2 meters wide and 1.9 meters tall. It is designed to meet dual needs: as a school boat and study room. It can accommodate 30 students in the classroom at a time. The atmosphere of the floating school study room is exhilarating enough to showcase some artwork and writings, handmade flowers, letter sets, word list and timetables (Ahmed et al., 2017).

Moreover, there are many reasons for depriving children of primary education in this haor areas, such as geographical location, poverty, and lack of a proper distribution of government budget. At the same time, the government of Bangladesh does not take sufficient initiatives to improve the education of that particular area as well as the transportation system is very bad in this region (Ahmed, Ashikuzzaman, & Nisha, 2018b). All of the above factors are observed in the waterlogged area in Bangladesh. That is why there are very few educational institutions have established that it is not enough for the children of these areas. Together with, the transportation system of these regions are undeveloped, and also, there is no full implementation of the national budget in the education sector (Md et al., 2015). Besides, the area remains waterlogged all year round due to geographical location. The government of Bangladesh does take adequate steps to improve the transportation system and to establish educational institutions in these areas. Money crisis and poverty, on the other hand, are their daily companions as Paul & Routray (2010) stated that Due to the size of the land, the Territory continues to be flooded throughout the year and the Bangladeshi government currently has no critical tasks in improving the vehicle framework and advancing the teaching framework. Therefore, the more additional steps should be taken by the government of Bangladesh for the overall development of these regions.

Education in Haor Area of Bangladesh by Floating Boat

Bangladesh is a riverine country (Islam, Bala, & Haque, 2010), and it has many big rivers, canals, bills, reservoirs, and ponds (Uddin, Matin, & Meyer, 2019). Due to geographical location and climate change, some areas of Bangladesh are kept underwater all year round (Ahmed et al., 2018b, & Nowreen et al., 2015). As a result, it is not possible to build good educational institutions in those areas. That is why a kind of floating boat was created to teach the children of those areas. And that floating boat is used as a school for children to study. Zafar (2019) mentioned that the floating boat is designed to have classrooms for teaching students, high benches, and low benches for students to sit in, and chairs and tables for teachers. Inside the boat, there is a beautiful library for students to study further. There is a school office. Besides, there are all kinds of facilities for students to study. As it has mentioned earlier, the boat collects students from the house every morning because of the lack of transportation system as the area is waterlogged. This education system in this region of Bangladesh is known as floating boat education (Thi Hong Phuong, Biesbroek, & Wals, 2017).

The necessity of Teaching in Floating Boat

As mentioned before that the region is surrounded by perennial wetlands of the year, and there is no sufficient educational institution has been established there (Journal et al., 2019). At the same time, the people in this area are so weak that they cannot afford to study in a world-class educational institution by keeping their children in hostels somewhere far away (Ahmed et al., 2017). As a result, they live in these wetlands. Boys and girls in that region can never dream of primary education or higher education. They cannot get any advanced treatment if they wish. Despite their many aspirations, they cannot lead a beautiful life. They have to live through extreme poverty, scarcity, and insecurity (Bhuiyan, Chamhuri, Ismail, Talib, & Constitution, 2011). And the biggest reason for this is that they are deprived of education. To spread the light of education among them, a private NGO is adopting a new method that is to provide education on floating boats (Paper, 2018). But the amount of floating school boats is not enough to provide education for the children in these areas. More floating school boats are needed to fulfill the educational demand of the children in this province, and at the same time, providing education on a floating school boat is a very temporary education system to educate the children of these haor areas. Still, it is highly required to take the proper initiatives by the government to solve this problem permanently (Ahmed et al., 2017). On the other hand, the Bangladesh government is more corrupted to distribute the educational budget (Rashid & Johara, 2018). And for the lack of proper distribution of national educational budget by the government, the haor areas of Bangladesh are still undeveloped in terms of providing primary education for the children of this locality (Denham, 2006, & Asadullah & Chakravorty, 2019).

Furthermore, education is one of the fundamental rights of human beings, and it is called the backbone of a nation (Wagner, 2011). However, education has a crucial contribution to the development and success of any individual, society, or state (Graber, 2006). But in this globalization age, if a particular population or community is deprived of the right to education, it is a curse for human civilization (Popovi & Despotovi, 2018). This floating boat education system has huge contributions to rescue the children of haor areas from that curse. Through which the disadvantaged children of Bangladesh's waterlogged area have regained their rights. They will be able to become a great educated person by completing primary, secondary, and higher education through this education system. They will learn to think about life again. They will adopt new plans for the country and society. As a result, poverty will be eradicated from society. They will be able to lead very peaceful and prosperous lives, and the country and society will move towards further development and progress.

Significance of This Study

Bangladesh is a middle-income country (Bank, Jolliffe, Bank, Sharif, & Bank, 2021). However, Most of the people of this country cannot live a decent life (Ahmad, 1817). One of the statics has shown that the majority percent of the people of this county cannot fulfill their basic needs because of poverty (Story et al., 2012). Moreover, including food, clothing, housing, treatment, and education are the basic needs of human beings. Many poor people in Bangladesh are deprived of these basic needs (Shams, 2014).

Furthermore, poverty alone is not the main reason for the many children in Bangladesh being deprived of education. The geographical location and climate change in Bangladesh is one of the primary reasons for that. We know Bangladesh is a riverine country. There are some areas in Bangladesh where the rivers, canal-bill and haor (a very large waterlogged areas) are high. As a result, these places remain waterlogged throughout the year. There is no good transportation for the students to go anywhere. The only means of transportation is by boat.

As the area is wet throughout the year; thus, no school or college has been established for the educating of the children (Ferdushi & Ismail, 2019). As a result, the children of this region are entirely deprived of the light of education. However, the floating boat education system has set up privately to educate the students in this area. This floating boat is arranged exactly like a traditional school but on a small scale. Inside this floating boat, there are classrooms for students to teach, teachers standard room as well as the school library. A floating boat is a school. This floating boat goes to every house in the morning and picks up the students to the boat. All the students started their regular education activities after being taken into the boat. When the class period is over, the boat again takes the students to their homes. This is how their education activities continue daily.

However, this study will inform every one significantly how hard and difficult for children to earn their fundamental right to education in this waterlogged region. This area is one of the most neglected areas of the Government of Bangladesh. So far, the government did not pay proper attention to provide a fundamental education in the very region. There is no good government initiative to improve the education system in these areas. Although the highest portion of the budget provides in the education sector of Bangladesh, yet again more special initiatives need to be taken to educate the disadvantaged children of this waterlogged region. A large part of the government's budget for education should allocate for them.

One the other hand, roads, culverts and bridges will have to be constructed for better transport of this area. Besides, this article will catch the attention of the ordinary people of the country, especially the businessmen and the rich people. As a result, there will be opportunities to make a variety of contributions through funding for the development of education in the region. Besides, this article will draw the attention of the Government to the extent of the budget allocation for these waterlogged areas. Finally, this article will help identify the obstacles to the development of education in this area as well as help to solve it.

Differences between the Floating Boat Education System and Gov. Education Systems

Although there are no major structural differences, from other perspectives, there are many differences between this education system and other education systems. General educational institutes have school buildings, classrooms, teachers' common rooms, hostels, and libraries, including academic buildings (Ahmed, Sharma, & Deppeler, 2012). But the floating boat teaching system does not have academic buildings, separate classrooms, separate teacher rooms, separate libraries, and separate office rooms (Uddin et al., 2019). In a typical school, such as sports and recreation, there are school grounds where students perform various types of sports. And where the school organizes annual sports and cultural events. But there is no provision of sports and entertainment for the students in the floating boat education system. Normal school students bring food for Tiffin Time But those who study on floating boats cannot bring food from home to eat in tiffin time because of their poverty. In addition, floating boat students eat from home in the morning and then go home to eat in the afternoon (Tibbitts & Kirchsclaeger, 2010).

Methodology

This article deals with the primary education on floating school boats in the waterlogged or haor areas in Bangladesh. The floating school boat education system not only help to provide the primary education for education deprived children in these regions but also contributed for the social and economic development. This article is based on secondary documents or data which has been collected from different books, newspapers, journals, and internet. This general review paper has been developed describing the aspects of primary education on floating school boat from Bangladesh perspective.

Conclusion

Education is one of the main means of improving the quality of life of ordinary and poor people in a society. By depriving of basic education, no nation can stand its head in society. Then they have to live below standard life and suffering poverty. On the other hand, when a nation or community is educated, they can stand on top of the world. Besides, a properly educated person can lead his/her life in a very meaningful way. The floating boat education system is a blessing to the children of the waterlogged areas in Bangladesh. Through this education system and given facilities are not enough yet again, this very initiative will make them self-sufficient and free from poverty. They will be able to live a very beautiful and healthy life. Therefore, the floating boat education system will serve as a light source for the people of the waterlogged area; thus, this floating school boat education system should be developed and improved by increasing the number of school boats, by developing infrastructure and ensuring proper distribution of national budget, especially in the education sector and taking effective initiatives by the government of Bangladesh.

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